

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Board of Directors – 24 September 2008

**Draft Decision Notes of the Regional Assembly Board of Directors
Meeting held on 18 June 2008**

Chairman: Cllr David S Smith

Present: Cllr Paul Tilsley, Dr Sarindar Singh Sahota, Elizabeth Newman, Roger McKenzie, Cllr Terry Dix, Cllr Steve Eling, Cllr Serena Croad, Cllr Rex Roberts, Cllr Chris Saint, Roger Stone, Frances Beatty, Cllr Roger Phillips, Cllr Jo Jones, Cllr Ken Taylor

In attendance: Olwen Dutton(WMRA), Gemma Poxon (WMRA), Sharon Philips (WMLGA), Rose Poulter (WMRA).

It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman opened the meeting by

1. Apologies for non attendance:

The following apologies were noted: Cllr Keith Austin, Rev John Hall, Cllr Bob Badham, Cllr Sir Albert Bore, Cllr Roger Evans, Barrie Williams.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Notes of Meetings

3a) Draft Decision Notes of the Board of Directors Meeting held on 12 March 2008 and Matters arising

It was **agreed** that the notes were an accurate record and there were no matters arising.

3b) Draft Decision Notes of the Special Board of Directors Meeting held on 15 May 2008

It was **agreed** that the notes were an accurate record and there were no matters arising.

4. **WMRA 07/08 Financial Statements**

The Board received the draft 2007-08 financial statements of the Regional Assembly from Clement Keys the appointed external auditors for 2007/08.

Members were reminded that ERN expenditure is shown in the statements but is entirely separate. Monies have been identified for Regional Spatial Strategy work.

It was **agreed**:

The Board **approved** the Financial Statements and the reappointment of Clement Keys for 2008-09.

The Board **noted** the Letter of Comment.

The Board **agreed** the Letter of Representation and it was signed by the Chairman.

5. **Company Secretary's Report**

The Board received a report from the Chief Executive which provided an update on Members Declarations of Interest, Internal Audit Findings and the LGA 2008 Conference.

Roger Stone was concerned about the number of people that had not returned a declaration of interest form and the lack of quoracy at partnership meetings. He also commended the internal audit procedures in place and questioned whether this will continue next year?

Sharon Philips informed members that there will be an audit during 09-10, it will be owned by the WMLGA, any work under the audit will be taken in to consideration for the Assembly.

The Chair echoed Roger Stone's views but responded that some members may not be councillors anymore and alternates may not think it is a priority.

It was **agreed**:

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

6. **Sub National Review Consultation Response**

The Board received a report from the Chief Executive which provided members with a draft Regional Response to the SNR consultation document and also the proposed ERN response to the consultation.

The Board were reminded that the government were consulting on its proposed arrangements until 20th June 2008. The West Midlands had established a Strategic Transition Group which had

co-ordinated the regional response.

Roger McKenzie thanked Rose Poulter for co-ordinating everyone's views and informed members that the TUC had responded to the consultation and he would circulate it to the Board. Roger emphasised the need to not let preconceptions about the way things are now affect future working. It is important that the OSG and Business representatives are included in the decision making process.

Cllr Roger Philips commented that there are also key players within the region such as the Highways Agency that needed to be involved in the new arrangements.

Dr Sarindar Singh Sahota commented that it was difficult to see how we can move forward if we don't know what it will look like in the future. AWM is not a representative of the Business Community.

It looks although WMBC and OSG have already been pushed out. There does need to be key players involved by Government need to realise this includes the Business Council and OSG.

Cllr Roger Phillips stated that SNR was the governments programme and it is their timetable the regional response notes that the democratic deficit needs addressing and flexibility is needed.

Olwen Dutton advised the Board that the response is a high level statement but in endorsing the response it will say those structures and arrangement need to be established.

It was agreed:

The Board **endorsed** the draft Regional Response to the SNR consultation.

The Board also **endorsed** the ERN response to the SNR consultation.

7. **Regional Spatial Strategy Revision Phase 3**

The Board received a report on the position regarding the RSS Phase Three Revision timetable which still needs to be agreed with Government. The main issues raised were the timetable, overlap between Phase 2 and Phase 3, best use of resources and budget implications.

The Board were advised that a strong response was made to GOWM following the last Board meeting on 15th May 2008.

Cllr Rex Roberts informed the group that the Regional Planning Executive takes this seriously and recommends that the Phase 3 launch take place following the EiP.

The Board asked that the Regional Minister was informed of this situation and the risks involved and the impact on communities. Elizabeth Newman stated that OSG members are supportive of the delay and would write accordingly

It was **agreed**:

Action: A response outlining the Boards comments and reiterating the arguments set out in the report will be sent to GOWM and copied to the Regional Minister.

The Board **noted** the report and **endorsed** the proposed timetable for the RSS Phase 3 Revision.

8. Policy Report of the Chief Executive – Headline issues for the West Midlands Regional Assembly

The Board received a report on key issues undertaken by the Secretariat on behalf of the Board and Assembly Partnerships over the last quarter.

The Board were informed that Michael Dalton from Royal Mail will be attending the afternoon session of the AGM 9th July 2008 to discuss Post Office closures.

Cllr Roger Phillips commented that rural proofing has been forgotten and if the region is committed to Equalities and Diversity then rurality should also be taken in to consideration.

The Chair stated that the work on Climate change is supported by the Assembly and should also cover existing housing stock.

Roger Stone raised concerns regarding the scientific evidence to back up the severity of the situation.

Cllr Dix commented that something is happening, even if we are not sure what exactly.

It was **agreed**:

Action: The Board proposed a letter to go to Trudi Elliott Regional Director at GOWM outlining these points and asking that it is raised at the Economic Inclusion Panel.

The Board **noted** the report

It was **agreed** the Gypsy and Traveller consultation DVD would be made available to Members.

9. Draft Agenda for the full Assembly meeting -9 July 2008

The Board **noted** the agenda

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business called

11. Date of the Next Board Meeting

Provisionally -24th September 2008 –Regional Partnership Centre

Chairman