

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

DECISION NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY BOARD OF DIRECTORS HELD ON 9 MARCH 2007

Chairman: Cllr David S. Smith (Lichfield)

1. Apologies and Attendance

The Apologies and Attendance of Board members are attached as Appendix A

2. Chairman's and Vice Chairs' Report

Cllr David S Smith (Chairman) advised Directors:

- of the recent publication from the New Local Government Network (NLGN) entitled 'Redesigning Regionalism' published on 6 March 2007. A further discussion took place under Item 4 to the agenda.

Roger McKenzie (Board Member, OSG) informed the Board;

- that Valerie Broom was recovering well and would be returning to work in the very near future.

The Chairman requested that the Board's best wishes be conveyed to Valerie.

3. Decision notes of the Board of Directors

3a. Decision notes of the Board of Directors held on 8 December and Matters Arising

The Board **noted** the decision notes of the Board of Directors on 8 December 2006. There were no matters arising.

4. Draft Decision Notes of the Assembly Meeting held on 17 January 2007

The draft decision notes of the meeting held on 17 January 2007 were **noted** in advance of formal agreement which would be sought at the Assembly meeting on 25 April 2007.

Matters Arising

Item 7a. West Midlands Regional Assembly Input into Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration.

A letter from English Regions Network (ERN) had been sent to the Treasury which set out their response to the Sub National Review. On 6 March a document was published by the NLGN "Redesigning Regionalism" and the Review Reference Group (RRG) had discussed the document.

A summary report which highlighted the options outlined in the NLGN publication was tabled. In discussion the following comments and concerns were expressed:

- Partnership working and its achievements had been ignored.
- The document did not reflect the current activities of Regional Assemblies and had little understanding of their roles.
- City Regions were not mentioned in the document and concerns were expressed that if there was to be redesign or reorganisation the confidence of the people would be lost.
- The RRG had recently met and had considered a proposition for enhanced regional working. The Board requested that this item be considered by the full Assembly Meeting on 25 April 2007.
- The Board considered that work needed to be undertaken to better inform Councillors and nominating bodies of West Midlands Regional Assembly's role and to break down misconceptions. Stronger engagement with the region's press and media organisations would additionally be considered.

**Agreed: The Board to feed their detailed comments to the Chief Executive.
The item to be on the Agenda for the full Assembly on 25 April 2007.**

Item 8 – Regional Health and Well Being Strategy

The Board was advised that the Health and Well Being Strategy would be launched during March and would be the topic of the 'conversation' following the Full Assembly on 25 April 2007.

5. Report of the Chief Executive and Company Secretary (1) 2007-10 Business Plan and Budget

The Board received the final version of the 2007-10 Business Plan & Budget as submitted to Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) shown as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Company Secretary asked that thanks be noted to Sharon Phillips for the hard work and commitment she has given to producing the budget.

Sir Albert Bore and Brian Summers raised concerns regarding the transference of regional connections to European Cities from British Airways to Flybe and the detrimental effect this may have on the region's economy.

The Board agreed

- (a) To approve the final 2007-10 Business Plan and Budget and recommended that it was submitted to the next Assembly meeting for formal adoption.
- (b) That a letter be written to Flybe to seek assurances that business flights would be maintained.

(2) Contingency Fund Requests

The Board received a report which advised of two separate letters sent to

DCLG requesting contingency funding. The Company Secretary had sought permission from DCLG for a legal contingency and, to date, a formal response from DCLG was awaited.

The Board **noted** and endorsed the contingency requests.

(3) 2006-07 Q3 Report and Estimated Outturn

The Board was presented with the Estimated Outturn report which had been produced following a comprehensive budget monitoring process and was additionally advised that it had been estimated the Assembly would fully utilise DCLG funding for 2006-07 with the exception of any approved contingency funds.

The Board agreed:

- (a) To note the details of the report.
- (b) The proposed virements between work strands in the final quarter as detailed in the report.
- (c) To delegate responsibility to the Chief Executive to administer any additional and final virements arising post the report to ensure full utilisation of funding according to work programme priorities.

(4) Corporate Governance Issues

The Board received an update report on Corporate Governance issues which highlighted the following four issues of activity:-

- (i) *Internal Audit* - which as with the provision of financial management services was via the WMLGA.
- (ii) *Company Law Reform Bill* – would come into effect on 1 April 2007 and would include amendments to the role of a Company Director.
- (iii) *Complaints, Comments and Compliments* – A *Complaints, Comments and Compliments* procedure was being developed and the approval of the Chairman and Vice Chairs would be sought before publishing the procedure.
- (iv) *Register of Interests* - The Assembly was required to keep and make available to the public, a register of members' declarations of interest. It was the personal responsibility of members to notify the Assembly of such interests and to update the Assembly when these interests changed.

The Board **agreed** to

- (a) Note the detail of the report.
- (b) Note the information on Company Law Reform and the fact that each Board Member should personally familiarise themselves with the changes in respect of Directors duties.
- (c) Note the need to update the Register of Interests and that each Board Member should submit an updated declaration form.

(5) Membership Issues

The Board received a report which sought their consideration and agreement on pertinent issues relating to membership of Assembly structures as follows:-

Regional Planning Partnership Vice Chair (Other Stakeholders)

This vacancy had been recently considered by the Other Stakeholders Group (OSG) who had nominated Roger Evans to the post.

The Board was however advised at the meeting that the OSG withdrew the nomination of Roger Evans until the group had met to endorse the position.

The Board **noted** this position and requested that it be considered at the next Board meeting.

