

# **SOUTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

## **MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT GROUP MEETING**

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September, Dennett House, Taunton**

### **Present:**

Pat Hockey (Chair)	South Gloucestershire Council
David Beardsley	Social & Economic Partner - Business
Julian Johnson	Wiltshire County Council
Stephen Pugsley	West Somerset District Council
Mark Robins	Social & Economic Partner – Environmental Bodies

### **Also in Attendance:**

Clare Brooke, Natalie Greenwood, Jane Lavick, SWRA  
Charles Cordy, Dorset County Council  
Sandra Fryer, Bristol City Council

### **1. Apologies**

1.1 Apologies were received from Robin Bush, Social & Economic Partner – Culture; Paul Crossley, Bath & North East Somerset; Malcolm Hanney, Bath & North East Somerset Council; Chris Harris, Torbay Council; George Wheeler, Plymouth City Council.

### **2. Minutes of the last Meeting**

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting dated 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2003 were agreed.

### **3. PAPER A - Terms of Reference & Work Programme**

3.1 Members discussed the Terms of Reference and Work Programme and commented how difficult it is to get the Environment Strategy high on anyone's agenda. It was suggested that the Environment Strategy should be more challenging to provoke more of a response, particularly from business. Mark Robins commented that the Social & Economic Partners discussed at a previous meeting about calling themselves Social, Economic & Environmental Partners, stressing that it is becoming more important to them and is now a standing item on their agenda.

3.2 The Consultation events were also discussed; Julian Johnson will attend Bristol, David Beardsley will attend Bodmin and Mark Robins said he may be able to attend at Dorchester and Pat Hockey will attend Exeter.

### **3.2 Members agreed:**

- (i) That the Terms of Reference should include 'to contribute to the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy'
- (ii) That there should be clear indicators for the monitoring process and these should be linked in with the first RSSSG meeting in November.

- (iii) That the dates in the work programme/timetable stay the same and those members not able to be present should attempt to send a substitute

#### **4. PAPER B - GM Crops**

- 4.1 Pat Hockey reported that Chris Clarke had requested the GM Crops is included on the agenda for the Assembly in October. The Group endorsed this proposal. Assembly Leaders will consider this at their next meeting.
- 4.2 Charles Cordy from Dorset County Council gave a presentation on how Dorset had approached this subject. A copy of his presentation was circulated at the meeting. (copy also attached for ease of reference) Members commented on how their authorities had been dealing with this subject. In particular it was felt that the economic implication of GM for the region needed to be considered.

#### **5. PAPER C – Integrated Regional Strategy - Issues**

- 5.1 Jane Lavick gave a brief outline to Members, explaining that this issues report has been written to stimulate debate across the region and so far, in its technical state, has been sent out to limited stakeholders. Once the summary has been completed at the end of September, it will go out for wider public consultation. It is also for reviewing the Regional Spatial Strategy and to inform the spending review for next year. Members mentioned the importance of testing scenarios and it was explained that some scenarios work would be done in October/November, reflecting on national level scenarios that already exist. Members were keen to ensure that there was an adequate environmental input to the scenarios work.
- 5.2 Members felt that the report does not address the seriousness of environmental issues and the size and diversity of the region and that the economic text is weak. Members suggested the following additions to issues but were generally satisfied that the report was asking the right questions to stimulate debate.
- Link between economic growth and increased waste production
  - EU enlargement
  - Social Environment, ie link between poverty and environmental quality
  - Increase in housing density needed
  - Trading on our environmental quality – need to show where the expertise is, ie centre of excellence needed in the South West to draw together best practice
  - Education & skills on environmental issues, especially amongst business
  - GM Crops and the economic future of the region
  - Should the South West aspire to look like the South East in terms of GDP/GVA – a different model is needed.

#### **6. PAPER D – Regional Spatial Strategy – Timetable & Work Programme**

- 6.1 Members briefly discussed the work programme and timetable and are keen to make sure that the Environment Strategy feeds properly into the RSS at

appropriate points in the timetable. Members also queried when there would be an opportunity to consider the results of the RTS prioritisation link

**7. AOB**

7.1 There was no other business

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

8.1 Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2003

**Chair (signature).....**

**Date .....**