

CONSTITUTION OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP

A. Purpose of the Partnership

- 1 Realise the potential of the West of England and improvements in its economy, public infrastructure, environment and quality of life for all its residents.
- 2 Set clear long term direction to support the development and delivery of key strategies for the West of England.
- 3 Promote the interests of the West of England regionally, nationally and in Europe.
- 4 Add to the confidence that attracts and retains public and private investment.
- 5 Work holistically involving local authorities, public agencies and social, economic and environmental partners.
- 6 Provide the leadership and strategic capacity to secure the well-being of the West of England.

B. Membership of the Partnership

- 7 Three elected members from each of the four unitary authorities in the West of England, namely:
 - Bath & North East Somerset Council
 - Bristol City Council
 - North Somerset Council
 - South Gloucestershire CouncilThe elected members are nominated by each authority, annually in May.
- 8 Seven social, economic and environmental partners selected using the following criteria:
 - able to contribute to the key issues the Partnership will be addressing based on their skills and knowledge
 - able to make a top-rate personal contribution
 - drawn from across the West of England
 - achieving a balance of representation of partners across the partnership and its specialist groups.These nominations may be reviewed annually by the Partnership to confirm or vary membership from May each year.
- 9 Observers. One nominated annually in May by each of the following organisations:
 - South West Regional Assembly
 - Government Office for the South West
 - South West Regional Development Agency
 - Gloucestershire County Council
 - Somerset County Council
 - Wiltshire County Council

C. Specialist Groups in support of the Partnership

- 10 These are as follows:
 - Planning, Transport & Environment
 - Housing
 - Economy & Skills
 - Culture, Leisure & Tourism

11 The purpose and core membership of each Specialist Group is set out at Schedule A attached. The criteria at B8 above will be used in selecting social, economic and environmental partners. A Specialist Group may add to its core membership where this assists with its responsibilities.

12 The Partnership may vary the number and roles of its Specialist Groups.

D. West of England Initiative

13 Whilst not formally part of the Partnership, the West of England Initiative is part of a variety of arrangements the Partnership makes to engage and consult people in the West of England. It supports the Partnership by:

- debating significant current and future issues
- facilitating information sharing and networking
- advocating for the sub-region

14 Established by Business West, the Initiative comprises a wide range of business, public, private and voluntary and community organisations including members of the Partnership.

E. Convening and conducting meetings

15 Annually in May the Clerk to the Partnership shall publish the:

- diary of meetings and events for the forthcoming year, including venues
- membership of the Partnership and its Specialist Groups
- name and contact details for the Clerks to the Partnership, its Specialist Groups and Sub Groups

16 At the first meeting of the Partnership and its Specialist Groups and Sub Groups the appropriate Clerk shall:

- arrange for the election of a chair and vice chair for the year
- publish the diary of meetings and membership

17 All meetings of the Partnership, its Specialist Groups and Sub Groups shall:

- take place at least 4 times each year.
- consider any items submitted to the Clerk of the appropriate meeting by a member of that meeting or an adviser, as long as they are received at least three working days prior to despatch of the agenda.
- be convened by the appropriate Clerk five clear working days in advance by publishing an agenda, previous minutes and reports, unless the appropriate chair first approves the meeting of a paper(s) as urgent business. The agenda and reports shall be published on westofengland.org website.
- be public meetings and although they are not meetings of local authorities be governed by their provisions, including considering confidential matters in exempt session if required.
- allow appropriate substitutes for members of the Partnership, Specialist Groups and Sub Groups where their names are notified to the appropriate Clerk prior to the meeting.
- provide for the appropriate Clerk to take the minutes and publish and seek approval for them at the next meeting.

- have a quorum for any meeting of 40% of the voting membership (the elected members and social, economic and environmental partners).
 - have a standing item on the agenda for the receipt of written or oral representations (each normally of no longer than 5 minutes) from the public; these may be taken at the outset or during of the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.
 - be advised by the officers employed to support the Partnership or by officers of the local authorities, as appropriate.
 - arrive at decisions and recommendations by a simple majority of the voting members present; the Chair shall have a casting vote.
- 18 All members of the Partnership, its Specialist Groups and Sub Groups and their representative shall:
- commit to working together with partners for the future well-being of the West of England.
 - declare any personal or prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at a meeting; if a declaration is made they may be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst the item is considered.
 - maintain confidentiality of Partnership business where that is expressly required.
 - ensure that appropriate communication, consultation and conventional decision-making takes place at an appropriate time within their own organisations to seek to ensure the Partnership has the necessary support and any formal approval for the action it proposes.
 - be asked to indicate if they wish to continue in membership should they be absent from 3 consecutive meetings.

F. Planning, supporting and financing the work of the Partnership

- 19 One unitary authority takes the role of 'lead' authority and ensures legal, financial and other general specialist services to the Partnership.
- 20 The Partnership, including its Specialist Groups and Sub Groups, is advised and supported by its Chief Officer who leads a 'core' policy, support and research team. Officers of partner organisations complement this advice and support.
- 21 The 'core' team comprises officers employed by or seconded to the 'lead' unitary authority on behalf of the partnership.
- 22 The total costs of the 'core' team and the services provided by the 'lead' authority shall be recharged in equal parts to the four constituent unitary authorities by the Treasurer of the 'lead' authority.
- 23 Such charges are based on an annual service plan and budget considered and approved by the Partnership by 31 December each year, in advance of the forthcoming financial year.
- 24 Should the requirements of the Partnership for support change, reduce or be terminated the constituent unitary authorities will use their best endeavours to ensure that employment is found for all the staff affected.

