

25th MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS RURAL AFFAIRS FORUM - THURSDAY 6th MARCH 2008

PROGRESS AGAINST ACTIONS FROM 6th DECEMBER 2007 FORUM

Agenda Item	Actions/Decisions	Progress
<p>4. Matters Arising</p> <p>i <u>Update on West Midlands Economic Strategy and Draft Delivery Framework</u></p> <p>The West Midlands Economic Strategy and Draft Delivery Framework together with a 12 week consultation period were launched by Liam Byrne MP on 10th December. A workshop will be convened during the consultation period which runs until 22 February 2008.</p> <p>It was suggested that a further workshop would be useful in terms of rural proofing programmes and the delivery of services would be rolled out after April 2008 as part of delivering the new regional strategy.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alison McLean to develop a draft Forum response to the consultation for circulation to Members by end of January 2008. 2. Secretariat to arrange a further workshop in February/March 2008 in order to rural proof programmes and delivery mechanisms for the new strategy. 	<p>Report forwarded on 15th February 2008.</p> <p>Meeting with AWM 27 February to prepare next steps for internal and external rural proofing of WMES implementation.</p>
<p>ii <u>Rural Development Programme for England</u></p> <p>Ian Baker informed members that all the indicators show that the RDPE would be approved on 5th December. The programme is expected to be launched in mid January which is somewhat earlier than anticipated.</p> <p>Plans will be put in place to engage partners in more integrated delivery of the programme. Simon West has been seconded to AWM from the Forestry Commission to help Forestry and other parts of the programme to work together. Rob Williams was keen to find someone from Natural England to play a similar role.</p> <p>Forum Members will be invited to attend the Stakeholders Group in February 2008, at which there will be a half day presentation of the CAP Reform study.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Action Plans will be available before Christmas and will be circulated through the Forum. 2. Ian Baker to invite Forum members to engage in delivery of the programme. 3. Secretariat to invite Forum members to attend the Stakeholders Group. 	<p>RDPE received approval in Brussels. Launch scheduled 04 March at Avon Lounge, RASE Building, Stoneleigh</p> <p>AWM's RDPE Team have been actively engaging with partners in project design, development and for delivery post April 2008</p> <p>Stakeholder group to be formally set up post launch event.</p>

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<p>Leader – The registration of interest stage ended on 30th November. Twenty four registrations of interest were received. Ian Edwards will arrange a meeting of the RDPE partners group to determine which of the 24 first round bids received will be supported.</p>	<p>4. Nick Read to represent the Forum at the Steering Group for the Leader appraisal training.</p>	<p>Nick Read unable to attend. Other Forum members approached by Secretariat to represent the Forum at this meeting.</p>
<p>iv <u>Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF) Review</u></p> <p>Steve Holliday explained that the RSDF was being revised this year, in response to Government recommendations to strengthen delivery of Sustainable Development in the regions. It was last revised in July 2006. Recommendations for further review were submitted to the Regional Assembly on 5th December and have been approved by the Management Board at the Assembly. A wider review will be completed by April 2008. Forum members will be invited to engage and comment on the review.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Steve Holliday to provide details of the timetable for the review process via Secretariat by the end of February 2008. 2. Secretariat to invite Forum members to engage in the review process. 	<p>Update to Follow</p>
<p>v. <u>Sub-National Review Road Map</u></p> <p>The Sub-National Review was published in July 2007 to promote a single integrated strategy for regions, focusing on the Government's main challenges: Housing, Transport, Skills and Planning.</p> <p>AWM and GOWM are looking at how to deliver the new arrangements in the West Midlands. Discussions are still taking place to prepare a Road Map to set out the roll-out of the SNR in the region from now to 2010, when the Government expects it to be put in place. Further legislation is required to do this.</p> <p>Although there is a considerable amount of work being undertaken by regional players it is unclear as to how the SNR agenda will roll out across the region. Rose will be in a better position to feed back at the next Forum meeting.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rose Poulter to keep the Forum advised on any developments by circulating any updates via the Secretariat. 	<p>Rose Poulter will provide update at Meeting: Item 4 vii</p>

