

Regional Policy Partnerships

Much of the region's strategic work is guided by regional policy partnerships (RPPs), comprising a wide range of interests from across the region. Some of these partnerships are led by the Assembly, in its regional co-ordinating role, some by other partners. Several people have requested contact details for these partnerships, so current West Midlands RPPs are listed opposite, together with an officer contact for each.

Transport - Danny Lamb (d.lamb@wmra.gov.uk)
Culture - Laura Moore (l.moore@westmidlandslife.org.uk)
Housing - Steve Forrest (s.forrest@wmra.gov.uk)
Planning - David Thew (d.thew@wmra.gov.uk)
Environment - Chris Blakeley (c.blakeley@wmra.gov.uk)
Rural - Kate Docherty (k.docherty@wmra.gov.uk)
Health - Zena Lynch (z.lynch@wmra.gov.uk)
Learning & Skills - Colin Williams (c.williams@wmlga.gov.uk)
European & International - Simon Hodgson (s.hodgson@wmra.gov.uk)
Sustainable Development - Rose Poulter (r.poulter@wmra.gov.uk)
Strategic Review Group (scrutiny) - Dagmar Waller (d.waller@wmra.gov.uk)

How the Assembly is structured

The following is the current list of Regional Assembly Full Members.*

LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS

Birmingham Sub-Region:

Mike Whitby (Birmingham)
 Peter Douglas Osborn (Birmingham)
 David Roy (Birmingham)
 Les Lawrence (Birmingham)
 Sir Albert Bore (Birmingham)
 Steve Bedser (Birmingham)
 Susan Burfoot (Birmingham)
 Kath Hartley (Birmingham)
 Ian Ward (Birmingham)
 Paul Tilsley (Birmingham)
 Penny Wagg (Birmingham)
 Jon Hunt (Birmingham)

Black Country Sub-Region:

Les Jones (Dudley)
 Peter Bilson (Wolverhampton)
 Steve Eling (Sandwell)
 Tom Ansell (Walsall)
 Pauline Hinton (Sandwell)
 Cyril Woodall (Dudley)
 Brian Douglas-Maul (Walsall)
 Sadie Smith (Sandwell)

Worcester & Hereford Sub-Region:

Dennis Norton (Bromsgrove)
 Jon Rayner (Malvern Hills)
 Martin Jennings (Wychavon)
 Jack Cookson (Redditch)
 Robert Rowden (Worcester City)
 Roger Phillips (Herefordshire)
 Dr George Lord (Worcestershire)
 Stephen Clee (Wyre Forest)
 Colin Beardwood (Worcestershire)
 Sebastian Bowen (Herefordshire)

Shropshire & Telford Sub-Region:

Keith Austin (Telford & Wrekin)
 Heather Kidd (South Shropshire)
 Pauline Dee (North Shropshire)
 Arthur Walpole (Oswestry)
 Jo Jones (Shrewsbury & Atcham)
 Malcolm Pate (Bridgnorth)
 Roger Walker (Shropshire)
 Martin Bennett (Oswestry)

Staffordshire & Stoke Sub-Region:

Ron Locker (Staffordshire Moorlands)
 Stan Highfield (Stafford)
 David S Smith (Lichfield)
 Terry Dix (Staffordshire)
 Alex Fox (East Staffordshire)
 Ron Cook (Tamworth)
 Bill Brownhill (South Staffordshire)
 Reg Cooper (Cannock Chase)
 Michael Salih (Stoke)
 David Leech (Newcastle-under-Lyme)
 Rex Roberts OBE (Staffordshire)
 John Wakefield (Staffordshire)
 Eddie Boden (Staffordshire)

Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Sub-Region:

Philip Seccombe (Stratford-on-Avon)
 Bransby Thomas (Warwickshire)
 Craig Humphrey (Rugby)
 Les Smith (North Warwickshire)
 William Sheppard (Nuneaton & Bedworth)
 Ken Taylor (Coventry)
 Margaret Begg (Warwick)
 Ted Richards (Solihull)
 Les Kyles (Solihull)

