

Agenda Item No. 5

**WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
Assembly Meeting – 24 October 2007**

**DRAFT DECISION NOTES OF THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY BOARD
OF DIRECTORS MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2007**

Chairman: Cllr David S Smith

Present: Cllr David S Smith, Dr Sarindar Singh Sahota, Roger McKenzie, Cllr Terry Dix, Cllr Rex Roberts, Cllr Jo Jones, Cllr Serena Croad, Cllr Steve Eling, Cllr Bob Badham, Cllr Paul Tilsley, Roger Stone, Elizabeth Newman, Yan Lovelock

In attendance: Nina Dawes (Deputy Partnership Secretary), Rose Poulter, Sharon Palmer (RAWM), Sherman Wong, Sian Clark

Part of meeting: John Edwards (AWM), Tim Gebbels (AWM)

* Attending in the absence of Rev'd John Hall

The Chairman welcomed new members to the meeting and the Board **endorsed** the following as new Directors:

- Cllr Serena Croad – Local Government Member
- Rev John Hall – Other Stakeholders Group

1. **Apologies for non attendance:**

The following apologies were noted:

Cllr Keith Austin, Cllr Sir Albert Bore, Cllr John Lines, Cllr Chris Saint, Cllr Heather Kidd, Cllr Roger Phillips, Barrie Williams, Roger Evans, Rev'd John Hall

2. **Chairman's and Vice-Chairs' Report (verbal update)**

Chairman advised the Board:

- of the death of Rt Rev'd John Austin former Bishop of Aston who was an early member of the Assembly.
- That he had, on the invitation of Dr Sahota, visited the Temple on the Soho Road. The Chairman complimented the community work that was being undertaken in the Temple and thanked Dr Sahota for the warm welcome that he, together with the Chief Executive, Director of Policy and the

Head of WMiE were given.

- of the honour of the Golden Needle bestowed on Cllr Dix by the German War Graves Commission for his work dedicated to fostering peace and reconciliation.

Dr Sahota as the Vice – Chair Business sector advised the Board that Fraser Mitchell and Sir William Lawrence, both long standing members of the Assembly had stepped down from all Assembly business.

Roger McKenzie, vice Chair of the OSG, emphasised that the work did not cease with the announcement of the restructuring of regional responsibilities. He stated that other sectoral interests should continue to add another dimension to the agenda and it would be integral for the benefit of the region that all constituent bodies maintained their influence. On behalf of the OSG, the vice chair expressed his hope that WMLGA continued to engage actively in partnership with other sectors and the OSG was keen to play an active future role in regional activities.

The Board of Directors **agreed** that the Chairman:

- (a) send a letter of condolence to the family of Rt Rev'd John Austin
- (b) write to Fraser Mitchell and Sir William Lawrence to thank them for their contributions to the work of the Regional Assembly

Sub National Review and its Implications for the West Midlands

This item was moved up the agenda and followed the initial comments expressed in item 2.

In initial comments prior to formal consideration of the report the following points were raised

- The Chairman advised the Board that he had made representation to the Regional Minister on the lack of recognition of partners.
- Partnership working at a Regional lever was important, however there was a risk that organisations would start to 'wonder away from partnership work'.
- Whilst SNR altered the statutory functions carried out by the Assembly, consideration would need to be given to the continuation of the broader partnerships.
- There was a requirement on local government, in terms of its leadership role, to actively engage with other stakeholders
- It would be fundamental for cross sectoral partnership working to be embedded for the future of the region.

The report was jointly prepared for consideration by the Boards of the West Midlands Regional Assembly and Advantage West Midlands and the WMLGA Executive Committee. The detail of the report outlined the key recommendations of the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) and provided initial thoughts on the implication of the SNR for the West Midlands.

The Board **agreed** for the Boards of AWM, WMRA with WMLGA's Executive Committee and GOWM to work together to:

- (a) develop new working agreements for the SNR in the West Midlands that can be implemented in time for the proposed changes 2010;
- (b) develop the roadmap for change to be launched by the Regional Minister in December 2007.

3. **Draft Decision Notes of the Board of Directors Meeting held on 8 June 2007 and Matters Arising**

The decision notes of the Board of Directors were **agreed** as a true record. There were no matters arising

4. **Draft Decision Notes of the Assembly Meeting held on 18 July 2007 and Matters Arising**

The draft decision notes of the Assembly Annual Meeting held on 18 July 1997 were **noted**.

Roger Stone requested information relating to the progress of the issues relating to British Waterways.

The Board **endorsed** Roger McKenzie's nomination as Chairman of the Strategic Review Group.

