

**EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES FROM FRIDAY 20TH JANUARY 2006**

Held at: PERA Innovation Park, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray.

CHAIR	Cllr David Parsons, Leicestershire County Council
VICE CHAIR	Graham Bennett, Engage East Midlands
CHIEF EXECUTIVE	Nigel Rudd

Cllr Parsons, EMRA Chair, welcomed Members to the meeting.

Tribute to Phillip Whitehead – Cllr Parsons paid tribute on behalf of the Assembly to Phillip Whitehead and gave details of the Memorial Service. There was a one minute silence as a mark of respect.

1.1 Apologies

1.1.1 Local Government Members

Cllr R Blackmore, Cllr J Carter, Cllr K Creed, Cllr T Freer, Cllr A Noskwith, Cllr Notley, Cllr M Rudulovic, Cllr A Roberts, Cllr Seery, Cllr E Watts, Cllr Joan Taylor, Mr R K Bali, Cllr R Blackmore, Cllr S Bray, A Davani, Mr T Egginton, Cllr Grant, Cllr Kirkham, Cllr P Larratt, Cllr D McCrossan, R McKenzie, Cllr B Newton, Cllr A Noskwith, Cllr Quigley, Cllr Radulovic, Mr P Reichelt, Cllr R Reichhold, Cllr R Russell

1.1.2 Economic, Social and Environmental Partners

Frank Berry, Tim Garfield, C Heaton-Harris MEP, Mr P Stothard

1.2 Declarations of interest

Cllr Geoff Carlile, Derby & Derbyshire County SSP, Alliance SSP and East Midlands Tourism - in respect of Items 4 and 11.

Cllr Geoff Stevens, emda Board Member - in respect of Item 11.

Parvin Ali, emda Board Member - in respect of Item 11.

1.2.1 Matters Arising

1.3.1 There were no matters arising

1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting 21st October 2005

- 1.3.1 The Minutes were passed as a true and accurate record after amendment to section 9.3.1. 'County' to be replaced by 'City'.

2. Questions to the Chair or Nominee

- 2.1 The agenda for the meeting had been structured to enable written questions to be put to the Chair of the Assembly ahead of the meeting.
- 2.2 A formal response from Cllr Jim Harker, Northamptonshire County Council on behalf of the Regional Housing, Planning and Transport Board, was made to a question received from:
Cllr Christopher Notley, (Question and Answer is attached as Appendix 1)
- 2.3 A formal response from Martin Traynor, on behalf of the Regional Scrutiny Board, was made to a question received from: Cllr Mike Edward, Deputy Leader of Nottingham City Council. (Question and Answer is attached as Appendix 2)

3. Report from Chair of the East Midlands Regional Assembly

- 3.1. Cllr Parsons, EMRA Chairman, provided a summary of the issues considered by the EMRA Board at their meeting on 16th December 2005, and gave an update on EMRA activities since the last full Assembly meeting on 21st October 2005.
- 3.2 Ministerial / ODPM Issues
Cllr Parsons, reported that a draft response was in preparation, to the David Miliband Letter. It would be sent to the Minister by the end of January 2006.
- 3.3 English Regions Network
Cllr Parsons and the Chief Executive of EMRA attended the launch of the Lisbon Project Brochure at an English Regions Network event in Brussels. It was reported that the conference had been very successful.
- 3.4 EMRA/LGEM Separation
At the Meeting of the EMRA Board on the 16th December 2005, delegated authority was given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of EMRA to resolve any outstanding matters with regard to the separation. Cllr Parsons stated that the proposals were going extremely well and it was now down to detail and the separation would be in place by the 1st of April 2006.
- 3.5 Sustainable Design Competition
The awards ceremony took place on the 7th December at Boughton Pumping station, it was well attended and the submissions to the competition were on display at PERA. Cllr Parsons congratulated all who were involved in the competition.