BUSINESS SECTOR MEMBERS

with nominating body

Mike Cherry	Federation of Small Businesses
Prof. Michael Clarke	West Midlands Higher Education Association
John Hart	West Midlands Business Council
Arthur Hill	National Farmers Union
Mike Hill	West Midlands Chambers of Commerce
John James	Institute of Directors
Geoff Minshull	Chartered Institute of Building
Richard Moxon	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Chris Newis	West Midlands Co-operative & Mutual Council
Ben Reid	Business in the Community
Julie Roy	Institute of Chartered Accountants
Sarinder Singh Sahota	Asian Business Forum
Roger Stone	Country Land and Business Association
Brian Summers	Heart of England Tourism
Roger Trotman	Engineering Employers Federation
Jane Yardley	Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators

OTHER SECTOR MEMBERS

with nominating body

Jay Patel - EMBRACE
 Alex Robertson - Disability West Midlands
 Gerald Kells - CPRE West Midlands
 Steve Holliday - RSPB West Midlands
 Rt Revd John Austin - WH Faiths Forum
 David Littlemore - WH Health Federation
 Pat Brandum - Federation of Housing Associations
 Mary Booth - Town & Parish Councils
 Valerie Broom - West Midlands TUC
 Richard Quallington - Regional Action West Midlands
 Lee Thompson - UK Youth Parliament
 Brian Woods-Scawen - West Midlands Life

*There were a further 12 Assembly Members to be appointed at the time of going to press.

Visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk

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Speaking Out



Issue 8. Spring 2005

We've got the power

But for how long? The Regional Energy Strategy aims to provide the answer.



From the Chair



Bransby Thomas

I was delighted to be able to host the visit of the Vice-Governor of Shizuoka Prefecture and his party in January. When I visited Shizuoka in May 2004 I received an extremely warm welcome and very generous hospitality and it was a pleasure to be able to reciprocate. The goodwill and understanding between the two regions continues to grow and I am pleased to be a part of this successful relationship.

In February the Kyoto accord, which aims to curb the air pollution blamed for global warming, came into force seven years after it was agreed. The accord requires countries to cut emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Some 141 countries, accounting for 55% of greenhouse gas emissions, have ratified the treaty, which pledges to cut these emissions by 5.2% by 2012. How timely then that the Assembly has also recently

launched the Regional Energy Strategy. Making a real contribution to tackling climate change starts in the West Midlands and the benefits of a co-ordinated approach to the region's energy policy will be considerable. Our challenge now is to successfully implement it.

On a separate note, but of equal significance to the Assembly is the consultation document from HM Treasury, "Devolved Decision Making: A consultation on regional funding allocations". The Assembly is preparing a response which sets out the case for strengthening the capacity of regional institutions to meet our specific economic and social challenges. It also sets out proposals to improve decision making by establishing clearer assumptions on funding for regional transport, housing and economic development. We are at the start of a long process, but it would be another step in devolving greater decision making to the regions. Our detailed response will be published on the website.

Bransby Thomas
Chair, West Midlands
Regional Assembly

In brief

Backing the bid

In the West Midlands the 2012 Working Group continues to prepare proposals about how the region could be involved in a successful bid, including hosting athlete training camps.

The Evaluation Commission from the International Olympic Committee has made a four-day trip to London to examine the city's plans for the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. The commission quizzed the London 2012 team on the bid plans, visit proposed venues for the 2012 Games and attended a dinner at Buckingham Palace hosted by Her Majesty The Queen.

The Evaluation Commission will visit each of the five cities bidding for the 2012 Games before preparing a report for IOC members ahead of the crucial vote in July.



Japanese Links

The link between Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan and the West Midlands Region, which is ten years old this year, has been further strengthened. Mr Masachika Suzuki, Vice-Governor of Shizuoka Prefecture and colleagues from the Shizuoka Prefectural Government and The Association for the Shizuoka International Garden and Horticulture Exhibition made a visit to Birmingham on 18 and 19 January. The party joined partners for a meeting and dinner at the Hyatt Hotel.

