

The City Region

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Dear Colleague

We thought it would be helpful if we wrote to you personally about the important changes which have occurred today in the City Region partnership.

There have been a number of strong successes from the City Region including the Multi Area Agreement for Employment and Skills, and the work in developing an Accelerated Development Zone. However, the unsuccessful bid to become a Pilot City Region in the April Budget highlighted a need to reflect on the direction of travel and the most sensible make-up of the partnership itself.

The Board has today discussed a paper which mapped out the economic geography of the sub-region, reflected on previous achievements and challenges, and proposed the future roles and responsibilities of the City Region.

Consequently, Coventry City Council has decided not to proceed with the City Region and will instead focus on developing existing links with Solihull and Warwickshire, and its participation in regional partnerships.

Under this agreement, the 'new' City Region partnership will comprise Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton, so forming a naturally aligned economic region. The West Midlands Regional Assembly, Advantage West Midlands, the Learning and Skills Council, and Business Voice West Midlands will all remain members of the City Region Board. JobCentre Plus, the Homes and Communities Agency and our Universities, along with Paul Lankester, Chief Executive of Stratford-upon-Avon District Council, and Chair of the City Region Forum, will continue to work closely with the City Region.

These changes will not alter existing sub-regional arrangements in the Black Country through the Association of Black Country Authorities and the Black Country Consortium.

We believe this is a positive and evolutionary move for the region and for our respective partnerships.

It is important that sub-regional arrangements in the West Midlands are fit for purpose and focused on delivering economic growth and regeneration that will benefit the whole region. We believe that the decisions taken today significantly strengthen our resolve and ability to achieve this outcome.

Coventry will remain a full member of the City Region's Multi Area Agreement on Employment and Skills, as is the case with Telford and Wrekin. It will also continue to work closely with the new City Region on areas of mutual interest and benefit.

The City Region Board reaffirmed its commitment to accelerating the delivery of existing regional and sub-regional strategies. This was first made on 24th January 2007 at the launch of the City Region's Strategic Framework for Action, and was repeated in the submission for City Region Pilot status on 5th March this year. The partnership will also continue to promote subsidiarity and balanced economic growth across the City Region.

We look forward to continuing to work with you over the coming months and years.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Whitby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Councillor Mike Whitby
Chair, City Region

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Councillor Ken Taylor
Leader, Coventry City Council