3.2 Questions from Members

3.2.1 There were no questions from Members

3.3 Resolution

3.3.1 Members noted the contents of the Report

4. **Report of the Regional Scrutiny Board**

4.1 Mr Martin Traynor, Chair, Regional Scrutiny Board introduced this report.

4.2 Introduction

4.2.1 Members were invited to note the issues considered by the Regional Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 12th January 2006 and the current activities being undertaken in order to deliver on the 2005/2006 scrutiny work programme.

4.3.1 Martin Traynor thanked *emda* for the advanced draft copy of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) to enable its consideration at the RSB meeting on 12th January 2006. The RSB had made a series of recommendations to *emda*, and were pleased to report that the majority of recommendations had been included in the draft RES. Further comments on the draft RES were to be submitted by 27th January 2006.

4.3.2 Advised by the RSB, Cllr David Parsons, EMRA Chair, would offer the Assembly's endorsement of the RES when appropriate. Martin Traynor further welcomed *emda's* support of tourism with an investment of £14 million over 3 years from April 2005.

4.3.3 Cllr Peter Valentine was thanked for chairing the Regional Tourism Strategy scrutiny panel. The Scrutiny Panel was also thanked for their hard work and commitment in finalising the review.

4.4 Questions from Members

4.4.1 Cllr Geoff Carlile, Derbyshire County Council, welcomed the Scrutiny Tourism Report and its emphasis on partnership working, which is highlighted throughout the document. However, he was concerned that roles and responsibilities would be removed from Local Authorities and put into new Destination Management Partnerships (DMP's). He also was concerned about future funding of DMP's.

4.4.2 Martin Traynor responded that nationally, Local Authorities invest around £120 million a year into tourism and felt this was a considerable investment, he was also aware that other core functions took priority over tourism in some regions.

Cllr Peter Valentine noted the concern of partners regarding the future sustainability of DMPs and stated that it was an issue addressed in the report.

4.4.3 Cllr Mike Edwards, Nottingham City Council, stated some recommendations in the Scrutiny Review appear rather process orientated

and asked if this was due to the remit set out by the RSB. He also stated that he felt that the RES understated tourism with regard to investment from creative and culture industries i.e. new contemporary arts centre.

- 4.4.4 Cllr Peter Valentine responded by highlighting the remit was a focus upon the effective delivery of the Tourism Strategy and so consideration was given to, for example, the effectiveness of partnership working, communications and structures.
- 4.4.5 Martin Traynor stated that the report recommended that the important role of tourism should continue to be emphasised through the RES. He further stated that the RSB had previously highlighted that tourism needed a stronger reference in the initial consultation draft of the RES and that this issue had been addressed in the latest draft.

4.5 Comments from Members

- 4.5.1 Marion Brighton, North Kesteven District Council applauded the Regional Tourism Report, however, felt that it should have been more widely distributed. The report highlighted funding through *emda* and SSP. She felt that if your particular area SSP did not consider tourism a priority then the funding went elsewhere. She stated that there was a need for the funding issue to be resolved.
- 4.5.2 Peter Valentine responded by highlighting the importance of effective communications and stated that there was a need for close co-operation between all parties involved in tourism. The role of SSP's in the delivery of the Tourism Strategy was an issue considered by the Scrutiny Panel Review.
- 4.5.3 Ted Cassidy, Chair, Culture East Midlands, stated that the RES should show the region, was a flourishing region in which culture and creative industries were included. It was important to attract talented people who could raise the economy in the region.

4.6 Resolution

Members accepted the recommendations to endorse the RES and noted the issues considered by the Regional Scrutiny Board at its meeting on the 12th January 2006, and current activities being undertaken in order to deliver on the 2005/2006 Scrutiny work programme.

5 Report of the Regional Housing, Planning and Transport Joint Board

- 5.1 This report was introduced by Cllr Jim Harker, Northamptonshire County Council and Chair of the Joint Board

5.2 Introduction

- 5.2.1 This report highlighted the current work of the Joint Board.

