

Agenda Item No. 13

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Board of Directors - Friday 8th December 2006

City Regions

Report of the Director of Policy

1. Purpose

To provide the Board with a brief update on City Region activity and copy of the Birmingham, Black Country and Coventry City Region 2020 Vision Statement.

2. Recommendation

To receive and note this report and the Birmingham, Black Country and Coventry City Region 2020 Vision Statement- attached as appendix1.

3. Update – White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities

3.1 The White Paper treats regions and city regions fairly even handily in chapter 4 Strong Cities, Strategic Regions. “There is ...no choice between strong cities and strong regions”. “Strong cities are central to increasing prosperity and wealth for individuals and communities. And we need strategic regions to ensure that the links between our major cities and towns and areas are made....”.

3.2 Government commits to continued dialogue with towns, cities and regions using the review of sub-national economic development currently being undertaken by Government. The review will look at how best Government can “devolve powers and resources to regions and local authorities in cities and elsewhere to ensure there is clear accountability for decisions; stronger leadership and incentives to enable and support growth; reduced inequalities and effective governance arrangements”.

3.3 It will also look at the opportunity to reform passenger transport authorities/executives, look at the options for multi-area agreements and city region companies and encourage strong leadership models. The review will report in to CSR07

4. Update – West Midlands Regional Assembly

4.1 The Joint Statement between the Assembly and Two City Regions was agreed at the Assembly’s meeting on 25 October.

5. Update - Birmingham, Black Country and Coventry City Region

5.1 The Birmingham, Black Country and Coventry City Region Executive Board approved the Joint Statement between the Assembly and the Two City Regions.

5.2 The Birmingham, Black Country and Coventry City Region 2020 Vision Statement, has been drafted by City Region officers with input from the Assembly Secretariat. It was endorsed by the Birmingham, Black Country and Coventry City Region Executive Board on 1 November. Its purpose is to offer clarity on the direction of travel that the Birmingham, Black Country and Coventry City Region is taking. See Appendix 1.

6. **Update – Stoke and North Staffordshire City Region**

6.1 Joint Statement between the Assembly and the Two City Regions was agreed at the Stoke and North Staffs City Region Executive Board in November. The Stoke and North Staffs City Region is working with the Works Foundation to develop their ideas on how the City Region approach will bring benefits to that sub-region's socio-economic and regeneration aspirations.

7. **The Future**

7.1 David S Smith will continue to serve on the Birmingham, Black Country and Coventry City Region Executive Board and your officers will continue to work with City Region officers to secure progress in line with the Urban Renaissance objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

7.2 The Stoke and North Staffs City Region is at an earlier stage of development. Your officers will keep a watching brief for the time being. A more pro-active approach is being taken to working with Renew the Housing Pathfinder for the area.

7.3 The outcome of the sub-national review of economic development, referred to above will no doubt have a significant bearing on city regions and regions – their governance, focus, remit and targets etc. We await its production with interest.

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The Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region

2020 Vision.

In 2020 the Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region will have high levels of personal prosperity, business success and population growth equal to those in the south east of England with every individual realising his or her full potential. It will be well on the way to achieving carbon neutrality.

The Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region is a voluntary partnership driven by locally set priorities and outcomes that will build upon existing cooperation between the local authorities of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton, the West Midlands Regional Assembly, Advantage West Midlands, the regional Learning and Skills Council, and the business community.

Creating Employment and Prosperity

By 2020 the City Region will have high levels of investment by existing, and new national and international businesses, and increasing numbers of people in work.

The City Region will have;

- higher than the national average earnings,
- wealth creation per person above the national average,
- higher than the national average employment rate
- an unemployment rate below the national average.
- a higher percentage of knowledge workers than the national average,
- increasing numbers of high skilled, high paid jobs.

Connecting People with Opportunities

By 2020 the City Region will have a workforce with the right skills for individuals and businesses to succeed in the modern economy.

The City Region will have;

- higher than national average basic, intermediate and higher level skills and qualifications,
- above the national average numbers of skilled and qualified entrepreneurs, self-employed and business start ups.
- Made a major move towards no one in work or seeking work being without at least the minimum vocational skills and qualifications to gain and maintain a job,
- improving levels of skills and education of those already with qualifications and in work,

Connecting the City Region

By 2020 the City Region will have an environmentally sustainable transport system and services that connects people, businesses, towns and cities with the opportunities to succeed and prosper in the modern economy.

The City Region will have;

- less congested roads enabling car, public transport, freight, and service vehicles, free flowing access at all times,
- above the national average levels of people using our bus services and our rail services and rail stations,
- a complete Midland Metro network,
- Birmingham International Airport equipped to deal with more local, national and international travellers.

Creating a Better Quality of Life

By 2020 the City Region will be an attractive and popular place in which to live, work and relax, with a growing population.

The City Region will have;

- all communities enjoying, success, prosperity, and rising aspirations.
- increasing numbers of people living, working and relaxing in all its parts
- a large and wide ranging mixture of modern housing able to meet the needs of any individual or family,
- a cleaner and greener environment with above national average levels of recycling
- made progress towards carbon neutrality,
- an international reputation for its cultural, sporting and leisure facilities and events.

The City Region will

- Seek to accelerate large scale urban developments by coordinating strategic cross boundary decisions and funding.
- Produce a series of connected Joint Investment Plans for economic growth and inward investment, skills and employment, transport, housing, regeneration, and quality of life.
- Use its influence to encourage environmental protection and carbon neutrality.
- Seek only to influence decisions of a genuinely strategic city region and regional nature, neither creating new layers of bureaucracy nor duplicating existing functions or services. This principle will be strictly adhered to.
- Be open, accountable and visible, consulting regularly and widely.
- Work with neighbouring non metropolitan and rural areas.
- Deliver existing and forthcoming agreed regional strategies
- Use its collective strength and influence to negotiate with central government, and other key partners.

Cllr Mike Whitby
Leader



Cllr Ken Taylor
Leader



Cllr David Caunt
Leader



Cllr Bill Thomas
Leader



Cllr Ted Richards
Leader



Cllr Keith Austin
Leader



Cllr Tom Ansell
Leader



Cllr Roger Lawrence
Leader



Cllr David Smith
Chairman



Mr Nick Paul
Chairman



Mr Mike Beasley
Chairman



Mr Ben Reid
Representative

