

**Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region**

**Notes of the Shadow Growth & Prosperity Board meeting  
held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at 11am  
in the St Pauls Suite, at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Birmingham**

**Present:** Cllr David Smith (Chairman), Cllr Hazel Noonan (Alternate - Coventry) [for part of the meeting], Cllr Roger Lawrence (Wolverhampton), Cllr Andrew Eade (Telford & Wrekin), Cllr John O'Hare (Walsall), Cllr Ken Meeson (Solihull), Cllr David Caunt (Dudley), Glyn Pitchford (Business Representative), Jamie Morris (alternate - Walsall), Peter Wall (Business alternate), Richard Carr (Wolverhampton) Stephen Hughes (Birmingham), Steve Wellings (Telford & Wrekin), David Cragg (LSC), Stella Manzie (Coventry) [for part of the meeting], Olwen Dutton (WMRA), John Sutton (Alternate- Sandwell), James Watkins (West Midlands Business Council), Nick Paul (AWM), Paul Watson (alternate - Solihull), Simon Murphy (City Region Project Director), Andrew Sparke (Dudley), Mark Pearce (AWM), Cat Parker (observer Coventry). John Hunter (City Region).

**Action**

**50/07 Apologies for absence**

Received from Cllr Mike Whitby, Cllr Ken Taylor (Coventry), Cllr Bill Thomas (Sandwell), Jerry Blackett (Birmingham Chamber), John Edwards (AWM), Allison Fraser (Sandwell), Mike Beasley (LSC), Mark Rogers (Solihull), David Martin (Walsall).

**51/07** The **Vice-Chair** advised members of his role of **Chairman** in the absence of **Cllr Whitby**.

The **Chairman** suggested that the shadow Board's best wishes are sent to **Cllr Thomas** as he is in hospital.

**Members** agreed to this.

**Simon Murphy**

**52/07 Notes from meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

**Olwen Dutton** stated that item 42/07 on page 3 - date of submission should refer to December, and not 22<sup>nd</sup> October which was the date scheduled for the adoption of the RSS Preferred Option.

**Glyn Pitchford** stated that item 43/07 should be "business support for the SME sector" which should replace "business structures".

With these corrections the Notes were received and noted.

**53/07 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## 54/07 Agenda Point 4 - Housing & Population Growth

**Olwen Dutton** as the Chief Executive Portfolio Lead for Spatial Policy outlined the content of the enclosed report highlighting that the emerging strategy for the RSS Preferred Option would equate to a 5.6% population increase in the City Region, and that this was a minima for the Major Urban Area which excluded Telford. This would equate to a population increase of approximately 155,000 with a dwelling increase of approximately 180,000, which assumes an extra 10,000 dwellings in Birmingham, and 15,400 in Coventry. She recommended that the Shadow Board adopt the 5.6% increase, bearing in mind it is a minima. She pointed out the actual demand for growth is not known.

**Cllr David Caunt** said he recalled a time when building 10 to an acre was considered a maximum number, These forecasts are looking at 25 to an acre. He said we should be concerned by this level of density.

**Glyn Pitchford** said there was a danger of dealing with housing in a vacuum. There was a clear need to bear sustainability in mind before any building was undertaken. He said that housing sustainability must take account of these factors:-:

- Affordable housing in the public and private sector.
- Transport
- Health
- Education
- Environment.

**Simon Murphy** pointed out that item 7.2 of the report clarified **Glyn's** point and the knock-on effects were this not taken into account.

**Stella Manzie** commented that most local authorities are already looking into their own needs with regards to education and health and such information needed to be gathered from each local authority. She then said that trying to define what a household was as this is extremely complex.

**Cllr David Smith** replied to the comment on 25 to an acre being dense. He said we need to take account of the changes in population. Many people now live alone and there is the new phenomenon of retirement villages, which tend to be very high density. There is also the new type of family structure. All these different types of living arrangements need to be taken into account when considering density as they tend to balance each other out.

