

**WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
Board of Directors – 24 September 2008**

Single Integrated Regional Strategy (SIRS)

SIRS – Scoping and Shaping

Chief Executives Task Force 3 September 2008
AWM – CMT 10 September 2008
Executive Transition Group 15 September 2008
AWM Board 24 September 2008
Strategic Transition Group 30 September 2008
Regional Forum of Leaders 1 October 2008

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the above groups on the progress made to date in scoping and shaping the Single Integrated Regional Strategy (SIRS).

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To note progress and provide strategic steer.

3. Government Response/Guidance

- 3.1 Government response to the SNR consultation exercise is expected by the end of September. Guidance on SIRS and other related issues will be published at the same time as the draft Bill. In respect to the guidance notes, both RDAs and Assemblies have requested that there should be scope for regional flexibility in terms of approach and content but recognise the need for a broadly consistent approach across regions.
- 3.2 This region in common with other regions has taken the view that whilst we want to make progress on the scoping and shaping of the SIRS we do not want to do work which would subsequently be out of kilter with the Guidance on Regional Strategies. With that proviso progress has been made as follows: -

4. Progress

- 4.1 The following headings are used to describe the progress being made to scope and shape the SIRS.

Communiqué
First Cut – Scope and Shape – Options
Visioning & Scenario Planning
Evidence Base
Project Plan

5. Communiqué

- 5.1 Regional and local partners with an interest in SNR and SIRS are on 'hold' as they await the Government Response/Guidance. It will be important that when the Government Response/Guidance comes out (eta end of September) those leading the SNR Transition phase in the region are ready to communicate and work with partners and stakeholders to progress the SNR agenda and develop thinking on the scope and shape of the SIRS.

- 5.2 It is proposed that a communiqué is prepared for STG to be emailed to partners and put on partner websites. This would reaffirm – the rationale behind SNR and SIRS, explain the role of STG and its members, summarise the work programme and encourage interested parties to contact the SNR Transition Team. In addition it is proposed that the following principles are promoted as a sign of intent to take a serious and comprehensive approach to the development of SIRS. The following are suggested: -

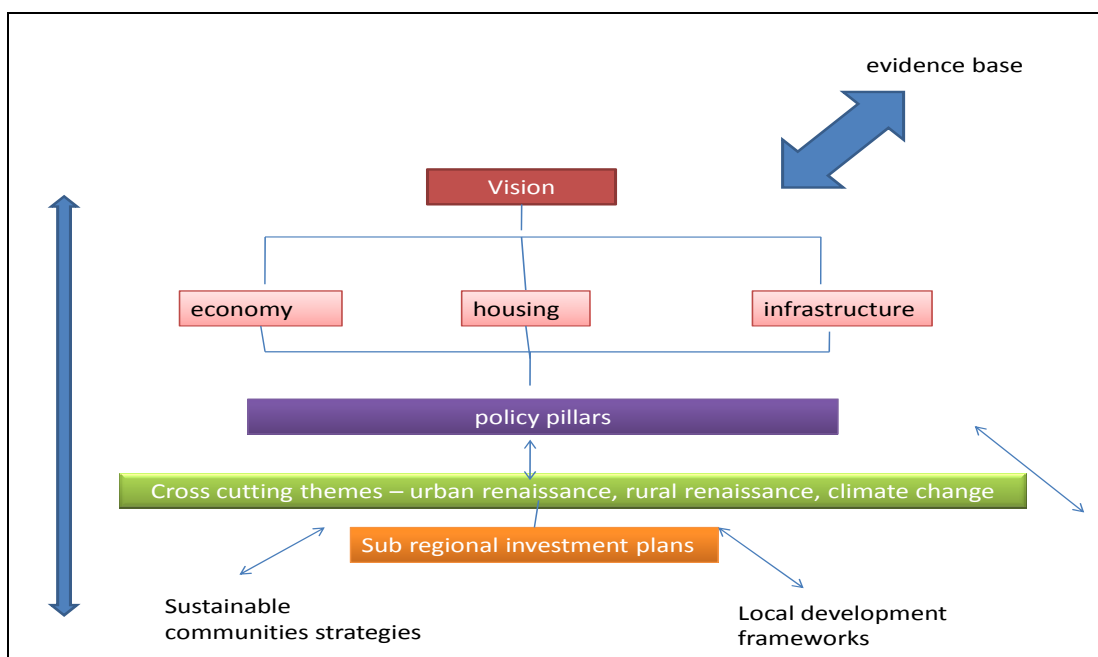
- The SIRS will be developed in an open, inclusive and transparent manner.
- The objectives of sustainable economic development and commitment to raise the trend rate of economic growth will underpin and be integrated throughout the process of developing the SIRS.
- The process will be initiated with the production of a draft project plan for consultation setting out:- proposed policy areas to be included, the process to be used to develop the SIRS, opportunities to input, timescales, milestones and key stages etc.
- The development of a robust regional evidence base which will inform policy development.
- Policy development will inform the building of the evidence base.
- Work towards a SIRS which is owned by regional and local partners.
- Endeavour to keep all documents accessible – 'easy to understand' and succinct - 'said in a clear and short way; expressing what needs to be said without unnecessary words'.