11. **Draft New West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (WMES) and Action Plan**

The item was presented by John Edward and Tim Gebbels of AWM who provided the Board with an update of the current position of the WMES Review and a summary of the headline changes as outlined in the report.

In response to specific points raised, JE/TG stated that:

- learning and skills were not considered in the WMES as separate issues but were woven through the document.
- It was accepted that the growth in the region's Health Economy was important and that this area would be

captured in the delivery framework.

- JE expressed fundamental disagreement to the statement that the WMES was urban based took exception to the comment that rural issues such as market town initiatives were included as token elements.
- AWM was committed to have the Learning and Skills Plan ready for Christmas 2007.
- JE welcomed the supportive comments that the document recognised Birmingham as key to the region's economy, as it was a fact that the city housed 20% of the region's population whilst producing 30% of the region's GDP.

The Board are **noted** the latest draft of the WMES and requested that their comments were noted

6. **Company Secretary's Report**

(i) Preparing for the Half Year Review & Progress Report

The Board **noted** the report and **approved** new RSS funding priorities and the approach to recruiting to the Head of Planning and the Strategic Planning Adviser posts within the Policy Directorate.

Additionally, the Board **agreed** to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairs, to agree a revised budget for submission to GOWM with the Half Year Report.

(ii) Coventry Airport Public Inquiry

The Board **endorsed** a proposal that the Chief Executive write to CLG seeking their approval for the Assembly to utilise the contingency sums of carried forward from 2006-07 to meet other RSS priorities.

(iii) Members Allowances Scheme

The Board **agreed to postpone** of the consideration of a Members Allowances Scheme for the Assembly until the 5 December Board Meeting.

(iv) Corporate Issues - General

The Board **noted** the detail of the report and **agreed** to the proposal for adopting the new model code of conduct.

(v) Membership of Governance Structures

The Board:

- (i) **Noted** and **received** the memberships of the Assembly Company and Board of Directors

- (ii) **Noted** and **agreed** the memberships of the West Midlands Regional Assembly's Planning and Housing Partnerships and their Executives.
- (iii) **Noted** the membership of the Partnerships (other than Planning and Housing).
- (iv) Encouraged all sectors to ensure that outstanding vacancies are filled and authorised the Chairman and Vice-Chairs to approve nominations once they had been received.

(vi) Membership on other Regional Bodies

The Board:

- i) **Noted** the representation on other regional bodies as outlined in the report
- ii) **Agreed** the following representation:
 - (a) Sustainability West Midlands Board – Nomination to be sought via the Regional Planning Partnership
 - (b) West Midlands Regional Observatory: Reconfirmed the appointment of **Roger McKenzie** for 2007/08
 - (c) MLA – West Midlands : Reconfirmed the appointment of **Elizabeth Newman** for 2007/08
 - (d) Regional Energy Advisory Board
The vacancy to be filled by a Business Sector nominee
 - (e) Regional Rural Affairs Forum
Nominees to be sought from the OSG and Business Sector

7. **Report of the Finance and Audit Committee**

Notes of the FAC Meeting 18 July 2007

The Board **noted** the content of the report and **received** the recommendations.

Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) Proposal for a Members Allowances Scheme

In light of the Board's **agreement to postpone** the consideration of a Members Allowances Scheme for the Assembly until the 5 December Board Meeting this item was put in abatement.

However, the Board **noted** the additional recommendations to the Board from the FAC as detailed in the cover report.

8. **Assembly Conference – 28 January 2008**

Board Members **noted** the report which advised of the progress of the Regional Assembly Conference and the theme which would be based around 'Voice of the Region – speaking out for the Region internally and externally'.

It was **agreed** that the Conference would be a morning event. Members suggestions for key speakers would be considered.

10. **Headline Issues for West Midlands Regional Assembly**

The Director of Policy updated the Assembly Board on key issues undertaken by the Secretariat over the last quarter and outlined in particular the work undertaken by both the Assembly Secretariat and local authorities to outline the broad shape and content of the preferred housing option in line with the spirit of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

The Chairman of the Board and the Chair of the Regional Planning Partnership expressed their thanks to both members and officers from local authorities and the Assembly for their tremendous contributions.

The Director of Policy undertook to confer with the Business Council on issues relating to transport infrastructure.

The Board **noted** the progress made on issues as highlighted in the report.

The following reports were noted for information only.

14. Strategic Review of The Regional Approach to Post 16 Education, Training and Skills
15. Draft Agenda for the Full Assembly Meeting 24 October 2007
16. Advantage West Midlands – Notes from Board Meetings (Item 13 - The notes of the City Region Shadow Board were not circulated and the item taken off the agenda)

Dates of future Board Meetings 2007/08

- 5 December 2007
- 12 March 2008
- 18 June 2008