**David Cragg** commented that some of the demographic data now looks very unreliable. The LSC are starting to examine all the information especially with regard to inward immigration figures, which are changing all the time.

**Cllr Ken Meeson** said in Solihull they had recently undertaken a project to build 650 dwellings with the appropriate infrastructure. This has now risen to 1400 dwellings, which means the transport system is inadequate and that they have had to double the school size. He said we need to be very clear on our forecasts.

**Olwen Dutton** agreed that we can't look at housing in isolation of infrastructure needs.

**Members agreed to adopt the recommendations of this report that**

**The shadow Board endorses the emerging RSS Phase 2 revision Preferred Option strategy which will lead to a forecast City Region population increase of 5.6%.**

**The shadow Board recognises that this represents substantial growth compared to the existing RSS, that the 5.6% figure is nevertheless to be seen as a minimum for the MUA of the City Region, and that there exists flexibility to examine further growth should this be deemed necessary or desirable.**

**The shadow Board supports the investigation of a Multi Area Agreement approach to the sustainable delivery of the number and mix of housing development required.**

Accepted

#### **55/07 Agenda Item 4 - Housing and Economy**

**Mark Pearce** (in the absence of John Edwards) presented this using a handout. He drew members' attention to the map on page 3 which showed where within the region there was forecast to be an under provision of housing supply against demand related to employment.

**Cllr Roger Lawrence** stated that our avowed policy was based on Urban Renaissance in the RSS and he would be unhappy were we to lose sight of that. He also commented that the Black Country Study was very ambitious and he would be very disappointed if this was undermined by a crude study on numbers.

**The Chair** thanked Mark Pearce for the report.

56/07 JIPs

**David Cragg** reported that the AWM & LSC have been tightening the integration between business support and employment and skills across the region. Liam Byrne MP, the Minister for the West Midlands wants a major focus to be placed on understanding employment and skills in the Public Sector. 27.5% of people in the region are employed in the Public Sector. He wants this taken into account in any future planning and thinking. David thanked **Olwen Dutton** for her help in the LGA hosting a meeting with the Health and Local Authorities. They were also working in trying to maximize work in the disadvantaged communities which was part of the JIP. They had also formed agreements with the CBI and the Birmingham Chamber and were forging links with other Chambers throughout the region.. He also mentioned that we were to become the Pilot Region in waving the "Sixteen Hour rule". David said he thought this was going to be starting in Coventry. This was a major breakthrough.

**Members to note**

He also thanked **Olwen Dutton** for her work in helping to facilitate a single integrated approach to ESF.

He has also stated that the study of migrant labour was now in its final stages. He will be meeting Liam Byrne on the 29<sup>th</sup> October to discuss this. He said he thought this report was going to be very significant as it showed the impact of migrant labour on young people. It also showed how migrant labour graduates from low skills into high skill work. **David** hoped to present it to the next meeting of the City Region Chief Executive Steering Group.

**Nick Paul** commented that the waving of the "Sixteen Hour rule" was massively important and was influenced by the way the Rover Task Force had dealt with the situation. He said he was very pleased we are being considered as a pilot region.

**Glyn Pitchford** asked **David Cragg** two questions;

1. There are work placed training schemes in place for the public sector but how will they work in the private sector?
2. He was under the impression that migrant workers would return to their own country, was this not the case?

**David Cragg** replied said he would talk to **Glyn** privately about question 1 as they were due to meet soon rather than get into details at this meeting. With regard to question 2, research has shown that migrants from the Accession 8 central and eastern European countries tend to stay longer, often bringing their

families over. The report will explore the different consequences of migrant workers on different localities.

**Mark Pearce** commented on the Economic Development and Investment JIP and the developments that had made so far, which included examination of ways of making Inward Investment a key goal. They were hoping to make a more formal strategy of inward investment.