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<p>Alison McLean asked if there would be a transition board including someone with a rural brief. Rose confirmed that there was a transition board but did not know if this included a mechanism for Rural Proofing. Peter Davenport advised that Local Authority leaders were keen to be involved in the transition board and those from upper tier authorities would provide a rural perspective.</p>	<p>2. Nic Cole from GOWM to approach the GOWM Regional Director by 4 January 2008 to request a mechanism for rural proofing the SNR.</p>	<p>The consultation document for the SNR is expected to be launched in the week commencing 10 March 08 and a consultation event, opened by Liam Byrne is being arranged in Coventry for 17 March 2008.</p> <p>GOWM has taken the opportunity to contribute to the development of the consultation document and has taken that opportunity to raise the issue of rural proofing.</p> <p>The RAF now has an opportunity both to be represented at the consultation meeting and to respond to the SNR consultation as a regional partner with specialist knowledge of the rural aspects of the region.</p>
<p>5. CAP Reform and Land Based Sector Futures</p> <p>Ian Baker provided headlines from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Land-based Economy Futures Reform Study and explained CAP Health Check proposals from the European Commission</p> <p>Ian detailed some expected trends and some significant changes, particularly looking at how CAP Reform affects rural areas and the wider impacts on land based businesses.</p>		

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<p>The European Rural Group has received the report and is considering recommendations. The full study will be reported to the first meeting of the RDPE Stakeholders Group in the New Year.</p> <p>The full report is available at the new Rural Evidence Base on the AWM website: www.advantagewm.co.uk. Paper WMF24/5a is an Executive Summary of this report.</p>	<p>The Forum will be invited to join the RDPE Stakeholders Group. Secretariat will approach members.</p>	<p>RDPE Stakeholders Group to be formally set up post Launch event on 04 March</p>
<p>7. West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 3</p> <p>Dr Stefan Preuss (West Midlands Regional Assembly) set out the process for taking forward Phase 3 of the WMRSS revision, which is now set to commence. This is a partial revision of the WMRSS, focusing on selected underlying principles to be reviewed. It will build on the existing strategy and provide a framework to inform other strategies.</p> <p>The Draft Project Plan explains how the Regional Assembly proposes to carry out this phase and what topics will be considered. It is out for public consultation between 27 November 2007 and 18 January 2008. Members are invited to engage throughout the process and provide initial views and comments to the Regional Assembly to wmrss@wmra.gov.uk. Further contact details are available in Information Paper 45.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members who would like to take part in rural proofing the WMRSS Phase 3 Revision to contact Secretariat before the next Forum meeting. 2. Members to provide initial views and comments to the Regional Assembly. 	<p>List maintained by Secretariat, additions welcome. Technical work has begun on Critical Rural Services and group will be approached in early March 2008 for input and comment on draft report.</p> <p>Consultation responses reviewed and analysed, with subsequent additions and amendments being made to Project Plan prior to formal launch on 19 Mat 2008.</p>
<p>9. Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests.</p> <p>The Forestry Commission, together with Natural England, are leading the development of the Delivery Plan for England's Trees, Woods and Forests Strategy. They will be engaging with national and regional stakeholders over the next few months, prior to the planned publishing date of July 2008. It will be important to ensure that the Delivery Plan strengthens and adds value to the Regional Forestry Frameworks and does not constrain them in any way.</p>		

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<p>Bill requested that Forum members should feedback any issues they have regarding the process and content of the Plan. In response to questions he agreed that the Plan would need to link with biodiversity action plans and also that cross border issues were very relevant and would need to be taken into account, especially with regard to this region.</p>	<p>Forum members to feed back any issues regarding process and content of the Delivery Plan to the Secretariat by the March 2008 Forum.</p>	<p>Bill Heslegrave will indicate progress within Business Updates Paper WMF25 Information Paper 48</p>
<p>10. Any Other Business</p> <p>i <u>Black Country Urban Park</u></p> <p>Ian Baker encouraged members to vote for the Black Country bid for £50 million Big Lottery funding.</p> <p>iii <u>RAF Chairs Group</u></p> <p>Nick Read reported that Matthew Taylor MP will be attending the next meeting of the RAF Chairs Group, a quarterly meeting which takes place with Jonathan Shaw MP. Matthew Taylor is a LibDem MP for Cornwall, who is appointed to look at land issues in relation to planning and housing.</p> <p>RAF members with expertise in these areas were invited to attend the meeting. Paul Shevlin and Christopher Harvey expressed an interest in attending this meeting.</p>	<p>Members were encouraged to vote for the Black Country bid by telephone, text or via the internet.</p> <p>Secretariat to invite Forum members to engage in this meeting.</p>	<p>This bid was unsuccessful. However, elsewhere in the region 7 Sustrans projects will receive their share of £50million to promote sustainable transport and healthy living.</p> <p>Oral presentation to be given to the next WMRAF meeting.</p> <p>Matthew Taylor has called for evidence for his review on the Rural Economy and Affordable Housing and a number of the regional stakeholders are responding (by 07 March)</p>