

Agenda Item No. 4

**WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
Assembly Meeting – 16 January 2008**

**Draft Decision Notes of the West Midlands Regional Assembly
Meeting held on 24 October 2007**

Chairman: Cllr David S Smith (Lichfield DC)

1. Apologies and Attendance

The apologies and attendances are attached as Appendix 1.

2. Members' Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest stated.

- The Chairman opened the meeting by paying tribute to the Rt Rev'd John Austin former Bishop of Aston who had passed away in August. He informed the Assembly that a letter of condolence had been sent to his family.
- He also paid tribute to Cllr Martin Smith (Sandwell) who had passed away recently, and advised that a letter of condolence had been sent to Cllr Sadie Smith.

3. Chairman's and Vice-Chairs' Reports

Cllr David S Smith (Chairman):

- Paid compliments to Members, Partners and Officers for the outstanding partnership work they had achieved with regards to Phase Two of the RSS. He particularly commended the achievement of reaching within 15,000 of the Governments requested housing figures which had been an exceptional achievement.
- He advised that the Black Country Urban Park had now been short listed for the People's Millions vote in December. Cllrs Chris Saint and Roger Lawrence advised

that all short listed projects would be televised and the outcomes would be subject to a public vote in December. Members of the Assembly were encouraged to support this project, and were asked to help publicise it within their sectors and organisations.

Roger McKenzie (Vice Chair - OSG)

- Highlighted the significance of the role Scrutiny and its future, particularly with regards to the key function of the Assembly and future working until 2010. He advised that, time permitting, there would be a discussion at the end of the meeting

Dr Sarindar Singh Sahota (Vice Chair – Business Council)

- Echoed views of the Vice Chair. There had been added value in partnership working which had brought together expertise across the region. The Regional Planning Partnership Meeting held on 22 October had shown true partnership working in achieving its agreement across all sectors regarding the RSS.

Cllr Terry Dix (Vice Chair - LA)

- Agreed with all comments made from the Vice Chairs.
- He advised that he was currently Chairing the Strategic Review Group for Transport. He requested that any input to the Review could be made to himself, Dagmar Waller or Daryl Davies.

4. Decision Notes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18 July 2007

The notes were **agreed** as a true record.

5. Decision Notes of the West Midlands Regional Assembly Board of Directors held on 26 September 2007

Members **noted** the decision notes of the Board of Directors.

6. Company Secretary's Report

The Assembly received a report which advised them of work in progress to produce the Half Year Review and Progress Report to Government Office.

The Assembly **noted** the details of the report.

7. **Climate Change Action Plan**

The Assembly received a report which sought their endorsement of the Climate Change Action Plan for the Region, prior to its publication and formal launch.

Members **agreed** to:

a) To endorse the Climate Change Action Plan (attached as Appendix 1 to the report;)

and

b) Note the proposal for a Regional Climate Change Panel to oversee delivery of the Action Plan.

8. **Regional Economic Strategy**

The Assembly received a report where endorsement was sought of the revised West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES).

The Assembly was advised that the review of the WMES was launched in 2006 by Advantage West Midlands, working with the West Midlands Regional Assembly. The review process had comprised five main phases:

- Building the evidence base (March to July 2006)
- Developing policy choices (August to October 2006)
- Consulting on policy choices (November 2006 to February 2007)
- Consulting on the full draft strategy (May to July 2007)
- Launch of the revised WMES (December 2007)

The review process had included two substantial periods of consultation, involving 12 major public consultation events across the region, numerous smaller meetings with partners and stakeholders and approaching 400 written consultation responses.

Some Members raised their concerns regarding sub-regional strategies being vague in the Strategy and were advised that there would be a Delivery Framework in place and consultation with the region would continue.

The Assembly **endorsed** the revised WMES.

9. Regional Spatial Strategy

The Assembly received a report which provided them with an update on the current progress in bringing forward the revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and informed of the work that had been undertaken to develop the Phase Two Preferred Option Submission to the Secretary of State and the development of the Phase Three Draft Project Plan.

The Chairman and Vice Chairs of the Planning Partnership who were present at the meeting requested that their thanks and gratitude be recorded to all Local Authority Members, The Business Council and the Other Stakeholder Group for their tireless efforts and contributions in achieving the endorsement reached across the region at the Regional Planning Partnership Meeting held on 22 October 2007.

Members were reminded that as the Regional Planning Partnership was the Regional Planning Body for the Regional Assembly it had delegated authority from the Assembly to endorse planning issues. A consultation period from January through to March 2008 would be held and Members were encouraged to use this time inputting any outstanding concerns or comments.

The Assembly **noted** the contents of the report.

