



West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy  
- Phase Three Revision

**Options**

**July 2009 – August 2009**



West Midlands  
**Regional Assembly**  
Speaking out for the region

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# Introduction

**Do you want to influence the future of the West Midlands region?**

**This is your chance to have a say and help us shape policies for the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS).**

The **West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA)** is the Regional Planning Body (RPB) for the West Midlands, and it is the RPB that is responsible for preparing the WMRSS and any revisions to it.

The WMRA has produced this document to help you help us answer some very important questions.

This document sets out Options and issues that will be addressed in Phase Three of revisions to the WMRSS.

To help respond to this consultation there is a detachable questionnaire at the back of this document. The questionnaire is also available on the WMRA website at **[www.wmra.gov.uk/xxx](http://www.wmra.gov.uk/xxx)**.

Having read the WMRSS Phase 3 Options and formed a view, please send your completed questionnaire by email or post to: West Midlands Regional Assembly, Regional Partnership Centre, Albert House, Quay Place, Birmingham, B1 2RA, or email **[wmrss@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:wmrss@wmra.gov.uk)**

The consultation period on these RSS Phase 3 Options is 8 weeks, starting on **xth July 2009** and finishing on **xth xxx 2009**.

# Background

The **West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS)** was published in June 2004 by the Secretary of State. Since 2004 the WMRSS has been part of the statutory development plan.

The WMRSS covers a wide range of topics, including housing, employment, transport and the environment. You can find a copy of the WMRSS on the WMRA website at [http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning\\_and\\_Regional\\_Spatial\\_Strategy/Regional\\_Spatial\\_Strategy/Regional\\_Spatial\\_Strategy\\_\(RSS\).aspx#Jan2008](http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy/Regional_Spatial_Strategy/Regional_Spatial_Strategy_(RSS).aspx#Jan2008)

The purpose of the WMRSS is to guide the preparation of local authority development plans and local transport plans, so together they can provide a coherent framework for the development of the Region. The WMRSS also provides a planning framework for other regional, sub-regional and local strategies, programmes and plans such as the Regional Economic Strategy and local Community Strategies.

Following the publication of the WMRSS in June 2004, the Secretary of State recommended that some issues should be immediately looked at and developed further. It was decided that this task be carried out in a phased way.

- **Phase One** concentrated on the Black Country Study, where the aim was to identify and 'fast-track' urban renaissance proposals through to implementation.
- **Phase Two** considered housing, employment, transport and waste.
- This phase of the WMRSS Revision, **Phase Three**, will look at critical rural services, provision for gypsies and travellers, culture, sport and tourism provision, quality of the environment and minerals.

This **Options consultation document** sets out choices or directions that can be taken for the Region.

All **responses to this consultation** will be considered when drafting the "Preferred Option". The **Preferred Option** is those policies and text that will be given to the Secretary of State setting out what the Regional Planning Body would like to see included in the revised WMRSS.

# West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

The existing WMRSS sets out a vision for the Region:

“The overall vision for the West Midlands is one of an economically successful, outward looking and adaptable Region, which is rich in culture and environment, where all people, working together, are able to meet their aspirations and needs without prejudicing the quality of life of future generations.”

This vision remains unchanged and will underpin the WMRSS Phase Three Revision.

## Challenges facing the Region

The existing WMRSS identifies four main themes and challenges for the West Midlands Region:

- Urban Renaissance: Developing the Major Urban Areas in such a way that they can increasingly meet their own economic and social needs in order to counter the unsustainable outward movement of people and jobs facilitated by previous strategies.
- Rural Renaissance: Addressing more effectively the major changes which are challenging the traditional roles of rural areas and the countryside.
- Diversifying and modernising the Region’s economy: Ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and that they help reduce social exclusion.
- Modernising the transport infrastructure of the West Midlands: Supporting the sustainable development of the Region.

These challenges continue to apply and will underpin the development and refinement of policies during the WMRSS Phase Three Revision.

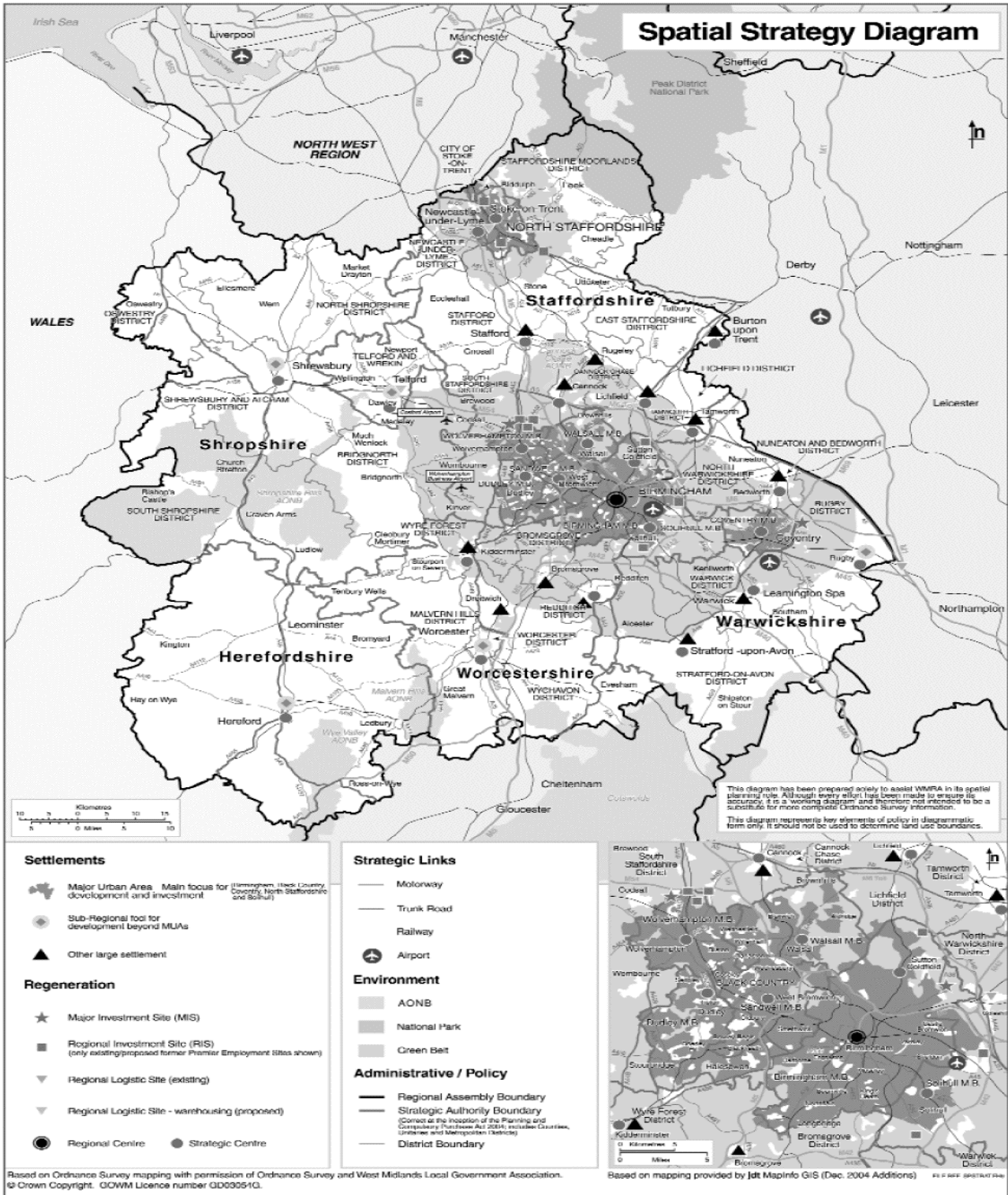
## WMRSS Objectives

The Revision aims to develop and strengthen the existing strategy, and it is not anticipated that the Revision will result in changes to the following Objectives set in the WMRSS:

- a) to make the Major Urban Areas of the West Midlands increasingly attractive places where people want to live, work and invest
- b) to secure the regeneration of the Rural Areas of the Region
- c) to create a joined up multi-centred Regional structure where all areas/centres have distinct roles to play
- d) to retain the Green Belt, but allow an adjustment of boundaries where this is necessary to support urban regeneration
- e) to support the cities and towns of the Region to meet their local and sub regional development needs
- f) to support the diversification and modernisation of the Region’s economy while ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and reducing social exclusion
- g) to ensure the quality of the environment is conserved and enhanced across all parts of the Region
- h) to improve significantly the Region’s transport systems
- i) to promote the development of a network of strategic centres across the Region
- j) to promote Birmingham as a world city.

(Please note: Amendments to Objectives d) and j) are currently proposed in the WMRSS Phase Two Revision.)

Key elements of policy in the existing WMRSS are represented in diagrammatic form in the Spatial Strategy Diagram overleaf.



# WMRSS Revisions

When issuing the WMRSS in June 2004, the Secretary of State supported the principles of the Strategy but suggested several issues needed to be developed further. In order to manage the WMRSS Revision process efficiently, it was decided to carry out the WMRSS Revision in three Phases.

## WMRSS Phase One: The Black Country

Phase One of the WMRSS Revision has developed a sub-regional strategy for the Black Country. This Phase began in February 2005 and the Draft WMRSS Revision was formally submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2006. Following an Examination in Public in January 2007 and the Panel's Report in March 2007, the Secretary of State published the final Phase One Revision in January 2008. Further information and the final Phase One Revision document can be found at

[http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning\\_and\\_Regional\\_Spatial\\_Strategy/RSS\\_Revision/RSS\\_Revision\\_Phase\\_1\\_\(Black\\_Country\\_Study\).aspx](http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy/RSS_Revision/RSS_Revision_Phase_1_(Black_Country_Study).aspx)

## WMRSS Phase Two

Phase Two of the WMRSS Revision deals with selected issues relating to the provision of housing and employment land, town and city centres, transport and waste. This Phase started in November 2005 and the Draft WMRSS Phase Two Revision was formally submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2007. Following formal consultation during 2008, an Examination in Public (EiP) into the submitted document took place in Spring 2009. Further information on this Phase can be found at

[http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning\\_and\\_Regional\\_Spatial\\_Strategy/RSS\\_Revision/RSS\\_Revision\\_Phase\\_2/RSS\\_Revision\\_Phase\\_2.aspx](http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy/RSS_Revision/RSS_Revision_Phase_2/RSS_Revision_Phase_2.aspx)

It should also be noted that when the EiP Panel Report is published in Summer 2009, there may be important conclusions and recommendations that need to be taken into account in the development of the Preferred Option within Phase Three. For example, issues relating to the level and distribution of housing and employment land may have a bearing on issues such as the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites, demand for minerals, location of rural services, and uses of the Green Belt that are being considered as part of the WMRSS Phase Three Revision.

## WMRSS Phase Three

Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision formally began in November 2007 when the WMRA issued a Draft Project Plan for public consultation which set out the issues to be considered in the revision. The WMRSS Phase Three Project Plan is available on the WMRA website at [www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)

The five topics covered in the Phase Three Revision are:

- Rural Renaissance – Critical Rural Services
- Communities for the Future – Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- Culture, Sport and Tourism
- Quality of the Environment, and
- Minerals Policy.

### **Principles for the Revision**

It is important to highlight that this is **a revision of selected topics** in the WMRSS and not a full review of the whole document.

The overall Strategy and those parts of the WMRSS not included in Phase Three are not subject to review and continue to be in place.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, where policy decisions have been made in either Phase One or Two of the WMRSS Revisions then these will be assumed to be fixed inputs to this Phase Three Revision and not subject to further change.

# Regional Context

In the process of revising the WMRSS consideration needs to be given to:

**(i) Changes in economic and environmental circumstances** since the WMRSS was published in June 2004, including:

- **Climate Change.** There is now a greater awareness that Climate Change is happening. In line with Government Policy and guidance, all development plans in the Region will need to strengthen policies that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and consider adaptation to climate change.
- **The Credit Crunch.** In the last 18 months the economic climate has shifted considerably and this will inevitably impact on the planning system. For example, in the short to medium term at least, it is likely that the rate of housing and employment development will reduce appreciably.

**(ii) Changes in Government policy, together with Phase One and Two Revisions to the WMRSS.**

**(iii) Other strategies that aim to shape the future of the West Midlands** to ensure that they align with each other and pull in the same direction. There are a range of relevant regional strategies, including:

- The **West Midlands Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF)**, prepared by Sustainability West Midlands, sets out a vision and objectives for the sustainable development of the Region. The RSDF is intended to make sure that other strategies are developed in a way that is complementary and mutually supportive. The RSDF also inform the Sustainability Appraisal which will be carried out as part of the WMRSS Revision, see page xx. More information about the RSDF can be found at [www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/rsdf](http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/rsdf)
- The **West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (WMRES)**, “Connecting To Success”, prepared by Advantage West Midlands (AWM), sets out what the Region needs to do to improve its economic performance. Key links between the WMES and the WMRSS Phase Three Revision exist, among others, in relation to critical rural services. More information about the WMES can be found at [www.xxxxxxxx](http://www.xxxxxxxx)

WMRA has worked closely with AWM to ensure that the WMES and the different Phases of the WMRSS Revision are well coordinated. This will help to ensure that both strategies and implementation activities are joined up and, depending on the exact nature of future arrangements, will ultimately feed into the proposed new Regional Strategy.

- The **Regional Housing Strategy (RHS)**, prepared by WMRA in partnership with a wide variety of stakeholders, provides a broad framework for long term housing investment in the Region. A key linkage between the RHS and Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision exists in relation to the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople topic. It will be essential to ensure any revised policies from the WMRSS Revision are aligned to those in the RHS, and that housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are no longer seen as separate from those of settled communities. More information about the RHS can be found at [www.xxxxxxxx](http://www.xxxxxxxx)

# WMRSS Phase Three – Timetable and Key Stages

The chart overleaf shows the timetable for key stages of the WMRSS Phase Three Revision.

The first stage of the process was the publication of the **Project Plan** which set out the issues to be covered in the Revision. A copy of the final Project Plan is available on the WMRA website at [www.wmra.gov.uk/xxx](http://www.wmra.gov.uk/xxx).

Because there are likely to be a number of choices as to the nature and content of new or revised policies, this **Options** document is being issued for consultation to help identify those choices and the consequences of adopting them. At this stage, policies are not fixed and everybody has a chance to say what they think about the Options before a Preferred Option is developed.

The **Preferred Option**, which is formally called the 'Draft WMRSS Revision', will then be submitted to the **Secretary of State**. The submitted Draft WMRSS Revision will be subject to another period of public consultation.

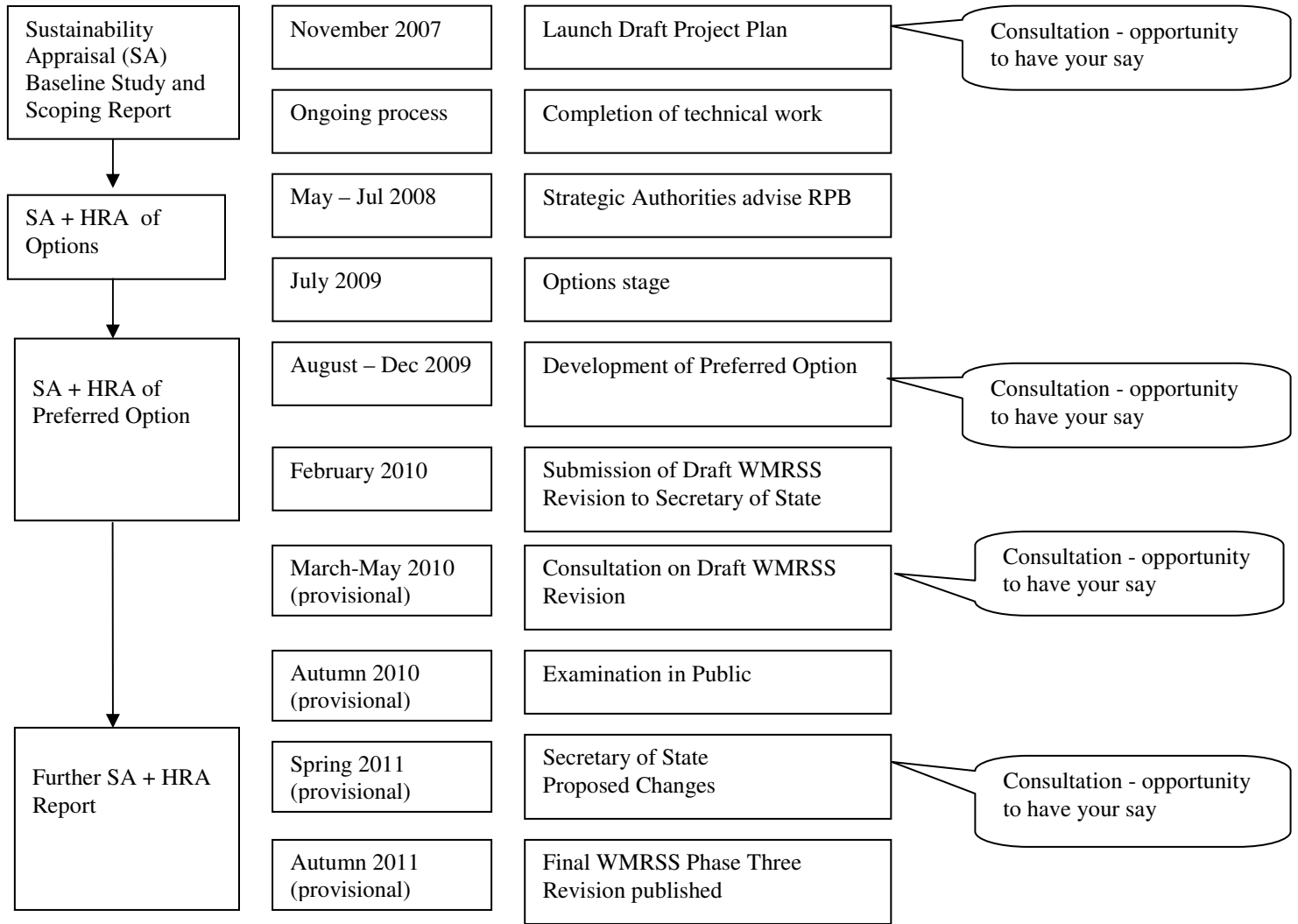
Under current regulations, once the Draft WMRSS Revision has been submitted to the Secretary of State, management of the final stages of the process would be led by the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM). These regulations will be revised once of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill is enacted. Therefore the programme for the final stages of the process can only be provisional at this stage.

At key stages in the Revision process various appraisals and assessments will be carried out, including a Sustainability Appraisal, Habitat Regulation Assessment and Rural Proofing. These are explained further in Appendix X.

In July 2007, the Government published a *Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration*. Among other things, the Government proposes to bring together the RSS and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) into a single Regional Strategy for each of the English regions.

In November 2008 the Government announced that responsibility for developing the Regional Strategy will be a new Local Authority Leaders Board and the Regional Development Agency jointly, working closely with local authorities and other partners.

The WMRA will work closely with the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM), Advantage West Midlands (AWM - the RDA for the West Midlands) and others to ensure that the issues and emerging policies in the WMRSS Phase Three Revision are integrated into the Regional Strategy.



# Next Steps

During the consultation period the WMRA will hold a number of events and other opportunities to help anyone who wishes to get involved in this important discussion. Please check the WMRA's website for more details on these events or alternatively you can e-mail [wmrss@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:wmrss@wmra.gov.uk).

Because this is a partial Revision, some of the topics may seem disconnected. If you wish to respond only to those issues and questions which you feel are particularly relevant to you or the organisation you represent this is perfectly acceptable.

When reading this consultation document it needs to be recognised that some of the policies being revised are further developed than others. Some issues in this Phase Three Revision require new policies whilst others will require an updating of existing policies. In most cases, the new or revised policies will be shaped to extent by relevant current national policy or guidelines which may have changed since the WMRSS was published in June 2004.

The Options set out choices or directions that we feel can be taken for the Region in relation to the Phase Three topics. The questions seek your views on those Options.

The Options have been written with consideration to a lot of relevant background information including:

- The objective of the WMRSS Revision
- Relevant national policy
- Relevant regional policy
- Relevant technical studies and
- Advice provided by Section 4(4) authorities

This information, together with the responses to this Options consultation, will provide the evidence for the development of the Preferred Option.

Accompanying this Options consultation document there are also **Background Technical Reports** for each of the five topics considered in the Phase Three Revision. These Background Technical Reports provide more evidence and detail about the matters discussed in this document.

Copies of all of the Background Technical Reports are available on the WMRA web-site at [www.xxxxx](http://www.xxxxx) or can be obtained from the Regional Assembly.

## Responding to this Options Consultation Document

The Spatial Options consultation starts on xx July 2009 and closes on xx xxxx 2009. Please ensure we receive your response by **5pm on xx xxx 2009**.

It will help us in understanding your views if you respond to the questions that we ask in the document, but please feel free to add any further comments you wish to make.

A detachable questionnaire is included at the back of this consultation document. The questionnaire is also available on the WMRA website at [www.wmra.gov.uk/xxx](http://www.wmra.gov.uk/xxx).

Please email your response to us at [wmrss@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:wmrss@wmra.gov.uk) or

Post it to:

RSS Phase 3 Revision  
West Midlands Regional Assembly

Regional Partnership Centre  
Albert House  
Quay Place  
Birmingham  
B1 2RA

# RSS Phase Three Options

## Rural Renaissance: Critical Rural Services

# Rural Renaissance – Critical Rural Services

## RSS Objective

To identify the role of service provision in enhancing the sustainability of rural communities, whether particular services are critical to this process and whether the process itself, and consequently the policies required to address it, varies in different types of rural area.

## National Policy Context

**Rural White Paper 2000 – “A Fair Deal for Rural England”**. The Government’s statement describing how it intends to improve the quality of life for people living in and using England’s rural areas. It includes statements on public services; affordable homes; rural businesses; agriculture; protection of the landscape and wildlife habitats; and access to the countryside.

**Rural Strategy 2004**. The Government’s strategy for tackling the key issues in rural England, based on targeting the greatest needs and working in partnership. The 3 key priorities for rural policy are:

- (i) Economic and Social Regeneration.
- (ii) Social Justice for All.
- (iii) Enhancing the Value of our Countryside.

**PPS7 – “Sustainable Development in Rural Areas” 2004**. PPS7 sets out the Government’s planning policies for rural areas, including country towns and villages and the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of larger urban areas. The objectives underpinning the statement are:

- (i) To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas.
- (ii) To promote more sustainable patterns of development.
- (iii) To promote the development of the English regions by improving their economic performance.
- (iv) To promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agriculture where farming achieves high environmental standards.

