

Agenda Item No. 8

**WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
Board of Directors – 8 December 2006**

**Regional Planning Partnership: 16 November 2006 –
Ratification of decisions**

Report of the Chief Executive and Company Secretary

1. Purpose

To seek the ratification of all the decisions of the meeting of the Regional Planning Partnership held on Thursday 16 November 2006.

2. Recommendation

The Board is recommended to ratify all the decisions of the Regional Planning Partnership meeting held on Thursday 16 November 2006.

3. Report Detail

- 3.1 The Regional Partnership met on Thursday 16 September 2006. After its commencement, the meeting was found to be inquorate.
- 3.2 A report from the Company Secretary which address the rules concerning quorum at meetings is being considered under Agenda Item No. 7
- 3.3 The Board is asked to ratify the decisions of the Planning Partnership. A copy of the draft notes are attached as an appendix to the report.
- 3.4 The Assembly Secretariat is in discussions to resolve administrative matters which may lead to Planning Partnership members being registered as they arrive, in a similar manner to Full Assembly meetings, rather than relying on the attendance book.

**Olwen Dutton
Chief Executive**

Appendix 1

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2006

Present: Cllr Rex Roberts OBE (Chairman of the Partnership)

Local Authority Members: Cllr Joyce Allaway (Shropshire), Cllr Sue Askin (Worcestershire), Cllr Bob Badham MBE (Vice-Chair) Sandwell MBC, Cllr Linda Bigham (Coventry), Cllr Alan Boad (Warwick), Cllr Neil Campbell (Rugby), Cllr Jack Cookson (Redditch), Cllr Bob Crowther (for Cllr Tamlin) (Warwick), Cllr Alwyn Davies (Worcestershire), Cllr Peter Douglas Osborn (Birmingham), Cllr Brian Douglas-Maul (Walsall), Cllr Jill Dyer (Bromsgrove DC), Cllr Veronica Fletcher (Borough of Telford and Wrekin), Cllr Albert Griffiths (Walsall), Cllr Anne Hingley (Wyre Forest), Cllr Mrs Jo Jones (Shrewsbury and Atcham), Cllr Mick Jones (Warwickshire), Cllr Ignatius Kelly (South Staffordshire), Cllr Mrs Heather Kidd (South Shropshire), Cllr Nigel Knowles (Worcestershire), Cllr Les Kyles (Solihull), Cllr Ian Lloyd (Nuneaton and Bedworth) Cllr Paul Middleborough (Wychavon), Cllr Sandra O'Brien (Birmingham), Cllr Mrs Judy Pearce (Wychavon), Cllr Roger Phillips (Chair of the Regional Transport Partnership), Cllr Glenda Powell (Herefordshire), Cllr Neil Roberts (Lichfield), Cllr Robert Rowden (Worcester City), Cllr Madge Shingleton (Bridgnorth DC), Cllr Roger Smith (Staffordshire), Cllr Bob Stevens (Warwickshire), Cllr Wendy Thompson (Wolverhampton) and Cllr John Windmill (Solihull).

Business Sector Members: Denise Craig (for Roger Culcheth), Fraser Mitchell, Roger Stone (Vice-Chairman) and Brian Summers.

Other Stakeholder Members: Peter Langley (CPRE – for Gerald Kells).

In attendance:

From West Midlands Regional Assembly Secretariat:

Rose Poulter, Alex Angus, Daryl Davies, Kate Docherty, Steve Forrest, Emma Kiteley, Danny Lamb, Stefan Preuss, Tanya Rountree, David Thew and Tim Williams.

