

*BERR Press Release, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008*

## **Top appointment brings fresh experience to the Board of Advantage West Midlands**

Pat McFadden, Minister of State for Employment Relations and Postal Affairs, today announced a new appointment to the Board of Advantage West Midlands.

Councillor Mike Whitby, Leader of Birmingham City Council, will take up his three-year appointment on 14 December 2008 until 13 December 2011.

### **Pat McFadden said:**

“I am delighted to be appointing Councillor Mike Whitby to the RDA Board for Advantage West Midlands. He will bring valuable experience and knowledge to the work of the RDA. His membership to the board will be important in the contribution he can make in supporting the national and regional economies through this exceptional economic period”

### **Nick Paul Advantage West Midlands Chair said:**

“I am delighted to welcome Mike to the Board of Advantage West Midlands. Mike will bring a wealth of experience to the Agency, having been the Leader of Birmingham City Council, the largest local authority in Europe, since 2004. He is a great ambassador for Birmingham and the West Midlands Region, both in the UK and overseas, with notable successes in India and China.”

### **Remuneration for the appointment**

Regional Development Agency Board Member posts attract a remuneration of £8,538 per year for a time commitment of a minimum of 2 days per month.

### **Length of appointment**

The appointment will be for three years.

### **The body to which the appointment has been made and its function**

RDAs are business-led organisations, and provide strategic leadership to promote economic development, enterprise and regeneration in their regions, tackling economic differences within their regions as well as driving up the performance of the regions as a whole. The role of RDAs is expected to change as set out in the Sub National Review (SNR) published in the summer of 2007 and the SNR consultation document launched in March 08. Subject to legislation, the outcome of SNR envisages RDAs

- Enhancing their strategic role.

- Taking a leading role in the Regional Spatial Strategy which it is proposed will become part of a new Single Regional Strategy (SRS) along with the Regional Economic Strategy, and
- Forging stronger relationships with local authorities in taking forward the SRS, together with the new scrutiny arrangements and increased role in economic delivery identified for local authorities in the SNR.

### **Appointments being made in accordance with OCPA Code of Practice**

The appointment was made following open competition in accordance with the requirements set down in the Commissioner for Public Appointments Code of Practice. All appointments are made on merit and political affiliation plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if any declared) to be made public.

### **Response to the political activity response questionnaire, including none declared**

Councillor Mike Whitby was Leader of the Conservative Group on Birmingham City Council and since 2004 has been Leader of Birmingham City Council.

### **Response to other ministerial public appointments held and any related remuneration received.**

Councillor Mike Whitby does not hold any other public appointments.

### **A brief summary of the appointee's career and experience**

Councillor Mike Whitby: Became Leader of Birmingham City Council, the largest local authority in the UK (and possibly Europe), in 2004. His political career stretches back to 1979, has included time as both a Councillor and a parliamentary candidate, and has involved working with some of the country's most prominent and influential politicians.

Not only a seasoned politician, Cllr Whitby has a long history as a businessman, industrialist and entrepreneur with a reputation for turning around failing companies. He has been a member of the Institute of Directors, the Federation of Small Businesses (being chairman of their largest branch in the country from 1994-1995) the West Midlands Engineering Employers Federation (National Committee 1994-1995) and a Director of the Dudley and Sandwell Chambers of Commerce. He is currently chairman and Managing Director of Skeldings Ltd, an award winning Engineering Company based in Smethwick.

Although born and raised in the West Midlands Cllr Whitby has also lived in Germany, being educated at Michael's Hoven College (in the then West Germany) and completing a programme of voluntary work there as well. He has also worked in the cultural sector in Liverpool.

In addition to being Leader of the Council, Cllr Whitby has interests and strategic influence across the city and the West Midlands. He is Chairman of the Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region, Chairman of the Aston Science Park

Board, a director of the NEC and sits on numerous cultural and economic boards across Birmingham.

As Leader of Birmingham City Council Cllr Whitby has driven some of the city's most significant improvements in recent history including taking over a Council which was audited as "0 stars and failing" to one which is "three stars and improving well."