## **Draft PPS4 – Consultation Paper on Planning for Sustainable Economic Development.**

The purpose of the finalised PPS4 will be to put into place a national planning policy framework for economic development at regional, sub-regional and local levels for urban and rural areas.

## Regional Policy Context

### **West Midlands Rural Spatial Strategy 2004**

The key policy in WMRSS in relation to this review is RR4 - Rural Services. In summary RR4:

- Requires an improvement in the range and quality of rural services, either by taking them to where people live or concentrating them in accessible towns and other centres.
- States that the impact of housing and other development on service provision must be considered, including the extent to which new development might support service provision.
- Requires development plans to set out how essential services will be retained in rural areas, and facilitate new services.

- Requires LTPs to identify where improved public transport is needed to support rural services.

There are 3 other Rural Renaissance policies in RSS:

- RR1 – Rural Renaissance. A general policy which draws a distinction between rural areas under the influence of MUAs which have generally good access to services, and rural areas remote from MUAs where access to services is generally poor.
- RR2- Rural Regeneration zone. A policy framework in which the primary focus for investment is the RRZ. Emphasis is given to establishing a network of rural service centres, where possible based on market towns and large villages, but possibly requiring a more scattered pattern in the most sparsely populated areas.
- RR3 – Market Towns. The policy emphasises the key role of market towns in rural regeneration, including the provision of services and other facilities to their rural hinterlands.

Clearly there are many links between rural service provision and other policy areas in WMRSS and WMES – transport, housing, employment and environment for example. These links should be examined in more detail against the option chosen. In particular, attention will have to be paid to the outcome of the Phase 2 review on the provision of rural housing. (See Rural Community Sustainability – Thematic Chapter 7, Critical Rural Services. SQW Consulting 2008.)

The **West Midlands Economic Strategy (2007)** aims to meet the economic challenges facing the region by focussing on 3 main components of the economy:

- The contribution that business makes to the productivity and growth of the regional economy.
- The role of place in attracting and enabling economic growth.
- The contribution of people and their skills to the sustainable growth and productivity of the West Midlands economy.

The **Regional Social Enterprise Strategy (2004)** provides a framework which recognises the potential of social enterprise to promote economic growth and address social and economic exclusion. The framework considers ways in which rural social enterprises can assist rural communities, including provision of services where the market cannot meet needs.

The **Rural Renaissance Framework and Action Plan (2005)** is a framework that sets out AWM's integrated approach to rural development, explaining the Agency's role in rural areas in implementing the WMES. The document has two purposes

- To explain the context and rationale for AWM's main rural development commitments and future actions.
- To help guide the actions of partners in aligning their activities with the WMES, and in seeking support for rural development from the Agency.

The **West Midlands Rural Delivery Framework (2006) – Rural Accord**. RDFs followed from the Rural Strategy of 2004 in developing new arrangements for the funding and delivery of services to rural communities. The aim was that these should be made simpler, and targeted where needed at regional and local level.

## Technical Studies

The **Rural Services Scoping Study – Roger Tym and Partners (2005)** identified basic rural services, but not necessarily those that are “critical”. The study considered access to services in rural areas, including the exclusion of particular groups in rural areas, the places most

affected by limited access to services, and the services which make the greatest difference to rural communities.

**Rural Community Sustainability – SQW Consulting (2008). Rural Community Sustainability – Thematic Chapter on Critical Rural Services (2008).** The study sought to identify “important and measurable services,” using “Indicators of Multiple Deprivation” to highlight the geography of access to services and geographical barriers to service delivery. The Thematic Chapter is a more detailed examination of the services and their importance, their geographical distribution, and the influence of WMRSS spatial planning policies on service provision.

**Living, Working Countryside – The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008)** seeks to avoid the “Sustainability Trap” – whereby development is only allowed if the settlement is sustainable in the first place – by allowing any settlement to be considered for development. Believes that small amounts of affordable housing can be the catalyst to the sustainability of a community – its shop, pub, school and local businesses. Seeks better integration of new development and services in market towns.

**Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities – A New Agenda. CRC (2007)** refers to “rural” without any distinction between different rural areas. Main thrust is to seek new affordable housing development in smaller settlements. Whilst acknowledging the decline of rural services, the report says little about how to deal with the problem, and almost nothing about the role of market towns.

**Future of Rural Services to 2015 – University of Gloucester (2005)** looked at factors determining the demand and supply of services to 2015, and the implications of changes in demand and supply for deliverers and recipients of services. Drivers of change in *demand* will be:

- Demographic and Social Change
- Cultural Change (Rural society expected to become more individualistic and self-centred, requiring more flexible, tailored and personalised services)
- Changes in disposable income, following a disproportionate increase of people in higher social groups in rural areas
- Greater personal mobility and capacity for communication
- “Non-rural resident” demand by tourists.

Drivers of changes on the *supply* side are similar, but include the diffusion of new technology, government policies, competition between various service providers and the profit motive. The introduction and use of ICT is seen as the most important driver of change in the supply of services.

The study also examines *how* services are likely to be delivered.

- Delivery outlets – a move towards multi-service outlets, innovative mobile services and electronic delivery by telephone and ICT.
- Settlement hierarchy – a drift of service provision up the urban hierarchy from villages to small towns to larger towns as consumers have more mobility, want more choice and quality; and as suppliers pursue economies of scale.
- Timing of delivery – In recent years the provision of services has become less restricted by time with the development of a 24/7 culture. Small local suppliers of goods and services will have increasing difficulty in responding, and may not survive. The greatest impact will be on the more disadvantaged rural communities.
- Governance of supply – The public sector’s role in service delivery has contracted, with a move towards the private and CVS sectors.

**State of the Countryside CRC National Report 2008**

**West Midlands Rural Evidence (2008)** includes a description of the challenges facing rural services. In particular the need for affordable housing to support the less well off in rural employment; the shift of demand for services as a result of demographic and cultural change, greater mobility and internet use; the opportunities to address these changes through market towns, acting as critical nodes for service delivery; and the importance of the VCS groups with local knowledge in filling the service provision gaps.

**Evaluation of Rural Transport Programme in the West Midlands – Ecotec (2005)** identified four priorities:

- (i) Provision of integrated and co-ordinated transport systems
- (ii) Ensure an informed public
- (iii) Develop a demand responsive system
- (iv) Address the needs for all

In order to deliver against these priorities, the report recommends that existing organisational structures and local knowledge/ expertise are built on.

**Thinking about Rural Transport – CRC (2008)**. On sustainability of rural communities, the papers both emphasise the importance of developing land-use patterns which maximise the ability to capture trips by sustainable modes, and which thereby reduce the need to travel.

**Rural Public Transport – Room for Improvement. CPRE (2008)**

## Responses from Strategic Planning Authorities

The issue of whether and how RSS policy should address the need to promote rural service provision received a mixed and largely cool response from the Section 4(4) Authorities. The approach of identifying the service deficit of any given centre did not receive strong backing, yet no real alternative was put forward. The issues of local distinctiveness and complexity were cited, together with reservations about whether the WMRSS should be setting out policy or merely providing broad encouragement. Accessibility was also frequently raised as more important than the physical provision of services from or within settlements. The use of “Accession” software tool was also suggested.

Summary of S.4.4 Responses:

- No clear consensus on whether “critical” or “important and measurable” rural services is better. All agree that there are no easy answers.
- Accessibility to services for particular population groups is the key issue. Agreement that all definitions of remote/ accessible/ rural etc have limitations and that data is limited.
- There are difficulties in applying a single approach or framework to all settlements in all parts of the region. Flexibility and local discretion must be allowed.
- Mixed response to the “service deficit” or “service centre deficit” approach. Strong concerns that this could conflict with PPS7, overall RSS strategy and Phase 2 preferred option.
- Feeling that RSS is too blunt a tool to address the issues. It can provide a broad framework, encouragement and give some pointers but should not be overly prescriptive.
- A multi-agency/ partners/ community-based approach is required but RSS cannot provide specific policy guidance on this. Existing policies may need tweaking but otherwise there is sufficient flexibility.

## Key Issues

The key issues arising from consideration of the policy background and technical papers can be summarised:

- (i) WMRSS is the only Regional Spatial Strategy to have a clear spatial strategy on rural services. There is a requirement in Phase III to identify and prioritise the critical services that need to be protected, enhanced or secured in different parts of the Region, and establish mechanisms for dealing with them (RSS 5.24).
- (ii) Various reports, in particular SQWs “Rural Community Sustainability,” emphasise that rural service provision is not static but it is a process that moves over time (demographic change; technical developments etc.) and over place. (Services in “accessible rural” areas are different, and are used differently, from services in “remote rural” areas).
- (iii) Defining a list of critical rural services is notoriously difficult. Different lists will be presented at different times in various places, and by different consultants and agencies. (SQW: Roger Tym and Partners: DEFRA; CRC) Is it therefore sensible and worthwhile trying to fulfil that part of the Phase III Review that requires such a list, particularly given that the Gloucester University findings are that the drivers of supply and demand are changing over time?
- (iv) Rural service provision is seen as a vital component of a sustainable rural settlement - there is little point in people agglomerating in a settlement if it does not offer better access to services. Sustainability encompasses social and economic, as well as environmental concerns. The emphasis on each of these varies according to one’s standpoint: for example the CRC report “Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities – A New Agenda” is somewhat dismissive of the environmental impact of new development in favour of meeting social and economic needs. But in general, the environment is regarded as fundamentally important, particularly in relation to climate change and CO<sub>2</sub> production. Can differing views be reconciled?
- (v) Related to (iv) is the concern expressed by some Section 4.4 authorities that opening the door to unsustainable amounts of development in inappropriate locations – particularly settlements accessible to the MUAs – would seriously conflict with RSS strategy and the Phase 2 Preferred Option.
- (vi) There are strongly held views (CRC: Taylor Report) that current and proposed policies tend to stress that new developments should only be directed towards settlements that already have a range of services. This, it is argued, perpetuates a cycle of rural decline in those places lacking a service base. On the other hand, it has often been shown in discussions around, for example, the closure of village primary schools, or the local post office, that the scale of new development required to generate support for these services is far in excess of the capacity of the settlement to take it given the other social, economic, political and environmental forces at work.
- (vii) The SQW report (2008) drew the important conclusion that service deprivation can be just as acutely felt in the “accessible rural” areas as in the “remote rural” areas. Services in smaller settlements in the accessible areas are often reduced because of the proximity to large urban areas which can provide them – but this disadvantages those who do not have access to reliable transport. (It also leads to patterns of travel which in turn undermine the sustainability of the settlement). By contrast, market towns, in particular in the “remote rural” areas, often perform a stronger service role and support a more sustainable community, as

encouraged in RR3.

- (viii) Most of the reports in the Technical Studies section above emphasise the importance of understanding what local people and communities in rural areas want from their services. They identify that the needs in one area can be very different from another, outwardly similar, place. In addition, many of the studies highlight the growing importance of the voluntary and community sectors in determining and delivering service provision. How can this very local emphasis be reflected in regional policy, and how can a more proactive approach to implementation be encouraged and framed by spatial policy at the regional and local levels?

## Options

Possible policy options are as follows:

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1: SUSTAINABLE – CLIMATE CHANGE DRIVEN</b></p> <p>Provide for and encourage service provision in a manner that offers the opportunity to reduce the need to travel by (a) concentrating most service provision in County and Market towns, with a particular emphasis on multi-use centres; (b) maximising the use of ICT and mobile facilities to deliver services elsewhere in the rural areas; (c) allowing growth of housing and employment development in the County and Market towns at a level that will help support existing, and create new, services. Placing strict limits on growth elsewhere in the rural areas; (d) improving public transport between the rural areas and County/Market towns, including those rural areas that are regarded as accessible.</p>	<p>There would be a concentration of services, not just higher-order services, in the larger towns. Because of their wider catchments, and being the focus of new development, services in these towns would be better supported, and are more likely to be created (new services) or to survive (existing services) than if located in smaller settlements.</p> <p>Limiting new development in the rural areas beyond the towns will reduce future travel between smaller settlements and the towns. This should help to reduce CO2 emissions.</p> <p>There would be fewer services in smaller settlements, and existing services might decline further and faster than would otherwise be the case.</p> <p>People in the smaller, more remote settlements who have limited access to private transport would be disadvantaged unless an adequate public transport network can be provided alongside innovative mobile service delivery and improved ICT.</p> <p>The Option suggests a focus of development on County and Market towns to support service provision. Care would have to be taken to ensure that the growth strategy of WMRSS is not prejudiced by this approach.</p> <p>The SQW Report identified significant service deprivation issues for people</p>

	<p>in “accessible rural” areas whose access to transport is limited. This option, in particular (d) above, would focus more attention on the needs of this group in relation to public transport provision.</p>
<p><b>Option 2: COMMUNITY BASED</b></p> <p>Adopt a “bottom-up” approach by facilitating local people, together with voluntary and community groups, to identify service needs, scale and locations. Service Audits should be required to justify the case for the protection/enhancement of services.</p> <p>Develop this work through Parish Plans, Community Strategies, LTPs and LDFs.</p>	<p>In contrast to Option 1, Option 2 would foster service development and protection of existing services throughout the rural settlement hierarchy.</p> <p>To give this option chance of success, local authority LDFs and LTPs would have to follow the conclusions of the Service Audits and adopt a flexible approach to their implementation.</p> <p>Unless it was carefully managed, this option could generate unrealistic wish-lists for services in unsustainable locations. The scope and nature of Service Audits would have to be carefully prescribed at the regional or sub-regional level to try and avoid this.</p> <p>If it could be made to work, this option would bring local knowledge and understanding of service needs to the fore, and give local people ownership of decision making. In contrast, there would be little regional planning involvement, although overall programming, funding and monitoring would still rest with the regional bodies.</p> <p>There is a risk with this option that, in order to support more widespread service provision, there would be pressures for more scattered housing development. However to maintain existing services, or provide new ones, often needs significant population and therefore considerable new development. This could lead to more private travel, with adverse consequences for CO2 emissions</p>
<p><b>Option 3: STATUS QUO</b></p> <p>Accept that the existing RSS policies on Rural Renaissance and related topics are adequate in dealing with rural service provision, and reject the need for any further definition of critical rural services</p>	<p>The current policy RR4 is very general about the location of services and there are major questions over its implementation. Therefore if the status quo is chosen as the option to take forward, it will need to be accompanied by details on how the policy can be made to work more effectively.</p>

	<p>LDPs and LTPs will need to set out clear policy guidance on service provision, reflecting the outcome of Service Audits, Community Strategies and Parish Plans.</p> <p>Because it is less specific about service location the status quo does offer a measure of flexibility, particularly compared to Option 1. However flexibility can also lead to uncertainty, making the task of policy development in LDPs and LTPs more difficult.</p>
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## Conclusions

The 3 options, and any associated policies, would each create different spatial patterns of rural service provision. The key to their success, however, depends on the way in which the policies are implemented, and for all the options this requires a considerable amount of careful work at the sub regional and local levels. An implementation plan which includes clear guidance on how Service Audits are defined, and how the results of these audits are built into community strategies and subsequently into LDFs and LTPs, is as important as re-defining policies themselves. Any redrafting of RSS policies on rural services should include a requirement for an implementation plan to be prepared at the sub-regional or local level.

## Questions

**Question CRC1:** The SQW Report identified significant service deprivation issues for people in “accessible rural” areas whose access to transport is limited.

*Do you think more attention should be given to meeting the service needs of this group?*

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If your answer is “yes”, please provide your reasons and any relevant evidence and suggestions.</i>	

**Question CRC2:** Arguments have been put forward that new development should be allowed in settlements lacking a service base in order to reverse a cycle of decline in such places. (“Planning for Sustainable Communities” – CRC; “A Living and Working Countryside” – Taylor Review). *Do you agree with this view?*

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If your answer is “yes”, please provide your reasons and any relevant evidence and suggestions.</i>	

**Question CRC3:** Three policy options for rural service developments are suggested above. *Please state if you have a preferred option, and the reasons for your preference.*

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1:	
Option 2:	
Option 3:	
Please provide reasons for your preference.	

Question CRC4: For your preferred option please state *If you have any suggestions how best to deliver the option at the regional level, taking into account the relevant key issues and implications in this chapter.*

<p>Please provide <i>any suggestions how best to deliver your preferred option at the regional level, taking into account the relevant key issues and implications in the Critical Rural Services chapter.</i></p>
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**Evidence Base**

List documents referred to above with weblinks

## RSS Phase Three Options

Communities for the Future: Sites  
for Gypsies, Travellers and  
Travelling Showpeople

# Site Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

## **Revision Objectives:**

There are four key objectives of the RSS Revision Phase 3 review of existing RSS policy for Gypsy and Traveller sites and development of new RSS policy for the provision of Travelling Showpeople sites, namely:

1. To significantly increase the number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches across the West Midlands, in order to address existing under-provision as expressed in the sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments.
2. To ensure there are sufficient plots in the Region to meet the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople.
3. To ensure that all revised Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople policies in the RSS, Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and other Regional and sub-regional strategies recognise, protect and ensure a traditional travelling way of life for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, whilst also respecting the interests of settled communities.
4. To ensure that all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) include fair, realistic and inclusive policies in relation to the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, and that the potential for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople to be evicted and thereby become homeless is avoided.

## **Key Figures:**

Findings from the sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments and outcomes from supplementary work undertaken by the Regional Assembly suggests a Regional need of:

- **660 additional Residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2007-2012**
- **279 additional Residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2012-2017**
- **244 additional Transit Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2007-2017**
- **118 additional Travelling Showpeople pitches (inc one relocation) between 2007-2012**

## **The Gypsy & Traveller Community:**

Gypsies and Travellers are estimated to make up less than 1% of the population of England, meaning that need for accommodation is numerically quite small. However, provision to meet that need can still be difficult to deliver due to a range of factors. The Government is keen to find solutions to these delivery problems, particularly as Gypsies and Travellers are the most disadvantaged Ethnic group, in terms of educational attainment and in relation to health issues:

- 30% of Irish Traveller and 13% of Romany Gypsy children obtain 5 GCSEs at A-C grades, compared to a national average of 50%
- Gypsy and Irish Traveller mothers are 20 times more likely than other mothers to have experienced the death of a child
- Life expectancy for Gypsy and Traveller men and woman is 10 years lower than the national average

## **National and Regional Policy Context:**

### **National Context:**

#### **Traveller Policy:**

The Government is committed to increasing the levels of authorised site provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and has established a new policy framework to

significantly reduce the current levels of unauthorised camping and avoid the problems that some unauthorised sites can cause, for example increased tension between Gypsies and Travellers and the wider community and costs to the local taxpayers.

In attempting to tackle these inequalities and to specifically resolve the problems which unauthorised camping can create, the Government expects local authorities to take a balanced approach by carrying out effective but fair enforcement of planning policies and by working to develop new sites and improve existing ones. The Government believes that well managed, authorised sites can provide a solution for all concerned and in support of this, Communities and Local Government (CLG) provides Capital funding through the Gypsy & Traveller Site Grant Programme. The Grant Programme is expected to make £97million available nationally to local authorities and RSLs over the 2008-2011 period, with innovative approaches to site delivery being encouraged.

However, Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have an important part to play in terms of the delivery of new sites, with many likely to be established through private funds. In relation to this, and to enable Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople to make self-provision, Government requires Local Planning Authorities to allocate sufficient land in their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) to meet pitch / plot requirements for both social and private sites and respond positively to travellers seeking guidance in regards to the overall planning application process.

#### **ODPM Circular 01/2006:**

The Government's position on addressing the issues brought about by unauthorised camping has been developing for some years, with new Policy statements being issued in 2006 and 2007. ODPM Circular 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites was issued on 2 February 2006 and put in place a legislative framework for planning Gypsy & Traveller sites, with local authorities having to address the unmet need of Gypsies and Traveller within their area (need for accommodation to be identified through an assessment of accommodation needs, as required under the Housing Act 2004).

The Circular defines Gypsies and Travellers and recognises that some may have a lifestyle of active travel and be self-employed in occupations such as seasonal agricultural work but that some Travellers may have a more settled lifestyle, as they work in trades which require lesser mobility or no longer travel due to issues of health and/or age.

#### **The Greenbelt and Sites in Rural Areas:**

ODPM Circular 01/2006 also acknowledges the difficulties that many rural areas face in terms of the supply of affordable land to meet Gypsies and Travellers accommodation needs. Consequently, it states that authorities in this situation should consider including a 'Rural Exception Site Policy' in their Development Plan Documents and that while development within the Greenbelt is normally inappropriate, adjustments to Greenbelt boundaries can be made in exceptional circumstances, for the provision of Traveller sites.

#### **CLG Circular 04/2007**

CLG Circular 04/2007: Planning for Travelling Showpeople was issued in August 2007 and acknowledged that previous Guidance (Circular 22/91) had failed to deliver adequate sites for Travelling Showpeople. The Circular indicated that the needs of Travelling Showpeople should be treated in a similar way to those of Gypsies and Travellers and that Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments are to include the needs of Travelling Showpeople, which will then be incorporated into revised Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs).

The Circular defines Travelling Showpeople in relation to their distinctive occupations – fairs, rides and amusements with associated catering and other stalls, which results in a pattern of frequent travel for short periods of time.

#### **Connecting Traveller Accommodation Need to General Housing Need:**

Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople policy does not and should not operate in isolation and the Government has signalled its intention for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation to be planned for and delivered in the same way that all other Social housing is provided. In relation to this intention, several recently introduced changes should have a positive impact upon the delivery of new sites in the future:

**Housing Green Paper: More Affordable, More Sustainable:**

The Housing Green Paper published in July 2007, set down new expectations in relation to an enhanced role for local authorities in creating a 'strategic vision' for housing policy and delivery across their communities. This 'strategic vision' should encompass the needs of all sections of the community, which includes the needs of Travellers and is intended to encourage the incorporation of accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople as part of general housing provision in the future.

**The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008:**

The Housing and Regeneration Bill, published in July 2008, will help to deliver the commitments set out in the Housing Green Paper, namely to provide more and greener homes, in mixed and sustainable communities. One of the key features of the Bill was the decision to merge the Housing Corporation (which delivered Social housing) and English Partnerships (which delivered large scale regeneration projects). A new single National Agency known as the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) became formally operational on 1 December 2008. One of the HCA's responsibilities will be the delivery of the national Gypsy & Traveller Site Grant Programme, acting on the advice of the Regional Housing Executive in terms of funding bids from local authorities and RSLs. The West Midlands Region has been allocated £2.5 million of Grant funding for the 2009-2010 period and the HCA should be able to assist in improving the delivery rate of new sites due to its expertise in delivering challenging projects.

