

WMRA Board of Directors – 5 December 2007 - Agenda Item 15

ADVANTAGE WEST MIDLANDS

NON CONFIDENTIAL

Minutes from the 94th Board meeting held on July 31st 2007

Present:

Nick Paul - Chairman

Cllr Richard Hyde – Deputy Chairman

Brendan Connor, Gerard Coyne , Cllr Roger Lawrence , Cllr Diane Rayner, Michael Oakes, Sue Prince, Dr Isabella Moore, Tony Sealey, Cllr Ken Taylor

Executive:

John Edwards Chief Executive

Mick Lavery Deputy Chief Executive/Corporate Director of Resources and Operations

Tim Gebbels Corporate Director for Strategy and Communications

Apologies:

Dr David Brown, John Crabtree, David Smith, Professor Michael Sterling,

Trudi Elliott Regional Director, Government Office West Midlands

Mark Pearce Corporate Director for Economic Regeneration

Karen Yeomans Corporate Director, Operations

In attendance:

Sue Marwa - Board Support Executive, Sue Morgan -Chairman's PA

ITEM	DETAILS	ACTION
1.	Minutes from the last meeting	
1.1	The minutes from the previous Board meeting were approved.	
2.	Matters arising	
2.1	Confidential item	
2.2	Corporate Director of Economic Development – the first round of interviews have taken place to replace Richard Hutchins and second interviews will take place in the middle of August.	
3.	Declarations of Interest	
3.1	There were three declarations of interest on confidential items.	
3.2.	Nick Paul declared an interest in item 12, Flood Response as a Director of Severn Valley Railway.	

4.	Declaration of items of any other business	
4.1	There were no confidential AOB items.	
5.	Chairman's report	
5.1	The Chairman drew attention to the following items from his report:	
5.2.	Investbx Office Opening – this went well and was a great step forward for Investbx.	
5.3	RDA Chairs' Dinner – the Chairman reported he had not attended this meeting due to illness. He had since discussed the RDA Chairs' meeting with Margaret Fay, Chair of Chairs who confirmed the meeting with Ministers went extremely well and they had positive discussions on the sub-national review with Stephen Timms as Chair.	
5.4	Meeting with Liam Byrne – the Chairman had a meeting with the Minister on 26 July to discuss the update on machinery of government (agenda item 14). The Chairman will also join the meeting with the Minister and Mike Whitby, Leader of Birmingham City Council to discuss New Street Station after the Minister's 'big speech' on 2 August.	
6.	Chief Executive's Report	
6.1	The Chief Executive drew attention to the following items from his report:	
6.2	Confidential Item	
6.3	Item 3 Project Performance Measurement – Brendan Connor asked what the Agency approach was in relation to funding for small projects. He had spoken with two businesses in Telford who had been told their projects were too small to be considered. He was concerned about communications in this issue. It was agreed this would be discussed in the communications workshop that afternoon.	
6.4	Policy Crib Sheets - The Board noted the updated policy sheets for all AWM policy areas. They will be made available on the Intranet and website.	
7.	Confidential item	
8.	WMES Action Plan Progress Report – non confidential	

8.1	Tim Gebbels outlined the paper. Two progress reports had been produced and agreed to date and this third report covered the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007.	
8.2	Good progress continues to be made against the majority of the actions. Action 41 relating to the engagement of voluntary and community sector in regeneration has been highlighted for improvement and this will be picked up by a new body from the black and ethnic communities.	
8.3	He explained that the report must be considered alongside the WMES review now in progress and the revised Action Plan and some actions will not be taken forward.	
8.4	Sue Prince asked whether rural renaissance support would be taken forwarded and Tim Gebbels confirmed that it would.	
8.5	Richard Hyde asked for actions that were not completed to be marked in red. This strategy was endorsed by the Audit Committee.	
8.6	The Board noted the report and agreed to its publication, having received the endorsement of the Assembly on 18 July.	
9.	Confidential item	
10.	Confidential item	
11.	Confidential item	
12.	Update on UKTI activity – non confidential	
12.1	Isabella Moore and Doug Mahoney presented the paper about international trade and inward investment.	
12.2	It was noted that a number of issues have arisen with regard to the relationship between UKTI and Brokerage/ Gateway system. There has been criticism from the Parliamentary Trade and Industry Select Committee about whether UKTI's regional services can be delivered through the BL Brokerage/Gateway system. The joint UKTI/RDA response to both these issues is that they are exactly the sort of issues the Joint Reviews are addressing and we need to await their findings before making any decisions.	
12.3	Sue Prince asked whether UKTI get involved in smaller projects. Doug Mahoney replied that UKTI do tend to concentrate on the larger ones but could get involved via the Business Links or Chambers.	

<p>12.4</p> <p>12.5</p>	<p>Michael Oakes was concerned at the lack of support from the Chamber regarding a recent delegation from China visiting the region. Doug Mahoney replied that this should not happen given that UKTI has relationships with 40-50 businesses in China.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p>Flood Response - non confidential</p>	
<p>13.1</p> <p>13.2</p> <p>13.3</p> <p>13.4</p> <p>13.5</p> <p>13.6</p> <p>13.7</p>	<p>The Chief Executive reported that the West Midlands was hit hard by the flooding in June, with particular (though not exclusive) impact along the Severn Valley from Bridgnorth down to Upton on Severn. A response programme of £1 million has been put into place by the Agency.</p> <p>The Region experienced further extensive flooding over the weekend 20th - 24th July. The impact was most heavy in South Shropshire, Herefordshire and parts of Worcestershire and Warwickshire. At the time of preparing this report, floods were starting to subside, so the full scale of the impact was as yet unknown.</p> <p>The Agency responded very quickly on 23rd July to re-visit the response developed to the floods in June in Phase 1 and develop a further package to support those areas affected badly, at the end of July, Phase 2.</p> <p>Farmers have approached the Agency regarding help with rotting crops.</p> <p>Michael Oakes enquired whether interest-free loans would be available. The Chief Executive replied that discussions were taking place with banks regarding this issue.</p> <p>Richard Hyde commended the Agency for its response to the crisis in the region.</p> <p>The paper was noted.</p>	
<p>14.</p>	<p>Planning White Paper – non confidential</p>	
<p>14.1</p> <p>14.2</p>	<p>The joint RDA response will be forwarded to government by 17 August. It was acknowledged that the publication of the Sub-National Review and its implications for regional planning and responsibilities will clearly influence the operation of the PWP. The Sub-National Review will be the subject of a future report to the Board in the Autumn.</p> <p>Action - A paper will be brought back to the Board later this</p>	<p>Mark Pearce</p>

	year.	
	Items 15-20 were confidential.	