Stephanie Baxter (North Warwickshire), Bruce Braithwaite (Waste – Policy Lead), Dave Carter (Prosperity for All – Policy Lead), Peter Davenport (Transport – Policy Lead), Sandra Ford (East Staffordshire), Simon Hanley (Barton Williams), Stephen Hill (Birmingham International Airport Ltd), Craig Jordan (Lichfield), Tony Lovett (Staffordshire), Alan Perkins (Stafford), Tim Plagerson (RPS), Malcolm Price (Shrewsbury and Atcham), James Russell (Chair of RAG/Coventry), John Sidebotham (CENTRO), John Ware (Rugby), Paul Watson (Solihull), Ada Wells (Communities for the Future – Policy Lead), Tim Wright (Dudley), Alex Yendol (Stafford),

Apologies:

Cllr M Angell (Malvern Hills), Cllr P Ansell (Cannock Chase), Cllr D Arrowsmith (Coventry), Cllr D Booth (Warwickshire), R Culcheth (WMBC), Cllr P J Edwards, (Herefordshire), Cllr J Overall (Shropshire), S Faulkner (WMBC), Cllr A Fox (East Staffordshire), R Heard (Birmingham International Airport Ltd), Cllr T Hunt, (Herefordshire), Cllr R Irving (Stoke on Trent), G Kells (CPRE – OSG), Cllr J McNicholas (Coventry), N Pountney (WMBC), Cllr B Powell (North Warwickshire), Cllr P Shotton (Stoke on Trent), Cllr P Smith (Birmingham) and Cllr C Wimbush (East Staffordshire).

Cllr Roberts (Chairman of the Partnership) welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded members of its chief purpose – to approve the Spatial Options document for consultation.

1. Draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 September 2006 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2006 were **agreed** as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

None.

3. Regional Spatial Strategy - Phase Two Regional Spatial Strategy - Phase Two

The Partnership considered three reports relating to the Regional Spatial Strategy - Phase Two Revision and received a presentation from James Russell (Chair of the Regional Advisory Group (RAG)) which referenced the key points made in the accompanying reports:

- i) Phase Two Revision: Regional Spatial Strategy Spatial Options
- ii) Sustainability Appraisal
- iii) Consultation and Engagement

In addition, the following pages were circulated (and were available via the Assembly's website):

Table Two: Potential Distribution of New Dwellings – Annual Build Rates (gross) 2001-2026 *[To replace page 25 in the Working Draft Phase Two Options document]*

Waste Tonnes to 2026 based on the Housing Options *[To replace pages 63 and 64 in the Working Draft Phase Two Options document]*

Appendix One: Table Two: Housing Demand (2001 – 2026) using 2003-based Sub-National Household Projections *[this is an additional paper at the*

end of the working draft Phase Two Options document]

A summary of the reports is set out below together with the comments of members and officers:-

(a) **Phase Two Revision: Regional Spatial Strategy Spatial Options**

A report presenting the Spatial Options to the Partnership for approval for consultation was considered.

Following publication of the final Project Plan in March 2006, the next stage required by Government guidance was to develop Spatial Options for public consultation. Following consultation, a Preferred Option would be drafted for submission to the Secretary of State, anticipated to be December 2007.

This paper set out the issues and invited comment from Members including key points such as the range of housing figures to be developed for consultation.

At the Regional Planning Partnership on 28 July and 28 September the headline agreements were set out for Members along with the approval timetable.

The Spatial Options must cover the matters set out in the Project Plan and are grouped into four key sections, housing, employment including centres, offices and casinos, waste and transport. There are many interrelationships between them and these are signposted within the document.

Ultimately, the Preferred Option developed and submitted to Government would build on the results of the Spatial Options consultation and further technical work. At this stage, it was not appropriate to be specific about the form that this might take.

The Spatial Options is a consultation document to open up issues for debate and to assist in shaping the Preferred Option. It was important to note that the Spatial Options do not in themselves set out or establish policy.

As reported to the Regional Planning Partnership in July 2006 three Options were set out for levels of housing growth. Members agreed these levels to be:

- **Option 1:** 381,000 dwellings gross 2001 – 2026
- **Option 2:** 500,000 dwellings gross 2001 - 2026
- **Option 3:** 576,000 dwellings gross 2001 - 2026

Recently the Metropolitan authorities “refreshed” the element of urban capacity studies on which the Section 4(4) advice was based. The decision of the RSS Strategic Management Steering Group was that these revised figures should be incorporated into the Spatial Options, subject to political endorsement. Consequently, the overall figures for the three housing options were now:

- **Option 1:** 381,000 dwellings gross 2001 – 2026
- **Option 2:** 491,200 dwellings gross 2001 – 2026
- **Option 3:** 575,000 dwellings gross 2001 – 2026

A range of technical work had already been completed to support the Phase Two revision process and further work was ongoing - this included a study of the broad infrastructure implications of the housing options. WMRA was working with regional partners including the Environment Agency, Highways Agency and Strategic Health Authority.