**Regional Context:**

**Role of the Regional Assembly and Local Authorities:**

West Midlands Regional Assembly, as Regional Planning Body for the West Midlands Region, has become increasingly involved in the issues surrounding the provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, since the publication of ODPM Circular 01/2006. This involvement has led to the formulation and submission to CLG of an 'Interim Regional Statement on Gypsy & Traveller Policy' in March 2007 and a 'Travelling Showpeople Supplement' in November 2007. Both of these Regional Policy statements were produced with the intention of providing local authorities with evidence of need in advance of the outcomes from the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments becoming available.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments were undertaken on a sub-regional basis in the West Midlands Region, with six Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments being completed by early 2008. In accordance with the Government's requirement, the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments assessed the accommodation needs of all Traveller groups in the Region (e.g. Romany, Irish and New Travellers), together with the needs of Travelling Showpeople and included Gypsies and Travellers in 'bricks-and-mortar' accommodation. The sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments undertaken by the local authorities form a key component of the evidence base upon which the Regional Planning policy for Gypsy & Traveller sites and Travelling Showpeople sites is being developed.

**Current Situation in the Region:**

Within the West Midlands Region, the response to Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's accommodation needs by local authorities has been mixed to date. Consequently, the pattern of current provision is fairly uneven, with some local authorities having chosen to allocate and deliver sites, whereas others have chosen to respond mainly through enforcement.

Overall caravan numbers in January 2008 were broadly similar to those in January 1994. Over this period, the number of caravans on authorised sites (both social and private) increased

while numbers on unauthorised sites decreased. This decrease is attributable to a significant fall in caravan numbers on unauthorised encampments (on land not owned by Gypsies & Travellers) which more than offset a slight rise in caravans on unauthorised developments (those set up on Gypsy-owned land without planning permission).

In January 2008, the Caravan Count identified a total of 1745 caravans across the West Midlands Region. Of this total, 1476 caravans were on authorised sites – 696 socially rented and 780 private – and 269 caravans were on unauthorised sites. Of the caravans on unauthorised sites, 192 were on land owned by Gypsies and Travellers (of which 70 were tolerated - an unauthorised development or encampment may be tolerated for a period of time during which no enforcement action is taken) and 77 were on other land (of which 10 were tolerated). The great majority of social sites owned by local authorities are recorded as providing residential rather than transit accommodation and transit pitches were identified in only three authorities, Stafford, Stoke on Trent and Bromsgrove.

### **Travelling Showpeople:**

The provision of accommodation for Travelling Showpeople across the West Midlands Region is highly concentrated in the Black Country sub-region (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall & Wolverhampton), with approximately 28 sites currently in existence.

The findings from the sub-regional Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments illustrated common issues for Travelling Showpeople communities throughout the West Midlands Region, namely:

- There is a strong preference among Showpeople for site ownership rather than renting
- Unauthorised developments of sites or illegal encampments by Travelling Showpeople are rare
- Traditional travelling patterns have changed (i.e. travelling shorter distances), resulting in many Travelling Showpeople sites now having some sort of requirement for year-round residence, rather than as in previous times whereby accommodation was primarily required over the winter months
- Newly forming households are increasingly forced to find accommodation separate from where their families reside, as a result of high levels of overcrowding. Whilst this is the usual practice for adult children who marry from the settled community, it is Showpeoples culture for extended families to continue to live and work together following marriage
- Testing requirements of equipment have become more vigorous and have led to a need for increased space
- The recent growth in land prices in some traditional town and city centre locations have had the effect of displacing some Travelling Showpeople families

### **Other Key Issues:**

#### **Regional Gypsy & Traveller Evidence Base:**

The West Midlands Regional Assembly has commissioned a range of research / technical studies into the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople since 2004, when it was tasked with the development of a Regional Housing Strategy for the West Midlands Region.

If you are interested in learning more about the evidence base, further information is provided at the end of this chapter. Weblinks to the sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) are provided, within which, the baseline position of existing traveller provision by each Authority is detailed.

#### **Sub-Regional GTAAs:**

The sub-regional GTAAs serve as a valuable source of data and mean that the West Midlands Region is now much better informed on the accommodation needs of Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople than at any time previously. All the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments were subjected to a 'benchmarking' exercise by CURS

(University of Birmingham) and SHUSU (University of Salford), which concluded that the survey methods and the ways in which pitch requirements had been calculated were 'sufficiently consistent and robust to be relied upon to give a Regional picture of requirements'.

However, the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments could be viewed as insufficient on several aspects:

- The accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople are often assessed on the basis of relatively small numbers of interviews and overall assessments are generally less detailed than for Gypsies and Travellers
- Transient need is assessed in different ways by each GTAA, making it difficult to be precise about the Regional needs
- Future needs of Travellers currently in 'bricks-and-mortar' accommodation are assessed only crudely – but it is recognised that this is an area in which it is difficult to distinguish need from 'aspiration'
- There is little direct evidence of locational preferences at local authority level
- There are few indications of migration / movement flows of Travellers between sub-regions and Regions
- The quantification of accommodation needs in terms of different Gypsy and Traveller Ethnic groups are not separately quantified

However, it should be noted that these weaknesses are not unique to the Assessments carried out in the West Midlands Region and can also be seen in Assessments undertaken in other Regions.

#### **Preferences of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople:**

As with all types of social housing, the preferences of each community are always a key consideration in terms of determining appropriate locations for provision. To date, the views of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have been obtained via an RSS Gypsy & Traveller Reference Group that comprises a wide range of Stakeholders and the RSS Travellers Advisory Group which is made-up solely of Travellers.

However, understanding the views of the wider community is equally important. Consultation workshops will be held across the Region, to encourage participation in the Revision by all communities.

#### **Analysis of Section 4(4) Advice:**

Advice on potential Options for the provision of new sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople was sought from the West Midlands Strategic Authorities (Metropolitan, County and Unitary authorities) during Spring 2008.

The Section 4 (4) advice was broadly supportive of the figures estimated by the six sub-regional Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments, with local authorities feeling unable to go beyond the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments to make estimates where gaps in the data existed. The brief asked for advice on three Options for the allocation of pitch requirements between local authorities. All of the Section 4 (4) submissions provided advice for Option 1: Need Where it Arises Option only, in several instances with strong support for additional need to be met in the area where it arises. There was also some support for an Option based on more equitable distribution; no suggestions were made for alternative Options.

#### **Future Trends and Issues:**

Expert advice suggests that predictions of potential future trends in Gypsy and Traveller communities beyond the next 10-year period would be unsafe. Future demographic trends are unknown. Similarly it is impossible to predict how Gypsy and Traveller communities will respond to new provision; for example, will increased sites encourage some Gypsies and Travellers to leave bricks-and-mortar accommodation and will travelling increase or decrease?

#### **Monitoring of Site Delivery:**

To ensure that the new RSS Planning policies for sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites are effective in their key objective of significantly increasing the number of Gypsy and Traveller sites and Travelling Showpeople plots, site delivery will be monitored through the Regional Monitoring system. This will allow the degree of progress being made from the baseline position (GTAA findings 2007/08) to be identified and reported to the Government, who will respond accordingly.

**Future Rounds of GTAAs:**

In addition to Monitoring, the findings from future rounds of GTAAs will be critical to establishing an updated position on provision across the Region. It is essential that future GTAAs continually improve local authorities’ understanding of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs and whilst the ODPM Circular 01/2006 does not set down timescales for undertaking the next round of GTAAs, local authorities should be mindful that the allocations proposed for Travelling Showpeople are only up to 2012 and that several aspects of Gypsy and Traveller need would benefit from further assessment, for example Gypsies and Travellers in ‘Bricks and Mortar’ accommodation and transient requirements.

**Options for Consultation:**

**Permanent Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers:**

In undertaking a review of planning policy on Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites, the RPB is committed to testing a range of Options for new policy and presents 3 Options for public consultation. The following 3 Options are presented in relation to the provision of residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and it is essential that these 3 Options are comprehensively consulted upon, to ensure that the emerging ‘Preferred Option’ is soundly based, fair and robust. However, it should be noted that the final Option may be different from any of the 3 Options presented, as responses to the consultation may lead to a modified Option or a complete alternative.

Options 1 to 3 are described below, and the resulting pitch distributions are summarised in Table 1. **Each Option relates to requirements for residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers only over the 10 year period 2007-2017.** For more details of how the Options have been derived, please see the background technical paper which is available from the Assembly website:

**www.xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**

Option	Comment
<p><b><u>OPTION 1: Need Where it Arises:</u></b>            Option 1 would see additional pitch requirements being distributed largely on the basis of the findings from the sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (with some additions to fill information gaps). The implicit assumption in this Option is that requirements will usually be met in the District in which they arise. The geographical pattern of requirements reflects the location of current site provision, unauthorised sites and concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers living in housing. There is zero or very low requirements in several Districts. While the GTAAs suggest that many Gypsies and Travellers favour living in the areas where they were interviewed, it is not known to what extent preferences are distorted by the pattern of current provision/ lack of provision or local enforcement policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would meet the need for new pitches identified by the GTAAs</li> <li>▪ Would reinforce existing patterns of residential Gypsy and Traveller provision – with some authorities continuing to make very low levels of pitch provision</li> <li>▪ Will not significantly expand Gypsies and Travellers choices as to where they can legally reside in the West Midlands Region</li> </ul>

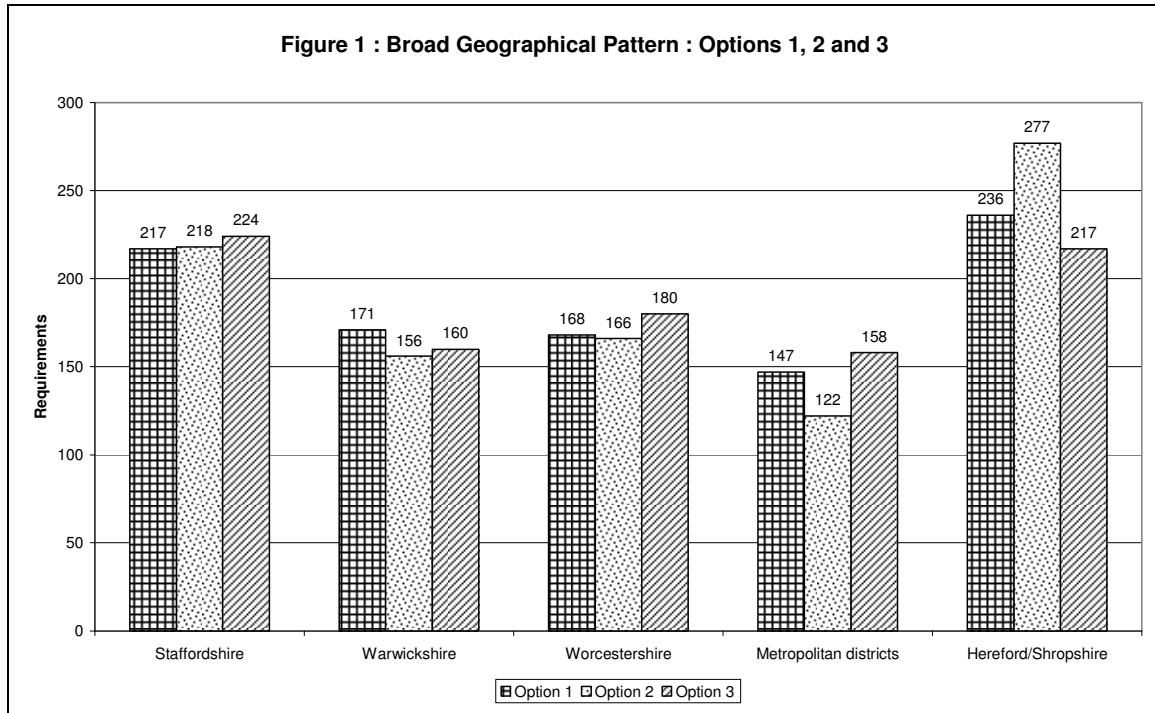
<p><b>OPTION 2: Planning Criteria:</b>  Option 2 would see additional pitch requirements being distributed on the basis of both 'need where it arises' and the potential land supply within each District for new sites. Three-quarters of requirements are distributed on a 'need where it arises' basis as in Option 1. The remaining 25% of requirements are distributed in relation to the footprint (area in hectares) of opportunities on unconstrained land within each District. Opportunities broadly reflect access to key services. Constraints include, for example, flood risk zones, Green Belt and built-up areas. The 'need where it arises' element in this Option takes account of Gypsy and Travellers' wishes to retain community and support links, while the planning opportunities and constraints element takes account of development potential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would see additional pitch requirements being largely distributed in line with existing patterns of provision but would also deliver a limited re-distribution and thereby increase the areas where Travellers can legally reside in the West Midlands Region</li> <li>▪ Would re-distribute some pitch requirements towards those areas which have unconstrained areas of land, together with areas of opportunity, with the balance of opportunity areas being in Shropshire and Herefordshire</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPTION 3: Re-distribution:</b>  Option 3 would see some additional pitch requirements being re-distributed beyond the areas where need currently arises to other parts of the Region. The underlying rationale is that there should be no Districts in the Region where Gypsies and Travellers cannot live on authorised sites. Option 3 allocates a minimum of 14 pitches to all Districts. Requirements to meet this minimum are 'diverted' from all other Districts so that those with the highest 'need where it arises' requirements contribute most to the diversion. The Option seeks to maximise choice for Gypsies and Travellers and, by spreading new provision, increases the areas of search for suitable locations for new sites. The minimum of 14 pitches is set to provide opportunities for a range of site provision while reducing the risk that families would be unduly isolated from other community members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would expand the areas in which Gypsies and Travellers could legally reside in the WM Region</li> <li>▪ The costs associated with making additional provision and the task of identifying suitable land would be more equitably shared between each District authority, than currently</li> <li>▪ Could potentially lead to new pitches being provided in areas where significant demand does not exist but due to the overall scale of need across the Region (identified by the GTAAs) this is considered unlikely</li> </ul>

**Table 1: District Allocation of Pitch Requirements under Options 1, 2 and 3**

Local authority	Additional Residential Pitch Requirements		
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<b>Staffordshire</b>			
Cannock Chase	35	28	32
East Staffordshire	15	23	14
Lichfield	11	12	14
Newcastle-under-Lyme	20	20	19
South Staffordshire	50	44	46
Stafford	37	42	34
Staffordshire Moorlands	2	7	14
Tamworth	7	6	14
<b>Warwickshire</b>			
North Warwickshire	18	16	17
Nuneaton & Bedworth	29	27	27
Rugby	66	55	61
Stratford-on-Avon	45	43	41
Warwick	13	15	14
<b>Worcestershire</b>			
Bromsgrove	3	4	14
Malvern Hills	33	34	30
Redditch	0	4	14
Worcester	22	19	20
Wychavon	66	70	61
Wyre Forest	44	35	41
<b>Metropolitan districts</b>			
Birmingham	19	16	18
Coventry	3	5	14
Dudley	21	17	19
Sandwell	3	3	14
Solihull	26	23	24
Walsall	39	31	36
Wolverhampton	36	27	33
<b>Unitary authorities</b>			
Herefordshire	109	109	100
Shropshire	93	122	86
Stoke-on-Trent	40	36	37
Telford & Wrekin	34	46	31
<b>West Midlands Region</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>939</b>

Figure 1 shows in graphical terms the pattern of requirements resulting from each Option at county level. Staffordshire includes Stoke-on-Trent; Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are considered together.

Figure 1 : Broad Geographical Pattern : Options 1, 2 and 3



The Options have relatively little impact at county level in Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire where there is never more than a 12 pitch difference between Options. Option 2 is markedly more redistributive in the Metropolitan districts of the West Midlands conurbation, where unconstrained land is relatively scarce, and the more rural western parts of the Region in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin where unconstrained land accessible to key services is more plentiful.

## Provision of Sites for Transient Need:

### **Transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers:**

Each of the sub-regional Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments assessed the need for future transient provision, along with residential provision but due to the difficulties in determining transitory need, the resulting evidence is limited.

In consequence, the following draft Policy for Transient Provision is proposed:

- Consistent with their respective GTAA findings, each District will be expected to deliver the number of additional Transit sites identified and to determine the location for the sites and most appropriate types of sites (i.e. formal transit site or informal stopping place) through consultation on the production or review of their Local Development Frameworks.
- RSS Planning policy for Transit provision will encompass all types of provision that are intended to fulfil a temporary purpose, for example stopping-places, or places to accommodate emergency need or places to meet seasonal demand, as well as formal transit site provision.

However, although numbers will be allocated on a District basis, it is hoped that joint working between authorities will allow the identification of suitable sites over a wider geographical area and thereby contribute to speedier delivery. In identifying suitable locations, authorities should consider access to the highways network and key services as well as any local evidence in relation to illegal encampments, historical patterns of transitory travel and annual events.

Those authorities that the GTAAs have identified as having nil need are encouraged to work towards establishing some form of transient provision and contribute to the creation of a comprehensive 'Transitory Network' for the Region.

### **Transient provision identified by sub-regional Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments for the 2007-2017 period:**

	<b>Transit Pitch Requirements</b>
<b>Unitary Authorities:</b> Shropshire Herefordshire Telford & Wrekin Stoke-on-Trent	35 pitches 10 pitches 10 pitches 10 pitches <b>65 pitches TOTAL</b>
<b>Staffordshire:</b> Cannock Chase DC East Staffordshire BC Lichfield DC Newcastle-under-Lyme BC South Staffordshire DC Stafford BC Staffordshire Moorlands DC Tamworth BC	5 pitches 5 pitches 5 pitches 5 pitches 5 pitches 2 pitches 2 pitches 5 pitches <b>34 pitches TOTAL</b>
<b>Warwickshire:</b> North Warwickshire DC Nuneaton & Bedworth BC Rugby BC Stratford-on-Avon DC Warwick DC	5 pitches 5 pitches 5 pitches 10 pitches 15 pitches <b>40 pitches TOTAL</b>
<b>Worcestershire:</b> Bromsgrove DC Malvern Hills DC	0 pitches 10 pitches

Redditch BC Worcester CC Wychavon DC Wyre Forest DC	18 pitches 20 pitches 20 pitches 0 pitches <b>68 pitches TOTAL</b>
<b>West Midlands:</b> Birmingham CC Coventry CC Solihull MBC Dudley MBC Sandwell MBC Walsall MBC Wolverhampton CC	15 pitches 5 pitches 5 pitches 3 pitches 3 pitches 3 pitches 3 pitches <b>37 pitches TOTAL</b>
<b>WM REGIONAL TOTAL:</b> <b>244 pitches</b>	

**Provision of Plots for Travelling Showpeople Need:**

Each of the sub-regional Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments also assessed the need for future Travelling Showpeople plots, along with residential provision but again the findings are somewhat limited and other robust evidence is not readily available.

Consequently, the Regional Planning Body proposes **that new Planning policy for the provision of future Travelling Showpeople sites is based upon the findings from the Assessments for the 2007-2012 period only.**

The Regional Planning Body sought supplementary advice from the West Midlands branch of the Showmen’s Guild, which suggested that the Travelling Showpeople community in the Region largely wishes to continue living in those areas where they currently reside but that they are also prepared to relocate to adjacent areas. The Showmen’s Guild had also previously advised that any new sites should have a minimum of 6 plots, to make them sustainable in terms of day-to-day living. Consequently, the Regional Planning Body proposes two Options for the distribution of the identified need, one of which has the potential to deliver a limited dispersal of the existing pattern of Travelling Showpeople sites, which are currently concentrated in the Conurbation.