5.3 Comments from Members:

Simon Galton, Harborough District Council, asked if the Assembly was aware of the latest ODPM population and household district based trends. Harborough has a 40% increase in dwellings, this contradicts the vision and objectives of the Regional Plan by encouraging unsustainable development patterns which would lead to a massive increase in green field development and this in turn would undermine the re-generation of Leicester City. He also stated that he had a real concern in the way the document was being put together.

5.3.1 Additional time has been given to Leicestershire to consider growth points and some section 4.4 Authorities. Is everyone else being given additional time too?

5.3.2 Cllr Jim Harker responded that a full account of the representations will be considered at the 16th of February meeting, and reported back to the Full Assembly.

5.3.3 Andrew Pritchard stated that no extra time had been given to Leicestershire to consider growth points, but it had been requested that those authorities that were considering responding to the ODPM consultation by the end of March 2006, should also keep the Regional Assembly informed.

5.3.4 Gary Porter, South Holland District Council, reported on affordable housing - that the Housing Corporation had received £200 million from private bidding rounds and about £151 million had been allocated.

5.3.5 He asked if the Assembly could write on behalf the Assembly to the Housing Corporation, ODPM and GOEM to express our concern that £49 million was still unspent and lobby that some of the monies should come into the East Midlands.

5.3.6 Cllr Harker confirmed that the matter would be investigated and progress reported.

5.4 Resolutions

5.4.1 Members noted the contents of this report.

6. Report of the Regional Policy Board

6.1 John Freeman, Chair of the Regional Policy Board, introduced this report.

6.2 Introduction

6.2.1 The report summarised the main issues considered by the Regional Policy Board at its meeting on 2nd December. It also provided an update on some activities and initiatives undertaken to support the Board's work programme. John Freeman presented Members with the results of the sustainable design competition.

6.3 Questions from Members:

6.3.1 There were no questions from Members.

6.4 Resolutions:

6.4.1 Members noted the issues addressed by the Regional Policy Board and the activities being undertaken.

7. Report of the Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands

7.1 Introduction:

7.1.1 Roger Helmer MEP, Chris Heaton-Harris MEP and Derek Clark MEP had submitted written reports to the Assembly which were distributed to Members prior to the meeting.

7.2 **Roger Helmer**

In addition to his written report, updated the Assembly on the British Presidency, Budget, Turkish Accession and Hong Kong Trade Talks.

7.3 **Derek Clark MEP**

In addition to his written report updated the Assembly on EU Budgets, and British Presidency.

7.4 Comments from Members

7.4.1 Elizabeth Donnelly, TUC, directed her question to Roger Helmer and requested that issues and items concerning the East Midlands should be included in the MEP's reports and for the MEP's to steer away from their personal political agendas.

7.4.2 Elizabeth Donnelly was unable to have a question answered concerning health foods natural supplements due to Chris Heaton-Harris not being in attendance at the meeting. She suggested that if MEP's submit written reports they should attend Full Assembly meetings so that they are available to answer questions.

7.4.3 Katrina Bull, Nottingham City Council, responded to Derek Clark's comments concerning signing off of accounts. Cllr Bull stated that the Auditors had not signed off the European Union accounts due to member states not providing audit trails for their own expenditure.

7.4.4 Gordon Lammie, Higher Education, asked why we have this item on the Agenda as there is no reference to the East Midlands. He suggested that MEP's should be instructed explicitly to report on matters that relate specifically to the East Midlands.