The RSS Reference Groups (Equality and Diversity, Health, Environment, Business, Transport, Culture, Housing and Rural-Urban linkages) met during September 2006 and their comments had fed into the drafting of the Spatial Options. These comments would be made available on the WMRA website.

The Partnership was recommended to consider and approve the Spatial Options for consultation on the 8th January 2007 – 5th March 2007.

During discussion, the following points were made:

- Peter Langley (OSG) offered his thanks to the members and officers who had helped develop the document and welcomed the production of the summary documentation. He expressed some concern about the level of technical detail and had hoped that more account would have been taken of the Sustainability Appraisal. In responding, James Russell recognised the concerns about the technical detail, although pointed out this was a statutory requirement. He expected that the key issues would be drawn out during the consultation process.
- Cllr Knowles (Worcestershire) expressed strong concerns regarding the need to secure investment in the transport infrastructure and requested that a strong message be set through this Partnership. Cllr Philips (Chair of the Transport Partnership) shared the concerns and the need to assess the impact of additional housing on the existing infrastructure.
- Cllr Fletcher (Borough of Telford and Wrekin) challenged the methodology of the immigration assumption believing that this undermined the principle of urban renaissance.
- Fraser Mitchell (WMBC) questioned the use of the 2003 Population figures as he believed the 2004 figures were available. In responding Ada Wells (Communities for the Future – Policy Lead) advised that the 2004 population projections were available the household projections were not. (Significant increase).
- Neil Campbell (Rugby) referred to a number of inconsistencies in the document regarding the position of Rugby and did not feel that this should be used for consultation until these had been resolved. In responding Rose Poulter indicated that the section 4 (4) advice had informed the document. James Russell suggested that this be referred to the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Forum for further consideration.

- Cllr Douglas Osborn (Birmingham) advised the Partnership that Birmingham City Council had commissioned Manchester University to undertake research to test the robustness of the Government's household projection figures.
- Several members expressed concerns regarding Option 3 housing figures. Officers reminded the Partnership that Government expected the capacity of districts and boroughs to deliver and therefore that Option 3 must be considered and variation through the Preferred Option supported by strongly evidenced arguments. This view was supported by David Marr (GOWM).

The Partnership **approved** the Spatial Options as the basis for consultation commencing on 8 January 2007 ending 5th March 2007

(b) **Sustainability Appraisal**

A report informing the Partnership of the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Phase Two Revision West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) Spatial Options was considered.

Sustainability Appraisal is mandatory for Regional Spatial Strategies under Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchasing Act 2004. Therefore, an SA had been undertaken as part of the Phase Two Revision of the WMRSS and in line with official guidance provided by ODPM and was designed to meet the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (or SEA) Directive.

It was carried out by URSUS Consulting Ltd, on behalf of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. To assist, a Sustainability Appraisal Steering Group was established and chaired by SWM Chair, Bernard Doyle.

A Scoping Report, produced and consulted on during February / March 2006, set out a SA Framework against which the Spatial Options had been assessed. The consultants were invited to Policy Leads Group meetings, and received iterative drafts of the Spatial Options to ensure they were involved throughout the development process.

The SA of Draft Spatial Options was approved by the Chair of the SA Steering Group and would be published on the WMRA website to accompany the Spatial Options document when it is issued for consultation on 8th January 2007.

The consultants had drawn attention to a number of limitations associated with the appraisal findings arising from the nature of the partial Revision. The consultants had advised that cumulative impacts could only really be determined at the 'Preferred Option' stage, when a final set of concrete proposals was put forward.

The consultants had identified some clear areas of compatibility or potential conflict between the Phase Two revision objectives and the SA objectives and these were outlined in paragraph 5 the report.

The Partnership was recommended to note the findings of the SA of the Phase Two Revision West Midlands RSS Spatial Options.