<b>Distribution of additional Plot requirements for Travelling Showpeople 2007 – 2012</b>		
	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>
Shropshire / Herefordshire/ Telford & Wrekin	9 plots	19 plots
Staffordshire & Stoke	23 plots	23 plots
Warwickshire	1 plot	23 plots
Worcestershire	22 plots	22 plots
West Midlands Conurbation	63 plots	42 plots
<b>Region</b>	<b>118 plots</b>	<b>118 plots</b>

<b>Options</b>	<b>Potential Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1:</b> Requirements as identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments, with the following assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requirements in the sub-regional South Housing Market Area and Southern Staffordshire/Northern Warwickshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments have been split between counties according to the GTAA’s by local authority area</li> <li>▪ The Birmingham/Coventry and Solihull GTAA site re-location is assumed to involve 25 existing plots plus and additional 5 plots for future family growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would meet the level of need identified in the sub-regional GTAA’s</li> <li>▪ Would maintain the existing pattern of provision for Travelling Showpeople, with over half (53%) of additional plot requirements to be met by authorities within the West Midlands Conurbation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 2:</b> This Option aims to create a wider spread of opportunities for site development for Travelling Showpeople.</p> <p>In calculating this re-distribution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ‘Need where it arises’ requirements in Staffordshire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would reduce the current concentration of Travelling Showpeople sites in the West Midlands Conurbation</li> <li>▪ Could potentially lead to</li> </ul>

<p>and Worcestershire are retained, as they already provide reasonable development opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ One-third of the Conurbation plot requirements are diverted from the Conurbation into Shropshire/Herefordshire/Telford &amp; Wrekin and Warwickshire – with a broadly even distribution between Shropshire and Warwickshire. These additional diverted plots are added to the ‘need where it arises’ plots numbers in Option 1.</li></ul>	<p>the development of a site in each County area, thereby increasing the areas in which Travelling Showpeople can legally reside in the West Midlands Region</p>
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**Consultation Questions:**

***GTQ1: Do you agree with the total residential pitch requirements (939 pitches), as identified by the sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments - can you provide any other evidence?***

***GTQ2: Do you think the 3 Options for the provision of residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches provide a good range of solutions – do you think there is another Option which could be explored?***

***GTQ3: Which of the 3 Options for the provision of residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches do you prefer and why?***

***GTQ4: You may wish to consider need in specific parts of the West Midlands Region (for example in a particular City or a sub-region such as Staffordshire) – please state where and provide any comments on this specific area and explain your reasons?***

***GTQ5: Do you think the numbers allocated for Transit provision (244 pitches) will meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers? If no, please explain your reasons and/or provide other evidence.***

***GTQ6: Do you think the geographical distribution for Transit provision will meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers? If no, please explain your reasons and/or provide other evidence.***

***TSQ1: Do you think the numbers allocated for Travelling Showpeople (118 plots) during the five year period of 2007-2012 will meet their accommodation needs – if not, please explain your reasons and/or provide other evidence?***

***TSQ2: Which of the two Options for the distribution of numbers for Travelling Showpeople do you favour? Please give reasons for your answer / provide evidence.***

***TSQ3: Do you agree that the plot numbers for Travelling Showpeople should be allocated on a County basis, rather than down to District level?***

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**Evidence Base:**

The evidence base comprises of both Guidance issued by Government and Regional documents:

1. ODPM Circular 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites
2. CLG Circular 01/2007: Planning for Travelling Showpeople<sup>3</sup>. Research report on Gypsy's and Travellers Housing Needs in the West Midlands Region, CURS 2004

3. West Midlands Regional Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Policy, WMRA, March 2007
4. West Midlands Travelling Showpeople Supplement, WMRA, November 2007
5. West Midlands Regional Overview of Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments, WMRA, May 2008
6. West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Three Review – Regional Note on Section 4 (4) Advice, WMRA, September 2008

WMRAs Gypsy and Traveller evidence base is also heavily informed by the outcomes from the six Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments which were undertaken by local authorities on a sub-regional basis:

1. North Housing Market Area GTAA– East Staffordshire, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent  
Website:  
[http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/housing\\_content.asp?id=-A780A050&cat=1359](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/housing_content.asp?id=-A780A050&cat=1359)
2. Southern Staffordshire and Northern Warwickshire GTAA – Cannock Chase, Lichfield, South Staffordshire, Tamworth, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth, Rugby  
Website:  
[http://www.northwarks.gov.uk/site/scripts/google\\_results.php?q=Gypsy\\_and\\_Traveller\\_Accommodation\\_Assessments&ie=&site=&output=xml&client=&lr=&oe=&filter=0](http://www.northwarks.gov.uk/site/scripts/google_results.php?q=Gypsy_and_Traveller_Accommodation_Assessments&ie=&site=&output=xml&client=&lr=&oe=&filter=0)
3. West Housing Market Area GTAA – Bridgnorth, North Shropshire, Oswestry, Shrewsbury & Atcham, South Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin (and Powys)  
Website:  
[http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/onecouncil.nsf/viewAttachments/MJOS-7JHCUZ/\\$file/appendix-6.pdf](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/onecouncil.nsf/viewAttachments/MJOS-7JHCUZ/$file/appendix-6.pdf)
4. South Housing Market Area GTAA – Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wyre Forest, Wychavon, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick  
Website:  
<http://bromsgrove.whub.org.uk/home/bdc-planning-lplan-corestrategy-evidencebase-1?highlightTerm=gypsy%20accommodation>
5. Black Country GTAA – Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton  
Website:  
<http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/what-is-the-joint-core-strategy-about/evidence>
6. Birmingham, Coventry & Solihull GTAA  
Website:  
[http://www.coventry.gov.uk/ccm/cms-service/stream/asset/?asset\\_id=17754405](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/ccm/cms-service/stream/asset/?asset_id=17754405)

The Regional Assembly has also been informed by other research/data which has been carried out within/ has association to the Traveller arena:

1. National Curriculum Assessment, GCSE and equivalent attainment and post-16 attainment by pupil characteristics in England 2005/2006 (provisional): SFR46/2006, National Statistics
2. The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers in England, Report to the Department of Health, School of Health and Related Research, University of Sheffield. Van Cleemput, P, et al. 2004
3. Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans: Last five counts. 21 January 2008, CLG.

**JARGONBUSTER TO BE ADDED:**

# RSS Phase Three Options

## Culture, Sport and Tourism

# Culture, Sport and Tourism

## **RSS Objective:**

The Phase Three Revision aims to strengthen WMRSS policy to meet cultural, sporting and tourism needs and through this support Urban and Rural Renaissance. Revised WMRSS policy will seek to improve the provision of, and access to, quality cultural and sports assets and provide opportunities to increase the rate of participation/attendance in cultural activities.

## **Definition**

The Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) definition of culture is very wide. However in recognition that - this is a revision (rather than a full review), that the WMRSS is focused on spatial land use planning and that some aspects of culture (such as the historic environment) are covered in other topic areas - this revision topic will focus on strategic cultural assets of regional importance or above relating to Arts, Sport and Recreation, Museums, Libraries and Archives, the built environment (iconic design) and Tourism.

## **Introduction:**

The reason for revising the RSS was based on the inspectors' recommendation to develop strategic recreation policies. This has been broadened to encapsulate the wider cultural agenda in recognition of the significant contribution culture can make to 'place making', and delivering sustainable communities and renaissance in the region. Nationally government has developed an initiative called '**Living Places**' <http://www.livingplaces.org.uk/> in which government and cultural agencies work in partnership with the aim of ensuring that all communities, particularly those experiencing housing-led growth and regeneration, can benefit from cultural and sporting opportunities.

Culture is also vital in strengthening the economy of the region with the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) stressing the importance of cultural assets in encouraging economic development and developing the attractiveness of the region. A RES priority is to maximise the regions cultural offer to accelerate the attraction, relocation and retention of visitors, people and businesses into the region with the outcome being to increase engagement in cultural activities, greater inward investment, the increased value of tourism to the region and the improved international profile of Birmingham. The facilities services and environments that visitors are looking for also provide local people with more choice and enrich the quality of life of local communities and the visitor economy can support regeneration projects being a key driver for inward investment. The main action in the RES delivery framework is to improve our cultural assets to enhance the image and perceptions of the West Midlands as a place to live, work, visit and invest including: developing a cultural, sporting and tourism offer to bring people to the region, utilise beacon tourism assets and maximise the opportunities generated by the London 2012 Olympic Games.

## **The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy:**

Against this backdrop culture, Sport and Tourism are important elements to integrate into the WMRSS. This revision is intended to help strengthen WMRSS policy to support sustainable economic growth (contributing to the vitality, growth and diversification of the regional economy), to meet the cultural needs of the Region and support the delivery of urban and rural renaissance. Regional policy should therefore seek to improve the provision of, and access to, quality cultural assets and provide opportunities to increase the rate of participation/attendance in cultural activities.

Ultimately the WMRSS Revision aims to contribute to:

- Improving physical and mental well-being of our communities by encouraging healthier, more active lifestyles and greater and more inclusive access to, and participation in, cultural activities
- Making the Region more attractive to residents, in-movers and businesses as a result of the cultural offer
- Supporting the growth and diversification of the regional economy to create a 'world class' visitor destination

The existing RSS is not silent on culture but its primary focus is on the benefits for economic growth – see policies in the 'Prosperity for All' chapter including:

- PA10 - improvement and new cultural and tourism development to create a diverse economy and employment generation,
- PA11 - a network of town and city centres as preferred locations for major cultural and sporting venues, and
- PA12 - Birmingham as a global city and a major centre for cultural and sporting facilities and activities.

Culture, Sport and Tourism are however also vitally important for the delivery of sustainable communities as it contributes towards the creation of a high quality of life. The revisions of Phase 2 have gone some way to recognise this and require such facilities to be delivered as part of new development and regeneration at a local level (see Sustainable Region policy SR2). The focus of policy enhancement for this revision is therefore to be clearer on what strategic assets there are in the region, where any gaps in supply are located and how the RSS can be revised to ensure a network of cultural, sports and tourism assets are provided to support economic growth and renaissance and improve the quality of life in the region.

### **National and Regional Policy Context:**

National **planning** policy concerning culture and sport is primarily set out in PPS1, 3, 6, 7, 17 and 25. They stress the importance of promoting sustainable communities, developing vibrant places, protecting and providing a better range/diversity of cultural and sporting facilities and new opportunities for communities, that town centres should be a focus for major cultural provision, improving access to community facilities, supporting sustainable rural leisure and tourism and improving the quality of life.

Each **cultural** agency has its own national strategy which in essence:

- aims for England to become a world leading sporting nation and to drive up community participation in sport (DCMS - Playing to Win; Sport England Strategy);
- seeks to provide great art for everyone (Arts Council - Great Art for Everyone);
- encourages museums, libraries and archives to add value to places and communities (MLA Corporate Plan).

In addition national strategies for tourism and creative industries seek to capture the opportunities of 2012 to increase tourism business and identify the West Midlands as a potential beacon for creative industries.

Regional Strategies include the RES and Visitor Economy Strategy (VES) which stress the importance of delivering economic regeneration and the Regional Cultural Strategy identifies the need to develop 'vibrant places' that includes focusing on priority areas to maximise the value of our most important cultural assets. Other regional strategies for specific cultural topic areas, include the Regional Sports Facility Framework which identifies the need to drive up participation in sport and address gaps in strategic sports facilities. The Regional Health and Well Being Strategy, amongst its priorities for action, includes; the need to promote health and well-being as an integral part of the social, environmental and physical regeneration of our towns, cities and rural areas and to improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of cultural opportunities.

### **The Regional Picture**

Culture, Sport and Tourism already make a vital contribution to the economy of the West Midlands region with culture accounting for over 10% of regional employment and generates a turnover of some £18 billion p.a. Tourism is a key sector of the region's economy worth £6 billion in visitor spend and supports 130,000 FTE jobs. Business tourism is strong in the region with conferences and exhibitions being a particular strength because of a central location, good access and the presence of several significant conference and exhibition venues that drive business to the region. The West Midlands is recognised as the pre-eminent business tourism destination in Britain, outside of London. The leisure visitor economy presents a more complex picture, reflecting the diversity of the region. That diversity embraces a range of shire or market towns, strong heritage associations and contemporary culture. The visitor economy makes a significant direct contribution to the regional economy through visitor spend. This spend creates demand for new and additional services that leads to the creation and growth of small businesses. It also helps support the high level of employment that the region enjoys.

However participation in cultural activity is lower than in most other regions and research (Taking Part Survey DCMS) shows that engagement in culture and sport has remained broadly static between 2005-7. Recently published research (Cultural Demand in the West Midlands - brmg Research, 2009) indicates that:

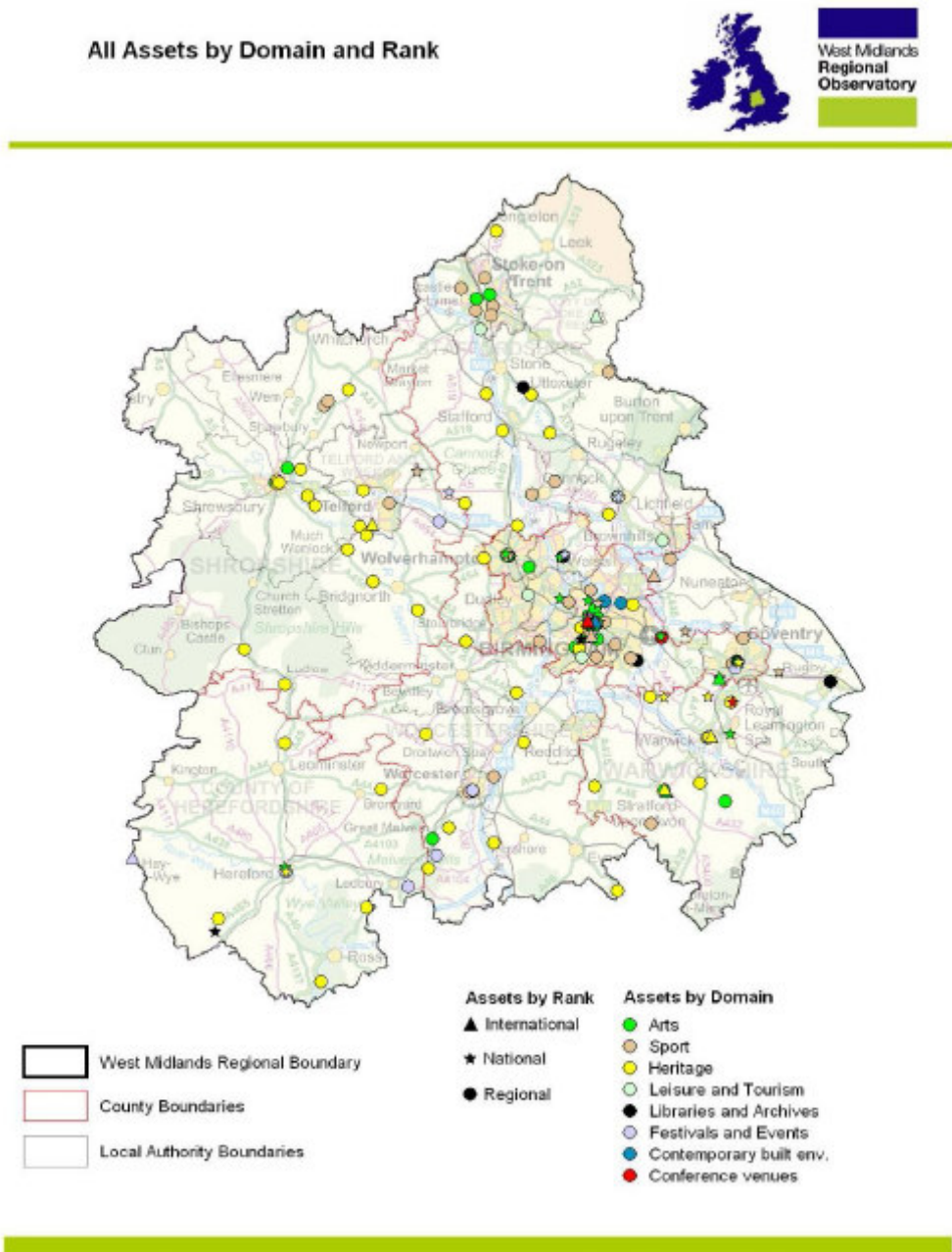
- culture is central to peoples everyday life and quality of life
- provision of cultural amenities and opportunities are considered adequate
- where participation is low the '*lack of a culture of culture*', exclusion, mobility and accessibility were identified as issues with specific barriers including cost, information, time, elitism, public transport deficiencies, distance, age and lifestyle and aspects of facilities infrastructure.
- The breadth of the cultural offer was poorly understood by visitors – assets of international importance tended to be the only ones recognised within the region

In relation to regional policy the study identifies 5 key themes:

- visits and participation are constrained by transport accessibility
- social and economic exclusion affect patterns of consumption
- developments must plan for culture
- culture has an important role in maintaining sub-regional and local identity
- Birmingham has a role in shaping the regional identity.

To address the low participation levels, challenge the '*lack of culture of culture*', meet the requirements of the regions changing population and support further economic growth a network of facilities is required from small local libraries to major international venues to provide an hierarchy of assets. Spatial policy in the RSS is focussed on regionally significant assets and research has been undertaken by Culture West Midlands and WMRA ('Mapping and Gapping Analysis of Cultural Assets in the West Midlands' 2008, Burns Owens Partnership – BOP Report) to identify such assets as a means of revising RSS Policy PA10. This research identified that the region has a significant collection of international, national and regional assets, which are much wider than that identified in PA10, but that geographical gaps in provision exist and the value of some existing assets is constrained by aspects such as poor access. In general the majority of strategic cultural assets are found in the Birmingham area with less provision in the north and west of the region (the north Staffordshire conurbation and Worcester have no international assets) and the region attracts very little leisure tourism.

Figure 4. Map of West Midlands' international, national and regional cultural assets, 2008



- The information below identifies the headline findings of the BOP report:
- **Arts** – The West Midlands has the lowest rate of visits to art galleries and museums of any English region with 60% of arts companies being based in Birmingham. The region has 5 international arts assets which include the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, for temporary exhibitions, and Warwick Arts Centre. Apparent gaps include:
    - no internationally important collection based museum or art gallery.
    - no asset of greater than of sub-regional significance in the north Staffordshire conurbation
    - very limited international and national provision in the north and west of the region.
    - Consultation with the City Region identified a perceived the lack of medium sized music venues and independent cinemas.
    - Absence of a home for the Birmingham Photo Archives

- **Sport** – Participation in sport remains the lowest in the English regions. The region has 4 international venues including Edgbaston Cricket Ground (currently subject to improvement proposals), Villa Park (to be an Olympic venue), Lilleshall National Sports Centre (major investment is planned for the Lilleshall National Sports Centre for use as a British training centre for archery and hockey in preparation for the 2012 Olympics) and Stoneleigh Equestrian Centre. The NIA and ICC provide venues for world-class sporting events. Apparent gaps identified in the RSFF/BOP report include:
  - a 50m swimming pool, an indoor cycling velodrome, a 200m indoor athletics track, a BMX national competition venue and a regional centre for netball (RSFF 2007)
  - Outdoor facilities generally fall short of the very top level.
  - The need for more high-class recurring events, especially in major spectator sports
  
- **Tourism** – The 4 most significant sites of importance for heritage are equally important for tourism (Shakespeare’s Birthplace and Stratford, Ironbridge Gorge and Warwick Castle), the only other asset of international importance being Alton Towers. This is affected by the low visitor numbers (the West Midlands having only 3% of English domestic tourist trips 2006). Regional assets include the Black Country Living Museum, Cadbury World and Drayton Manor Theme Park. Apparent gaps/challenges identified include:
  - A lack of a coordinated offer around the Potteries in Stoke-on-Trent and
  - increasing international competition in the core business tourism offer.
  
- **Libraries and archives** – Library attendance is in line with national trends but the region does not have one of the six legal deposit libraries however Birmingham Central library is the second-most visited public library in the country. Assets of national importance include Huntley Film Archive and University of Warwick Modern Records Centre and there are 5 assets of regional importance including Coventry Central library and Staffordshire Film Archive. Apparent gaps identified include:
  - there is only one library of national importance, and no international assets in the region.

Consultation with strategic planning authorities (Section 4/4s) in the region identified a view that the focus should be on improving existing assets rather than providing new and suggest the general view that PA10 is adequate but needs to be updated to reflect the range of assets and current strategies, that the policy should focus on key regional facilities and clearly safeguard existing assets. In addition it was generally considered that any new policy should be criteria based, with broad locational policies only if specific locational gaps are identified for regional assets.

## Options

The options set out below explore how the RSS could influence and support delivery of regionally significant cultural, sport and tourism assets through the revision of existing RSS Policy PA10 and developing new policy.

It is important to identify our main regional cultural, sport and tourism assets in order to understand the sector, to inform policy making, to ensure assets are maximised and to guide investment. This would allow a review of PA10 Part A to ensure it accurately reflects the range, type and importance of cultural assets in the region, and the identification of any strategic gaps in provision which, when tested against opportunities and priorities for investment in the region, the RSS should seek address. The options below are therefore split into two areas, the first identifying an accurate portfolio of assets and the second addressing strategic gaps in provision.

### Updating the Cultural Assets Portfolio in RSS Policy PA10 Part A:

RSS Policy PA10 Part A includes a portfolio of tourism and cultural assets for the purpose of “encouraging improvement” and supporting “further development and success of key regional tourism and cultural assets” to deliver a diverse regional economy.

It is important this portfolio of assets in PA10 correctly represent the importance and range of regional assets for the policy to be consistently effective in its aims. Research has demonstrated that PA10 currently includes an incomplete portfolio with important assets, such as the NIA, being omitted and some assets included which are of less than regional importance.

To include all assets within the range of international to sub-regional would be impractical as there are over 400. The options below therefore explore in principle the scope of the portfolio to be incorporated in PA10.

**Key Issues –**

1. Scope of assets - The starting point of this revision was to update the portfolio of assets to ensure the policy identified all the appropriate assets. Research (BOP) identified the assets and assessed them against a set of agreed criteria and provided the first objective assessment of what assets are in the region and how important they are. However other considerations have to be taken into account such as national designations, for example National Parks. The final portfolio of assets would need to be developed from the BOP Report into a form agreed by the key regional partners. The options do not seek to identify the assets at this stage but to establish the scope and range of assets which the policy should include.
2. Why identify the assets - In deciding on which option is most appropriate it is important to be clear as to the value of having a portfolio – this might include:
  - Provision of a comprehensive portfolio of all assets in the region
  - Encourages improvement of the identified assets
  - Supports the diversification of the economy, employment growth and regional distinctiveness
  - Provides a guide for future investment.

It might be argued however that this could divert investment away from local assets or become inflexible as it would not be responsive to change in demand and supply.

3. Protection of assets - A second issue revolves around whether the policy should also seek to protect these assets. As currently worded that is not its purpose but national planning guidance and some strategic authorities suggest that it should. This could be valuable to those assets not already protected by national designations (such as AONB) but it might be argued this could prohibit redevelopment and responsiveness to changing markets.

**Spatial Options for updating the cultural assets portfolio:**

	Implications
<b>Option 1 - Remove the Portfolio</b> of strategic cultural assets within policy PA10 – this means that all assets listed in Part A of the policy would be deleted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A shorter policy giving rise to no diversionary debate on what assets should/should not be included at the later stages of policy development and providing flexibility to determine which assets the policy would apply to.</li> <li>• A lack of information/clarity as to which assets are of regional importance and therefore which assets take priority with regard to investment and improvement (and perhaps protection).</li> </ul>

<p><b>Option 2 - Update the Portfolio</b> of strategic cultural assets within policy PA10 to reflect the most up to date information on the Region's most important cultural assets – this means that the policy would include all assets of regional, national and international importance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The portfolio of assets would be longer than the current policy but not unduly long.</li> <li>• Some agreement would be needed to ensure the final portfolio was generally supported by key partners.</li> <li>• It would provide a valuable portfolio to identify the most important assets and guide decisions and investment</li> <li>• It would exclude those assets of sub-regional importance which you might expect the WMRSS to address if there are any cross-boundary issues for example.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 3 - Update the Portfolio</b> of strategic cultural assets within policy PA10 as Option 2 <b>and provide a full list of assets (sub-regional to international) in an RSS appendix</b> – this means that information would be available as to the full portfolio of assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As option 2 but would provide reference to assets of sub-regional importance and guide decisions and investment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 4</b> – In addition to Options 1, 2 or 3, to include within the policy the requirement to <b>protect</b> existing strategic cultural assets - this means the policy would seek to improve, develop <u>and protect</u> the assets in the portfolio.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the assets listed such as National Parks, Ironbridge and historic sites are already protected by other national designations. Others however currently are not offered protection such as the NIA or Drayton Manor Park.</li> <li>• Including protection in the purpose of the policy would therefore protect our most important assets</li> <li>• Protection might imply restriction to redevelopment or improvement if the policy is not dynamic.</li> </ul>

Questions

**Question CST1: Which of the Options 1-3 do you think should be used as a basis of revising PA10 Part A and why?**

	Please tick one box
Option 1: Remove the portfolio	
Option 2: Update the portfolio to include regional to international assets	
Option 3: Update the portfolio as Option 2, with the addition of a full portfolio of assets in an appendix	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

**Question CST2: Do you also agree with Option 4, that PA10 should also protect existing strategic cultural assets?**

	Please tick one box
Yes	
No	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

Addressing Strategic Gaps

In order for the cultural economy to grow, for the region to attract/retain residents and for participation in cultural activity to increase it is necessary for the community and visitors to the region to have good access to a range of quality cultural facilities, including those of strategic importance to provide opportunities for participation and events at the highest level. Therefore, not only should existing assets be improved (and potentially protected) but the RSS should recognise the social benefits and support proposals for new strategic cultural assets for which there is a need or where demand could be generated.