7.4.5 Cllr David Parsons, Chair, responded that he would bring such matters to the attention of the MEPs.

8. GOEM Report – Jane Todd, Regional Director GOEM

8.1 A written report from Jane Todd, Regional Director GOEM, was distributed to Members prior to the meeting.

- 8.1 In addition to the written report Jane Todd gave the following update:
- 8.2 Local Area Agreements
- 8.2.1 The 5 East Midland areas submitted redrafts of their proposal as part of round 2 in November 2005. Area teams within GOEM are identifying and taking forward freedom and flexibilities requests and negotiating reward targets. Final agreements are due to be signed off by March 2006.
Work is underway to put into place structures and processes for agreement, for implementation in April 2007.
- 8.3 Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI)
- 8.3.1 LEGI bids have been received in the region, one from Lincoln and two collaborative bids from each of the 3 cities, Derby, Leicester and Nottingham and the 3 coalfield districts, Ashfield, Bolsover and Mansfield. Initial assessment was undertaken on 22nd December and a feedback letter was sent to each individual bidder thereafter.
- 8.3.2 The full panel will be held on 31st January at which the bids will present and following which the panel will decide a regional ranking order.
- 8.4 Rural
- 8.4.1 East Midlands Rural Delivery framework, GOEM has led a Regional Steering Group which has developed a consultation draft of the East Midlands Framework. The consultation period is from mid January until April 2006. Members were urged to respond to the draft consultation.
- 8.5 Questions from Members
- 8.5.1 Simon Galton, Harborough District Council, asked when we will know about funding levels in the LAA and why in two tier areas, money is being given to County Councils, however statutory responsibility for delivery of crime reduction strategy and achieving targets are with District Councils.
- 8.5.2 Jane Todd responded, that she was unable to give a definite date for funding levels for Local Area Agreements, and was aware of the difficulties surrounding this. There is a Community Safety review underway which may be able to give more information on how it will work in the future. At present there is an excellent partnership of Councils working together.
- 9. Report of the Director of Public Health for the East Midlands**
- 9.1 A written update was supplied from Lindsey Davies, Director of Public Health for the East Midlands and an improving Health in the East Midlands Report was distributed to Members prior to the meeting.
- 9.2.1 Lindsey Davies stated that the East Midlands Public Health Task Force had been established and met in November.

- 9.2.2 Organ donation- Lindsey Davies reported that, through ENRICH, the EU regional 'health' network of which East Midlands is a founder member, work was being undertaken to better identified approached to organ donation in Andalusia, where organ donation rates were particularly high.
- 9.2.3 Public Health for the East Midlands had received external funding through the lottery , the sum of £120,000 to continue work on Arts and Health including employment of a specific project worker
- 9.3 Supplementary Question – on Incapacity Benefit – Lindsey Davies responded to the question posed by Mike Edwards, Nottingham City Council, indicating that broader investigation was required as there were many factors which would come into play.
- 9.4 Lindsey Davies stated that at the July Full Assembly Meeting she would launch her Annual Regional Director of Public Health Report, which would include in depth coverage of mental health issues.
- 9.5 Questions from Members:
No questions from members
- 9.4 Resolutions
Members Noted the contents of the Report.

10. Business Plan

- 10.1 Introduction
The report informed the East Midlands Regional Assembly that the Assembly is required to submit a business plan in January 2006 for consideration by the Government Office East Midlands and subsequently for approval of the final document by the ODPM in March 2006.
- 10.2 Nigel Rudd reported to the Members that the Business Plan was written to a very precise format required by ODPM and it was not in its 'final' draft format as it still had to go through GOEM and ODPM.
- 10.3 Nigel Rudd pointed out key points that have changed from the last Business Plan: -
Budgets – The base budget for 2007/8 is being used as an indicative figure in 2008/9.
The Regional Housing Board – It was anticipated that the Regional Housing Board function would merge with the Housing, Planning and Transport Joint Board by September 2006.
- 10.4 Questions from Members
- 10.4.1 Lucy Care, Derby City Council, asked about energy specification and emergency planning within region.
- 10.4.2 Simon Galton, Harborough District Council, asked about the NEMA master plan and was there a revised timetable for production.