The purpose of the visit was to express appreciation for the region's participation in Pacific Flora 2004. This major horticultural event featured a West Midlands garden and English West Midlands Regional Day, which was held on 11 May 2004. During their visit to Shizuoka the West Midlands delegation, which included Bransby Thomas and Colin Beardwood, visited education, health care, agriculture, research and development and tourism facilities.

Regional Housing Strategy 2005 update

The Assembly is co-ordinating the Regional Housing Strategy on behalf of the Regional Housing Board. The aim of the Strategy is to contribute to delivering the Urban and Rural Renaissance strategies of the Regional Spatial Strategy and to support economic revitalisation of the Major Urban Areas.



As part of the Strategy development, an Issues Paper was produced, with the aim of drawing together issues from the research, along with feedback from consultation events. Consultation on the Issues Paper closed at the end of February 2005 and the key elements included Urban Renaissance, Rural Renaissance, Affordability and Decent Homes.

The paper and the comments provided will inform the development of the draft Regional Housing Strategy alongside the technical research.

www.wmra.gov.uk/regional_housing_partnership.htm

Skills partnership

The West Midlands Regional Skills Partnership was launched in January at the Jaguar Visitor Centre in Castle Bromwich. The partnership includes members from private and public sector bodies including Advantage West Midlands, the Learning and Skills Council and JobCentre Plus. In the West Midlands almost 1.1 million people - around thirty five percent of the working age population - are not qualified to NVQ level 2, the equivalent of five GCSE grades A to C.

The Partnership is chaired by Mike Beasley, Chairman of CBI West Midlands. He said: "Across the West Midlands we have some star performers, but not enough employers and individuals are investing in skills. This is why the partnership was formed - to use a data-driven approach to align the activities of all partners and provide accessible solutions."

The aim of the partnership is to make tangible improvements to the region's employment levels, qualifications and skills levels, wage levels and entrepreneurial activity. AWM Chairman Nick Paul said: "One thing is absolutely clear - if the region is to meet the skills challenge, we need change and improvement in performance from suppliers of training and business support, individuals and employers."

The next issue of Speaking Out will feature more of the work of the Regional Skills Partnership.



Scrutiny Reviews

During March and April the Assembly is collecting evidence for the review of Advantage West Midlands's role in supporting High Technology Corridors. The final report will be completed by July 2005.

The Equalities and Diversity Review will identify the extent to which regional bodies are currently addressing these issues and will continue until July.

The review of AWM's contribution to Rural Renaissance is underway and will report in the summer.

www.wmra.gov.uk/regional_accountability.htm

STOP PRESS The reviews for the year 2005-6 have been announced. The assembly will be reviewing the **Business Clusters** and the role of Advantage West Midlands in **supporting skills**. A review will also be held of the implementation of the recommendations following the **Regeneration Zones** review. The thematic review will examine **European Relations post 2007**.

Charting the future of energy in the West Midlands region

Climate change, energy efficiency and exciting developments in technology are some of the issues covered by the West Midlands region's first Energy Strategy, which was launched on 3 December by Energy Minister Mike O'Brien.

The launch took place at BMW's engine plant at Hams Hall in Warwickshire, a leading example of energy efficient production methods.

The Strategy has been produced in response to the Energy White Paper, which sets out plans to address climate change while maintaining reliable energy supplies. It sets an ambitious target to reduce the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050, as well as ensuring that every home is adequately and affordably heated. The West Midlands

has moved swiftly in response to proposals that each region should chart its own path to meeting these objectives.

The West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy has been produced by the Regional Assembly, Advantage West Midlands and Government Office for the West Midlands, and a range of other partners including local authorities and energy experts.

Currently just 1% of the electricity consumed in the West Midlands region is generated from renewable sources (compared with a national target of 10% by 2010), and the energy use in the region is estimated to emit some 42 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year.

A number of key themes were identified for inclusion in the Strategy - housing,

non-domestic energy efficiency, renewable energy, security of supply and transport. The Strategy also addresses carbon reductions and business opportunities presented by the need to reduce energy consumption and to move towards renewable sources of energy.