### **Key Issues:**

1. Scope of the policy - Part B of RSS Policy PA 10 sets out general policy to assess new large scale, innovative projects under the tourism and culture topic for economic development. However it is not driven by other social objectives such as delivering sustainable communities and improving health and well-being, and is not based on any assessment of current needs or opportunities, or an understanding of the current spatial issues.
2. Current distribution - The BOP research, regional strategies and Section 4/4 authorities identify gaps in regional provision (see above) primarily based on the geographical spread of existing supply. In general most cultural assets are located in Birmingham with fewer assets in the west and north of the region. This could be explained by many factors such as lower demand and poor accessibility in rural areas, competition for north Staffordshire from Manchester and Birmingham and other social factors such as deprivation and ethnic background. Whether the RSS should seek to reinforce this pattern of distribution or use culture through regeneration as a catalyst to redress the apparent imbalances is an issue which needs to be considered.
3. Future distribution - The above pattern of distribution appears to reflect the current economic thrust of RSS policy which identifies a network of town and city centres as preferred locations for major cultural development with Birmingham being a Tier 1 City Centre, Stoke on Trent Tier 2 and Hereford/Worcester Tier 3 (PA11). PA12 also identifies Birmingham as a 'Global' city and the 'regional capital' and a focus for development for major cultural, sporting and other tourist facilities and activities. There might be an argument however why this general principle should not always apply to all types of cultural asset (e.g. a new proposal for a centre parcs or legoland style of development is unlikely to be appropriate in towns and cities) and does not recognise the social drivers for cultural development which might encourage development in more deprived areas for example.
4. Other spatial issues - Recent guidance, research and consultation with Section 4/4 authorities also identifies other factors and issues which revised policy might need to address e.g. climate change, poor access, poor quality (e.g. aging stock of swimming pools and low quality of tourist attractions and accommodation), the potential impact of housing growth on the 'unspoilt countryside' and the impact of flooding on cultural assets and the tourism economy.
5. Assessing need and gaps in provision - Whilst the region has a significant collection of strategic assets it is implicit that improved/new provision will be needed given the drive to increase participation, address population changes and deliver the priority to improve the economic performance of the West Midlands. The mechanism for doing this is 'up for discussion' but the mapping and gapping exercise is the first stage in the process. Planning for cultural assets at the highest level is more difficult to predict than local requirements such as housing or schools. Markets for different cultural sectors are very different, they are subject to changes in taste and fashion and supply can often generate its own demand (e.g. the Eden Centre). Some facilities are very specialist (such as a velodrome) which might not be justified in terms of numbers using the facility. For these reasons it is hard to accurately predict demand and the need for new provision and policy needs to be flexible. Does the need for new cultural assets always need to be identified and justified with empirical evidence - if not how should RSS policy address this to ensure proposals are deliverable – can we rely on criteria based policy or where such evidence

does exist (e.g. the need for a 50m pool in Birmingham) should policy be more directional? The BOP report suggests each gap/challenge would need to be tested against agreed criteria and suggests developing an hierarchy of provision, further research into demand and comparison of Birmingham with other benchmark 'world class' cities.

The options below therefore seek to address and broaden the purpose of improving and providing new cultural assets, look at mechanisms to address the gaps in provision and opportunities for new aspirational projects and ensure policy criteria seek to address the current spatial issues.

**Options for addressing strategic gaps in cultural assets:**

	Implications
<b>Option 1 - Rely on PA10</b> parts B and C as currently drafted – this means that there would be no revisions to the policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus of the policy would remain on the economy.</li> <li>• The existing criteria to assess new development would be unchanged.</li> </ul>
<b>Option 2 - Amend PA10</b> parts B and C – this means that the criteria could be updated to reflect current issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus of the policy would remain on the economy.</li> <li>• The criteria could be updated to include, for example, reference to sustainable transport and climate change (and/or clear cross ref. to other RSS policy areas)</li> </ul>
<b>Option 3 - Develop a new general criteria based policy</b> located in the Sustainable Communities chapter - this means that the scope of the policy could be broadened and detailed criteria developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus of the policy would be broadened to compliment the economic drivers and recognise the social benefits.</li> <li>• More detailed criteria could be developed to reflect the broader scope of cultural assets (and/or clear cross ref. to other RSS policy areas)</li> <li>• Specific distribution/locational criteria could be established to maximise investment and regeneration opportunities and address social drivers.</li> </ul>
<b>Option 4 - in addition to an updated PA10 policy (Option 2) or a new general policy (Option 3), to develop new asset specific policies</b> for each cultural area (e.g. arts, sport) where there is an identified asset gap – this means that a more tailored policy could be provided against which to assess specific types of development, and where appropriate identify broad locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As with Option 3 but specific developments could be supported against more tailored criteria with, where appropriate, the identification of broad locations.</li> <li>• This might enable specific linkages to be made with regeneration initiatives and maximise development/funding opportunities through growth points and other investment funds such as Building Schools for the Future.</li> <li>• This might support a case for funding strategic facilities under the forthcoming Community Infrastructure Levy.</li> </ul>

Questions

**Question CST3:** Do you think it is appropriate to retain the direction of PA10-12 with regard to focussing distribution of new cultural assets on the identified network of towns and cities?

	Please tick one box
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide reasons (and where possible, evidence) for your answer.	

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**Question CST4:** Do you think it is important for all strategic cultural assets proposed by the RSS to be robustly justified by an evidence base to provide certainty of demand and deliverability?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
Please provide reasons (and where possible, evidence) for your answer.	

**Question CST5:** Do you think the options above help to address the issues of current provision in terms of poor quality and access?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
Please provide reasons (and where possible, evidence) for your answer.	

**Question CST6** Which of the options do you think should be used as a basis of revising the WMRSS?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Spatial Option 1: No amendment to PA10	
Spatial Option 2: Amend PA10	
Spatial Option 3: Introduce a new general criteria based policy	
Spatial Option 4: Introduce new asset specific policies	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

**Evidence Base:**

- Taking Part Survey – DCMS 2008
- Active People Survey – Sport England 2006 and 2008
- State of the Region Report – Regional Observatory 2008
- Mapping and Gapping Analysis of Cultural assets in the West Midlands – BOP and WMRA 2008
- Cultural Demand in the West Midlands – bmg research for WMRA 2009

# RSS Phase Three Options

## Quality of the Environment

# Quality of the Environment

## 1. Update of the Environmental Policies in the WMRSS

### RSS Objective

The Phase Three Revision will be used to update and align the existing Quality of the Environment policies so as to ensure consistency with current national guidance and regional plans, strategies and initiatives. This will also include making appropriate links to other Phase Three topics such as culture, sport and tourism.

### National and Regional Policy Context

Much has changed in the policy context for the quality of the environment policies. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy recognises the need to live within our environmental limits, and identifies protection of essential natural resources and environmental enhancement as a priority for action. The Millennium Ecosystems Approach, reflected in a Defra Action Plan, promotes integration between environmental resources. Recent Planning Policy Statements (PPS) have highlighted the importance of sustainable development, global sustainability, the mitigation and adaptation to climate change, efficient use of land, high quality design, developing resilient landscapes, the historic environment and conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

The European Landscape Convention emphasises the importance of all landscapes, not just designated areas. The European Convention on Biological Diversity and the England Biodiversity Strategy encourage conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. Local authorities now have a duty to conserve biodiversity.

The White Paper on Heritage Protection emphasises the importance of the historic environment within planning and in building sustainable communities. A new PPS will bring together all aspects of the historic environment (built environment, archaeology, landscape) and will take forward aspects of the Heritage Protection Bill. In 2008, English Heritage launched a national programme on Heritage at Risk.

The European Water Framework Directive encourages an holistic approach to water resource management and the sustainable use of water. The Directive requires the UK to put in place River Basin Management Plans, which are being prepared for river catchment areas such as the Severn and Humber, and will set environmental objectives for each water body and how these will be achieved. Future Water, the Government's water strategy aims to make all new development take full account of water quality, resource management and climate change. The Environment Agency will be producing a new water resources strategy in 2009, whilst Water Companies are preparing water resource management plans for the period 2010 to 2035.

A number of new regional strategies are relevant. The Regional Economic Strategy identifies the challenge to the region of the forecast growth in brownfield and derelict land. The Green Infrastructure Prospectus highlights the multiple benefits of green space, with its links to health and well being. The draft Historic Environment Strategy prioritises the need to more fully understand and appreciate the Region's historic environment. It encourages community involvement, and seeks to ensure that development respects the historic character of places by considering the whole landscape not just individual sites. Landscapes for Living also takes a landscape scale approach to restoring and enhancing biodiversity. The Regional Forestry Framework promotes the multiple benefits that trees and woodlands provide, including safeguarding and enhancing ancient semi-natural woodlands. It also promotes the links between tree planting and woodland management, the generation of renewable energy, green infrastructure and combating climate change.

### Key Issues

Brownfield and derelict land detracts from the quality of the region's environment, especially its major urban areas, discouraging economic investment and exacerbating unsustainable migration to the Shires. Such land provides opportunities to enhance the quality of the environment and meet social and economic needs especially in the MUAs, but there are concerns that developers will target easier to develop green field sites in preference to brownfield and derelict land in urban areas undermining regeneration of the MUAs .

There has been some progress in planning for green infrastructure, especially in some Growth Points, but these principles need to be adopted more widely. Valued historic buildings, archaeological remains and historic landscapes continue to be at risk through neglect, decay, loss of use, and development pressures. The historic environment offers regeneration, leisure and tourism, and educational opportunities, and is also vital to the valued and distinctive character and identity of the Region's urban and rural areas. However, there is the potential that this irreplaceable resource may come under further pressure particularly in areas designated for significant housing growth.

Biodiversity is declining and is threatened by climate change. Potential exists for managing and increasing woodlands and other habitats to help plants and animals adapt to climate change, to support renewable energy generation, to offset carbon emissions and to contribute to a healthier region.

The water environment is under threat from the increasing demands from new development, with greater demands for water resources and levels of waste water putting pressure on river flows and quality.

### **Advice from Strategic Planning Authorities**

Environmental policies need to be stronger and better integrated with those promoting or directing development, developing work on the Sustainable Region policies in Phase 2, and taking account of the implications of climate change, the growth agenda, and for key environmental services. Policies should address the key issue of the poor environmental quality of much of the major urban areas.

The RSS should identify areas where improvements to the urban and rural environment and townscape are needed, especially within the major urban areas, Regeneration Zones and Settlements of Significant Development, reflecting both the urban and rural renaissance agenda. It should also promote the concept and facilitate delivery of green infrastructure and the use of landscape characterisation techniques.

### **Options**

#### **Policy QE1- Conserving and Enhancing the Environment**

Options for the revision to Policy QE1 are included in the section titled Integrated Approach to the Management of Environmental Resources.

#### **Policy QE2 – Restoring Degraded Areas and Managing and Creating High Quality New Environments**

It is suggested that a revised policy and text for Policy QE2 could:

- (a) Recognise the key role that brownfield land can play in the transformation/regeneration of the region, especially its major urban areas
- (b) Ensure that the wider social and environmental benefits of brownfield land are recognised and nurtured, such as brownfield land habitats, and the multiple benefits of green infrastructure, including flood risk management, biodiversity and the promotion of good health
- (c) Recognise the benefits of the reuse and repair of existing buildings, particularly those of historic interest, and the potential for surviving archaeological interest

- (d) Recognise the role of West Midlands Brownfield Land working group in enabling brownfield land to be brought forward for development in line with housing and business policies
- (e) Encourage the preparation of Brownfield Land Action Plans/previously developed land strategies in areas with significant problem of brownfield land
- (f) Develop the regional Centre of Excellence for Land Reclamation as a source of information and expertise about brownfield land.

Three Options have been considered:

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1: Needs led</b></p> <p>This involves targeting communities in need when developing strategies and programmes of action to encourage the conservation and enhancement of brownfield land in ways that contribute to biodiversity and/or meet wider needs for greenspace or other environmental interests. Redevelopment would be targeted to other sites in sustainable locations.</p>	<p>Would lead to an improvement in the attractiveness of disadvantaged areas with significant amounts of brownfield land and meet social and economic needs</p> <p>Would contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and provide accessible local greenspace</p> <p>May increase proportion of development in urban extensions/new settlements</p>
<p><b>Option 2: Growth led</b></p> <p>This approach would mean that resources devoted to facilitating the redevelopment and re-use of brownfield land would be concentrated in those areas identified for significant growth, promoting the use of appropriate techniques to determine the most appropriate use of individual sites.</p>	<p>Would recognise the pattern of new development/ redevelopment in the RSS phase 2 revision</p> <p>Potential conflict between maximising development and enhancing attractiveness</p> <p>May not address re-use of brownfield land in locations removed from the main focus of growth</p>
<p><b>Option 3: Competitiveness led</b></p> <p>This option would prioritise redevelopment and re-use of those brownfield sites that would enhance the image and attractiveness of the region, addressing for example areas of poor environmental quality in and around the major urban areas and regeneration zones.</p>	<p>Best fit with the principles of the original Regional Spatial Strategy</p> <p>May not contribute so significantly to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity or the provision of accessible local greenspace</p> <p>Would place lower priority on brownfield land in Settlements of Significant Development and other growth areas</p>

## Implementation of Policy QE2

It is suggested that alternative means of implementation might include:

- (a) Relying primarily on the targets for housing/business development on previously developed land and on phasing policies to deliver re-use of brownfield land

- (b) Requiring Brownfield Land Action Plans to be prepared in all areas, in the major urban areas, in and? regeneration zones
- (c) Recognising and alleviating the barriers to redevelopment by the market and concentrating resources on improving the quality of land by providing greenspace and enhancing biodiversity, to make sites more attractive to developers.

**Questions**

Question ENV1. Do you agree with the suggested list of issues a – f in paragraph x that a revised Policy QE2 could include?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
Are there any suggested issues which you think a revised Policy QE2 should <u>not</u> include? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.	
Are there any additional issues which you think a revised QE2 should include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.	

Question EN2. Which Option would you prefer Policy QE2 to follow, and why?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1: Needs Led	
Option 2: Growth Led	
Option 3: Competitiveness Led	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

Question ENV3. Are there any other strategic options that you think we should consider?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
If “yes” please provide reasons for your answer.	

Question ENV4: Which, if any, of the means for implementing Policy QE2 outlined in a- c of paragraph x do you think would be most appropriate, and why?

Which, if any, of the means for implementing Policy QE2 outlined in paragraph x do you think would be most appropriate? Please provide reasons for your answer.	
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**Policy QE3 – Creating a high quality built environment for all**

Policy QE3 was superseded by Policies SR2 and SR3 in the Phase 2 Revision Draft Preferred Option.

### Policy QE4 – Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Spaces

It is suggested that a revised policy and text for Policy QE4 should be re-titled “Green Infrastructure”, and could include:

- (a) Greater emphasis on Green Infrastructure
- (b) Use of the West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus definition as a foundation with supporting text including historic environment/character/local distinctiveness
- (c) Greater emphasis on the wider sustainability benefits that Green Infrastructure can deliver, especially in areas of deprivation, including improving the image of an area (and thus helping in efforts to regenerate an area).
- (d) Reference to recreational resources including access and emphasising importance of PPG17 assessments
- (e) Requirement for local authorities to produce Green Infrastructure Strategies – link to LDFs.

Three Options have been considered:

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1: Green Infrastructure Approach</b></p> <p>This means advocating an integrated, multi-functional and consistent approach across the region as defined by green infrastructure planning.</p>	<p>Would ensure that the multi-functional benefits of green spaces are realised</p> <p>Would ensure a consistent approach that would address links across local authority boundaries</p>
<p><b>Option 2: Green Infrastructure Strategies</b></p> <p>This option would include the Green Infrastructure approach in Option 1, but also involves expecting local authorities to prepare green infrastructure strategies. This could apply to all authorities, or just to priority areas such as growth areas.</p>	<p>Comprehensive approach would ensure all parts of the region enjoy benefits</p> <p>Approach particularly important in growth areas to maximise attractiveness and contribute to sustainable communities</p>
<p><b>Option 3: Targeted approach</b></p> <p>Under this option the Green Infrastructure approach and requirement for local strategies in Options 1 and 2 would be supplemented by priorities for green infrastructure provision. These would be identified either at a regional level or alternatively in sub-regional and local Green Infrastructure Strategies.</p>	<p>Regional priorities would ensure that Green Infrastructure delivered in key areas for Spatial Strategy</p> <p>Priorities easier to identify at the local level</p>

### Questions

Question ENV5. Do you agree with the list of issues a – e in paragraph x that it is suggested Policy QE4 could include?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any suggested issues which a revised Policy QE4 should <u>not</u> include? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.	

Are there any additional issues which you think a revised QE4 should include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.

Question EN6. Which option would you prefer Policy QE4 to follow, and why?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1: Green Infrastructure Approach	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 2: Green Infrastructure Strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 3: Targeted Approach	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

### Policy QE5 – Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

It is suggested that a revised policy and text for Policy QE5 could:

- (a) Emphasise the historic environment as a finite and non-renewable resource
- (b) Underline the importance of the undesignated historic environment resource and of consulting local communities to determine what they value and why
- (c) Retain an emphasis on the consideration of historic landscapes and townscapes as a whole rather than individual sites in isolation
- (d) Review the lists of regionally distinctive aspects of the Region’s historic environment and regeneration opportunities
- (e) Recognise the benefits of the historic environment to local distinctiveness and sense of place, to tourism, leisure, educational and cultural activities, to the economy and to sustainability
- (f) Reflect the principles of the Heritage White Paper, Heritage Protection Bill and Draft PPS for the Historic Environment
- (g) Retain an emphasis on managing change in a way that sustains heritage values and respects local character and distinctiveness
- (h) Strengthen the requirement to use historic landscape characterisation and other characterisation tools and data to understand the historic character of places, their significance, and their capacity for change
- (i) Strengthen encouragement for the enhancement of the historic environment

Three Options have been considered:

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1: Defining the historic environment</b></p> <p>This means providing more detail on regionally distinctive aspects of the West Midlands’ historic environment and regional priorities for its enhancement and regeneration</p>	<p>Supports a regionally distinctive policy</p> <p>Difficulty in capturing the full diversity of the region’s historic environment</p>

<p><b>Option 2: Understanding the benefits of the historic environment</b></p> <p>This option would include the definition of the historic environment in Option 1, but also involves promoting the social, economic, cultural and sustainability benefits of the region's historic environment and ways in which these benefits should be realised</p>	<p>Would ensure wider benefits of the historic environment not overlooked or underplayed</p> <p>Complements the Regional Historic Environment Strategy and action plan</p>
<p><b>Option 3: Managing change in the historic environment</b></p> <p>This option would supplement the definition of the historic environment and promotion of its benefits by providing more detailed guidance on the protection and enhancement of the historic environment in areas of the region likely to experience the greatest change, such as the Major Urban Areas and Settlements of Significant Development. This could include strengthening encouragement for undertaking historic landscape characterisation and historic environment assessments</p>	<p>Would help to ensure that the historic values of these areas are protected and opportunities for enhancement are maximised</p> <p>Historic places beyond these areas also need to be protected and enhanced</p> <p>Small scale change can also affect the historic character of places</p> <p>Would utilise improved regional coverage of historic landscape and urban characterisation</p>

### Questions

Question ENV7. Do you agree with the list of issues a – i in paragraph x that it is suggested Policy QE5 could include?

		<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>
No		<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any suggested issues which a revised Policy QE5 should <u>not</u> include? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.		
Are there any additional issues which you think a revised Policy QE5 should include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.		

Question EN8. Which option(s) would you prefer Policy QE5 to follow, and why?

		<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 1 + 2:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 1 + 2 + 3:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide reasons for your answer.		

## Policy QE6 – The Conservation, Enhancement and Restoration of the Region’s Landscape

It is suggested that a revised policy and text for QE6 could:

- (a) Refer to the European Landscape Convention as the National and European context for managing the region’s landscapes
- (b) Emphasise the importance of managing all landscapes positively – explaining the shift to ‘All Landscapes Matter’
- (c) Include the protected landscapes element of QE1
- (d) Refer to the pressures on the landscape in growth areas and the urban fringe, and identify Joint Character Areas subject to neglect/change (Currently 10 out of the region’s 25 Joint Character Areas)
- (e) Retain the use of Landscape Character Assessment as a tool including Historic Landscape Characterisation and integrated assessments
- (f) Strengthen references to tranquillity, noise and light pollution
- (g) Include reference to geodiversity
- (h) Include reference to townscapes and maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness.

Three Options have been considered:

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1: Protection and Enhancement of Landscapes</b></p> <p>This option would require Local Development Frameworks to take account of the European Landscape Convention and encourage local authorities to prepare Action Plans for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention.</p>	<p>Would ensure positive management of all landscapes</p> <p>Would help to ensure that the European Landscape Convention is implemented at local level</p>
<p><b>Option 2: Landscape Character Assessment</b></p> <p>Under this option, which includes the protection and enhancement of landscapes in Option 1, local authorities would be required to use landscape character assessment, including consideration of tranquillity and light pollution, to inform policies.</p>	<p>Would ensure consistent approach to landscape assessment</p> <p>Help to strengthen local distinctiveness</p> <p>Would ensure issues of tranquillity and light pollution are incorporated</p>
<p><b>Option 3: Landscape Restoration and Enhancement</b></p> <p>This option would supplement the protection and enhancement of landscapes and the requirement for landscape character assessment in Options 1 and 2. It would mean identifying priorities for landscape restoration and enhancement, based on those landscapes that are being neglected or changing in a way that is inconsistent with their character, as well as requiring local authorities to identify opportunities based on landscape character assessment.</p>	<p>Would ensure that strategic and local landscape issues are addressed in a targeted manner</p> <p>Would help to inform the targeting of resources</p>

## Questions

Question ENV9. Do you agree with the list of issues a – h in paragraph x that it is suggested Policy QE6 could include?

	Please tick one box
Yes	
No	
Are there any suggested issues which a revised Policy QE6 should <u>not</u> include? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.	
Are there any additional issues which you think a revised Policy QE6 should include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.	