**The meeting endorsed the conclusions of the JIP to date.**

Endorsed

In the context of the Transport JIP, **Stella Manzie** informed the group of the report that had been submitted to Government in July. Work is now ongoing to respond to Liam Byrne's request for a list of the region's key transport priorities by December.

Jamie Morris provided an update on the Quality of Life JIP. A gap analysis of culture within the region is being undertaken. They were also looking to be involved in some way on the 2012 initiative. They were also exploring the links between the Transport JIP and Culture. There will be a seminar in December which he hopes will bring more clarity to the general direction of this JIP. He also commented that it was not as developed as some of the other JIP's.

**57/07 Agenda item 6 - Report from Project Director**

**Simon Murphy** summarised the report and invited David Cragg to comment on the Public Service Compact.

**David Cragg** said they were working with 38 public service organisations looking at the workforce, considering spatial distribution, training and recruitment. They were also examining public services and the skills collaboration across the City Region. He felt they were making good progress and had a good network of contacts. Liam Byrne was keen on the work they were doing on apprenticeships and wanted more emphasis on that.

**Simon Murphy** informed the meeting about preparations for the Away Day and that the agenda and full details would be sent out soon.

**Simon Murphy** presented the item on Shadow Board Portfolio Leads pointing out that there was one vacancy outstanding for Carbon Neutrality and Sustainability. A further report would be bought to the meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> October.

**Simon Murphy** introduced the exchange of correspondence between Councillor Whitby as Chairman of the shadow Board and Philippa Holland from Government Office on MAAs.

**Stephen Hughes** commented that our reply should be robust in

what we are asking for. We should not sign up to anything unless the Government agrees to bring something to the table.

**Jamie Morris** said he believed the Government expected us to state what we wanted from them. We should not sign up to any agreement unless there is a real benefit to us otherwise we may find we are bound up in bureaucratic procedures which hinder us from making any effective progress.

**Richard Carr** said we need to take the bull by the horns. We should state clearly what we want.

**Cllr Ken Meeson** wondered if there was likely to be any pump priming funding for this.

**David Cragg** commented that we need to talk to the relevant Government departments and not just the CLG. He felt we would gain much by holding a dialogue with the appropriate department directly.

**Stephen Hughes** said we need to develop more work on what we want to take to the Government. (He assumed Simon Murphy would take the lead on this.) We need to consult with authorities and put some structures into place.

**Simon Murphy** said he was in dialogue with the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership on the issues of capacity and deliverability of MAAs.

**Olwen Dutton** agreed that we need to involve RIEP. There will be a meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> November where they will examine LAAs and MAAs.

**Simon Murphy** said, in reply to **Cllr Meeson**, that there was no funding available as yet. He will try and ascertain what the MAA will bring and follow up the relevant Government department. He noted that **Cllr Mike Whitby** had said in his original response that he would reply more fully after this meeting. Simon asked if the meeting was happy for him to send a reply?

**The meeting agreed he should do this detailing our intention to be a first wave MAA in June 2008 based upon worklessness, transport and also housing.**

**Cllr David Smith** said he was concerned that we were going to get side-tracked by all the paper work an MAA would generate.

**Glyn Pitchford** (in reference to portfolio leads) mentioned the 5 joint initiative plans were well received by the business community in the region, and there was a general consensus that the City Region is doing good work. However he did

Simon Murphy

wonder what happened to these plans, where did they go and how would they come into effect, and was there any means of monitoring them?

**Simon Murphy** replied that, due to the circumstances explained in the JIP roundup earlier, the proposed completion date of each JIP was different. He also stated that the Skills and Investment JIP is working as a first year plan, whereas the others had different time-lines in view. With regard to monitoring, completed JIPs would be brought back to the shadow Board for approval.

**Peter Wall** asked if the Away Day would discuss JIPs and MAAs and the Sub-National Review..

**Simon Murphy** replied that it would.

**The Meeting endorsed the recommendations in the report.**

**Simon Murphy**

**58/07 Agenda point 7 - City Region Communications Strategy**

**Simon Murphy** introduced the report and drew attention to page 2 where he had outlined the key issues.

**Glyn Pitchford** said he had two point to make:

1. Business gets confused about quangos.
2. Business in the Shires outside the main urban centres do not see the benefit of the City Region. Although he did think that a marketing consultant might well be able to get round this.

