
Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

5th March, 2008

Report of
Cllr Kevin Foster Cabinet Member (City Development)

Title
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies - West Midlands Local Government Association -
Regional Planning Partnership

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This reports sets out details of the work of West Midlands Regional Planning Partnership over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the City Council continues to be represented at meetings of the Regional Planning Partnership so that the City Council can play a full role in supporting the work of the Region and ensuring those matters of particular interest to Coventry and our immediate Sub – Region are fully discussed and considered in relation to the planning of the region.
- 2.2 That given the nature of the issues being discussed at the Regional Planning Partnership it is appropriate that elected members continue to be appointed to it.

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

- 3.1 The Regional Planning Partnership undertakes duties in relation to strategic planning on behalf of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. This is the body responsible for preparing and revising the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This is the statutory planning framework within which the Coventry Local Development Framework (our statutory plan, replacing the Coventry Development Plan) must be produced.
- 3.2 The existing RSS was originally published as Regional Planning Guidance in 2004. However when publishing it the Secretary of State indicated that an early review of certain aspects should be undertaken. This work is being undertaken in 3 phases and last year saw the completion of Phase 1 – The Black Country and substantial work on Phase 2 which includes cross cutting policies on Climate Change, Sustainable Communities, Air Quality and Sustainable Construction and substantial changes to the chapters on the overall strategy, Communities for the Future, Prosperity for All, Waste Policies, Transport and Monitoring.

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

- 4.1 This year in particular the revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) has had important implications for the future of Coventry. This sets the framework for the future development of our area. The initial proposals presented to the Partnership would have restricted the ability of the City to attract new jobs and retailing. We were able to speak against these and were successful in getting the Partnership to agree newer, higher targets to reflect our ambition to transform the City. Similarly we were successful in ensuring the transport priorities took account of Coventry's needs.
- 4.2 As a result of representations made by elected members from Coventry lifetime home standards were included in the draft RSS. The West Midlands is one of the first regions to look to adopt this on a regional basis.
- 4.3 The decisions taken around the RSS will have a major impact on the city and local people. It is therefore vital that a strong representation is present from the city council. Given the nature of the issues concerned it is also important that those representatives are elected members from the City Council to ensure democratic accountability.

5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

- 5.1 Coventry City Council's representatives on this Partnership are Councillors Foster, Ridley and McNicholas. Councillor Arrowsmith was a representative until May 2007 and did not attend either of the two meetings held during the period of November 2006 up to May 2007. In the period November 2006 and October 2007 inclusive, 6 meetings were held and Councillors Foster and McNicholas both attended 2 meetings. Councillors Mrs Bigham and Noonan each attended one meeting as alternative representatives.
- 5.2 There is no remuneration associated with the appointment.

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper	Location
Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies	CH 59