Question EN10. Which option(s) would you prefer Policy QE6 to follow, and why?

	Please tick one box
Option 1: Protection and Enhancement of Landscapes	
Option 2: Landscape Character Assessment	
Option 3: Landscape Restoration and Enhancement	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

## Policy QE7 – Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the Region’s Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources

It is suggested that a revised Policy QE7 should be re-titled “Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the Region’s Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources”, and could:

- (a) Refer to the need to support resilient natural systems across the region, through for example promoting delivery at a landscape scale and linking fragmented habitats
- (b) Recognise the need to ensure that biodiversity assets can adapt to expected future climate change
- (c) Deliver an agreed set of regional habitat targets **[TARGETS]** linked to the Regional Opportunities map **[MAP]**
- (d) Require that local opportunity maps are developed as part of the Local Development Framework process
- (e) Emphasise the social and economic benefits of biodiversity across the region
- (f) Ensure that benefits for biodiversity are captured from the housing and other growth proposals for the region
- (g) Raise awareness of the statutory duty on local authorities to ensure beneficial management of Local Sites for biodiversity and geodiversity
- (h) Recognise the potential for biodiversity enhancement associated with mineral extraction
- (i) Incorporate Geodiversity

Two Options have been considered:

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1: Regional Habitat Targets</b></p> <p>This option involves updating the targets for improving priority habitats, as set out in Annex B of the RSS.</p>	<p>Would ensure that the policy reflects up to date national and regional priorities</p>
<p><b>Option 2: Focus Enhancement on Specific Areas or Zones</b></p> <p>Under this option the focus for enhancement would be mainly on specific geographical areas, either the existing Biodiversity Enhancement Areas (BEA) in the adopted RSS, or the areas shown in the Regional Opportunities map.</p>	<p>Focus on BEA would develop the policy approach in the adopted RSS</p> <p>Focus on the Regional Opportunities map would reflect development of work on enhancement since the RSS was adopted</p>

**Questions**

Question ENV11: Do you agree with the proposed targets (see page x) for improving priority habitats set out in the updated Annex B of the current WMRSS, and if not, why?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Agree with the proposed targets on page x	
Disagree with the proposed targets on page x	
If disagree, please provide reasons for your answer.	

Question ENV12: Do you agree with the list of issues a – i in paragraph x that it is suggested Policy QE7 could include?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
Are there any suggested issues which a revised Policy QE7 should <u>not</u> include? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.	
Are there any additional issues which you think a revised Policy QE7 should include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.	

Question ENV13: Should the focus of Policy QE7 be mainly on the existing Biodiversity Enhancement Areas, or alternatively those areas identified in the Regional Opportunities map (on page x), and why?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Existing Biodiversity Enhancement Areas	
Areas identified in Regional Opportunities map	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

## Policy QE8 – Forestry and Woodlands

It is suggested that a revised policy and text for Policy QE8 could address the following key issues:

- (a) Continue enhanced woodland management and creation in the region, but develop the balance between them, including resource targeting
- (b) Woodlands in rural areas, where most of the woodland resource is, must be considered alongside urban woodlands, where most of the region’s population reside, with comparable but different priorities for each
- (c) Change in targeting woodland creation to include areas influenced by Opportunities Mapping as well as existing priorities such as the National Forest and Community Forest
- (d) The need to focus on ancient woodland protection/ enhancement and active Programmes of restoration of Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), with priorities influenced by national guidance, Opportunities Mapping and Biodiversity Action Plan targets for woodland
- (e) The need to afford effective protection to veteran trees/wood pasture as well as woodland
- (f) The potential for forestry and woodland industries to contribute to woodland management and creation and the rural economy
- (g) The increasing importance of woodland and forestry policies embracing climate change adaptation and mitigation, including for example flood mitigation/floodplain management and linking with wood fuel for heat and energy
- (h) A wide range of woody biomass is potentially available as fuel for renewable heat and energy production, although wood arising from woodland management operations could be prioritised

Two Options have been considered:

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1: Woodland Management and Creation</b></p> <p>This option involves considering the balance between the need for more and better woodland management and creation in the region.</p>	<p>Emphasis on creation is likely to lead to increased tree planting across the region</p> <p>Emphasis on management is likely to result in improvements to existing woodlands</p>
<p><b>Option 2: Spatial Dimension</b></p> <p>This means deciding how woodland and forestry policy should be targeted on different parts of the region, such as growth areas, areas of low woodland cover, and areas of greatest potential for enhancing woodland biodiversity, and the need for further development of the Woodland Opportunities Mapping approach.</p>	<p>Targeting growth areas would help to improve their quality and strengthen green infrastructure</p> <p>Would not address needs of majority of woodland resource in rural areas</p>

### Questions

Question ENV14: Do you agree with the list of issues a – h in paragraph x that it is suggested Policy QE8 could include?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
Are there any suggested issues which a revised Policy QE8 could <u>not</u> include? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.	
Are there any additional issues which you think a revised Policy QE8 could include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.	

Question ENV 15. Should woodlands in rural areas, where most of the woodland resource is, take precedence over urban woodlands, where most of the region's population reside?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Greatest emphasis on woodlands in rural areas	
Greatest emphasis on urban woodlands	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

Question ENV16: Should Policy QE8 give greater emphasis to woodland management or woodland creation in the region, and why?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Greater emphasis on Woodland Management	
Greater emphasis on Woodland Creation	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

Question ENV17: Should woodland creation continue to be targeted on existing priority areas such as the National Forest and Community Forest or in areas highlighted on the Woodland Opportunities Map, and why?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Priority Areas eg National Forest and Community Forest	
Areas highlighted on Woodland Opportunities map	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

### **Protection of Agricultural Land (Paragraphs 8.38 and 8.39 of existing WMRSS)**

It is suggested that revised text for Agricultural Land in paragraphs 8.38 and 8.39 of the existing WMRSS could address the following issues:

- (a) The importance of the quality of agricultural land regionally
- (b) The wider sustainability benefits to which agricultural land can contribute, including adaptation to the impacts of climate change

- (c) The potential for diversification of agricultural land to contribute to flood risk management
- (d) The potential to encourage local sourcing of food and energy crops
- (e) The potential for encouraging the management of agricultural land for biodiversity
- (f) Any variations in the agricultural importance across the region.

There may be links to WMRSS Policies PA14 Economic development and the rural economy, and PA15 Agriculture and farm diversification.

### Questions

Question ENV18: Do you agree with the list of issues a – f in paragraph x that it is suggested that the text relating to the Protection of Agricultural Land could include?

		Please tick one box
Yes		
No		
Are there any suggested issues which revised text for Protection of Agricultural Land should <u>not</u> include? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.		
Are there any additional issues which you think a revised text on the Protection of Agricultural Land should include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.		

### Policy QE9 – The Water Environment

It is suggested that the text and policy for a revised Policy QE9 could include:

- (a) Embedding the requirements of the European Water Framework Directive, which applies to all surface and ground water bodies in the UK, and has significant implications for both spatial and development control planning
- (b) A requirement for all Local Planning Authorities to adhere to the policies and long term objectives of all relevant River Basin Management Plans, which include specific environmental objectives for each water body and how the objectives will be achieved
- (c) The implications of major growth in the region for water supply and treatment systems and the need for significant investment in new water infrastructure
- (d) The increasing problem of diffuse pollution (pollution arising from land use activities that are dispersed across a river catchment or sub-catchment area) in the region
- (e) The need for better surface water management through sustainable drainage techniques to help mitigate diffuse pollution
- (f) A requirement for all Local Authorities to prepare Water Cycle Studies in accordance with the published guidance from the Environment Agency to identify necessary infrastructure to support growth
- (g) A requirement to direct all new development to areas that have adequate existing infrastructure or any additional infrastructure can be accommodated with limited costs and environmental mitigation impacts
- (h) The achievement of biodiversity action plan targets and provision of guidance on the protection, management and enhancement of the region’s Strategic River Corridors

Question ENV19: Do you agree with the list of issues a – h in paragraph x that it is suggested Policy QE9 could include?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
Are there any suggested issues which a revised Policy QE9 should <u>not</u> include? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.	
Are there any additional issues which you think a revised Policy QE9 should include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.	

### **Air Quality (Paragraphs 8.45 and 8.46 of existing WMRSS)**

It is suggested that the text for Air Quality in paragraphs 8.45 and 8.46 of the existing WMRSS could be updated to reflect the following issues:

- (a) The wider benefits which good air quality can provide for human health, biodiversity
- (b) The links to accessibility, congestion and public transport provision
- (c) The findings from the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the RSS Revision Phases 2, which highlighted the impacts of Phase 2 Revision development on the European nature conservation sites within and beyond the region
- (d) Any variations in air quality across the region

NB. The implications of the air quality impacts of new development on European nature conservation sites is covered in the new Policy SR4 – Improving Air Quality for Sensitive Ecosystems in the Phase 2 Revision Draft Preferred Option.

### **Questions**

Question ENV20: Do you agree with the list of issues a – d in paragraph x that could be included in text relating to Air Quality?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
Are there any suggested issues in paragraph x that you think should <u>not</u> be included in revised text for Air Quality? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.	
Are there any additional issues which you think revised text on Air Quality should include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.	

### **Evidence Base**

RSS Annual Monitoring Reports  
Heritage at Risk 2008  
Heritage Counts: The State of the West Midlands Historic Environment 2008  
The state of the Natural Environment, Natural England 2008  
Condition of Landscapes in the West Midlands by Joint Character Area – Countryside Quality  
Counts  
A review of habitats targets contained within Annex B of the RSS  
Growing our Future – The Regional Forestry Framework and Delivery Plan 2004  
Woodland Opportunities Map  
Draft River Basin Management Plans for the Severn and Humber

## **2. Integrated Approach to the Management of Environmental Resources**

### **RSS Objective**

The Revision aims to develop a strategy for the protection, conservation, enhancement and management of regional environmental assets and resources, for their intrinsic value and wider social and economic benefits.

### **National and Regional Policy Context**

The UK Sustainable Development strategy recognises the need to live within our environmental limits and identifies the protection of essential natural resources and environmental enhancement, and climate change and energy as priorities for action. The Millennium Ecosystems Approach recognises the integration between environmental resources. The Regional Sustainable Development Framework highlights the quality of the region's urban environments as a key issue, and valuing the environment and living within environmental limits as a key principle.

Recent Planning Policy Statements have highlighted the importance of sustainable development, global sustainability, the causes and impacts of climate change, efficient use of land, high quality design, developing resilient landscapes, the historic environment and conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

Recognition of the importance of environmental limits has led to the development of concepts such as environmental capacity, environmental capital and the ecosystems approach. These concepts are developing and may have application within the RSS Revision process. The Government's approach is set out in Securing a Healthy Natural Environment, an action plan which aims to embed the ecosystem approach in regional policy and delivery.

### **Key Issues**

Evidence of the state of the environment suggests that many assets are declining, or that any improvements are too small to make a significant difference within RSS time scales. Some assets perform vital functions for life to exist, such as air and water quality, which can be affected by over exploitation or pollution. Others may be irreplaceable if lost, such as soil and the historic environment.

Environmental limits or thresholds will vary according to a range of factors, so it is often difficult to set levels that should not be exceeded. New development will create demands for water and sewage treatment for example, which may require new infrastructure and improved efficiency levels, or threaten water quality and biodiversity standards set by European Directive or Government regulations.

Climate change will have significant impacts on environmental assets, with natural habitats and species threatened by changes in temperature and rainfall. There is potential to deliver wider benefits through green infrastructure for urban cooling, linkages for wildlife and as a source of renewable energy.

The growth agenda will lead to greater pressures on environmental assets and vital services. It increases the importance of development conserving and enhancing the environment, as well as meeting socio-economic needs, including green space and recreation.

A number of potential methodologies for protecting and enhancing the environment have been investigated. The environmental capacity approach is insufficiently developed, whilst there are reservations about alternatives. The Government is promoting an ecosystems approach, which aims to deliver a healthy natural environment today and in the future.

Promoting positive enhancement and net environmental gain in all development will help to ensure that the environment is conserved and enhanced.

**Advice from Strategic Planning Authorities**

Advice from Strategic Planning Authorities suggested that a revised Policy QE1 should set the context for the quality of the environment chapter. It should reflect the identification of Settlements of Significant Development and other growth areas, the inclusion of Sustainable Region policies in Phase 2, and the priority of addressing areas of poor environmental quality.

There were considerable reservations about the use of the environmental capacity approach, with alternative suggestions including the continuation of the assets based approach, the use of landscape characterisation, the development of the green infrastructure concept, and the use of environmental limits where these can be clearly defined.

It was suggested that the policy should establish regional principles based on minimising damage, no net loss or net environmental benefit, and living within the region’s environment. It is suggested that existing guiding principles should be used, including the proximity principle to promote a positive approach. Region wide targets and further designations should be avoided, with a policy hierarchy set out for the more detailed policies on environmental assets to follow.

Green infrastructure studies and strategies are in various stages of development across region, with green infrastructure particularly important in urban areas, where green spaces have no formal designation.

**Options**

It is suggested that a revised Policy QE1 and text could:

- (a) Provide overarching guidance to set the context for more specific environmental policies
- (b) Link back to and develop the Phase 2 Sustainable Region policies to provide a bridge between Phase 2 and green infrastructure etc
- (c) Establish key environmental principles such as the ecosystems approach, minimising environmental damage, positive enhancement and net environmental gain to reverse decline
- (d) Emphasise the social and economic benefits of a high quality environment including image, and environmental justice/minimising environmental inequality
- (e) Promote a landscape scale approach to environmental assets utilising characterisation techniques and green infrastructure
- (f) Guide the approach to the targeting of resources, eg protecting and enhancing best quality areas or areas of poor/ degraded environmental quality such as the major urban areas, Settlements of Significant Development, the urban fringe
- (g) Recognise the challenges and opportunities presented by environmental decline, the cumulative impact of loss and degradation, the growth agenda and the impacts of climate change, including flood risk
- (h) Develop the sub-regional approach established by Phase 1
- (i) Highlight the importance of delivery mechanisms.

Three Options have been considered:

	<b>Implications</b>
<b>Option 1: Environment led</b>	Would address environmental concerns
This means promoting a landscape scale	May not address wider sustainability

approach, the protection and enhancement of key assets and the improvement of poor quality environments across the region.	issues
<p><b>Option 2: Development led</b></p> <p>This involves targeting areas affected by significant growth, promoting the use of characterisation techniques, with priority given to the protection and enhancement of key assets, quality of development and addressing areas of poor environmental quality in and around growth areas.</p>	<p>Recognises role that the environment plays in making areas more attractive for development</p> <p>May not address poorest quality areas or communities with greatest social need</p>
<p><b>Option 3: Spatial Strategy led</b></p> <p>This option would enhance the image and attractiveness of the region, with priority given to the protection of key assets and addressing areas of poor environmental quality in and around the major urban areas and regeneration zones.</p>	<p>Would contribute to the spatial strategy</p> <p>Would not address issues relating to Settlements of Significant Development and other growth areas outside the major urban areas and regeneration zones</p>

### Questions

Question ENV21: Do you agree with the list of issues a – i in paragraph x that it is suggested Policy QE1 could include?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
Are there any suggested issues which a revised Policy QE1 should <u>not</u> include? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.	
Are there any additional issues which you think a revised Policy QE1 should include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.	

Question EN22: Which Option would you prefer Policy QE1 to follow, and why?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1: Environment Led	
Option 2: Development Led	
Option 3: Spatial Strategy Led	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

### Evidence Base

The RSS Annual Monitoring Reports provide evidence of the state of key environmental assets, and longer-term trends.

The Infrastructure Implications of the Housing Options 2006 highlights the impacts of growth on environmental assets. The effects of the Phase 2 Revision have been highlighted in the

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment, and in the critique of the appraisals undertaken for the Government Office for the West Midlands study into higher housing options.

Alternative methodologies considered include that on behalf of Natural England (Environmental Capacity and Environmental Assets – David Tyldesley & Associates 2006) and by the Government (Securing a Healthy Natural Environment: An Action Plan for Embedding an Ecosystem Approach – Defra 2007).

### **3. Flood Risk**

#### **RSS Objective**

The WMRSS Revision will be used to consider the regional flood risk from all sources and set out a strategy for managing the risk.

#### **National and Regional Policy Context**

A number of national and regional policy documents have been published reflecting concerns about the increasing severity and frequency of flooding in the country and the region in recent years. The need to make space for water is highlighted in the Government's strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in England.

Guidance in PPS25 requires the preparation of regional flood risk appraisals, and more detailed strategic flood risk assessments at local authority level and in locations where new development may contribute to the risk of flooding.

Further recommendations are included in the Pitt Review following the flooding in the summer of 2007. Flood risk issues are recognised in a range of other policy documents covering climate change and development.

The Environment Agency is preparing catchment flood management plans for the rivers Severn, Trent, Wye and Usk within the region, which will set out a range of policy options for different parts of the catchments.

#### **MAP?**

#### **Key Issues**

The Summer 2007 and September 2008 floods have demonstrated the vulnerability of parts of the Region to severe flooding from both rivers and surface water runoff, and of a wide range of public infrastructure to flooding. There is a need to ensure greater resilience in the future.

There is a need to adopt a whole catchment approach that is consistent with and contributes to the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. This approach is reflected in the Catchment Flood Management Plans produced by the Environment Agency for the River Severn, River Trent and River Wye and Usk, which will be a key consideration in developing regional flood risk policy.

Opportunities should be sought to make space for water and ensure that that new development is appropriate and sustainable, for example by opening up culverts, restoring natural floodplains and recreating river corridors to help store and attenuate flood water. Large scale redevelopment and regeneration could provide significant opportunities to provide multifunctional benefits. However, the potential for higher densities of housing may conflict with the requirement for sustainable drainage systems.

The number of people and properties at risk of flooding from all sources will increase as a result of climate change. There is a need to consider how the Region will adapt to this in relation to flood risk.

The extensive urbanised areas across the Region place large numbers of people and property at risk from surface water flooding. Integrated management of urban drainage and greater use of separate drainage systems for surface and waste water offer potential solutions. The Integrated Urban Drainage pilot projects in Birmingham and Telford have identified some key benefits, which could be rolled out on a wider scale.

### **Advice from Strategic Planning Authorities**

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments being prepared or completed across region, but limited work on more detailed assessments where growth has to take place in areas of flood risk. Key issues are promoting sustainable drainage and using catchment areas to consider the impact of potential large regionally significant developments across administrative boundaries.

The main sources of flooding in the Shires are from fluvial flooding, with a number of catchments at significant risk eg Upper Severn. The main issue in urban areas is the growing threat from surface water flooding, which is likely to be exacerbated by urban intensification and climate change.

The advice supports the use of the criteria identified in PPS25, the Environment Agency constraints/flood zone maps for testing allocations, and the benefits of locational guidance where growth is needed in zones of greater flood risk. Further work on the impacts of climate change is needed.

The Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans provide broad policy options, whilst adaptation and mitigation is best dealt with at LDF level or in integrated drainage projects. The RSS could encourage the preparation of surface water management plans.

### **Options**

It is suggested that a new policy and supporting text for Flood Risk could include:

- (a) Text emphasising the national framework with regard to flood risk management and development in flood risk areas.
- (b) A requirement for local authorities to have regard to the Catchment Flood Management Plans produced by the Environment Agency when preparing LDDs.
- (c) The need to decrease the reliance on engineered flood defences and focus on catchment-wide flood risk management.
- (d) A requirement for local authorities to adopt a strategic and integrated approach to managing surface water.
- (e) Requirements for local authorities to produce and update Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and Surface Water Management Plans.
- (f) A requirement for all infrastructure supporting new development to avoid areas at risk of flooding and to be capable of remaining operational during flood events by incorporating resistance and resilience measures if required.
- (g) A requirement for all new development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless it would be impractical to do so, linking back to and developing the Phase 2 Sustainable Region policies.
- (i) Encouragement for local authorities to promote the retrofitting of existing properties with sustainable drainage systems and flood resistance and resilience measures.
- (j) Encouragement of positive flood risk management by promoting land management practices which provide multifunctional benefits.
- (k) A requirement for local authorities to consider emergency planning and services in relation to flood risk at a strategic level.
- (l) Encouraging new development to seek opportunities to make space for water by providing guidance on layout and design issues.
- (m) that the need for local authorities to take account of the increasing flood risk associated with climate change by ensuring that new development does not increase, and wherever possible reduces the adverse consequences of all forms of flooding.

A number of options have been investigated, but it is considered that the only realistic option involves providing guidance in a new policy on what to take into account in considering the location and design of new development, in order to prevent flooding. The policy would be informed by the Regional Flood Risk Appraisal and address the requirements in PPS25.

A number of alternative approaches to that outlined above were considered but rejected. One approach involved updating the existing text in paragraphs 8.41 to 8.44 but no policy, thereby relying on existing policy guidance. This was considered to be contrary to the requirements of PPS25. Another approach which was considered would seek to embed the policy options in the Environment Agency's Catchment Flood Management Plans in a new RSS policy. This was likely to be difficult to achieve at a regional level and would not take account of the findings in the Regional Flood Risk Appraisal.

### Questions

Question ENV23: Do you agree with the suggested list of issues a – m in paragraph x a new Policy on Flood Risk could include?

		<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes		
No		
Are there any suggested issues which a new Flood Risk Policy should <u>not</u> include? If so, please tell us why you think these issues should be excluded.		
Are there any additional issues which you think a new Flood Risk Policy should include? If so, please tell us what issues you think should be included and why.		

### Evidence Base

Regional Flood Risk Appraisals 2007 and Update 2009.  
 Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans for the rivers Severn, Trent and Wye and Usk.  
 Environment Agency Flood Zone Maps.

## 4. Energy

### RSS Objective

The Revision will seek to promote the development of renewable energy and low carbon technology resources, subject to appropriate environmental and social safeguards.

The revision objective relates only to the promotion and development of renewable energy and low carbon technologies within Policy EN1 (Energy Generation) of the current WMRSS. The revision does not include a review of issues relating to fossil fuels in the region.

### National and Regional Policy Context

During the period covered by the RSS, two major challenges will affect the way in which energy is perceived and planned for. The first challenge is climate change, which has a global reach but requires locally and regionally based action to put into effect national and international commitments. The second challenge concerns the UK's shift from being virtually energy self-sufficient to becoming ever more dependent upon external supplies of oil, coal and gas. Both of these challenges are recognised by the Government.

