



**EAST MIDLANDS
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

*· Progress Through ·
Partnership*

UPDATE

JULY 2001

ENGLISH REGIONS NETWORK

COUNCILLOR Robert Jones, Chair of the East Midlands Regional Assembly, was elected Chair of the English Regions Network (ERN) at its AGM in Harrogate on July 5.



Cllr. Robert Jones

Councillor Jones will hold the position for 12 months. The new vice-chair of the ERN is the Chair of the South West Regional Assembly, Councillor Chester Long.

The East Midlands term of office comes ahead of the proposed White Paper on the future of regional governance, which is expected later this year. The recent announcement of funding and enhanced scrutiny roles already ensures changes in the roles of the eight English regional assemblies.

The East Midlands Regional Assembly will provide the ERN Secretariat at the Assembly's offices in Melton Mowbray.

MELTON MOWBRAY VENUE FOR NEXT ASSEMBLY MEETING

THE next meeting of the East Midlands Regional Assembly will be held at PERA's conference centre at Melton Mowbray on Friday September 7, 2001.

'STRONGER FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL VIEWS'

Minister's announcement gives green light to Assembly funding

GOVERNMENT MINISTER Nick Raynsford has formally announced to Parliament that Assemblies will receive £15m to help them to strengthen and expand their role in representing the interests of the regions.



Nick Raynsford

Answering a Parliamentary Question Mr Raynsford said the Government had received a very positive response from all the major regional players, to the consultation on strengthening the regions that the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor launched earlier this year.

He said: 'I am therefore announcing the go-ahead for the new £15 million fund for regional chambers (Assemblies) - £5 million this year, and in each of the next two years.

'This will help them to enhance their role in providing regional input to, and scrutinising, the plans and work of the Regional Development Agencies, and to develop their position as the strategic focal point for the regions. The aim is to provide a stronger framework for representing the regions' views, not to impose burdensome new procedures on the RDAs or others.'

Mr Raynsford said that in 2001-2, £500,000 would be available for each Assembly to develop its scrutiny role, with similar funding available for each of the following two years. The deadline for receiving bids from the regions has been extended to 29 July.

There was also a further £1 million set aside for each of the three years for initiatives supported collectively by the English regions.

STOP PRESS....

The East Midlands Regional Assembly proposals were submitted well in advance of the deadline of July 29 and drafted in line with Government guidelines. Notification as to whether the bid has been accepted is expected very shortly.

'SD CHALLENGE'

INITIATIVE PROMPTS POSITIVE RESPONSE ACROSS THE REGION

REACTION to the Regional Assembly's call to the public and private sector organisations to rise to the challenge of creating sustainable and inclusive communities is encouraging.

Interest in the initiative has come from local authorities, government agencies, higher education and the business sector. The region's second Sustainable Development Conference to be held in February 2002, will consider the responses and several organisations are to be invited to make presentations on policies and initiatives.

Around 1000 circulars were distributed across the region in June. The information focussed on the crucial role that Sustainable Development has at the heart of the East Midlands' Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS), the policy framework for economic, environmental, social and spatial development issues in the region.

- Further information on the SD Challenge is available from the Assembly's Communications Officer, Simon Brian on 01664 502563 or by email to simon@emrlga.clara.net

LIFE LONG LEARNING EVENT PLANNED FOR SEPTEMBER

THE Regional Assembly's new Life Long Learning Task Group is to invite seminar delegates to help map out its agenda at an event being planned for September 21.

The Task Group, which held its first meeting at Matlock on July 17, will invite learning professionals, both funding bodies and deliverers, to its event. The event will identify areas where a strong regional influence can bring benefits, e.g. how to engage non-traditional learners.

Councillor The Honorable Joan Taylor of Nottinghamshire County Council and Chair of the East Midlands Regional Local Government Association, is Chair of the new task group. Dates and details will be circulated over the next few weeks but further information is available from Myrt Bradley on 01664 502555 or by email to myrt@emrlga.clara.net

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Emda aims for 'e-east midlands'

ALMOST everyone in the East Midlands will be able to have access to the internet within three years in a plan drawn up by East Midlands Development Agency to make the region one of the most online in Europe.

Emda will work closely with the Assembly and a wide range of partners to see that all sectors of the community have access to ICT. This will include making all contact and business with local councils possible electronically by the middle of the decade and almost all people in the region possessing information technology skills by 2010. Schools, colleges and businesses will have some of the fastest access to the Internet available to them.

It is the first time that the East Midlands has had an all-encompassing information and communications technology (ICT) strategic framework designed to improve the economy. It aims to show how computers and other technologies can make business, education and government more efficient and improve people's skills to enable them to get better jobs.

Bryan Carr, one of the board members at East Midlands Development Agency with responsibility for ICT issues, said: 'We want to make the East Midlands a region that is among the foremost in Europe in ICT skills and usage by 2010.'

'ICT can underpin and enhance business development; it can help with flexible and lifelong learning upon which effective workforces are built; and it can make public administration faster. So it can play a leading role in helping the East Midlands to become a more competitive region within Europe, with the ripple effect of improving prosperity and the quality of life.'

E-champions will be appointed, covering e-business, e-learning and e-government, with the aim of launching a major campaign of raising people's awareness of the benefits of ICT and how they can take advantage of it. A strategic framework for action sets the following targets:

- Create a focal point for information on ICT such as where to find help, where there are learning resources or what the latest technologies can do
- By 2004, nine in ten people in the region will have access available to the internet at home, work or in their local communities
- By 2005, every business, school and college will have access to sufficient network capacity that would, for example, enable videos to be downloaded on demand
- By 2005, all interactions with local councils will be capable of being carried out electronically
- By 2005, 19 in 20 businesses will conduct most of their work with customers and suppliers online and nine in ten people in the region will have basic IT skills and high quality e-based learning material available to them.

The research for the East Midlands ICT strategic framework was carried out by a team of consultants, headed by Philip Sowden, director of specialist consultancy, Technopolis.
