



Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

20th March 2013

Report of
Councillor John Mutton

Title
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – West Midlands Councils

1 Purpose of the Report

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

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council should review its membership of West Midlands Councils.

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

- 3.1 West Midlands Councils was set up to bring together all 33 local authorities in the West Midlands Region provide a strong, coherent voice for local government and to promote the West Midlands on regional, national and international issues (particularly in Europe). It has replaced the former West Midlands Leaders Board and West Midlands Local Government Association and it is funded through subscriptions from its members and income from services.
- 3.2 West Midlands Councils (WMC) aims to facilitate local authorities working together at a sub-regional or regional level where a collective approach would bring about economic, social and environmental prosperity and give added value. WMC works with a range of partners including the Local Government Employers and the Local Government Association.
- 3.3 During the last year Birmingham City Council ended its membership of WMC and this, plus the reductions in local government finance, has resulted in its members undertaking a comprehensive review of the costs and benefits of the WMC including the costs of closing the organisation completely.
- 3.4 Each local authority is currently being asked to consider a number of options for membership but there is a general agreement that a residual WMC body needs to remain for legal and financial reasons and that there is a need for any remaining to have a simplified structure and a significant reduction in the requirement for meetings.

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

- 4.1 There is now a reduced need for formal regional working with the ending of the requirements for the statutory production of regional strategies and so there is less need for

the co-ordination of local government at a regional level and has meant that the role of the WMC has changed. Coventry City Council is making less use of the facilities offered by the WMC and is working more closely with other local authorities at a sub-regional level through the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sub-Regional Programme and with the other West Midlands Metropolitan Councils through the West Midlands Joint Committee.

- 4.2 Current proposals for the future of West Midlands Councils include the continuation of the WMC regional employer function and a strategic co-ordination/policy function – at a reduced overall subscription rate. Coventry City Council has provisionally indicated to West Midlands Councils that it would wish to continue its membership of the regional employer organisation but would not wish to continue to fund a strategic co-ordination function but that this is subject to a formal Council decision.
- 4.3 A further report on future membership of the West Midlands Councils will be produced for consideration by Council shortly.
- 4.4 Coventry City Council is also a member of the Local Government Association (LGA). This is a national organisation that is funded and operates separately from the WMC.

5 What Financial Contribution Does the Council Make to this Organisation

- 5.1 The cost of annual membership of West Midlands Council for 2012/13 was £43.012 (net of vat).

6 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

- 6.1 During the year 2012 two meetings of the West Midlands Councils Full Council were held. Coventry City's representatives on the West Midlands Councils are Councillors J Mutton and Duggins. Councillor Mutton tendered his apologies for both meetings and Councillor Duggins did not attend either meeting.
- 6.2 There is no remuneration associated with the appointment.

List of background papers

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Description of paper	Location
Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies	CH59