

Agenda Item No. 7

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 24 October 2007

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

Report of the Chief Executive

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the endorsement of the Regional Assembly to the Climate Change Action Plan for the Region, prior to its publication and formal launch.

2. Recommendations

That the Regional Assembly:

- 2.1 Endorses the Climate Change Action Plan attached as Appendix 1;
- 2.2 Notes the proposal for a Regional Climate Change Panel to oversee delivery of the Action Plan.

3. Background

- 3.1 At the Regional Assembly meeting in July 2007, the Assembly endorsed a consultation draft Climate Change Action Plan for the Region; supported further consultation on arrangements for governance and accountability arrangements for Regional Climate Change working; and endorsed a process for consultation on and finalisation of the Regional Climate Change Action Plan.
- 3.2 Progress on developing the Action Plan is reported below.

4. Consultation on the Climate Change Action Plan

- 4.1 The draft Climate Change Action Plan was made available for consultation between 23 July and 14 September 2007. In total, 45 responses were received, most of which were very supportive and showed clear understanding of what the Action Plan is intended to achieve.

- 4.2 Consistent themes in responses included the need to improve the profile of adaptation to climate change impacts; the need for all regional policy to be genuinely directed towards addressing the causes and impacts of climate change as a central objective; and the need for robust mechanisms to deliver the Action Plan both within its current timescale and beyond 2010.
- 4.3 The Action Plan has been redrafted to take account of responses to the consultation and was submitted to the Climate Change Executive Group, consisting of the Chief Executives of the Assembly, Advantage West Midlands, and Government Office for the West Midlands, and also including representatives of the Local Government sector, the Environment Agency and Natural England, for consideration at their meeting on 4 October 2007.
- 4.4 The regional Climate Change Priorities identified within the Action Plan are as follows:
- **Planning and Environment:** Plan for low-carbon, well-adapted sustainable communities with high quality green infrastructure and thriving biodiversity, with low-carbon new development, improved existing stock, and sustainable transport and waste planning to deliver substantially reduced emissions and resilience to likely climate change impacts.
 - **Economy:** Facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy by promoting energy efficiency and low-carbon energy generation, increasing take-up of low-carbon technologies, removing barriers to new technology investment, supporting the development of environmental technology and low-carbon business sectors, and enabling businesses to prepare for the opportunities and risks of a changing climate.
 - **Implementation:** Ensure the delivery of substantial carbon reductions and climate change adaptation measures by removing barriers and providing appropriate support and incentives for regional, sub-regional and local delivery agents.
 - **Leadership:** Ensure that regional partners lead by example by significantly reducing carbon emissions from their own premises, activities and services and by ensuring that their assets and services are resilient to likely climate change impacts.
 - **Communication:** Increase awareness and understanding of the implications of Climate Change and appropriate mitigation and adaptation actions for the West Midlands amongst regional policy-makers, public sector organisations and businesses.

- **Targets and monitoring:** Where there are gaps in national monitoring or where Regional accountability is required for progress, establish appropriate regional carbon reduction targets and adaptation goals, and a robust and transparent framework for monitoring and reviewing progress.
- 4.5 Each of these Priorities is supported by detailed actions specifying lead organisation(s) and timescale for delivery.

5. Delivery Arrangements

- 5.1 The Climate Change Action Plan is intended to be broadly based and achievable within the sphere of influence of regional partners. The purpose of the Action Plan is to focus regional capacity to realise the Climate Change Vision for the region.
- 5.2 The Action Plan includes milestones for the achievement of key elements required to tackle climate change, including the development of robust mechanisms for benchmarking, monitoring and review.
- 5.3 Building on responses to the consultation, discussions with key regional partners, and thinking arising from the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration, the Climate Change Executive Group has endorsed a proposal for delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan to be taken forward by a Regional Climate Change Panel.
- 5.4 The Panel will oversee the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan and ensure the contribution of all policy areas to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impacts of unavoidable climate change. The Panel will include the Chief Executives of Advantage West Midlands (AWM), the Regional Assembly and West Midlands Local Government Association, the Regional Director of Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), and Directors from the Environment Agency and Natural England. The Panel will be ultimately accountable to the Regional Minister for the West Midlands.
- 5.5 The Panel will be supported by an officer management group (or virtual Climate Change Office) with devolved responsibility for developing and managing delivery of the detailed work programme for the Action Plan. Membership of this group will include officers from various regional partners whose work will contribute to the delivery of the Action Plan and to regional climate change working more broadly. The Climate Change Office will be accountable to the Panel, which will monitor and review progress of actions. Resources

for the Panel and delivery of the Action Plan are subject to discussion and agreement.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 Subject to endorsement of the Climate Change Action Plan by the Regional Assembly, the Action Plan will be published in November 2007. Arrangements are currently being made for a launch to be attended by the Regional Minister, Liam Byrne MP.
- 6.2 The Action Plan will be a dynamic resource rather than remain a static document. The Action Plan will be regularly reviewed, with the outputs of early actions and the periodic review of progress against targets informing the development of an ongoing programme of further actions. Future iterations of the Action Plan will be reported to the Regional Assembly for information and made publicly available via the Assembly's website.

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