Cllr Neil Roberts (Lichfield) referred to paragraph 5.8 of the report entitled "Parking Standards" and suggested that the first sentence should read "Although restricting new parking provision in developments will help to reduce the growth of car use,". This was noted.

Brian Summers (WMBC) expressed strong concerns about the findings of the SA and did not feel able to support the recommendation as printed. He considered the word "note" implied an acceptance of the content and the Business sector members would vote against unless the recommendation was changed.

Rose Poulter reminded members that the SA was a statutory requirement and had been undertaken by external consultants and overseen by an independent steering group which had provided advice and ensured that representatives from outside the Assembly could input into the process from start to finish.

Cllr Kyles (Solihull) suggest that the Partnership could agree to receive the findings.

The Partnership **agreed** to receive and note the findings of the SA of the Phase Two Revision West Midlands RSS Spatial Options.

(c) **Consultation and Engagement**

A report setting the proposed Spatial Options consultation process was submitted.

At its July meeting the Partnership wished to ensure that appropriate consultation arrangements for the Spatial Options were in place, particularly given the highly sensitive nature of some of the issues being considered.

As part of the new planning system, the Regional Planning Body (RPB) was required to publish and keep under review a Statement of Public Participation (SPP). This set out what the RPB would do to ensure that all communities in the West Midlands were given the opportunity to play a positive role in helping to shape the future of the region. A statement setting out how the SPP was achieved was required as part of the Submission to the Secretary of State.

The proposed approaches for consultation and engagement were set out in detail in paragraph 5 of the report.

Rose Poulter advised the Partnership that the Assembly secretariat would lead on the pre-consultation awareness raising and be attending over 35 meetings regionally. She asked members to recognise that although resources centrally were limited, meetings would be supported at a sub-regional level through the provision of a range of briefing material, including powerpoint presentations, summary leaflets and RPB press releases. It was expected that the RPB would be represented through Policy Leads or

members of other officer groups.

Paul Middleborough (Wychavon) referred to the need to secure a consistent approach across the region or risk undermining the outcome. In responding, the Chairman recognised the concerns but appreciated the resources issues.

The Partnership was advised that the consultation process would be monitored to ensure the approach was working effectively.

The Partnership **noted** the report.

4. **Alignment of the Revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and the Review of the West Midlands Economic Strategy**

A progress report on the revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) and the review of the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) was considered.

Both the WMRSS and the WMES were currently under revision and review respectively. The report outlined the key issues which were being addressed and how the processes for the review and the revision were aligned.

The Partnership noted that the consultation on WMES policy options, now referred to as choices, had been launched at AWM's annual conference. As discussed earlier, the WMRSS options consultation would be launched on 8th January 2007.

A further report would be brought to the next meeting which would identify how policy within the two strategies was being developed and aligned.

The Partnership was recommended to note the report.

Tony Lovett (Staffordshire) referred to Table One in paragraph 5.11, the closing date for the WMRSS Options consultation should read **5th March** and **not** 30th March. This was noted.

Rose Poulter strongly encouraged members to participate in the WMES policy options consultation. Copies of the Policy Choices document would be available for members to collect at the conclusion of the meeting.

Cllr Badham (Vice-Chair) felt that the importance of securing the alignment of the two strategies should be reflected in the resolution.

The Partnership:

- (a) **noted** the report, and
- (b) **endorsed** the process and stressed the importance of aligning the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and the West Midlands Economic Strategy.

5. **West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase One Revision – Public Examination Update**

David Thew (Head of Planning) provided an update on the procedures leading up to the Public Examination of the Draft WMRSS Phase One

Revision – Black Country which would commence on 9 January 2007.

A Preliminary Meeting to discuss the administrative arrangements had included issues relating to a Preliminary List of Matters and Participants. Although no major issues were raised the Panel requested advice on the relationship between the Phase One submission and Phases Two and Three of the WMRSS Revision.

In response, a Briefing Note, based on the ‘protocol’ agreed by the Planning Partnership on 23 September 2005, advising how this inter-relationship should be managed had been submitted.

