

## **Agenda Item No. 9(b)**

### **WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY Board of Directors – Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

#### **Equality & Diversity: Proposed Regional Strategic Partnership**

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##### **1. Purpose**

To obtain Board Members approval to set-up the proposed new Regional Strategic Partnership for Equality & Diversity.

##### **2. Recommendation**

That Board Members agree that the Lead Officer may:

- i) approach those people (or organisations) mentioned below with a view to offering them membership of the Partnership for Equality & Diversity;
- ii) approach others if we are unable to secure membership from the above-mentioned;
- iii) arrange a meeting in March of those members identified with a view to discussing and agreeing the Partnership Work-Plan and further membership; and
- iv) submit a short written report to the Regional Assembly at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> April.

##### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Review of Equality and Diversity matters within the West Midlands was approved by the Regional Assembly following the publication in May 2004 of *Fairness for All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights* a White Paper by the Department of Trade and Industry.
- 3.2 The White Paper outlines its proposals for a new single Commission for Equality and Human Rights. This includes a presence in each of the 9 English regions, as well as Scotland and Wales. It was agreed that the identification of our regional needs would enable the West Midlands to take forward this agenda more effectively with the Commission from the outset.
- 3.3 The White Paper identified the following as groups which are, or soon will be, protected by legislation on discrimination as key to delivering this agenda:
  - Women
  - Racial groups
  - Disability
  - Sexual orientation
  - Religious beliefs
  - Age
  - Gender Reassignment

- 3.4 The aim of the Assembly's Review was to examine:
- Firstly, how Equality and Diversity issues (relating to the above) were being approached within the West Midlands; and
  - Also, the extent to which Regional Partners were working together.
- 3.5 In addition to the groups mentioned the Review paid particular attention to:
- Regional demography;
  - Differences between Urban and Rural locations (in relation to accessing services); and
  - Refugees and Asylum-Seekers – although these groups do not strictly fall within the remit of the White Paper
- 3.6 The Review commenced in February 2005, the recommendations of which were endorsed by the full Assembly on 18<sup>th</sup> January this year. It identified numerous areas of good practice throughout the region, although in order to be of value, the final report itself concentrates more on identifying areas of weakness as a starting point for future regional development.

#### **4. Proposal on the new Partnership Structure**

- 4.1 Recommendation 5 of the Equalities and Diversity Review proposed:

*"That a new Regional Partnership Body be established under the aegis of the West Midlands Regional Assembly to replace the Social Inclusion Partnership with a first meeting of core members to be held during April 2006."*

- 4.2 In order to meet this recommendation a new structure for the Regional Partnership Body has been looked at. It is proposed that given its close links with the Social Inclusion agenda that the Equality & Diversity Partnership also covers this work. The Partnership will look to meet quarterly, in line with other Regional Partnerships, at venues across the region, with its first formal meeting being held in June this year. This will allow the Partnership to submit written reports at the Regional Assembly meetings, the first being the Assembly's AGM in July.
- 4.3 In order to get the most out of the Partnership, it is proposed that it is made up of a Board of around 15 – 20 members, with membership being reviewed after 12 mths. This would be the decision-making body of the Partnership and its members would be responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Partnership's Work-Plan.
- 4.4 The proposed membership of Partnership Board, for which approval is being sought, would seek to include experts in the areas mentioned above along with key regional stakeholders. Consideration was given to using the "4:1:1" ratio, however, given the wide range of subjects

to be covered by the Partnership using this ratio would have led to a very large (and perhaps less productive) decision-making body. The ratio is also perhaps less necessary given that the Partnership does not cover statutory areas such as planning and transport. A suggested list of recommended experts and key stakeholders were drawn together as outlined below:

**Portfolio Holder:**

Cllr Jo Jones (Chair) [and Regional Assembly Member]  
[Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion and WM Consortium for Asylum & Refugee Support (WMCARS)]

**Regional Assembly:**

Carmel Kerr, Equality & Diversity Director, Regional Assembly  
(Secretary)  
Cassie Manly, Regional Assembly