Welcoming the Strategy, Energy Minister Mike O'Brien said: "The West Midlands has taken an important step with the publication of this Strategy, which recognises the key issues energy policy poses for the region. The Strategy sets out how the region can contribute to the development of renewable energy and greater take up of energy efficiency, both critically important to the delivery of the Energy White Paper.

"It will be important now for the region to take the Strategy forward to implementation; with the support, where appropriate, of national government."

Regional Assembly Chair Bransby Thomas said: "This is not an academic issue - we all use energy every day. This strategy shows we can do things at a regional level so that the inevitable changes in how we generate and use power have a positive, rather than negative effect on the West Midlands economy and environment."

Advantage West Midlands Chief Executive John Edwards said: "Key partners in the region have an important responsibility to ensure that the aims of the energy strategy are achieved. I am delighted the West Midlands has acted so swiftly to outline how we

plan to hit the targets set by government. Social and economic prosperity must run alongside environmental and sustainability issues - this strategy will be key to achieving this balance."

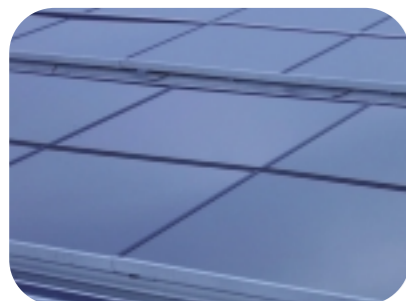
Harald Krueger, director of BMW Plant Hams Hall said: "Finding answers to the need for affordable and environmentally viable sources of energy in the future is a challenge that cannot be met by any one body, company or organisation on its own; it requires us to work in partnership. BMW looks forward to being able to contribute to the development of innovative and sustainable solutions."



Roger Sumpton (AWM), Harald Krueger (BMW), Mike O'Brien MP, Bransby Thomas (Regional Assembly)



Jack Parry and Richard Davies (Marches Energy Agency)



Nick Baldwin

Regional Energy Advisor

The next stage for the Regional Energy Strategy is the preparation of an implementation plan.

The Regional Assembly, Advantage West Midlands and Government Office West Midlands have appointed Nick Baldwin, former Chief Executive of Powergen, as the Regional Energy Advisor. Nick has led throughout the development of the Strategy and his new role is to lead dialogue with industry about how to implement the Strategy. He will also act as strategic advisor to the Assembly and partners on energy issues.

One of his key tasks will be to establish a WM Energy Advisory Board and create the business case for a Regional Energy Office.

Midlands Way

Smart Growth - Midlands Way was officially launched as a consultation document at the Sustainable Communities Summit in Manchester on 31 January 2005.

The development of Smart Growth: The Midlands Way has been led by Advantage West Midlands and East Midlands Development Agency, working together with Government Offices, Regional Assemblies and representatives from some of the Midlands' major cities. It sets out to be a pragmatic and deliverable vision, encompassing practical and achievable actions.

- To ignite innovation, enterprise and creativity
- Drive economic growth and creativity across the English Midlands
- Accelerate the evolution of sustainable communities

These are our challenges:

- The relentless need to **modernise and diversify our industrial base**
- **Improve our educational and skills attainment** across the board to enhance our productivity of our people and firms
- **Build capacity in our urban areas** to attract and retain people and firms - linking new economic opportunities to physical regeneration and social inclusion

Three key areas of action have been identified:

- **Productivity** - raising productivity through smart use of technology and knowledge
- **Connections** - developing gateways and linkages nationally and internationally

- **Renaissance** - creating conditions for choice and growth through improved living environments and infrastructure, employment and skills, land assembly and use

The consultation on the full document and action plan will end on 30th April 2005. For more information see www.wmra.gov.uk



Milton Keynes: Opportunity or threat?

There has been much debate in the regional press over recent months about the planned growth of Milton Keynes and its potential impact on the West Midlands. Milton Keynes and the south midlands is one of the four growth areas proposed by the Government to deliver its Sustainable Communities Plan published in February 2003.