Regional Health Partnership

The Board was advised that the Regional Health Partnership had proposed the nomination of Cllr Steve Eling (current Acting Chair) to the vacant position of Partnership Chair. The Other Stakeholders Group had confirmed their full support for Cllr Steve Eling nomination as Chair with Donald McIntosh (SHA non-executive Board Member) to be Vice Chair to the Partnership.

The Board **agreed** the nomination of Cllr Steve Eling as Chair of the Regional Health Partnership with Donald McIntosh as the Vice Chair.

Equalities and Diversity Partnership

The Board was requested to endorse those listed below to the four vacant positions on the Equality & Diversity Partnership

- Steve Blick, Age Concern England, covering age-related matters
- Sue Huyton, West Midlands RNIB covering disability matters
- Anita Edwards, Regional Women's Officer, UNISON, covering gender matters (particularly women)
- Frank Reeves, Chief Executive, Race Equality West Midlands, covering race-related matters

The Board **agreed** to endorse the membership to the Equalities and Diversity Partnerships.

(6) Alignment of Meetings

The Board was advised of the Executive Committee's decision to seek alignment of future meeting dates of the Board and WMLGA Executive Committee.

The Board agreed to:

- (a) note the decision of the Executive Committee; and.
- (b) endorse the principle of aligning future meeting dates of the Executive Committee and the Board.

6. Regional Planning Executive Meeting – 7 February 2007

The Board received a report which sought their ratification of the decisions of the meeting of the Regional Planning Executive (RPE) held on Wednesday 7 February 2007 which was not quorate.

The Board **agreed** to ratify the decisions of the RPE meeting held on 7 February 2007.

7. Scrutiny and Strategic Review

7a. European Strategic Review – Key Issues

Roger McKenzie presented a report which informed the Board of progress with the European Strategic Review and of issues that would be addressed through the recommendations.

The Review initially aimed to “assess the effectiveness of the Region in securing and utilising European funding for the West Midlands Region” was refocused on how engagement with the European agenda was taken forward within the Region.

It was anticipated that all recommendations would include timescales and an organisation or regional structure responsible for implementation. Progress reports would be submitted annually to the Strategic Review Group as part of the Assembly's scrutiny and strategic review monitoring arrangements.

The Board **agreed**

- (a) to note the content of the report and
- (b) that individual members submit responses during the consultation process as appropriate.

7b. Scrutiny Review of Advantage West Midlands: Access to Finance

The Board received a report which advised of the forthcoming scrutiny review of Advantage West Midlands: Access to Finance which would commence in early March and conclude in May 2007.

The Board **agreed**

- (a) To note the content of the report.
- (b) For the Assembly to receive the final report for endorsement at the Annual General Meeting on 18 July 2007

8. Draft Response to the West Midlands Economic Strategy Choices Consultation

The Board received a report that provided them with a draft response to the West Midlands Economic Strategy Review Choices Consultation. The Board was requested to sign off the response for submission subject to any agreed amendment.

The Board discussed the response and the following comments were made:-

- The Board supported the proposal for the West Midlands to have a Vision Statement. The profile and identity of the West Midlands was considered poor and the WMES and other regional strategies should contribute positively to both.
- A reference to Airports needed to be included.
- The WMRES must recognise the spatial dimensions of the region as set out in the WMRSS and should acknowledge that the WMES should be spatial as well as sector based.
- WMES must also acknowledge the place of EU Structural Funds, together with the need to focus on high level skills as well as basic skills.
- The WMES must set the framework for delivering improvements in

quality of life and the economy.

- Manufacturing remained an important part of the West Midlands economy and the region/AWM, through business support programmes, must support the sector in respect of growth and diversification.
- Business support service must also assist companies to recognise the need to attract, recruit and retain graduates.
- Enterprise/Innovation/Skills must use WMRO data to assist in deciding the future collective approach of the WMES.

The Board **agreed** to :

- (a) Sign off the draft response for submission subject to the inclusion of the above comments.
- (b) Lead on the development of a shared Regional Vision.

9. West Midlands RSS (WMRSS) Update Phases 1, 2 and 3

The Board received an update report on current progress in bringing forward revisions to the Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS)

The Board **noted** the contents of the report.

10. Climate Change

The Board received a report that informed them of the steps being taken by the Regional Assembly in response to the Climate Change challenge following its Annual Conference and the Assembly meeting in October 2006.

The Board requested that this item be brought to the Full Assembly Meeting on 25 April 2007.

The Board **agreed** to:

- (a) Note the steps being taken by the Regional Assembly following the Annual Conference on Climate Change, and
- (b) Note the contents and issues (as laid out in the report) raised in the Draft PPS1 for the revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

11. Draft Agenda for Assembly Meeting – 25 April 2007

The draft agenda was **noted** and **agreed**. Additional items for inclusion to include: Climate Change; NLGN; Lyons Review.

12. Dates of Future Meetings – 8 June 2007

The Board **noted** and **agreed** the date of the next meeting.

13. Any Other Business

The Board were advised that the Business Sector nominations to the Housing Partnership and the Housing Executive were in process.

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES OF
THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
HELD ON 9 MARCH 2007

Present: Cllr David S Smith, Chairman

Roger McKenzie
Elizabeth Newman
Cllr Jo Jones
Cllr Chris Saint
Cllr Albert Bore
Keith Austin
Brian Summers
Roger Stone
Barrie Williams
Sarindar Sahota
Rex Roberts

Officers in attendance:

Sharon Doak
Phil Davis
Ciara Mulligan
Liz Charlton
Olwen Dutton
Rose Poulter

Apologies:

Terry Dix
Roger Phillips
Paul Tilsley
Claude Bodenham
John Lines
Bob Badham
Steve Eling
Roger Evans