**Members of the Equality & Diversity Strategic Review Group:**

Rev John Hall, Chair, West Midlands Faith Forum, (Chair of the Strategic Review Group) (Religious Beliefs)  
Roger McKenzie, TUC, (Vice Chair of the Strategic Review Group)  
Chris Eade, GOWM  
Cllr Diane Rayner, AWM Board, (Rural Issues)  
Cllr Elias Mattu, Wolverhampton City Council

**Key Experts:**

Michael Cashman, MEP, (Sexual Orientation)  
*Invite expert* (Gender Reassignment)  
Dally Panesar, (Women, Refugees and Asylum-Seekers)  
Zahid Nawaz, CRE, (Racial Groups)  
*Invite nominee from* Advisory Group for Ageing (Age)  
*Invite nominee from* Disability WM (Disability)

**Other Key Stakeholders:**

Portfolio Holder: WM Strategic Partnership for Asylum and Refugee Support (WMSPARS) [formerly WMCARS] *when appointed*  
CEHR Representative *when appointed*  
Gisela Stuart, MP  
*Invite nominee from* WM Business Council  
Chris Bonnard, RAWM

- 4.5 In addition to the Board, a much larger number (40-50) of associate members would also be invited to attend the quarterly meetings. The Board would be asked to look at a nomination scheme for associate members and be responsible for ensuring that there is appropriate regional as well as expert representation. It is proposed that the Board would meet for 1-2 hours in advance of the full membership group to review progress of the Partnership's Work-Plan. The meeting of the full membership would be used not only to enhance the understanding of its members of the Equality & Diversity and Social Inclusion agendas, but also use members as key advisors on high profile consultation matters.

- 4.6 The Board may also be required to meet in addition to the quarterly meetings and would be required to contribute to agenda setting for forthcoming meetings, as well as agreeing the Partnership's contributions (written and verbal) on key matters.

## **5. Proposed Work-Plan for the new Partnership**

- 5.1 The proposed Work-Plan for the first 12 months of the Partnership is attached at Annex A. It is hoped that the Board can meet before the end of March to agree (amend as appropriate).
- 5.2 The Work-Plan takes into account the recommendations made in the Review and has used these to set the key focus of the forthcoming agendas for the Partnership:

**June 2006:** Presentation by DTI on its plans for a regional CEHR presence (Recommendation 8) to be followed by workshops and a feedback session to members and DTI staff, with a follow-up paper to DTI to form the basis of further discussions.

**September 2006:** Presentation of looking at ways in which the Partnership (and others) can address the low representation of "diverse" groups within the Regional Assembly and the local political arena in general. To be followed by workshops and a feedback session.

**December 2006:** Presentation on the work of the Commission (Recommendation 14) set-up by the Partnership to look at how it can address related community cohesion issues. To be followed by workshops and a feedback session.

**March 2007:** Presentation on work carried-out by the Partnership over the last 12 mths "Review and Evaluation", with a view to setting the Work-Plan for Year 2. To be followed by workshops and a feedback session to identify future objectives.

## **6. Handling**

Subject to approval being given, proposed members of the new Partnership Board will be invited to join. Agreement will be sought on the Partnership's proposed work-plan and a short written report on progress will be provided to Members at the next meeting of the Regional Assembly on 5<sup>th</sup> April.

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## DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR RSP FOR EQUALITY & DIVERSITY 2006

NB: Version.02 dated 13/02/06 for discussion.

This RSP will cover Equality & Diversity as well as Social Inclusion issues – a title for the Partnership has yet to be agreed.

This work-plan is based on the RSP Board Members being in place by March 2006.

The Responsible Officer will change as Members are allocated roles.

All progress against the Action Points below should be recorded, as appropriate, on the Regional Assembly website.