The 2007 Energy White Paper "Meeting The Energy Challenge" sets out a strategy to minimise energy use and pollution and move towards an increasing proportion of energy generated from indigenous renewable sources. The White Paper's four goals are to:

- Cut the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 60% by 2050, with real progress by 2020;
- Maintain the reliability of energy supplies;
- Promote competitive markets in the UK and beyond, helping to raise the rate of sustainable economic growth and improve productivity; and
- Ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated.

The Climate Change Act 2008 sets legally binding greenhouse gas emission reductions targets. The target is reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of at least 80% by 2050, and 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

Planning has a key role to play in facilitating the development of renewable energy and the achievement of the energy targets. PPS22 states that planning policies at regional and local level should promote and encourage rather than restrict the development of renewable energy resources.

The Planning and Energy Act 2008 allows local councils in England and Wales to set reasonable requirements in their development plan documents for a proportion of energy used in development in their area to be energy from renewable or low carbon sources in the locality of the development. It also allows local authorities to set energy-efficiency standards that exceed the energy requirements of national building regulations.

The Act legitimises policies based on those initially adopted by Merton London Borough Council which typically require 10% of any new building's energy needs to be met from renewable resources, although the Act says that there is a need to allow flexibility for renewable energy and low-carbon requirements to be supplied from the locality, rather than just the immediate development site. The Act also allows policies which require energy-efficiency standards above those set by Building Regulation requirements.

The national target for generating electricity from renewable sources is set at 10% by 2010, with a further target of 15.5% by 2015. The current RSS states that "the Region should aim to contribute as far as possible towards the achievement of the national energy target – 10% of

**electricity produced** from renewable energy by 2010, with an aspiration to double renewables' share of electricity between 2010 and 2020."

The West Midlands current renewable energy target is set out in the West Midlands Energy Strategy (November 2004). Targets in the Regional Energy Strategy are for:

- 5% electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2010 (1,250 GWh), rising to 10% by 2020 (1,700 GWh);
- 0.3% of heat consumption from renewable sources by 2010 (250 GWh), rising to 1% by 2020 (650 GWh); and
- At least 460 GWh of liquid biofuels to be produced for transport use in the region by 2010.

## Key Issues

The region currently meets less than 1% of its electricity demands from renewable energy and will therefore fail to meet the national or regional targets for 2010.

Increasing the generation of energy from renewable sources is dependent on a range of factors, but planning will have a key role to play.

The region will face a significant increase in renewable energy proposals in the RSS plan period. Guidelines on the criteria for considering proposals will help to ensure that schemes are appropriately located. Criteria will need to include environmental and amenity factors, traffic implications and the wider benefits of renewable energy such as the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and contribution to urban and rural regeneration.

The development of renewable energy and low carbon technology will have different impacts in different parts of the region reflecting the fact that some areas have greater renewable energy resources and potential than others. For example, growth areas and urban areas offer the greatest potential for decentralised energy generation and community heating schemes. Opportunities for implementing renewable heat technologies such as biomass boilers or ground source heat pumps particularly exist in those parts of the region that do not have access to the gas network. Those rural areas where there are high wind speeds and no national land-use planning designations may be under greatest pressure for large scale developments such as wind farms.

Whilst it is important that renewable energy is encouraged, it is also important that it is appropriately located and designed. The integration of large-scale renewable energy proposals, such as wind and biomass production, into the region's varied landscapes will require careful consideration. Areas with national landscape planning designations in particular need to be protected from inappropriate development. The purposes of planning designations does, however, vary considerably between sites and some may not be in conflict with particular forms or scales of renewable energy development. The key test in assessing proposals should be the extent to which they might affect the integrity of the designation.

Minimising any impacts caused by noise, odour, traffic, discharges to the air and watercourses will be important particularly in relation to nearby residential areas and individual dwellings. Visual impact on the landscape is also a relevant issue when determining the acceptability of proposals for large-scale renewable energy.

Policies to encourage the on-site generation of renewable energy and low carbon technologies need to be placed within the context of an "energy hierarchy" whereby energy demand is reduced through energy efficiency and low energy design before meeting the residual energy demand from renewable energy, and then from fossil fuels or grid electricity.

This "energy hierarchy" approach where energy efficiency opportunities are maximised before renewable energy is considered within proposals for new developments has been incorporated into Draft Policy SR3 in the RSS Phase 2 Revision. Draft Policy SR3 encourages greater

energy efficiency in existing buildings and requires a proportion of the energy requirements of major developments to be provided from on-site renewable sources.

This Phase 3 Revision needs to consider whether any further policy guidance is needed in these areas, including whether there is also potential for retrofitting renewable energy systems to existing buildings.

### Advice from Strategic Planning Authorities

There was no clear consensus from Strategic Planning Authorities on the need for sub-regional targets for renewable energy. Some authorities thought that a regional target for renewable energy was most appropriate whilst others suggested that targets should be disaggregated to at least sub-regional level.

Strategic Planning Authorities felt that the RSS needed to include criteria for considering the provision of renewable energy, but there were mixed views on whether the criteria should be general (as in the current RSS and PPS1 Supplement) or technology specific (eg criteria for biomass, wind etc). They advised that the RSS should consider how to balance local environmental impact against wider environmental, economic and social benefit.

There was clear consensus that a Merton Rule style policy in the RSS would be helpful. However, authorities also felt that the issue was adequately considered in the Phase 2 Draft Policy SR3.

The advice offered a strong view that energy efficiency in existing buildings is very important but cannot be implemented through the RSS, although two authorities did consider that a RSS policy would be useful.

All authorities recognised the importance of planning in facilitating the development of decentralised energy, but whilst some felt that a regional policy would be helpful, others felt that this was best considered at the local level, particularly given that the Phase 2 Draft Policy SR3 deals with the issue.

### Options

#### Energy Efficiency

It is important that any approach to promote the development of renewable energy and low carbon technologies is complimented by policies to tackle energy efficiency to reduce the demand for energy.

We would therefore like you views on whether it would be appropriate to update Policy EN2 (Energy Conservation) in the WMRSS to address energy efficiency in the regions existing building stock. Two Options are shown below:

	<b>Implications</b>
<b>Option 1: No regional policy on energy efficiency</b> – this means that the RSS would not include a specific policy encouraging improvements to the energy efficiency of existing buildings.	RSS would not address one of the greatest challenges to tackling climate change
<b>Option 2: Introduce regional policy to address energy efficiency in existing buildings</b> – this means that the RSS would include a policy which encouraged the retrofitting of energy efficiency measures to existing buildings as opportunities arose. For example, it may be possible to introduce a requirement that major refurbishments submit an Energy Use Assessment alongside a planning application which could then help to identify	Contribute to tackling climate change  Difficult to implement energy efficiency policy at regional level

opportunities to improve energy efficiency.

### Targets for Renewable Energy Generation

To promote the development of renewable energy and low carbon technologies in the West Midlands it is considered that there is a need for stretching but realistic targets. Three Options are shown below.

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1: Retain existing RSS Policy EN1 with the aspiration that the region meet the national target for generating electricity from renewable sources</b> – this means setting targets to generate 10% of electricity from renewable sources by 2010, with a further target of 15.5% by 2015 and 20% by 2020.</p>	<p>Would reduce the demand on fossil fuels and make a positive contribution to tackling climate change.</p> <p>Would encourage the development of a “green economy” based on renewable energy and low carbon technologies and provide employment benefits.</p> <p>Locational requirements of renewables (particularly in high wind speed areas) could create significant landscape impacts and lead to negative effects in regard to biodiversity.</p> <p>This Option does not include a target for renewable energy to contribute to heat consumption or transport.</p>
<p><b>Option 2: Adopt Regional Energy Strategy targets for renewable energy</b> which requires 5% of electricity consumption by 2010 rising to 10% by 2020; 0.3% of heat consumption by 2010 rising to 1% by 2020; and for at least 460 GWh of liquid biofuels to be produced for transport use in the region – this means targets for 2010 which would be equivalent to up to 75 MW of landfill gas fuelled generators, 100 1.5 MW wind turbines (in rural and urban areas) and 27 1MW biomass/biogas powered generators. The regional target for biofuels by 2010 equates to approximately 44 million litres.</p> <p>[Please note that the exact mix of renewables to achieve the above targets would depend on a wide range of factors. The mix of renewable energy technologies to meet the Regional Energy Strategy target was for presentation purposes only and are not specific targets]</p>	<p>Increased level of renewable energy in the region compared with the present</p> <p>Fails to meet Government targets for renewable energy</p> <p>Would fail to meet Government climate change (CO2) targets</p>
<p><b>Option 3: Sub-Regional targets for renewable energy</b> – this means the RSS including targets for the County areas in the West Midlands which reflect renewable energy opportunities and constraints in those areas. This would involve assessing the potential renewable energy and low carbon technology resources (for example</p>	<p>Sub-regional targets which reflect renewable energy opportunities and constraints</p> <p>Technical assessment of renewable energy opportunities and constraints in County areas required</p>

wood and wind) and planning constraints in each County and apportioning a target for that area.	Different targets in different parts of the region  Realistic sub-regional targets might help better contribute to the achievement of regional targets.
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### Location of Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Technologies

Whilst it is important that renewable energy and low carbon technology is encouraged, it is also important that it is appropriately located. The integration of large-scale renewable energy proposals, such as wind and biomass production, into the region's varied landscapes will require careful consideration.

Minimising any impacts caused by noise, odour, traffic, discharges to the air and watercourses will be important particularly in relation to nearby residential areas and individual dwellings. Visual impact on the landscape is also a relevant issue when determining the acceptability of proposals for large-scale renewable energy.

National planning guidance makes it clear that the wider benefits of renewable energy projects must also be given significant weight when determining planning applications. These benefits could include: CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, the diversification of local rural economies, the creation of new jobs, and support for the regeneration of urban areas, including industrial and brownfield sites.

We would like your views on how the RSS can ensure that renewable and low carbon technologies are appropriately located. Two Options are identified:

	<b>Implications</b>
<b>Option 1: Retain existing Policy EN1 in RSS</b> which states that local authorities in their Local Development Documents should identify the environmental and other criteria that will be applied to determine the acceptability of renewable energy proposals – this means that there are no clear or consistent criteria for the Regional Planning Body or local authorities to assess whether planning applications for renewable and low carbon technologies are in appropriate locations.	No clear criteria for assessing appropriate locations for renewable energy and low carbon technology development  Inconsistent approach to assessing applications in the region
<b>Option 2: Criteria-based policies for renewable energy and low carbon technology</b> – this means that the RSS would set out consistent criteria against which planning applications for renewable energy and low carbon technologies would be assessed. For example, this could include setting out minimum acceptable distances from residential properties, maximum noise levels and guidelines for considering the visual impact of developments on the landscape.	Clear and consistent approach to assess whether applications for renewable energy and low carbon technologies are appropriately located

### **Questions**

Question ENV24: Do you think that Policy EN2 should be revised to encourage improvements to the energy efficiency of existing buildings as opportunities arise?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	

No	
Please provide reasons for your answer including any views you may have on how a regional policy on energy efficiency could be implemented.	

Question ENV25: Which of the 3 Regional Energy Target Options do you think should be used in the RSS to promote the development of renewable energy and low carbon technologies in the West Midlands?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1: Adopt national target for renewable energy	
Option 2: Adopt Regional Energy Strategy targets for renewable energy	
Option 3: Sub-regional targets for renewable energy	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

Question ENV26: Do you think that the RSS should set regional targets for specific renewable energy and low carbon technologies such as biomass, combined heat and power (CHP), ground source heat, landfill gas, solar, wind etc?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

Question ENV27: Do you think that the RSS should retain the existing Policy EN1 (Option 1) or should it set out clear regional criteria to assess whether applications for renewable energy and low carbon technologies are appropriately located (Option 2)?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1: Retain existing Policy EN1	
Option 2: Criteria-based policy to ensure that renewable energy is appropriately located	
Please provide reasons for your answer. If you answered Option 2, please also answer Question EN6.	

Question ENV28: If you think the RSS should include clear criteria for assessing applications for renewable energy and low carbon technologies (Option 2 above) please tell us which are the most important factors in assessing where renewable energy and low carbon technologies would be most appropriately located. Please rate each factor on a scale of 1 – 5 (where 1 is the least important and 5 is the most important).

	<b>Score (from 1 to 5)</b>
Contribution to the global environment	
Contribution to the local economy	
Impact of fauna, flora and animal life	

Noise	
Odour	
Traffic Implications	
Visual Impact	
Other factor(s) (please specify)	

### **Evidence Base**

Energy White Paper “Meeting The Energy Challenge” (2007)

Climate Change Act (2008) -

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/legislation/index.htm>

PPS22: Planning and Renewable Energy -

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps22>

Planning and Energy Act (2008)

West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy (2004)

WMRSS Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2 Revision – Draft (December 2007) – Policy SR3

## **5. Positive Uses of the Green Belt**

### **RSS Objective**

The WMRSS Revision aims to consider the potential for a regionally-specific policy for the Green Belt, to define its regional and sub-regional roles and the specific uses that should be encouraged within it, in the context of national Green Belt policy.

### **National and Regional Policy Context**

National policy on Green Belts is set out in PPG2, which includes the purposes of including land in Green Belts, objectives for the use of Green Belt land, a presumption against inappropriate development, and guidance on development that is not inappropriate. This is supplemented by more recent guidance, such as for waste management and renewable energy, which recognise the pressures for such developments in Green Belt locations.

### **Key Issues**

Whilst Green Belt policy is clearly defined in PPG2, there is a wider debate about the role and purpose of the urban fringe, This is reflected in the need to identify the most sustainable locations for new development in the context of the Government's growth agenda.

The Green Belt performs an important role in contributing to the regeneration of the region's major urban areas, and to the delivery of the region's spatial strategy.

The presumption against development can result in Green Belt becoming poorly managed and underused, where developers may discourage more positive uses in the hope that development might be accepted. A more positive approach, encouraging appropriate uses, management and enhancement would provide wider benefits.

### **Advice from Strategic Planning Authorities**

There was wide variation in responses from Strategic Planning Authorities on the approach to the Green Belt, from no need for change, through support for positive uses, but not function of the Green Belt, to the need for a review. Some authorities are strongly opposed to a review or the reopening of Green Belt matters from Phase 2.

Views varied from applying a policy to all parts of the Green Belt, to the development of sub-regional policies at LDF level, and the need for guidance on changes to boundaries.

Generally, the advice suggested that there was no need for guidance on management and enhancement, as this was provided in PPG2, but it could be applied to specific areas, such as the role in supporting regeneration, or specific uses, especially in the urban fringe.

### **Options**

Green Belt policy is a well understood part of wider planning policy. The nature of the policy is its measure of certainty and its worthy and widely supported objectives.

PPG2 makes the case that the Green Belt has a much broader positive purpose and is a potent policy against the potential urban sprawl of major urban areas into the surrounding hinterland.

However, the national policy does nothing for the positive use or enhancement of the Green Belt. It includes a large part of the urban fringe, which faces growth pressures and many competing land use demands. It provides an opportunity for improved access and recreational activity in locations close to large populations. A stronger strategic approach to the whole of

the area would help to deliver more positive social, economic and environmental benefits, such as access, amenity value, recreation, health and protection for sensitive sites.

Two Options have been considered:

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1: Apply PPG2</b></p> <p>This option reflects the current situation where PPG2 provides the policy for decisions in Green Belts within the region. There would be no need for a further specific regional policy in RSS. The positive enhancement of this particular spatial area would be covered by the other policies in the revised Quality of the Environment chapter.</p>	<p>Would comply with national Green Belt policy</p> <p>May not deliver positive use or enhancement of Green Belts</p> <p>May not recognise the wider sustainability benefits provided by Green Belt land</p>
<p><b>Option 2: Develop a Regionally Specific Policy</b></p> <p>This would mean developing regional green belt/urban fringe policy to reinforce green infrastructure/landscape and historic assessment of development proposals in Local Development Frameworks. The policy would identify where positive improvement should take place during the plan period and call on LPAs to work together across boundaries to develop Action Area Plans.</p>	<p>Would provide a regional priority for positive use and enhancement of Green Belts</p> <p>Would recognise the wider sustainability benefits provided by Green Belt land</p>

### Questions

Question ENV29: Should the RSS develop a policy to secure positive use and improvements of the green belt and urban fringe, or rely on the guidance in national green belt policy and the environmental enhancement policies, and why?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1: Apply PPG2	
Option 2: Develop a Regionally Specific Policy	
Please provide reasons (and where possible, evidence) for your answer.	

### Evidence Base

Green Belt baseline study of uses.

Phase 2 Study of More Positive Uses of the Green Belt

# RSS Phase Three Options

## Minerals Policy

# Minerals Policy

## 1) Safeguarding Mineral Resources

### **RSS Objective**

One of the national objectives for mineral planning is “to safeguard mineral resources as far as possible”, paragraph 9, Minerals Planning Statement 1 (MPS1). It is important that economically important minerals in the Region are not needlessly sterilised by surface development. The objective for the WMRSS Revision is to develop a policy for the safeguarding of brick clays (including fireclays), natural building and roofing stone and aggregates and minerals and minerals related infrastructure.

### **National and Regional Policy Context**

#### National Policy Context

Safeguarding is a process necessary to ensure that natural resources are not needlessly sterilised by other development, leaving insufficient supplies for future generations.

Paragraph 9 of MPS1 sets out the national objectives for minerals planning and these include:

- to safeguard mineral resources as far as possible;
- To promote the sustainable transport of minerals by rail, sea or inland waterways.

Paragraph 10 requires the Regional Planning Body to carry out its functions in accordance with a number of national policies one of which is safeguarding.

Paragraph 13 sets out the national policies for safeguarding and this includes defining mineral safeguarding areas, encouraging the prior extraction of minerals and safeguarding existing, planned and potential facilities/sites for the bulk transport of minerals and for the manufacture of mineral related products and alternate sources of materials for construction purposes.

#### Regional Policy Context

Policy M1 in the current WMRSS and draft revised WMRSS (Phase 2) requires safeguarding of mineral resources and infrastructure sites/facilities to be secured through local development plans by:

- Identifying the resources needed to maintain appropriate levels of planned and future supplies (Bi);
- Identifying and safeguarding opportunities for the transportation of minerals (Biv) and
- Including policies to safeguard mineral resources from other forms of development (Bv).

However, the existing WMRSS does not specifically define which regionally important minerals and minerals infrastructure needs to be safeguarded and the mechanisms for achieving those policy requirements. It also does not define how Minerals Planning Authorities should safeguard mineral resources from other forms of development.

There is no recognition of the potential for different approaches to be taken in urban and rural areas and in the sub-regions, for example, in the urban environment of the Black Country.

## Key Issues

If the West Midlands is to ensure that indigenous mineral resources are not needlessly sterilised it needs to put in place a policy framework to identify the most important mineral resources to be safeguarded, define the regional mechanisms to secure effective safeguarding and manage the overall process. Failure to properly manage this process will have implications for securing and maintaining supplies of indigenous mineral resources for the region (its citizens and the local economy) and ensuring that future generations have supplies available to meet their future needs. A long term view needs to be taken of the mineral resources that need to be safeguarded and for this to be embedded in spatial plans across the region.

The population of the West Midlands is forecast to increase significantly. This increase will create additional demand for minerals and competition for land. The location of many mineral resources coincides with environmental and nature conservation designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Areas of Conservation (and candidates). The impact of these policy drivers could be to restrict future development options for mineral development and supply.

### Issues Related to Safeguarding Areas

In order to avoid important mineral resources in the region being needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development policies it is suggested that a new regional minerals policy will be required which would address:-

- (a) The preparation of a comprehensive mineral resource assessment for sites affected by non –mineral development.
- (b) The designation of local Mineral Safeguarding Areas and Mineral Consultation Areas where appropriate.
- (c) The comprehensive working of permitted reserves in existing quarries.
- (d) The need for a consistent approach to be taken to avoid the sterilisation of regionally important minerals.
- (e) The maintenance of mineral production from existing and planned mineral sites and mineral related infrastructure by limiting encroachment by non-mineral development.
- (f) The prior extraction of minerals where practical and environmentally acceptable before non-mineral development takes place.
- (g) The need to refer non-mineral development planning applications to the Regional Planning Body so they can consider general conformity with the WMRSS where there is a significant quantity of mineral resources that could be sterilised.
- (h) The protection, from alternative uses of existing planned and potential facilities/sites for the bulk transport of minerals and for the manufacture of mineral related products and for alternate sources of materials for construction purposes.

To ensure these policies were being complied with consistently across the region would require Mineral Planning Authorities to define Mineral Consultation Areas where they are to be consulted on planning proposals for non-mineral development. Mineral Planning Authorities would also need to record in the Annual Monitoring Report the number of planning applications for non-mineral development on which they were consulted and where objections and no objections were raised on sterilisation grounds.

An option could be to define those minerals which are regionally important and which need policy protection such as brick clays (including fireclays) aggregates and natural building and roofing stone. Other minerals present in the region, albeit important to the local economy are covered by specific national planning policy guidance and they are:

- Silica Sand – MPG15
- Cement – MPG10

MPG3 which deals with coal does NOT require safeguarding of coal resources even though the supply of energy raw materials for electricity generation remains, for the short term at least, an important consideration.

Both gypsum and shale resources are located in very specific areas within the region and they could be addressed by local safeguarding policies set out in Mineral Development Frameworks.

The distribution of mineral resources differs across the region reflecting their geological deposition and occurrence. In the Major Urban Areas (MUAs) there is the added pressure of conflicting uses of land and maximising previously developed land for built development. In these locations the accessibility of mineral resources may be constrained suggesting that a different safeguarding approach may be required.

## Issues Related To Safeguarding Mineral Infrastructure

### National Position

Paragraph 13 of MPS1, sets out the need to safeguard existing, planned and potential rail heads, wharfage and associated facilities for the bulk transport by rail or inland waterways of minerals. It also requires the need to identify future sites and for these to be reflected in LDDs of district councils in two-tier planning areas. District Council in these areas should not normally permit other development proposals near such safeguarded sites where they might constrain future use for these purposes. Existing, planned and potential sites for rail and water served mineral related products and recycled materials also need to be safeguarded. Where appropriate future sites for these uses should be identified and reflected in District Council LDDs.

### Regional Position

Policy M1 in the existing RSS requires the identification and safeguarding of opportunities for the transportation of minerals by rail or water, including the maintenance of existing, and the provision of new rail head facilities. In the draft Phase 2 revision of RSS Policy T10 requires plans and strategies to improve the efficiency of freight movement by safeguarding existing and disused railway lines and sidings which could be used for rail traffic in the future and to encourage the use of rail and inland waterways for freight.

