



Report to Cabinet

Subject Strategic Sub-Regional Partnerships Review

Date 11th July 2005

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1. Purpose of report

- To inform Members of East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) review of strategic sub-regional partnerships (SSPs) and of the potential implications for Greater Nottingham Partnership.
- To seek Members' views on whether any representations should be made on the issue.

2. Background

Greater Nottingham Partnership (GNP) is the strategic sub-regional partnership for the greater Nottingham area.

Its membership includes City, County and Borough Councils and a range of private sector, community and voluntary and public service agencies (e.g. Business Link, Universities).

Its role focuses on the regeneration of the Greater Nottingham area, through a range of strategy action teams or theme groups. It takes a holistic view of regeneration, addressing wider social and environmental factors as far as possible.

The partnership has been given a key role in the allocation of funds by EMDA for this type of project, deciding on whether bids from authorities and local strategic partnerships should be agreed, monitoring progress and allocating funds, much of which originates from EMDA.

The Borough Council funds the Greater Nottingham Partnership to support its running costs. 2004/05 contributions were £9,000.

3. **Proposal**

EMDA is reviewing the role of SSPs following a previous review by the East Midlands Regional Assembly Scrutiny Panel.

That panel made a range of recommendations, the most relevant of which are attached at **Appendix A** to this document.

Since then there has been some concern, recently reported in local and specialist national press, that EMDA may be seeking to remove some powers from SSPs, including GNP, and this may include the removal of some funding allocation responsibilities. Such a progression, as reported, would be counter to the recommendations made by the East Midlands Regional Assembly. These concerns have not been confirmed by EMDA and it is understood discussions on the matter are still ongoing.

It is felt that GNP has largely served this Borough's interests well. Its flexible interpretation of its remit has allowed it to fund projects in the borough, which while having a primary economic regeneration function, have also addressed wider social regeneration issues. Examples include funding of the St George's Centre in Netherfield.

GNP has also adopted a genuinely conurbation view of regeneration, which has benefited more deprived communities outside the administrative city boundary. It has a potential role in progressing the fourth Local Area Agreement stream (see elsewhere on this agenda).

There are concerns that the flexibility it has offered may not continue should responsibility for these decisions rest with EMDA, working to a more rigid, measurable output based approach.

If Members are concerned about these potential developments, it may be appropriate for those concerns to be raised through East Midlands Regional Assembly representatives.

4. **Resource Implications**

None specific, but any changes to current arrangements for the allocation of funding may be to the detriment of the Borough as a whole.

5. **Recommendations**

Members' instructions are requested.

Appendix A

Extract from East Midlands Regional Assembly Review of Strategic Sub-Regional Partnerships – 2004

Recommendation 6

EMDA should develop a plan to devolve greater strategic freedom and responsibility to SSPs that includes: -

- Greater discretion in setting strategic objectives, according to sub-regional priorities.
- Greater discretion about the projects SSPs choose to support.
- Less frequent and rigid reporting procedures.
- More encouragement for innovative approaches.
- More significant delegation of funds.
- Longer and more realistic programme timescales in accordance with:
 - The scope of EMDA's contract with government.
 - The capability and capacity of each SSP, in particular the extent of partnerships 'buy-in' to the SSP.
 - The SSPs' commitment to address sustainable development issues.
 - The implementation of more robust corporate governance procedures.

Recommendation 8

Recognising the steps already taken by EMDA, and linked to recommendation 6 above, EMDA should develop and publish a plan to give SSPs greater financial freedoms and flexibilities, including longer term planning/project delivery horizons, to encourage greater partner 'buy-in' and bending of mainstream programmes and other funding.

To address capacity limitations, it should also identify resources, financial or otherwise, that may arise from efficiency savings made by the alignment or transfer of activities.