

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
Board of Directors – 24 September 2008

Notes - Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region

**Notes of the Annual General Meeting of the Growth & Prosperity Board
Wednesday 4th June 2008 at 10.30 - 12.30, Birmingham Council House, Committee
Rooms 3- 4, Birmingham.**

Present: Cllr Mike Whitby (Chairman), Cllr Ken Taylor (Coventry), Cllr Bill Thomas (Sandwell), Cllr John O'Hare (Walsall), Cllr Ken Meeson (Solihull), Cllr Barry Findlay (for Cllr Neville Patten) (Wolverhampton), Cllr David Caunt (Dudley), Cllr David Smith (WMRA), Glyn Pitchford (Business Representative), Mike Beasley (LSC), Andrew Sparke (Dudley), Stephen Hughes (Birmingham), Peter Wall (Business alternate), Mark Rogers (Solihull), James Watkins (Business), Richard Carr (Wolverhampton) [for part of the meeting], Paul Sheehan (Walsall), Iain Neville (for Mick Laverty) (AWM), Stella Manzie (Coventry), John Sutton (For Allison Fraser), Steve Wellings (Telford & Wrekin), Simon Murphy (City Region Project Director), Paul Toomer (City Region/JCP), John Hunter (City Region Admin).

20/08 Apologies for absence

Cllr Andrew Eade (Telford & Wrekin), Cllr Eric Carter (Telford & Wrekin), Allison Fraser (Sandwell), Nick Paul (AWM), Jerry Blackett (Chamber), Mark Pearce (AWM), Mike Laverty (AWM), David Cragg (LSC), Olwen Dutton (WMRA), Lisa Hamilton (City Region Policy).

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Barry Findlay to the meeting.

21/08 Item 2 - Notes from AGM 6th June 2007.

Notes were received and noted.

22/08 Item 3 – Notes from meeting held on 9th April 2008

Notes were received and noted.

23/08 Item 4 – Matters Arising

Glyn Pitchford requested, regarding Item 12/08, that the Board give some priority to arranging a further meeting with Liam Byrne.

Action

Noted

Noted

Glyn Pitchford requested clarification on Item 16/08 - work being done on the SNR. **Simon Murphy** suggested this item would be addressed at Item 7 on the current agenda.

24/08 Item 5 – Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Nominations for Chairman were invited. Cllr David Smith nominated Cllr Whitby (Leader of Birmingham City Council), seconded by Glyn Pitchford. This was accepted and Cllr Whitby was appointed.

**Cllr Whitby
appointed
Chairman**

The Chairman called for nominations for the Vice Chair. Cllr Whitby nominated Cllr David Smith (Chairman of the WMRA), seconded by Cllr Ken Taylor This was accepted and Cllr Smith was appointed.

**Cllr Smith
appointed Vice
Chairman**

25/08 Item 6 – City Region Annual Review

Simon Murphy presented this report which was a review of the work done by the City Region since the last AGM. He informed the Board of the changing nature of the political scene and that the LSC and the Assembly were both scheduled to cease to exist by 2010.

It was agreed that a Press Release is issued on the appointments of the new Chairman and Vice Chairman, also highlighting the achievements of the City Region City Strategy

**Agreed press
release to be
produced.**

Comments on this report :-

Mike Beasley (LSC) said they were in discussions with Government over the trialing of new Integrated Employment and Skills scheme in the region.

Following a suggestion from **Glyn Pitchford** it was agreed that Innovation be added to the Business Support/Enterprise theme

A background note would be prepared for **Glyn Pitchford** on the background to 11.2 and the decision to remain a voluntary partnership whilst keeping future governance under periodic review.

The launch of the website indicated in 13.3 would be delayed – this had been caused by staffing constraints.

The Chairman commented that the implementation of the SNR would have implications for the City Region's purpose and governance. This will need to be considered by the Board and appropriate action taken. We all need to be honest and prepared to work with each other and he felt this meeting showed the willingness to do this. **Cllr Findlay** and other Leaders all supported the Chairman's comments. **Peter Wall** said the Business community were frustrated by that lack of achievement over the last two years, but welcomed the Chairman's comments, and is glad there is a drive to make something happen. **Mike Beasley** endorsed these comments.

