



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

West Midlands
Regional Assembly
Speaking out for the region

NEWS RELEASE

Date: 24th March 2009

for immediate release

REMOTE BORDER COMMUNITIES IN SHROPSHIRE, HEREFORDSHIRE AND POWYS TO BENEFIT FROM GROUNDBREAKING CO-OPERATION

Private and public sector agencies working across Central Wales and the West Midlands are meeting on April 2nd, to do just this, on behalf of those living along the remote England/Welsh border in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Powys. The borders in the three counties include around 60 of the most remote rural parishes and community council areas and it's thought up to 56,000 people may benefit.

Devolution means that two different governments are now responsible for designing policies that better match the needs of people in England and in Wales. It is important to make sure that any inconsistencies that result have no more than a minor impact on the everyday lives of people living on the border.

Health and social care, transport, environment, agri-food and tourism and community facilities and services are all being scrutinised to ensure that people on both sides of the border receive an efficient and appropriate level of service.

For example, in the health and social care field, some patients in a single village may have a GP based in England and some in Wales, and this may influence which other services they receive. The ways in which services provided in England and Wales are managed and monitored may differ, though generally local agreements are already in place to ensure patients receive appropriate treatment, whether they receive care in Wales or England. This situation may be mirrored in all six key areas of service provision being examined.

In 2007 a landmark Memorandum of Understanding was signed between The Welsh Assembly Government and the West Midlands' Regional Assembly with a commitment to share information on policy and service development in border communities. Building on this, neighbouring groups have been working together to achieve a clear picture of the needs and challenges in the Wales and West Midlands border and on April 2nd over 150 delegates will gather at the Strategic Forum for Central Wales and the West Midlands in Newtown, Powys to discuss their findings and plan the way forward.

Alun Ffred Jones AM, lead Minister for the Central Wales Spatial Plan Area at the Welsh Assembly Government said: "Communities along the borders may face similar issues and this co-operation will benefit everyone. Only with all parts of the region working together can

we plan effectively for the future. This approach will ensure public and private investment is targeted to best effect so we can create the best public services, infrastructure and economic development possible.”

Cllr. David Smith Chairman of the West Midlands Regional Assembly said:

“Working together has, to date, been informal and has relied on the good will and common sense of the people concerned. Our work and the conference itself will mean we can be more efficient and deliver better services to everyone in our border communities.”

The Strategic Forum for Central Wales and the West Midlands will be held at The Hope Conference Centre Newtown on April 2nd 2009, jointly hosted by the West Midlands Regional Assembly and the Welsh Assembly Government.

This cross border work is a case of applied common sense. It is clearly important that any assessment of the current situation and proposals for changes are fully informed by evidence from the people living locally, so organisers are asking people in these remote areas to communicate their concerns.

-ENDS-

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Notes to editors:

West Midlands Regional Assembly

1. The West Midlands Regional Assembly (‘the Assembly’) represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands region (comprising the historic counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, and including the metropolitan area centred on Birmingham).
2. The Assembly’s membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.

3. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe.
4. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body, and is also responsible for scrutinising the operation of the region's Regional Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands.
5. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk

Welsh Assembly Government

1. The National Assembly for Wales, established in 1999, consists of 60 Assembly Members (AMs) elected by the people of Wales. It is responsible for most public expenditure in Wales, and has powers to make a wide range of secondary legislation. The National Assembly has delegated its executive powers to the Welsh Assembly Government.
2. It is the job of the Welsh Assembly Government to govern Wales, while the National Assembly for Wales makes laws ("Measures"), and scrutinises the Welsh Assembly Government's policies and how it uses its budget. The Government of Wales Act 2006 enables the Welsh Assembly Government to acquire enhanced legislative powers for matters approved by Parliament.
3. The Welsh Assembly Government's role is to exercise functions devolved to it in order to: make decisions on matters which affect people's daily lives; develop and implement policy; make subordinate legislation (eg regulations and statutory guidance) and propose Assembly Measures (Welsh laws).
4. The Welsh Assembly Government currently consists of the First Minister, 8 Welsh Ministers, 4 Deputy Ministers and the Counsel General. For further information, including individual members' responsibilities and biographical details, please click on the link: [About the Welsh Assembly Government](#)
6. For further information, visit our website www.wales.gov.uk