The List of Matters, currently being finalised by the Panel, was set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report. In each case, participants would be invited to submit statements to a range of detailed questions to facilitate discussion and debate. Accordingly, the Assembly would be preparing joint statements with the Black Country Consortium (who would also be acting on behalf of the individual Black Country planning authorities.)

In preparing these statements, the views expressed by other parties in their responses to the formal consultation would need to be considered. In some instances, recommendations as to how revised policies could potentially be improved had been made. The Panel had indicated it would be useful if the RPB could indicate in its submissions whether such policy adjustments would be supported. The Partnership was therefore recommended to delegate authority to the Chair and Vice-Chairs to approve the incorporation of such advice to the Panel if required.

Further details on the Examination are accessible through a link on the Regional Assembly’s website.

Roger Stone, supported by Brian Summers, reported that whilst the West Midlands Business Council supported the Black Country Study in general terms it opposed the transport elements in the Study due to its concerns over the lack of investment and commitment. Their participation in the Examination in Public was to allow their views to be taken into account.

The Partnership:

- (c) **noted** the report, and
- (d) **delegated** authority to the Chairman and Vice-Chairs of the Partnership, in consultation with the Head of Planning, to agree any further policy advice to the Panel prior to the Examination.

6. **Launch of the Regional Guide to the Delivery of Affordable Housing**

The Partnership was advised of the launch of the Guide to the Delivery of Affordable Housing which had been produced on behalf of the Regional Planning and Housing Partnerships.

The Regional Planning Partnership (RPP) and former Regional Housing Elected Members Forum had asked officers to develop a Regional Guide to

support to local authorities in their efforts to increase the current rates of delivery of Affordable Housing within the region. The process of producing the guide was set out in the report.

It had been formally launched at the Regional Housing Partnership on Thursday 16 November, with Regional Planning Partnership and officers involved in its development also invited.

The Partnership **endorsed** the Regional Guide to the Delivery of Affordable Housing.

7. **Regional Assembly Annual Conference On Climate Change**

Rose Poulter introduced a report providing feedback from last month's Annual Conference on Climate Change led by the Regional Assembly.

The Assembly's Annual Conference, held on 10 October 2006, focussed on the challenge of climate change and its implications regionally. The conference was attended by 280 representatives from the local authority, voluntary and business sectors and included keynote speeches by the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Ian Pearson, MP and Sir Martin Doughty, Chair of the newly formed national environmental body, Natural England.

The Conference acknowledged that although considerable work was being undertaken across the region to address the challenges of climate change it recognised the need for regional leadership.

Subsequently, a meeting between Chief Executives / Regional Assembly, GOWM and Advantage West Midlands, confirmed that there was clear support to work together to make climate change a regional priority and become an exemplar Region.

At its last meeting, the Assembly agreed to establish a Regional Climate Change Task Group that working with partners would evaluate existing activity and identify "gaps" in projects or initiatives which could make a significant difference, and develop an action plan.

The Assembly also approved the signing of the West Midlands Declaration on Climate Change ("Nottingham Declaration") - attached as Appendix A - as a public declaration that the Assembly acknowledges that climate change is occurring and will work to contribute to address this at a regional level.

Rose Poulter indicated that the Assembly's commitment in encouraging a reduction in carbon dioxide omissions was reflected in its strategies and policies including the Spatial Options document and forthcoming Phase 3 of the WMRSS revision.

Peter Langley welcomed the commitment being made and looked forward to it being reflected in early outcomes.

The Partnership:

(a) **noted** the key issues arising from the Annual Conference on Climate

Change

- (b) **endorsed** the Assembly's decision to sign the West Midlands Declaration on Climate Change ("Nottingham Declaration"); and
- (c) **noted** the establishment of a Regional Climate Change Task Group.

For Information items

8. Regional Policy Partnerships Activity

A report setting out the current status and activities of Regional Partnerships, established by or working closely with the West Midlands Regional Assembly was submitted.

The Partnership **noted** the report.

9. West Midlands Economic Strategy Review

Copies of the Policy Choices document referred to under agenda item no. 5 were available for members to collect at the conclusion of the meeting.

DRAFT