

Agenda Item No. 13

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Friday, 8th December 2006

CLIMATE CHANGE – NEXT STEPS

Report of the Chief Executive

1. Purpose of Report

To inform Board Members of steps being taken by the Regional Assembly in response to the climate change challenge following its recent Annual Conference.

2. Recommendations

That the Assembly Board note the steps being taken by the Regional Assembly following the Annual Conference on Climate Change.

3. Regional Assembly Response To The Climate Change Challenge

3.1 The Regional Assembly held its Annual Conference in Lichfield on 10th October 2006, focussing on the challenge of climate change and its implications at the regional level. The Conference set out a challenge for greater action and political leadership on climate change at the regional and local levels and through the "Speaking Out", the Regional Assembly has made a commitment to address climate change with the following 10 actions:

1. Establishment of a Regional Climate Change Task Group.
2. Production of a Regional Climate Change Action Plan.
3. Climate Change to be adopted as a Regional priority across all sectors and act as fundamental driver into all regional decision making.
4. Climate Change to be integrated in forward planning, business planning and strategy development work of all key regional bodies (Advantage West Midlands, Government Office West Midlands, the Assembly and all the Concordat Partners) and backed up with targets and accountability to the Region.
5. Leaders of business organisations and politicians to be encouraged to integrate climate change as a risk-based activity in their business plans and strategies.
6. The Regional Assembly to sign up to the Nottingham Declaration.

7. Encourage all local authorities in the West Midlands to work to sign up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and follow it up through a published Action Plan.
 8. Sustainability checklist to be launched and endorsed to push for a step-change in the rate for green design and sustainable construction.
 9. All Assembly-led Partnerships to consider key issues and projects that have significant impacts on climate change and develop appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation projects with partners.
 10. The Regional Assembly to be accountable for driving forward priority action across the Region.
- 3.2 Following the Annual Conference, the Regional Assembly has already begun to progress a number of commitments.
- 3.3 Following approval by the Regional Assembly on 25th October, the Regional Assembly formally signed the **West Midlands Declaration on Climate Change** ("Nottingham Declaration") at the Sustainable Development Business Summit held at the NEC on 30th November. The Declaration was signed by the Minister of State for Climate Change and the Environment, Ian Pearson MP, the Assembly Chair and Director of Policy. A copy of the Declaration is attached as Appendix A. By signing the Declaration the Regional Assembly has committed to:
- Working to deliver the UK Climate Change programme and the Kyoto Protocol;
 - Reducing Co2 emissions from within its own operations, including a internal audit of energy use and promoting energy reduction;
 - Developing an Action Plan to progressively address the causes and the impacts of climate change within the West Midlands, and
 - Encouraging all regional Concordat partners to take the opportunity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and to make public their commitment to action.
- 3.4 A **Regional Climate Change Task Group** has been established and convened its first meeting on 23rd November. The Task Group, Chaired by Michael Barker (Telford & Wrekin Council), will work through the Regional Environment Partnership and involve other partners in integrating climate change action across the region. Views and actions emerging from the Task Group meeting included:
- There is a need for a high level Chief Executive grouping involving the Assembly, AWM and GOWM to provide leadership, accountability and take responsibility for the emerging regional climate change agenda.

- A Climate Change Action Plan will be developed and reported to the Regional Assembly's next annual conference.
 - A regional Vision related to climate change will be developed.
 - Decision-makers need to understand that tackling climate change involves a change in behaviour. As a first step towards raising awareness of crunch issues facing the region, a paper outlining the climate change implications of the RES and RSS Options consultation documents will be prepared.
 - The possibility of a future scrutiny review or evaluation of actions taken by the Assembly, AWM and GOWM to address the climate change challenge is to be explored.
- 3.5 The next meeting of the Climate Change Task Group will be 19th January 2007.
- 3.6 Since the Conference the Regional Assembly has also begun the process of:
- Integrating climate change policy development into the Assembly Business Plan for 2007/08 (Action 4),
 - Encouraging all local authorities in the region to sign up to the Nottingham Declaration (Action 7) through support for "Adapting to Climate Change Workshops", and is
 - Working with AWM to publish a regional Sustainability Checklist (originally developed by the South East England Development Agency) to inform planners and assist developers in drawing up planning applications (Action 8).
- 3.7 The Regional Rural Affairs Forum also convened a 'Rural Response to Climate Change' Conference in Telford on the 17th November. The Conference was positioned to follow on from the Assembly's conference and identified the key issues and opportunities for rural areas of the region arising from the climate change challenge. 140 delegates made personal short and long term pledges to begin to mitigate for climate change. A conference report will be produced which will identify the actions which will be taken forward as a result of the event.
- 3.8 In the next round of Partnership meetings, the Assembly will also be requesting that all Assembly-led Partnerships consider key issues and projects that have significant impacts on climate change, and request that they develop appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation projects with partners (Action 9).

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The West Midlands Declaration on Climate Change

We acknowledge that

- Evidence shows that climate change is occurring.
- Climate change will continue to have far reaching effects on the UK's people and places, economy, society and environment.

We welcome the

- Social, economic and environmental benefits which come from combating climate change.
- Emissions targets agreed by central government and the programme for delivering change, as set out in the UK Climate Change Programme.
- Opportunity for the Regional Assembly to lead the response at a regional level, encouraging and helping regional, sub-regional and local partner organisations to reduce their energy costs, to reduce congestion, to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to improve the local environment and to deal with fuel poverty in our communities.
- Endorsement of this declaration by central government.

We commit the Regional Assembly from this date 25th October 2006 to

- Work with central government to contribute, at a regional level, to the delivery of the UK Climate Change Programme, the Kyoto Protocol and the target for carbon dioxide reduction by 2010.
- Participate in regional and sub-regional networks for support.
- Within the next year develop a plan of action with our regional concordat partners to progressively address the causes and the impacts of climate change within the West Midlands.
- Commit to achieve a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from within our own operations, including energy sourcing and use, travel and transport, waste production and disposal, and the purchasing of goods and services.
- Encourage all regional concordat partners to take the opportunity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and to make public their commitment to action.
- Monitor the progress of our plans against the actions needed and publish the results.

The West Midlands Regional Assembly

acknowledges the increasing impact that climate change will have on the West Midlands during the 21st century and commits to tackling the causes and effects of a changing climate on our region.

David S Smith	Olwen Dutton	Ian Pearson	Baroness Andrews OBE
Chairman	Chief Executive	Minister of State for Climate Change and the Environment, DEFRA	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, DCLG