10.4.3 Paul Hodgkinson, CBI asked about priorities, performance indicators and alignment of statements.

10.5 Nigel Rudd responded that the list of priorities and statements set out in the Business Plan sit within the context of the Integrated Regional Strategy and overall objectives. The SMART targets are in the activity areas of the Business Plan.

10.5.1 Key performance indicators were used as a tracking device by EMRA Board.

10.5.2 The Regional Policy Board have the lead on energy, however, this issue did relate to the Regional Resilience Board Chaired by GOEM. He offered to refer this matter to the Regional Resilience Board as required.

10.5.3 Andrew Pritchard confirmed that the Joint Board would be making a response on the Draft NEMA Master plan consultation.

10.6 Resolutions

Members agreed to note the process to be adopted in respect of the Ministerial approval of the EMRA Business Plan 2006/9.

Members agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of EMRA to make any final changes to the Business Plan 2006/9 and submit to GOEM/ODPM accordingly.

11. ENDORSEMENT OF REGIONAL FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

11.1 This report was introduced by Jane Todd, GOEM, the report updated members on the RFA process and asked Members to endorse the Draft Advice in Appendix 1.

Jane Todd gave a presentation and overview of the Regional Funding Allocations Report and stated that the report would be finalized by 31st January 2006.

11.2 Cllr David Parsons stated that he wished to move an amendment to the report as follows:-

11.3 Motion Proposed

Reference page 15, A46 'In the meantime Regional Partners urgently intend to explore with government the alternative approaches to funding this scheme as well as examining the alternative engineering options that might deliver similar benefits at a reduced cost'.

11.3.1 The motion was Seconded and Agreed.

Following discussions a second motion was proposed.

- 11.4 Motion Proposed - Debbie Mason, Rushcliffe Borough Council, proposed a second amendment, (recommendation 7.2 within Report) regarding the A46 which she stated was an arterial road and of a dangerous nature.
- 11.4.1 'The Regional Assembly agrees to use its best endeavors to seek additional funding for the A46 improvement in order that it can be constructed in accordance with the current published timetable'.
- 11.4.2 The Motion was Seconded and agreed. The report would be reworded to reflect both amendments.
- 11.5 Comments from members
- 11.5.1 Ernie White, Blaby District Council stated that he and his Council were unable to endorse the full advice of the Regional Funding Allocations report due to their long standing opposition to the Earl Shilton bypass.
- 11.5.2 Jeff Moore said that it had been a difficult process and congratulated all involved in the RFA.
- 11.6 Recommendation
- 11.6.1 Members Accepted and endorsed the Draft Regional Funding Allocation Advice contained in Appendix 1 subject to the changes agreed in reference to the A46.
- 12.0 Cllr Parsons thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
QUESTIONS TO CHAIR OR NOMINEE
FRIDAY 20th January 2006

QUESTION TO CHAIR OR NOMINEE

Question Received from Cllr Christopher Notley, Federation of East Midlands Associations of Local Councils

“Regional Funding Allocation”

“Observing that in the Eastern Sub Area RFA Advice (Draft Final) it is stated that the A1073 Spalding to Eye improvements are an investment priority, can the Joint Board assure the Assembly that the Eastern Region through which part of this road passes, is giving its improvement equal priority?”

RESPONSE:

The A1073 (Spalding to Eye improvement) is reflected as a priority in the East Midlands Draft RFA Advice (Item11, Appendix 1). A start date of 2007 is proposed for the East Midlands side of the project with completion within 5 years.

The scheme is also recognised as priority in the East of England’s Draft RFA Advice. However, due to problems with programming spend in the early years of the East of England’s preferred package, a start date of 2011 is proposed on the Peterborough side of the project.

In considering both Regions’ advice, the Secretary of State will need to consider whether the scheme can be implemented in stages. Alternatively, any slippage in the delivery of other schemes in either Region may enable the Peterborough side to be funded concurrently with the Lincolnshire element of the project (which could involve a temporary inter-regional virement of funds).