10. Scrutiny and Strategic Review Annual Plan 2007/08

The Assembly were presented with the proposed 2007/8 Annual Plan which had commenced in September 2007 for approval (attached as an appendix to the report).

The Assembly **endorsed** the 2007/8 Annual Plan.

11. Sub National Review Update

The Assembly received an update report on the steps being taken to implement the SNR in the region.

The Assembly:

- a) **Noted** the Government's expectation that Regional Assemblies would continue to fulfill important functions until legislation implementing the SNR was enacted.
- b) **Noted** that discussions at officer level were continuing as outlined in the appended report with regard to the

roadmap about the transfer of functions from the Assembly to the RDA.

The Chairman assured the Assembly that the value of partnership working would continue to be reinforced.

12. Advantage West Midlands Annual Report

Members received a verbal report from John Edwards, Chief Executive of Advantage West Midlands in which he highlighted some of the RDA's achievements over the last 12 months which included:

- 14,000 newly employed
- 3,000 receiving help to go back to work
- 2,000 new businesses had been created in the region
- Museum opened at Cosford and work continues with the Ministry of Defence regarding further future use of Cosford
- The first Bank of India branch opened in the West Midlands
- After the closure of Longbridge employment had been found for many ex workers which highlighted the strength of the sub regions.

AWM had achieved 4 stars in their Independent Assessment which echoed the strength of partnership throughout the region.

Finally, John advised the Assembly that he would be retiring in March 2008 and that this would be his last attendance at a meeting of the Assembly. He thanked the Assembly for their support over the eight years he had been in post.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Assembly, thanked John for all his invaluable contributions to the Assembly and its Partnerships and wished him well in his retirement.

Members **noted** the content of the verbal update.

13. The Future of Regional Scrutiny

The Assembly **agreed** that, due to other meetings taking place after the Assembly and due to time constraints, this focussed discussion item would be deferred to a later date to give the topic the valued time it needed.

FOR INFORMATION

14. Report of the Director of Policy – Headline Issues for West Midlands Regional Assembly

The Assembly were updated on key activities undertaken by the Secretariat on behalf of the Assembly and Partnerships over the last quarter.

The Assembly **considered** the report and **noted** the progress made.

15. Dates of Future meetings:

- **16 January 2008 – Austin Court, Birmingham**
- **23 April 2008**
- **9 July 2008 - Annual Meeting**

**WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETING
Held on 24 October 2007 at Wolverhampton Science Park**

Attendance:

Councillor David S Smith – Chairman, Lichfield DC

Local Authority Members:

Cllrs: A Bore (Birmingham), K Taylor (Coventry), A Matchett (Coventry) D Sparks (Dudley), K Meeson (Solihull), S Eling (Sandwell), P Bilson (Wolverhampton), T Singh* (Wolverhampton), T James (Herefordshire), L Wanger* (Stoke-on-Trent), P Shotton* (Stoke-on-Trent), A Eade (Telford & Wrekin), K Austin (Telford & Wrekin), M Pate (Shropshire), P Phillips (Shropshire), D Lloyd (Oswestry) T Dix (Staffordshire), R Roberts (Staffordshire), A Fox (East Staffordshire), B Edwards (South Staffordshire) P Atkins (Staffordshire) S Warren (Rugby), C Saint (Stratford-on-Avon), E Tucker (Worcestershire), R Madden* (Malvern Hills) I Fletcher* (Telford & Wrekin) J Jones (Shrewsbury & Atcham) and P Middlebrough (Wychavon)

Business Sector Members:

M Cherry, G Minshull, S Sahota, D Walsh*, B Summers, R Trotman, J Yardley R Stone and D Craig.

Other Stakeholder Group Members:

G Kells, R McKenzie, P Shirley, Revd J hall, C Welch, E Newman, R Evans, M Lewison, S Palmer and Y Lovelock

In attendance:

Cllr R Lawrence (Wolverhampton), R Hutchings (AWM), M Lavery (AWM), J Edwards (AWM), N Paul (AWM), K Yeomans (AWM), T Gebbels (AWM), M Pearce (AWM) and J Baker (Environment Agency)

Apologies:

Local Authority Members:

Cllrs P Tilsley (Birmingham), M Whitby (Birmingham), J Mutton (Coventry), M Patrick (North Shropshire), I Lloyd (Nuneaton & Bedworth), P Phillips (Shropshire), N Davies (Solihull), H Hendry (Solihull), R Hyde (Stratford-on-Avon), J O'Hare (Walsall), G Lord (Worcestershire) and P Pinfield (Worcestershire)

Business Sector Members:

S Faulkner, B Williams, M Clarke, P Singh and M Hill

Other Stakeholder Group Members:

V Broom and R Bubb

*Alternate Members