6. First Cut – Scope and Shape

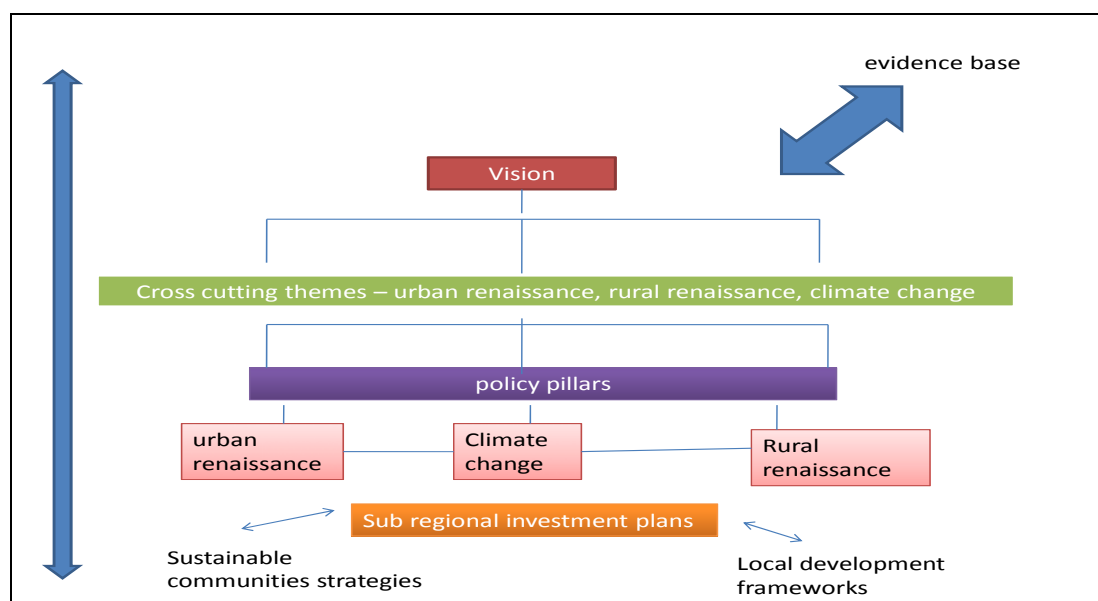
6.1 The AWM and Assembly officer's brain storm suggest that at the very highest level SIRS will encompass: -

High Level Vision & Ambition Strategic Objectives
Policy Pillars/Objectives Targets
Regional & Sub-Regional Implementation/Delivery/Investment Plans

6.2 Below are 2 diagrams which reflect current options for scoping and shaping: -



Or



7. Visioning & Scenario Planning

- 7.1 ETG partners have agreed the value of using scenario planning to support the development of the SIRS by elucidating separately how the key drivers, enablers and constraints on the region may interact, and highlighting the key areas for policy consideration. Further thinking is required to develop this outline proposal for visioning and scenario development into a clear plan. It is anticipated that this will commence early 2009.

8. Regional Evidence Base

- 8.1 The evidence base for the SIRS has to be policy led. Policy will need to be informed by the evidence (evidence driven), but the evidence will also need to be policy driven in an iterative process that doesn't put one above the other.
- 8.2 Agreed the following as a starting point to develop a work: -
- A full understanding of what the current evidence base is able to tell us;
 - Where there are key points of tension (of data or interpretation) between the current strategies' evidence bases;
 - Establish which evidence is still sufficiently "fresh" to proceed to the new arrangements;
 - In preparation for 'visioning & scenario planning' a set of briefings with key messages from the current evidence base should be prepared for early 2009 with a specimen available for September. Each to cover – what evidence is available, what are the key messages and where are the gaps in the evidence.

9. Project Plan

- 9.1 The the concept of having a project plan for the development of the SIRS has previously been discussed and agreed. These initial discussions identified that as a minimum the Project Plan will set need to include: -
- How the process of developing the SIRS will be carried out including a timetable
 - That the objectives of sustainable economic development and commitment to raise the trend rate of economic growth will underpin and be integrated throughout the process of developing the SIRS.
 - The issues to be included in the SIRS
 - How scenario planning will be used to establish the vision and strategic objectives
 - Identification of relevant research and evidence
 - Inputs and influences of existing regional strategies
 - Funding streams to deliver the SIRS
 - How the SIRS will deliver regional ambitions and national Government priorities
 - A consultation schedule
 - The resource and capacity needed to develop the SIRS

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