**Simon Murphy** agreed to add these to the Issues item on the Communication report.

**Amendment**

**Stephen Hughes** said he would much rather we draw on the resources we currently have than to possibly duplicate our efforts. He also felt we required a more cohesive strategy. The focus of our communication needs to be clarified.

**Jamie Morris** said we should be clear about the message we wanted to deliver. We need to be clear about our audience. He thought there might be other audiences that ought to be involved. We should be looking to contact the London audience where the decision makers reside. He said that our message should be: "If you give us the money we can do a good job!"

**Simon Murphy**

The shadow Board noted the issues raised in the report, and that **Simon Murphy** would be meeting with local authority Communications Officers on 21<sup>st</sup> September to continue discussions on the strategy and plan.

**59/07 Agenda item 8 - Governance**

**Simon Murphy** presented the report along with the draft Articles and Memorandum of Association for the proposed City Region Company limited by guarantee.

**Cllr David Smith** wondered how the creation of MAAs would work and fit into the company structure. He also asked if this was the best way forward. What are the benefits of forming a company when MAAs may present an alternative report? His view of establishing a limited company for the Regional Assembly was that it had been almost more trouble than it was worth.

**Cllr Meeson** asked if it was a requirement to have the Memorandum and Articles of Association agreed by full Council meetings.

**Stephen Hughes** explained that by formally establishing a body, which everyone signed up to we are sending a very strong signal that we are serious about what we are doing and our commitment to work together. He said he was a very strong supporter of forming a company. He also stated that it would have to go the relevant local authorities to get approval to join.

**Steve Wellings** said he supported **Stephen Hughes'** point. His council had already approved this in outline they just needed to ratify the details.

**A typing error in the Memorandum footnote was noted and will be removed from future drafts.**

**The shadow Board endorsed the proposal to formally adopt the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and to individually instigate the relevant approval processes within their own organisations. The shadow Board also agreed to remove the descriptor "shadow", and agreed to the official name as the Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region.**

Proposals endorsed.

#### **60/07 Agenda item 9 - Stakeholder Forum**

The notes of the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July were noted, as was the Working Protocol that had been agreed.

#### **61/07 Agenda Item 10 - AOB**

**David Cragg** wanted to inform the meeting that the LSC had now accepted a major change in that funding for 16-19 year olds had gone back to the Local Authorities. This was important for the City Region. David has been working with John Freeman

on this and they are setting up meetings across the whole region. He said he would like to report back on his progress at some point. He said he thought these changes would happen quickly.

**Stephen Hughes** stated that he had not seen any detailed Government information about this yet.

**David Cragg** replied that there will be a consultation in Dec - Jan 2008 and the legislation would be tabled sometime 08-09 with a decision by mid 09. He thought it would be implemented by 2010.

He offered to invite John Freeman to the next City Region Chief Executives Steering Group meeting which was agreed by the meeting.

**Olwen Dutton** mentioned the SNR and regional issues. Mirror reports are being tabled to the Boards of AWM (25<sup>th</sup> September) and WMRA (26<sup>th</sup> September) on this.

**Nick Paul** endorsed the approach she outlined

**Cllr David Smith** said he would like the endorsement of the Leaders meeting.

**Cllr Meeson** said discussion of the LGA Young People's Board expressed concern on 16-19 funding. Young people do not only go into education in their local area. We maybe need to think of some kind of common approach to funding otherwise Colleges might lose out by having different levels of funding. The danger of this might be that Colleges try and keep students local.

There being no other business the meeting was closed at 12.31 pm

#### **62/07 Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 31st October 10.30 - 12.00 noon, Birmingham Council House, Committee rooms 3-4