

**WELLAND LEADERS MEETING, 1ST FEBRUARY 2002**

Application to East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)  
For Welland Partnership to become a Strategic Sub Regional Partnership (SSP)

**Background**

1. Our first bid, submitted in June 2001, was awarded an 'amber light'. At that time we had to acknowledge that we had made insufficient progress with engagement of partners other than ourselves. EMDA acknowledged that 'the economic case was proved' and encouraged us to move forward. There is a clear indication that EMDA hope we can achieve SSP status in that they had provided significant capacity building support. We believe we have now made sufficient progress to 'have another go' and the second bid was lodged with EMDA on 16th January 2002. All partner councils should have received six copies of the bid. Trevor McHugh, our External Funding Manager, is to be thanked for compiling this bid and for his efforts more generally in the work leading up to bidding.

**Potential Timetable**

2. We expect to be called to EMDA to discuss the bid with their selection board towards the end of February. It is envisaged that we will then hear the outcome (which if successful could still have some further capacity strings attached) at the end of March. If successful we will be presumed to be prepared for operating formally from 1st October 2002. It has been intimated that EMDA wants to devolve budgets etc to SSPs in due course but there is no indication yet of when that might apply to the Welland Partnership.

**Business Engagement and Next Steps**

3. EMDA requires that the business community both supports the concept of the Welland as a SSP and is prepared to join and lead the body. With EMDA's financial support we staged four business briefings at Barnsdale Hall during November. These events were designed to make businesses aware of the Welland (as an economic area), to explain the value of SSP status and to establish whether there was sufficient enthusiasm to 'join and lead'.
4. Also in November we developed the idea of nominating local Welland 'champions', one per council, to make face to face contact with business leaders. This exercise was designed to broaden/roll out the understanding of Welland, to further test the business view of the pending SSP bid and to feedback to us the key issues of economic concern for businesses.
5. The general assessment is that the business events and the work of the champions have been beneficial. As noted earlier, EMDA expects that we will demonstrate that there is business involvement and leadership within the framework of the SSP bid. The following parts of this report deal with the issues emanating from this EMDA requirement.

6. Here, it needs to be understood that many other partnerships have been established to undertake regeneration work in response to a wide range of initiatives such as SRB, Objective 2 etc but without any other purpose. The Welland Partnership, however, exists for another primary reason (i.e. working together) and as such is not a suitable body into which the wider range of economic regeneration partners can be invited. The establishment of a "Welland SSP Board" is therefore a fundamental component of our bid to EMDA.

#### The Welland SSP Board

7. From the experiences of other bodies bidding for SSP status, and, of course, business good practice, it is important that the Welland SSP Board is kept relatively small. Within the context of
- i) Welland's population
  - ii) our expectations about funding levels to manage
  - iii) the exclusivity of our remit compared to other bidders

We should have the smallest SSP board in the region. Our earlier discussions determined that 9 was about the correct number.

8. The bid proposes a board comprising
- 4 business sector representatives (including the Chairman)
  - 3 council representatives
  - 1 voluntary sector representative
  - 1 other public sector (education\*) representative.
9. As will be seen from the bid, the 'other public sector' representative is, we believe, essentially a member of the educational partners, given the concentration within our proposals upon uplifting skills etc.

#### Business Membership

10. The 'champions' have identified several potential business board members. It would, however, be unreasonable to expect commitments to be made in advance of an understanding of what might be entailed: we need to accept that we, ourselves, remain unclear about this. A debate took place within a focus group, comprising council officers, the champions, and their local nominees, about whether specific parts of the business community (e.g. farming) should be represented as of right. On balance the view prevailed that the 'best' should take precedence over any hopes to secure sectoral or geographical considerations.
11. As we need the business community to assist us to "sell" our bid to EMDA we have been seeking to recruit aid effectively on a temporary/shadow Board basis. Details of probable helpers are included in the supplements to the bid. At this stage I need to explain that we have found an Interim Chairman who has agreed

to help the Welland submission. His portfolio prevents him, presently at least, from taking on any longer-term commitment. His details are:

Name: Derek Brewer  
Post: East Midlands Regional Director  
Royal Bank of Scotland  
Credentials: Promoted by EMDA Board  
Chairman of Greater Nottingham Transport Partnership

Derek attended a business briefing at Barnsdale and offered to promote the Welland at EMDA in his GNTP and RboS work with them.

12. Subsequently (after the bid presentation) we need to establish a shadow board. Derek Brewer, with his experience at GNTP, has agreed to assist in this process and, in particular, with finding a permanent chairman. I will report the focus group's latest views on the process for recruitment of business board members at our meeting.
13. One issue that does need some clarification is the description given to the SSP Board. It is intended that this body would, without reference, assume full executive powers for reviewing/assessing proposals/delivery plans, allocating resources and monitoring performance/outcomes. To the public sector this might be termed an 'Executive Board' but business differentiates between the 'Main Board' which often includes a number of 'non-Executive' directors and the Executive Board which comprises 'officers' of the company, akin to councils management teams etc. To overcome this potential for confusion we will endeavour to refer to the SSP Board simply as that.

#### Councils' Membership of the Board

14. The primary Welland Partnership (i.e. the five councils) can, it is proposed, 'claim' three places on the Welland SSP Board. It is important that there is early agreement on these nominations, or, at the very least, the process by which those nominations are to be determined.
15. The Chief Executives' Group takes the view that the most appropriate method of determining Board membership is a system of rotation. (I apologise for taking the privilege of authorship of this report to record that I am in the minority of one here). I will put to the meeting a range of options for determining the process of rotation which presupposes that, at any one time, three councils are 'represented'. I use this last description cautiously: the key issue for every nominee to bear in mind is that he/she must represent the Welland generally rather than one of five segments of the Partnership's area.

#### Other Board Members

16. We will need to consider the most appropriate invitees to take up Board membership from the wider public sector (1) and the voluntary sector (1). The meeting can discuss the options for these two positions.