Simon Murphy

26/08 Item 7 – City Region Future Priorities

Stephen Hughes introduced this item explaining that Jerry

Blackett had been scheduled to present this item but had been unable to do so due to a conflicting appointment. The presentation had arisen out of discussions at the Steering Group on 21st May. At that meeting a lively discussion had addressed what sort of City Region strategic options would have the greatest impact and added value, and how their feasibility could be assessed. In the absence of Jerry Blakett, Simon Murphy had been asked to make the presentation.

Simon Murphy delivered the presentation. He informed the Board that key issues would come back to the Board on the 10th September with a view to these items being discussed in depth **at the Board Away day currently proposed for 10th – 11th October.**

The Chairman commented he was keen to see a strong influence from Business on this item. This was a vital opportunity for the Public and Private sectors to work well together.

Glyn Pitchford said Business was very excited by this project and the methodology of applying Principles to Projects to see what a suitable City region project was.

Ken Meeson commented that possibly Low Levels of Enterprise as indicated by the SEA SWOT analysis may well be a good theme to be undertaken.

Ken Taylor emphasized the need to consider Culture and Climate Change themes.

Paul Sheehan (lead CEX on Culture) informed the meeting a report on Culture would be coming to the next meeting of the Board.

Steve Wellings (lead CEX on Climate Change) said a report had gone to the Steering Group recently and more work was currently being done on this and would be brought back to the Board in due course.

The Chairman said we need to consider Universities as a strength and engage with them more.

Bill Thomas said that medical science is a major strength in this region. We have many Centres of Excellence. There is a very strong Health Economy that we should capitalize on. The Health sector is the 2nd biggest employer in this region. We should do some research on this and how we can benefit from it.

David Smith conveyed his concern about the lack of bricks being laid in the region due to planning holdups, as well as

Members to note proposed date of Board Away Day 10th – 11th October.

other impacts from the SNR.

Other Comments:-

- We should build on the manufacturing strengths we have with TATA, LDV and Science R&D sectors, and ensure we keep them in this region.
- The public and Private sector need to work together
- We can create a renaissance in this region.

The Chairman said he felt this Presentation had highlighted how we could develop the City Region. We need to focus on City Region outcomes. The City Region is a very powerful forum. The Public and Private Sectors can work together on this.

Ken Taylor agreed with the Chairman and stressed that we need to keep working together especially in the light of the developing SNR background. We should drive our agenda forward to ensure we can work well with AWM.

The Board agreed to accept the outcomes suggested in the presentation:

- **To support the work necessary to complete the strategic options analysis, following the publication of the SEA.**
- **To give an early steer as to possible priority opportunities for examination.**
- **To make this work a priority for the team that will input Board members views.**

Agree to undertake this work

27/08 Item 8 – City Region Outturn 2007/2008

The Board received and accepted the City Region Budget Outturn during the financial year 2007/2008.

The Board agreed that the £71,865 under-spend on the 2007/08 budget be used to establish a contingency reserve for the 2008/09 budget.

Agreed

28/08 Item 9 - AOB

Peter Wall informed the Board that the Index Voucher Scheme had been a success and was now being rolled out across the UK.

Glyn Pitchford said the Business Community were hoping to bring 3 or 4 new projects back to the Board for consideration soon.

The Chairman congratulated **Stella Manzie** on her new appointment and wished her all future success on behalf of the Board. He thanked her for her contribution and her robust and forthright manner which had been very refreshing. The region would be sorry to see her go and she would be missed.

29/08 Item 10 - Date of next meeting

Wednesday 23rd July 2008 – 11.00 – 12.30 – Council House
Rooms 3&4

Date of next AGM - Wednesday 3rd June 2009 - 10.30 – 12
noon Rooms 3 & 4, The Council House, Birmingham

The meeting closed at 11.30