

WEST OF ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP

8th September 2006
The Council House, Bristol

Present:

Bath and North-East Somerset

Cllr Paul Crossley (in the Chair)
Cllr Sir Elgar Jenkins, OBE. (for Cllr Francine Haerberling)

Bristol City Council

Cllr Barbara Janke
Cllr Helen Holland
Cllr Richard Eddy

North Somerset Council

Cllr Alan Hockridge
Cllr John Crockford-Hawley
Cllr Peter Burden (for Cllr Mike Roe)

South Gloucestershire Council

Cllr John Calway
Cllr Pat Hockey (for Cllr Ruth Davis)
Cllr Roger Hutchinson

Social, Economic & Environmental Partners

John Savage, Executive Chairman, Business West
Steve Grainger, Biodiversity Partnership
Sonia Mills, North Bristol Trust
Faith Davey, The Care Forum

Observers

Liz McCarty, Assistant Director, GOSW
Ian Knight, South West Regional Development Agency

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. Ruth Davis, Cllr Francine Haerberling, Cllr Mike Roe, David Clarke, David Rapley, Ian Ducat, Sarah Hamilton-Foyn.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING ON 10th July 2006

RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising:

Queries were raised concerning progress with outstanding items – these were dealt with as part of the normal agenda items.

3. UPDATE ON PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY

The Chief Executive introduced this new item which he intended to be a regular item on future Board agendas. The purpose of the report was to identify the full range of Partnership activity and to highlight issues for action by the Board.

He indicated that there was a change in the deadline in relation to the New Growth Points initiative and that further information had been requested by September 18th. A total of 18 bids were going forward.

Partnership comments included:

Regional Infrastructure Fund (RiF)

There were a number of queries concerning this new initiative. Terry Wagstaff, Assistant Chief Executive, Bristol City Council, described the proposal in more detail explaining that pilot schemes in Poole and Exeter were being examined to establish the operational basis for such a Fund. The model is not yet complete and, if it proves feasible, it is planned that the fund will be operational in 2008.

It was pointed out that the RiF was not taking transport resources from the Regional Funding Allocation but was a completely new and additional initiative.

An update report would be submitted to the Partnership meeting in December.

Transport

The Board queried governance arrangements for the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN). The Chief Executive described the new arrangements which had recently been agreed with scheme delivery the responsibility of the local authorities and with co-ordination taking place at a sub regional level. Appointments to the permanent Joint Transport Team were moving forward.

It was agreed that a presentation on governance would be made to the Partnership in December. This would include the relationship between the various groups and also proposed scrutiny arrangements.

Waste Management and Planning Strategy

An update report was requested for December, to include consideration of governance and scrutiny arrangements.

Economy and Skills

In response to queries the Chief Executive explained that this group was now proceeding with the preparation of a Sub Regional Economic Study which would be reported to the Partnership in due course.

Housing

The Partnership felt that this section in the report underplayed the wide ranging work of this group. The Partnership noted the importance of the initiative relating to Gypsies and Travellers.

Rural Strategy

Ian Knight, SWRDA, stated that the Rural Renaissance scheme is funded by SWRDA but is not operating in a satisfactory manner in the West of England. He told the Partnership that there needs to be an improvement in performance and in engagement from Members. A review was currently underway relating to both the Rural Strategy Group and the fund. This would shortly be completed and proposals would be submitted to the Partnership in December for consideration.

PTEG

The Partnership discussed the possible future role for PTEG. It was agreed that members of PTEG should be requested to debate possible roles at the Groups meeting in early October. This feedback would form part of the overall Working Group review which would in turn be reported to the Partnership.

Environment

The Partnership requested that other options (as well as engagement with Sustainability West) should be examined with respect to environmental issues. The role of PTEG was part of this review.

Public Health

This work was still ongoing and would be reported in due course.

Communications

It was agreed to hold an annual Partnership conference starting in September 2007.

RESOLVED:

That the Partnership:

- 1) Notes the progress with Partnership activity.
- 2) Requests future reports with respect to the RiF; the governance arrangements for transport; the progress and arrangements for waste planning; the review of the Rural Strategy Group; the future role of PTEG; and options for developing a Partnership approach to environmental issues.
- 3) Agrees to hold an annual conference, commencing in September 2007.

4. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Partnership Board agreed that the draft representations on the draft Regional Spatial Strategy be approved and submitted to the Panel.

The Partnership had been requested to provide additional evidence regarding the Joint Study Area by the Regional Assembly. It was agreed that PTEG should consider a draft of the additional evidence before it is submitted to the Assembly.

The Partnership made a number of detailed comments which the Chief Executive undertook to take into account in preparing his report to PTEG.

5. BUSINESS CASE

A deputation from the Partnership is scheduled to meet with the Secretary of State Ruth Kelly on October 3rd in order to present the Business Case.

6. PARTNERSHIP OFFICE – STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

RESOLVED:

That the Partnership:

- 1) Approves the proposed staffing structure for WEPO.
- 2) Requests a finalised budget for 2006/07 for consideration in December.
- 3) Requests draft budget proposals for 2007/08 for consideration in December.