No.	Action	Methodology	Timescale	Measurables	Responsible Officer
1.	<p>To set, for the RSP, the Terms of Reference and an agenda with a specific work-plan with agreed [SMART-ER] objectives.</p> <p>[Recommendation 5]</p>	<p>Discuss and agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Terms of Reference and the objectives outlined below [amend as appropriate]</li> <li>2. The structure of the RSP mtgs</li> <li>3. The structure of recording and reporting back on progress</li> <li>4. A Communications Plan for the RSP</li> <li>5. How [and who] the objectives will be taken forward.</li> </ol>	End of March 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agreed Terms of Reference and work-plan</li> <li>2. Agreed structure for RSP mtgs</li> <li>3. Agreed reporting processes for RSP mtgs and Communications Plan</li> <li>4. Written guidelines/ instructions in place to which all RSP Executive Members are signed-up to</li> <li>5. Date for first formal RSP mtg set</li> <li>6. Written report to Regional Assembly for mtg on 5<sup>th</sup> April</li> </ol>	<p>Jo Jones, Portfolio Holder</p> <p>Carmel Kerr, E&amp;D Director</p> <p>RSP Board Members</p>
2.	To identify further members for the RSP with experience and skills in the key E&D areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess the various options for identifying extended membership.</li> <li>2. Agree how this will be taken forward.</li> <li>3. Allocate the task with key milestones and complete.</li> </ol>	End of April 2006	<p>Membership extended and each of the key areas covered.</p> <p>Electronic mailing list in place.</p>	As above

No.	Action	Methodology	Timescale	Measurables	Responsible Officer
3.	To organise and host the launch of the Equality & Diversity [and Social Inclusion] RSP.	Discuss and agree: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Project plan - milestones</li> <li>2. Domestic arrangements</li> <li>3. Agenda and workshops</li> <li>4. Speakers, facilitators</li> <li>5. Chair</li> <li>6. Invitations</li> <li>7. Marketing and Media</li> </ol>	Agree plan by March 2006  Timescales as per plan  Launch in May 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Launch held</li> <li>2. Report of the findings disseminated to attendees</li> <li>3. Objectives from the findings added to the RSP work-plan, where appropriate</li> </ol>	As above
4.	To oversee the implementation of the recommendations in the E&D Strategic Review.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Standing item on RSP agenda</li> <li>2. Work with those responsible for delivering individual recommendations and invite regular updates, including presentations at RSP mtgs</li> </ol>	On-going  (quarterly review)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progress will be recorded in the Regional Assembly's E&amp;D work-plan</li> <li>2. RSP Executive Members (and wider Members, as appropriate) to be updated on progress at each mtg</li> <li>3. Progress will be included in the RSP written update to the Regional Assembly</li> </ol>	As above  All RSP Members, as appropriate
5.	To develop options for the proposed Regional CEHR presence, which has clear links to existing networks and structures.  [Recommendation 8]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss with DTI about their plans for a regional CEHR [invite DTI to attend and present at the June RSP mtg]</li> <li>2. Develop an options paper with recommendations for wider consultation</li> <li>3. Amend options paper in the light of comments received</li> <li>4. Take final recommendations to DTI for discussion</li> <li>5. +</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. June 2006</li> <li>2. June 2006</li> <li>3. September 2006</li> <li>4. October 2006</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RSP mtg held as stated</li> <li>2. Options paper issued as stated</li> <li>3. Options paper amended</li> <li>4. Paper submitted and discussions had with DTI</li> </ol>	As above  All RSP Members as appropriate

