

Agenda Item No. 11

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 12 July 2006

Regeneration Zones Revisited Scrutiny Review - Final Report

Report of the Review Panel

1. Purpose

To present the findings from the scrutiny review assessing the extent to which Advantage West Midlands has implemented recommendations from the review of Regeneration Zones completed in 2004. The complete report and Advantage West Midlands' formal response can be accessed on the Assembly's website.

2. Recommendation

That the Assembly discuss and endorse the findings of review panel.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2004, the Regional Assembly carried out a scrutiny review of Regeneration Zones which explored the progress made by Advantage West Midlands (AWM) in developing the regeneration zone concept and the issues faced by those involved in them. The review panel made 17 recommendations around vision, communications, structural issues, integration with other initiatives, partnership working and process issues.
- 3.2 The Assembly endorsed the report in October 2004 and requested that a further review take place to identify the progress made in implementing the Panel's recommendations. This assessment commenced in April 2006 with evidence sessions held during May 2006. Advantage West Midlands have made a commitment that the final report will inform the current revision of the Regional Economic Strategy.
- 3.3 The current Review Panel consists of:
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| Sarinder Singh Sahota | Assembly Vice-Chair - Business Sector |
| Yann Lovelock | Other Stakeholders Group – Faith |
| Richard Bubb | Other Stakeholders Group – Voluntary and Community Sector (Urban) |
| Cllr Mrs Jo Jones | Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council |
| Kevin Farrell | British Ceramic Confederation (co-opted member) |
- 3.3 Two of the Panel Members, Sarinder Singh Sahota and Cllr Mrs Jo Jones also served on the original scrutiny review panel. This has allowed continuity between the two reviews.

4. **Progress on Recommendations**

4.1 The original review was challenging for the Panel, partners and Advantage West Midlands both in terms of the outcomes and the process itself. The Panel feels that Advantage West Midlands has made progress in implementing the recommendations from the original report although there is a need for further activity in some areas. Advantage West Midlands have shown an open and helpful attitude throughout the assessment clearly demonstrating the maturing scrutiny relationship between Advantage West Midlands and the Assembly.

4.2 Demonstrable progress has been made in respect of communications, partnership working, implementation issues and delegation. The recommendations in respect of the breadth of the Regeneration Zone approach and principals behind them are being explored VIA the revision of the Regional Economic Strategy.

5. **Areas for Further Action**

5.1 The final report does not make recommendations but identifies areas for future activity within the context of the current regional Economic Strategy. However it requests that an action plan is developed by Advantage West Midlands that addresses the areas identified. This is required to be submitted to the Strategic Review Group for discussion at its meeting on 25 October 2006. This action plan will then be included in the ongoing monitoring arrangements led by the Strategic Review Group.

5.2 The report identifies ten key areas of activity for Advantage West Midlands

- Supporting Regeneration Zones in responding to changes in the policy and delivery environment
- Continued development of appropriate and inclusive Zone governance arrangements in the Black Country
- Linkages between delivery mechanisms
- Understanding of Partners' expectations, responsibilities, capacity and ability to deliver
- Corporate communication issues including understanding of Advantage West Midlands' role and communication with wider partners
- Completion and use of the Zone Charter
- Continued development of realistic Zone budgets
- Encouraging use of the indicators developed by WMRO at a Zone level
- Re-examination of delegation levels
- Development of an IT solution to allow sharing of real time project spend and output data

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