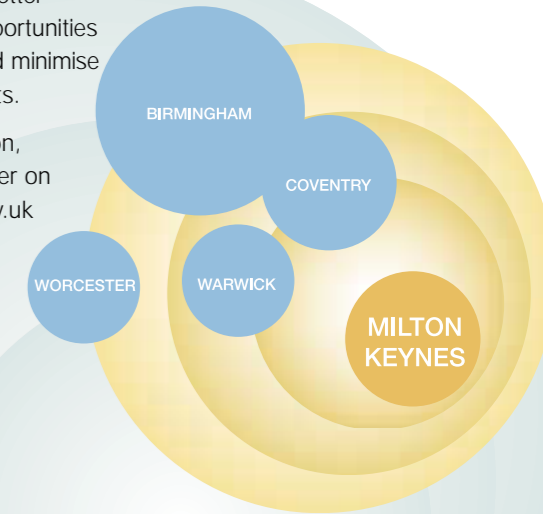
Specific concerns are that the growth of Milton Keynes will draw people and jobs out of

the region, at a time when so much effort and investment is going into the urban renaissance in our major urban areas of Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry, Solihull and Stoke. Would this growth on the West Midlands' doorstep be an opportunity or a threat?

The Assembly has set up a monitoring scheme to measure the impact of potential growth of Milton Keynes and the Assembly's Planning Partnership has set up a

working group to better understand the opportunities and understand and minimise the negative impacts.

For more information, contact Rose Poulter on r.poulter@wmra.gov.uk



Black Country Study

The Black Country Study was launched on 22 February jointly by West Midlands Regional Assembly and the Black Country Consortium. It is a dynamic study to develop the long term renaissance of the whole of the Black Country. It aims to identify a framework to guide the long-term development of the Black Country. It has three principal aims:

- To reverse the trend of people leaving the Black Country
- To raise income levels
- To attract and retain people with higher skills levels

The Government has requested that the Black Country Study should be completed and developed as a revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands over the next twelve months. This will ensure that emerging proposals can be included in the Local Development Frameworks of the four Black Country Planning Authorities and implemented as soon as possible.

The Study is being managed as a partnership and a series of consultation events will take place. The aim is to submit the final Regional Spatial Strategy

Revision for the Black Country to the Secretary of State in March 2006.

For more information see www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk



My Region



Valerie Broom,
Vice Chair,
Other Stakeholders Group.

As Chair of the Other Stakeholders Group, I have recently become one of the Vice Chairs of the Regional Assembly. I am pleased to represent the Trades Union Congress Region on the Assembly.

For me it is vitally important that the voice of working people is heard in decision making. My "day job" is that of Regional Secretary for UNISON in the West Midlands, which has 118,000 members in the region. Organised into 100 branches, members work in public service organisations as diverse as local government, health trusts, police forces, fire services, universities and energy and water companies. The public services are amongst the biggest employment groups in the region.

The role of the unions is very much about representing the interests of working people in the West Midlands, and

working on related issues. The region's working patterns have changed significantly, with many more people in the service industries than in the traditional manufacturing base. Over the years many more women have joined the workforce, and there is a greater proportion of people working more flexibly, for example working part time, or working from home. As trade union leaders we have to adapt our focus to represent these changes and the issues that result.

One of the changes for unions has been the increased commitment to looking at the whole worker, not just the hours they spend at work. For example, we are very involved in the development of family friendly policies. Employers are not just about servicing the needs of the organisation and the customer, they have a responsibility to look after the wider needs of their employees and the communities in which they operate, and effective unions can help them to do this.

An area where the unions can have a great deal of impact on the regional economy is on the skills agenda. The low skills levels in the West Midlands are a cause for concern and the unions are working with employers to develop training in the workplace. We have also adapted our own organisations to create Learning Representatives to support the skills development of the workforce.

Unions continue to have a major role in ensuring that people are treated fairly at work. As a movement, we are not just reactive; we can and do shape the development of the workplace and the future workforce. In order to do this successfully, and with integrity, it is important for us to reflect the community we serve and we will continue to strengthen our own representation of the workforce.