No.	Action	Methodology	Timescale	Measureables	Responsible Officer
6.	<p>To develop a “branding” for the new RSP.</p> <p>[Recommendation 7]</p>	<p>Discuss and agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where the focus of Equality and Diversity and Social Inclusion for the region should lie</li> <li>2. What this should look like</li> </ol>	<p>Agree on branding by August 2006</p> <p>Launch branding at the Conference at 7. below</p>	<p>A definitive name and logo which is clear and understandable to people within different organisations across the region, whether public, private, voluntary or community.</p>	As above
7.	<p>To organise and host a summit for Regional Leaders to discuss Equality &amp; Diversity and Social Inclusion in an open and honest way.</p> <p>[Recommendation 6]</p>	<p>Discuss and agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Project plan - milestones</li> <li>2. Domestic arrangements</li> <li>3. Agenda and workshops</li> <li>4. Speakers, facilitators</li> <li>5. Chair</li> <li>6. Invitations</li> <li>7. Marketing and Media</li> </ol>	<p>Agree plan by May 2006</p> <p>Timescales as per plan</p> <p>Conference by Autumn 2006</p> <p>Follow-up work by December 2006</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conference held</li> <li>2. Report of the findings disseminated to attendees</li> <li>3. Objectives from the findings added to the RSP Action Plan, as appropriate</li> </ol>	As above
8.	<p>To develop a website to allow sharing of research, good practice and information.</p> <p>[Recommendation 12]</p>	<p>Discuss and agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where the website could be hosted [Regional Assembly ?]</li> <li>2. Look at what other relevant sites are currently available</li> <li>3. Look at the possibility of fund-raising</li> <li>4. Look at the cost implications and decide upon realistic content</li> </ol>	<p>Open discussions June 2006</p> <p>Launch website at Conference Autumn 2006</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decision taken on website content</li> <li>2. Preparation of website allocated to responsible officer</li> <li>3. Website launched at Conference in Autumn 2006</li> </ol>	As above

No.	Action	Methodology	Timescale	Measurables	Responsible Officer
9.	<p>To establish a regional commission to examine how regional partners can contribute to the understanding, development and achievement of community cohesion goals.</p> <p>[Recommendation 14]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify a body to take this work forward [Task and Finish group]</li> <li>2. Identify what information is already available and what is required [address through a mapping exercise]</li> <li>3. Look at how the findings can be used to develop the Equality &amp; Diversity agenda</li> </ol>	<p>Review progress by December 2006</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Body in place to take this work forward</li> <li>2. Available information identified</li> <li>3. What further required identified and any related cost</li> <li>4. Agreed way forward</li> <li>5. Report completed and presented to the RSP [and Assembly]</li> </ol>	<p>As above</p>
10.	<p>To encourage bodies currently providing regional awards to include an Equality &amp; Diversity element for awards made in 2007 and thereafter.</p> <p>[Recommendation 15]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss and identify suitable organisations to approach [for example through the WMBC]</li> <li>2. Look at what the Equality &amp; Agenda can do for these organisations, including what they are doing now and how this can be improved</li> <li>3. Develop a marketing and media strategy beneficial to all parties</li> <li>4. Identify responsible officers to take the negotiations and other matters forward</li> </ol>	<p>Open discussions by September 2006</p> <p>Review in March 2007</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Several organisations to have included an Equality &amp; Diversity element within their awards scheme.</li> <li>2. Other organisations to be planning to do so.</li> <li>3. Marketing strategy in place to publicise the Equality &amp; Diversity awards and the organisations receiving them</li> </ol>	<p>As above</p>

No.	Action	Methodology	Timescale	Measurables	Responsible Officer
11.	To look ways in which the Region can address the imbalance of diverse groups within the Assembly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find out more about people's awareness of regional and local politics [commission research]</li> <li>2. Discuss at the September 2006 RSP mtg, and develop an options paper for raising awareness and interest</li> <li>3. Identify funding [or how otherwise] the agreed options can be taken forward</li> </ol>	<p>By September 2006</p> <p>By December 2006</p> <p>By February 2007</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion workshop held at the September 2006 RSP mtg</li> <li>2. Organisations asked to contribute to options paper on key issues, such as women, disability and race</li> <li>3. Funding or alternative option agreed</li> </ol>	<p>As above</p> <p>All RSP Members, as appropriate</p>
12.	To review RSP work-plan at the end of 12mths – evaluate work undertaken; revise and set new objectives for the RSP accordingly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss and prepare presentation / workshops for March 2007 RSP mtg</li> <li>2. Collate findings and update RSP work-plan accordingly</li> </ol>	March 2007	Revised (and agreed) RSP work-plan for 2006/07 issued to RSP Executive Members	As above