G. Other provisions

- 25 This arrangement shall not constitute a partnership in law. Neither the West of England Partnership nor any of the Specialist Groups or Sub Groups shall have the power to take decisions that bind the member authorities or any other participants. Decisions that require to be ratified by the member authorities or participants shall be referred back to them to be taken.
- 26 The four unitary authorities will conclude a formal legal agreement to ensure clarity about the role, responsibilities and rights of the 'lead' authority and arrangements to protect the interests of each unitary authority. The agreement will deal with:
- budgeting, incurring and meeting expenditure and audit arrangements;
 - the employment of staff;
 - property and assets, including the current rights to use the premises at Wilder House, Bristol;
 - procurement and entering into contracts;
 - liabilities and insurance;
 - arrangements in the event of an authority wishing to withdraw from the Partnership or all authorities agreeing to terminate the Partnership;
 - Arbitration;
 - Force Majeure.
- 27 The drafting of the legal agreement will be assisted by the provisions of the current joint agreement between the authorities for the operation of the Joint Strategic Planning & Transportation Committee and the Joint Strategic Planning & Transportation Unit.

Draft: November 2004

Revised: December 2004. January 2005.

Final Version following 7 February 2005 Partnership

West of England Partnership

PURPOSE AND CORE MEMBERSHIP OF SPECIALIST GROUPS**1. Specialist Groups**

- Planning, transport & environment
- Housing
- Economy & skills
- Culture, leisure & tourism

2. Purpose

(At * insert the name of the appropriate group)

- Advise and act in support of the West of England Partnership and the local authorities on sub-regional (*) matters
- Recommend joint action on these issues to the Partnership and secure the outcomes approved
- Advocate responses on sub-regional (*) to influence regional and national policy and resource allocation
- Work with the other specialist groups of the Partnership on issues of common interest
- Initiate areas of co-operative working to further the interests of the West of England

3. Core Membership of Specialist Groups

- Elected members are nominated by each authority, annually in May each year.
- Social, economic and environmental partners may be reviewed annually by each Group using the criteria at B8 above, to confirm or vary membership from May each year.
- Observers are nominated by the relevant organisations, annually in May each year.
- Nomination of members and partners who are also members of the South West Regional Assembly is welcomed.
- A Specialist Group may add to its membership during the year, using the criteria at B8 above, where this assists with its responsibilities.

4. Membership of the Planning, Transport and Environment Group

- 5 elected members from each of the four unitary authorities including ones with responsibility for spatial planning and/or transport and/or environmental matters (including waste).
- 10 social, economic and environmental partners, one drawn from each of the following organisations:
 - Business West
 - CBI
 - Community Actions
 - Environmental interests (to be settled - further discussion with organisations in the sector)
 - First Group
 - Highways Agency

- South West TUC
 - Rail Industry (nomination to be settled taking into account the Rail Review and franchising)
 - Transport 2000
 - University of the West of England
- 7 observers, one drawn from each of the following organisations:
 - South West Regional Assembly
 - Government Office for the South West
 - South West Regional Development Agency
 - Gloucestershire County Council
 - Somerset County Council/Somerset Strategic Planning Conference (choice to be made once consultation concluded with Somerset CC)
 - Wiltshire County Council
 - Welsh Assembly

5. Membership of the Housing Group

- A Cabinet Member with responsibility for housing from each of the four unitary authorities.
- 3 social, economic and environmental partners, one drawn from each of the following organisations:
 - House Builders Federation
 - National Housing Federation
 - National Landlords Association: Wessex Branch
- 2 observers, drawn from the following organisations:
 - Government Office for the South West
 - Housing Corporation

6. Membership of the Economy & Skills Group

- up to 2 Cabinet Members, including one with responsibility for economic development and/or education & lifelong learning, from each of the four unitary authorities.
- 10 social, economic and environmental partners, one drawn from each of the following organisations:
 - Business West (inc. on behalf of the Federation of Small Businesses)
 - CBI
 - Connexions
 - Jobcentre Plus
 - Learning & Skills Council
 - NHS Workforce Confederation
 - Universities
 - Social Economy
 - South West Regional Development Agency
 - South West TUC
- 1 observer, drawn from the following organisation:
 - Government Office for the South West

7. Culture, Leisure & Tourism

- up to 2 Cabinet Members, including one with responsibility for culture and/or leisure and/or tourism, from each of the four unitary authorities.
- 7 social, economic and environmental partners, one drawn from each of the following organisations:
 - Arts Council of England – South West
 - Business West
 - Culture South West
 - Destination Bristol
 - English Heritage
 - Museum, Libraries and Archives Council
 - Sport England
- 2 observers, one drawn from each of the following organisations:
 - Government Office for the South West
 - South West Regional Development Agency