Cllr Jim Harker
Chair, Housing, Planning & Transport Joint Board

EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
QUESTIONS TO CHAIR OR NOMINEE
FRIDAY 20th January 2006

QUESTION TO CHAIR OR NOMINEE

Question received from Cllr Michael Edwards, Deputy Leader of Nottingham City Council

“How many people in the East Midlands are claiming Incapacity Benefit”?

“Are more people claiming this benefit than in previous years and how does the trend in the East Midlands compare with other regions in Britain? What are the main health reasons given for claiming Incapacity Benefit and does the profile of these reasons differ from those of say 10 or 20 years ago? Which parts of the region can offer best practice in getting claimants back to work?”

RESPONSE:

- 1. How many people in the East Midlands are claiming Incapacity Benefit?**

Using May 2005 data (the latest available), the total number of Incapacity Benefit claimants was 153,100¹. This represents 5.9%² of the working age population.

Please note all the data is contained in the Appendix 1 to this note.

- 2. Are more people claiming this benefit than in previous years?**

Between 1997 and 2005, the numbers of IB claimants in the East Midlands, as a percentage of the working age population, has increased by 2.7%.

¹ All benefit figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.

² Populations used to calculate rates come from the Labour Force Survey four quarter average.

The total numbers of IB claimants has increased by 6.3% from 144,000 to 153,100.

3. How does the trend in the East Midlands compare with other regions in Britain?

At the national level, between 1997 and 2005, there has been a slight increase in the total number of IB claimants but a decrease in the numbers of IB claimants as a percentage of the working age population. During this period, some regions have experienced an increase in claimants while other regions have seen the number of IB claimants fall.

In areas with high levels of IB claimants, there has been a decline in the number of Incapacity Benefit claimants as a percentage of the working age population, i.e. Wales (-12.2%), North West (-9.8%), North East (-8.7%).

Other regions have seen an increase in the number of IB claimants as a percentage of the working age population, albeit from a lower initial base, i.e. West Midlands (2.4%), East of England (6.4%), South East (8.4%), South West (8.8%).

4. What are the main health reasons given for claiming Incapacity Benefit?

The most common health condition for claiming Incapacity Benefit in all regions is mental and behavioural disorders followed by diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissues.

In the East Midlands, 34.6% of all IB claims are on the grounds of mental and behavioural disorders, 22.7% of IB claims are as a result of diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissues.

5. Does the profile of these reasons differ from those of say 10 or 20 years ago?

We do not have access to data dating back 10 or 20 years. However, compared against 1997 data, the profile of health conditions of the IB claimants in 2005 has changed, specifically:

- A reduction in claims due to diseases of the circulatory system (all regions).
- A reduction in claims due to diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissues (all regions).
- A marked increase in claims due to mental and behavioural disorders (all regions).

6. Which parts of the region can offer best practice in getting claimants back to work?

Following discussion with colleagues at the Regional Office of Job Centre Plus, Derbyshire is recognised as an area of best practice in supporting IB claimants back to work. This is a result of implementing reforms and support through the 'Pathway to Work' pilot that provides an enhanced service, including advice and guidance from personal advisors, for IB claimants in their return to work,

Initial Pilot Areas (2003)

Derbyshire
East Lancashire
Essex
Gateshead
Rhondda
Somerset
West Glasgow

In view of the encouraging early results of these pilots, it was agreed to further extend the programme to include a further 14 areas in 3 waves (based on Jobcentre Plus District Areas). Although Derbyshire was a pilot for this programme, the subsequent extension of 'Pathways to Work' did not cover any further areas from this region. The selection of additional areas was a Ministerial decision made on the basis of the density of IB claimants in proportion to the working age population.

A Green Paper is expected in the coming weeks that will detail Government proposals and may announce the further extension to the 'Pathway to Work' programme.

Martin Traynor
Chair, Regional Scrutiny