There is water-borne mineral transportation facility operating in the region and that is located on the River Severn. There are two sites (Walsall and Birmingham) providing for the rail transportation of mineral related products, one site (Shrewsbury) transporting aggregates and two sites (Staffordshire) which are rail connected but have not been developed to transport materials by rail.

If the impact of the transportation of minerals by road is to be minimised then it will be important to encourage the use of other modes of transportation to move materials around the region. This could be achieved by:-

- identifying sites and facilities of regional importance for the transportation of minerals and minerals related products
- Formulating policies to safeguard these sites and facilities by ensuring they have capacity to expand and are not constrained by other forms of development.

- Requiring all major proposals for the extraction of minerals and manufacture of minerals related products to be accompanied by a Transport Impact Assessment which includes an examination of the potential to transport the materials to the market by other modes of transportation.

## Options

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1a: Safeguard Key Minerals and Infrastructure.</b> Safeguard only regionally important minerals and minerals infrastructure for the economic and development needs arising from Phase 2 revision (aggregates, brick clays, natural building and roofing stone).</p> <p>This means that we only safeguard those minerals and infrastructure in the region which are essential to the delivery of future housing and employment growth and protection and enhancement of the historic environment.</p>	<p>Formulation of safeguarding policy at the regional level is focussed on key minerals resources and infrastructure</p> <p>The important link between the supply of minerals and minerals related products and development needs is highlighted.</p> <p>The importance of key mineral infrastructure to the delivery of raw materials to the regional economy.</p> <p>The value and importance of other minerals may increase in the future and may not be adequately provided for at the regional level.</p>
<p><b>Option 1b: Safeguard All Minerals and Key Infrastructure.</b> Safeguard all mineral resources and regionally important minerals infrastructure within the region.</p> <p>This means that all minerals and key infrastructure in the region are safeguarded.</p>	<p>This will ensure that the changing values and importance of mineral throughout the plan period is provided for at the regional level.</p> <p>Not all minerals require regional policy support where is adequate national or local safeguarding policies in place.</p>
<p><b>Option 2: Apply Different Approaches Inside and Outside the MUAs.</b> Apply different safeguarding approaches in MUA's and non-MUA areas.</p> <p>This means that the key elements required to support the safeguarding process could be different in different area but more focussed on local needs</p>	<p>A blanket one size fits approach may not be sufficiently flexible to accommodate local circumstances.</p> <p>There are different requirements in rural/urban areas due to the location and pressure for development and growth and to maintain the Urban and Rural Renaissance policy objectives.</p> <p>Different approaches may impact on the need by business and the public for a single, transparent and consistent approach by MPAs across the region.</p>

The West Midlands contains mineral deposits which are of national, regional and local significance, and these are gypsum, silica sand, limestone for cement, aggregates, natural building and roofing stone, shale, coal, brick clays and fireclays ( See Map ) Those which are considered to be of importance to the economy and development needs of the region are:-

- brick clays and fireclays – new housing and built development, employment and security of supply for other downstream markets;

- aggregates – new housing, built development and infrastructure provision, employment and security of supply for the local market;
- Natural building and roofing stone – maintaining regional distinctiveness and for use in the historic environment.

These regionally important resources will need to be defined on a map so that the public, developers and local planning authorities are aware of their presence and their importance is taken into account when planning for mineral and non-mineral development in the region.

Paragraph 13 of MPS1 requires Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSA's) to be defined in local development documents. MSA's are areas of known mineral resources that are of sufficient economic or conservation value to warrant protection for generations to come.

The policy statement also requires in two tier planning areas for MSA's to be defined in county LDD's and for them to be shown in district LDD's. Where MCA's are defined in County LDD's they should be reflected in district LDD's. There is no presumption that resources defined in MSAs will actually be worked for minerals

It is suggested that the most appropriate approach is not to define such areas at the regional level, but to require local planning authorities to reflect regional importance in local designations either individually or at the sub-regional level in the LDF's. This is because regional designations will not in themselves add any value to policy protection and will be difficult to differentiate from local designations derived from the same resource information. However, is there a case in particular for treating Etruria Marl differently and defining a regional MSA form that mineral only?

### Questions

Question M1: Which Spatial Option (1a or 1b) do you think will provide the most effective means of safeguarding the minerals the region needs for the future? Please state why you have chosen a particular option and provide any evidence that you have to support your view.

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1a	
Option 1b	
Please provide reasons (and where possible, evidence) for your answer.	

Question M2: Do you think that the WMRSS should provide for a higher level of policy protection for Etruria marl through the designation of a specific regional safeguarding area? If yes please state the reasons for your views. If no why do you think a higher level of protection is not required.

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
If yes, please provide reasons for your answer.	
If no, why do you think a higher level of protection is not required?	

Question M3: What should be the policy approach for safeguarding minerals in a) rural areas and b) urban areas? Please give reasons for your views.

Do you have any views on a policy approach for safeguarding minerals in a) rural areas and b) urban areas? Please give reasons for your views.

Question M4: What should the threshold for development be when consulting on non mineral developments in MSA's/MCA's? For example could be it as follows

“Non – Mineral Development in a MCA comprising more than:-

- 5000 sq metres for offices, comparison retail development, tourist development;
- 20000 sq metres for retail or leisure uses
- 2 hectares for any Use Class B1, B2, B8
- 1 hectare for any residential development

What should the threshold for development be when consulting on non mineral developments in MSA's/MCA's? Please provide your reasons for your views and your reasons why you think the example quoted is too high or too low.

Question M5: What minerals and minerals related infrastructure should be safeguarded in the region? Please state your reasons and provide evidence to support your view. Please provide a list of key sites/facilities that should be safeguarded.

What minerals and minerals related infrastructure should be safeguarded in the region? Please state your reasons and provide evidence to support your view. Please provide a list of key sites/facilities that should be safeguarded.

Question M6: Do you think that minerals resources should or should not be safeguarded in areas covered by national designations for landscape, wildlife conservation and cultural heritage? Please give reasons for your views.

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Minerals resources safeguarded in designated areas	
Minerals resources not safeguarded in designated areas	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

Question Mx: Is there a need for a regional safeguarding policy on coal? If yes, please explain why and provide evidence to support your view.

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
If yes, please explain and provide evidence to support your view.	

### **Evidence Base**

1. MPS1 Planning and Minerals together with the 4 Annexes and the Practice Guide.
2. A Guide to Mineral Safeguarding in England (October 2007) BGS
3. Mineral Resource Information for Development Plans ( 1996 -2002) BGS/DETR
4. The Economic Importance of Minerals in the UK (ODPM 2004)

# Minerals Policy

## 2) Future Supplies of Construction Aggregates

### **RSS Objective**

Construction aggregates (sand and gravel and crushed rock) are essential to built development, other construction and maintenance of infrastructure (e.g. roads, flood defences) and are therefore essential to delivering growth and Urban and Rural Renaissance. In order to maintain adequate supplies on the one hand, and protect valuable landscapes and communities on the other, a managed supply system operates nationally providing guidelines on regional provision.

The Government determines the future national requirements for aggregates and apportions it between the regions based on past production, regional shares, future levels of construction activity and growth to give a regional requirement.(National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England: 2001-2016)

The West Midlands current regional requirement for aggregates is apportioned between the sub-regions through the WMRSS and covers the period up to 2016. The regional provision needs to be rolled forward to cover the period up to 2026 and apportioned sub-regionally to reflect the occurrence, accessibility and availability of resources across the Region. This new sub regional apportionment, however, will need to take into account new revised national and regional guidelines which are expected to be published by Government in spring 2009.

The RSS Revision Objective is to examine and produce new sub-regional apportionments for the period 2007-2026.

### **National and Regional Policy Context**

#### National Policy Context

Construction aggregates (sand and gravel and crushed rock) are essential to built development, other construction and maintenance of infrastructure (e.g. roads, flood defences). In order to maintain adequate supplies on the one hand, and protect valuable landscapes and communities on the other, a managed aggregates supply system operates nationally providing guidelines for regional provision.

Mineral Planning Statement 1 sets out the national objectives for mineral planning and the most relevant to aggregates at the regional level are:-

- to ensure, so far as practicable, the prudent, efficient and sustainable use of minerals and recycling of suitable materials, thereby minimising the requirements for new primary extraction;
- To secure adequate and steady supplies of minerals needed by society and the economy within the limits set by the environment, assessed through sustainability appraisal, without irreversible damage.

Ancillary policy objectives for aggregates are set out in paragraph 2.1 in Annex 1 to MPS1.

#### Regional Policy Context

Across the country there are geographical imbalances between the supply of, and demand for, aggregates at national level and therefore a mixture of sites is needed to contribute to meeting local, regional or national demands. This imbalance is reflected in the West Midlands region by

the relationship between consumption in the Major Urban Areas and supplies from its rural hinterland (See Map)

The regional provision set out in the National and Regional guidelines is apportioned sub-regionally by the RPB following advice from the West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party and incorporated into the WMRSS as Policy M2. The present national and regional guidelines and sub-regional apportionment cover the period up to 2016. The figures need to be reviewed and projected forward to cover the period up to 2026 to ensure supplies are available to meet future needs having regard to the availability of resources and potential environmental constraints.

The draft revision to the WMRSS Phase 2 (covering the period up to 2026) proposes major new housing development across the region, additional employment sites and the development of a better transport system.

This level of future growth will require mineral resources and they will be found by reducing the quantity of material used in new construction, maximising the use of alternative materials in construction projects and where necessary defining areas for new minerals extraction.

### Key Issues

The Government has consulted on a new draft regional provision for the West Midlands which requires 370 million tonnes of aggregates and alternate materials to be provided over the period 2005-2020. This comprises the production of:

- 247 million tonnes of primary aggregates,
- 101 million tonnes of alternate materials and
- 23 million tonnes from imports outside the region.

In the absence of mechanisms to apportion the alternate materials requirements the figure of 247 million tonnes for primary aggregates will be used to carry out the sub regional apportionment.

When the regional provision is finalised and published it will be used to create a new sub-regional apportionment in the West Midlands for the period up to 2026. In the absence of the new figures, Table x provides a broad indication of what might be the future requirements for Mineral Planning Authorities across the region Table 1 has been created.

Table x is a possible sub-regional apportionment up to 2026 based on the draft regional provision using the existing sub-regions and existing apportionments in Policy M2 in the WMRSS. In determining the requirements beyond 2020 the draft guidelines have been projected at a constant value for a period of 6 years. This is consistent with the advice from CLG when determining the likely sub-regional apportionment for the period 2016-2021 (end date of the current WMRSS) based on the existing National and Regional Guidelines.

Table x: Apportionment of the Regional Guidelines 2005-2026 (million tonnes) by existing sub-regions

	Annual Apportionment	Annual Apportionment
	Sand & Gravel	Crushed Rock
Herefordshire	0.308	0.398
Worcestershire	0.946	0.153
Shropshire	0.891	2.77
Staffordshire	7.172	1.31
Warwickshire	1.133	0.827
West Midlands County	0.55	0
<b>Regional Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5.46</b>
<b>Regional Total 2005-2020</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>82</b>

Additional Requirement 2020-2026	+66	+32.76
Regional Total 2005-2026	231	114.76

The WMRSS will look at whether the proposed new sub-regional apportionment figures based on the final published National and Regional Guidelines are appropriate to meet local, regional or national demands and can be achieved without undue harm to the quality of the environment in the West Midlands.

Part of this process will include examining the existing sub-regions and their appropriateness for apportionment. The Section 4(4) authority's advice suggests that the sub-regions should be reconfigured (see Table 2) and the apportionment levels are modified to reflect the accessibility, availability and distribution of resources and the operation of local markets.

Table x: Sub-Regions: Sub-Regional Apportionment

Existing	As proposed by S.4(4) Authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herefordshire</li> <li>• Worcestershire</li> <li>• Shropshire (inc. Telford)</li> <li>• Staffordshire (inc. Stoke)</li> <li>• Warwickshire</li> <li>• West Midlands County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffordshire/Stoke and Walsall</li> <li>• Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire</li> <li>• Worcestershire</li> <li>• Herefordshire</li> <li>• Shropshire</li> <li>• Telford and Wrekin</li> <li>• West Midlands (Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell, Birmingham)</li> </ul>

The Section 4(4) advice also suggests that levels of apportionments should reflect the distribution of growth set out in Phase 2 revision of WMRSS. However, national planning guidance requires a mixture of sites producing resources which will meet local, regional or national demands.

Contribution of Alternative Materials to Future Supply

The Government's draft regional provision includes a requirement to provide 100 million tonnes of alternative materials over the period 2005-2020. This is an increase in the contribution towards total aggregates provision from 24% to 27% and an increase of 17.5% for the annual requirement – 5.5 million to 6.66 million tonnes.

Policy W9 in the revised draft WMRSS (Phase 2) requires new sites for facilities to store, treat and recycle soils and construction and demolition waste to be provided and for more recycling through on site activities and purpose built facilities in urban areas.

The quality of the available data is not sufficiently robust to determine reliable geographical area based local apportionments for alternate materials.

If the increase in use of alternative materials is to be delivered better collection of data will be required and even more emphasis placed on reuse and recycling of on site materials.

**Options**

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1: Apportion future supplies by existing methods.</b> Apportion final regional guidelines up to 2026 using existing sub-regions and existing apportionment methods.</p> <p>This means that future supplies of materials will come from the same areas and in the same proportions as in the past. The impacts will, therefore, be spread across all parts of the region reflecting the location of mineral resources and existing markets and mineral infrastructure.</p>	<p>This provides a level of certainty for the minerals industry and business community about future supplies of materials.</p> <p>It maintains certainty in the provision of future supplies.</p> <p>The impacts are spread evenly across the region in accordance with historic trends.</p> <p>It does not reflect the changing position on functional sub regions for mineral production and consumption.</p>
<p><b>Option 2: Apportion future supplies using different sub regions.</b> Apportion final regional guidelines up to 2026 using different sub-regions and existing apportionment method.</p> <p>This means that future supplies of materials will come from either a mixture of existing and potentially new areas or increased production from existing areas. Depending on the location and availability of sites and resources the proportions of the sub regions may increase, decrease or stay the same.</p>	<p>This would better reflect the changing position on functional sub regions for mineral production and consumption.</p> <p>The impacts may increase or decrease in certain parts of the region.</p> <p>Because there are potentially “winners and losers” the new sub regional configuration may not be acceptable to stakeholders and partners.</p>
<p><b>Option 3 Apportion future supplies using different sub regions and methods.</b> Apportion final regional guidelines up to 2026 using different sub-regions and a methodology based on linking local supplies to future patterns of growth and infrastructure requirements and environmental capacity.</p> <p>This means that the amount and distribution methods of future mineral supplies will be determined by the relationship between future patterns of growth, resource availability and existing mineral infrastructure and the capacity of the local environment to absorb the level of mineral extraction expected in the future.</p>	<p>This will provide a more integrated approach to resource/development management in the region.</p> <p>Resource utilisation will be locally based and directly linked to local demand and use for future supplies.</p> <p>This is untried and untested system.</p> <p>It does not reflect the geographical imbalances between the supply of, and demand for aggregates at the national level. A mixture of sites is required to not only meet local demand but also regional and national demands.</p>

## Questions

Question M7: Do you think that the indicative apportionment outlined in Table 1 is realistic?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide reasons (and where possible, evidence) for your answer.	

Question M8. Which of the three Options do you think would provide both an adequate and sustainable supply of aggregates up to 2026 in the West Midlands?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1: Apportion future supplies by existing methods.	
Option 2: Apportion future supplies using different sub regions	
Option 3: Apportion future supplies using different sub regions and methods	
Please provide reasons (and where possible, evidence) for your answer.	

Question M9. What additional policies are required to reduce the reliance on aggregates and increase the use of alternative materials in construction?

Do you have any suggestions for additional regional policies that could reduce the reliance on aggregates and increase the use of alternative materials in construction?
--

Question M10. Do you think that the provision of future supplies of aggregates in the region can be determined by applying one of more of the following policies, provisions or concepts? (Please tick the relevant boxes.) Please give reasons for your choices.

	<b>Please tick relevant boxes</b>
Future Patterns of Housing and Employment growth	
Existing Mineral Infrastructure	
Local Resource Availability	
Environmental Capacity	
None of the above	
Other (please specify)	
Please provide reasons (and where possible, evidence) for your answer.	

Question M11. Do you agree with the S 4(4) Authorities that the sub regions set out in Table x are the most appropriate for carrying out any future sub regional apportionment of aggregates in the West Midlands? Please state your reasons.

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Existing Sub-Regions	
Sub-Regions Proposed by Section 4(4) Authorities	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

**Evidence Base**

1. MPS1 “Minerals and Planning” together with the Practice Guide.

2. Collation of the Results of the 2005 Aggregate Minerals Survey for England and Wales
3. Primary Aggregate Reserves in England 1990- 2004
4. National and Regional Guidelines for aggregates provision in England 2001-2016
5. National and Regional Guidelines for aggregates provision in England 2001- 2016 First, Second and Third Monitoring Reports
6. Draft Revised National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England 2005 -2020
7. United Kingdom Minerals Yearbooks
8. Mineral Planning Fact sheet – Aggregates
9. The Economic Importance of Minerals in the UK (ODPM 2004)
10. WMRAWP Annual Reports
11. Planning 4 Minerals – A guide on Aggregates
12. Survey of arisings and use of Alternatives to Primary Aggregates in England ,2005 ( Construction, Demolition, Excavation Wastes and Other Materials)
13. The Sustainable use of aggregates for the production of aggregates in England. (WRAP August 2006).

# Minerals Policy

## 3) Future Brick Clay Provision

### **RSS Objective**

While brick clays are found in many parts of England only some are suitable for use in the manufacture of bricks, pipes and tiles, or for environmental and engineering uses. Some valuable clays (including fireclays) are nationally scarce and only occur in limited locations such as the specific outcrops within the West Midlands.

Security of supplies of clay over a period of 25 years is needed by operators to justify and secure the large level of investment required to set up, maintain and modernise existing brick making plant.

The Revision objective is to examine the supply of and demand for brick clays and ensure that appropriate provision is made in the Region

### **National and Regional Policy Context**

#### National Policy Context

Mineral Planning Statement 1, sets out the national objectives for mineral planning. The ancillary policy objectives for brick clay are set out in Annex 2 to MPS1:-

- to maintain and enhance the diversity of brick clay produced by making appropriate provision for supply in Mineral Planning Authorities (MPA's) local development documents;
- to provide and make available brick clays at a level that reflects the high initial investment in, and high levels of capital expenditure required to maintain and improve, new and existing brick making plant and equipment; and
- To safeguard and where necessary, stockpile supplies of clays, especially specific "premium" brick clays such as those from the Etruria formation and fireclays.

#### Regional Policy Context

The policy framework for determining proposals for brick clay development is set out in Policy M1 in the existing WMRSS and the draft revised WMRSS Phase 2.

There is no specific policy in the existing WMRSS requiring appropriate provision to be made for brick clays.

### **Key Issues**

In the West Midlands, the principal brick clay resource is the Etruria Formation and the main outcrops occur in Staffordshire. Nationally, the Etruria formation covers only 1% of the total outcrop area of the brick clay resources. Despite the small size of the outcrop it is a very important brick clay resource and is covered by planning permissions over 9% of its area. However, 35.3% of the resource is sterilised by urban development. This resource of premium quality clay is confined to a relatively small and fragmented outcrop which is almost exclusively in an area with a high population density.

The largest users of clay are the brick industry in the West Midlands reflecting the concentration of working around the West Midlands conurbation and Stoke on Trent.

The Phase 2 revision to the WMRSS (up to 2026) proposes major new housing development and additional employment sites across the region. The demand for bricks primarily reflects activity in the house building sector, although bricks are being used for other forms of

development. An average three bedroom house requires some 8,500 bricks (equivalent to 25 tonnes of clay) in its construction.

MPS1 requires MPA's to provide a stock of permitted reserves normally sufficient for 25 years of production at new and existing manufacturing plant. The guidance does not define whether in planning terms the 25 year supply requirement should be taken from a base year or an annual requirement to have a 25 year supply from the date the revision is approved. For the purposes of this revision the former approach is to be used reflecting the need to maintain production at each site based on a stock of permitted reserves.

In the region and based on a 2007 baseline there are 18 brickworks and tileries which need future supplies of clay, but only 17 are currently operational (see Map) The baseline of 2007 was chosen to reflect normal operating conditions before the credit crunch and economic recession impacted on the brick industry. Of the 17 operational brickworks/tileries data is only currently available for 16 and those 16 will require annual clay resources of 2.1 million tonnes in total to be made available.

Seven of the brickworks/tileries have sufficient supplies of clay available to them to sustain production for 25 years from the baseline of 2007. In order to meet the needs of the remaining 9 facilities to have a 25 year supply from 2007 an additional 13 million tonnes of clay needs to be made accessible and available to the industry. This provision needs to be made from within the region having regard to the available mineral resources and potential environmental constraints.

This clay resource requirement could be met by the following means:-

- (a) Possible contributions from imports from other regions.
- (b) Appropriate provision being made in LDF's within and/or outside the region and subsequent planning permission being granted;
- (c) Specific sites falling outside allocations being granted planning permission;
- (d) Prior extraction of minerals from non-mineral development where this is economically and environmentally acceptable.
- (e) Planning permission being granted for long term off site strategic stockpiles.
- (f) Safeguarding minerals through the planning process i.e. Mineral Safeguarding Areas and Mineral Consultation Areas.

It is suggested that the most appropriate approach could be for MPA's with clay resources should make adequate provision to meet the regional shortfall in resources over the plan period.

In order to ensure that the growth in new housing development in the region is delivered, MPA's will be required individually and/or collectively to work together to maintain resource support for all the new/existing brickworks/tileries in the region.

The level of new housing development may increase pressure on the remaining outcrops of clay resources in the region leading to possible sterilisation of valuable minerals. Prior extraction of minerals is a means of preventing sterilisation but with some manufacturing plant having limited on site storage available there is a need for off site facilities to be identified and secured. The creation of strategic stockpiles across the region especially in the MUA's offers the opportunity to prevent sterilisation and maintain supplies to the brick industry over the medium to long term.

## **Fireclays**

MPG3 sets out the national policy context for facilitating the efficient and economic working of other mineral deposits when extracting coal from a site and this includes fireclays.

Fireclays are derived from coal measures, although almost exclusively as a by-product of opencast coal extraction. Although comprising less than 7% of total consumption, these are important premium quality clays which are used in relatively high value buff brick products manufactured at sites across the Midlands.

The West Midlands is a net importer of fireclays with 65% being imported from the Durham and Leicestershire/South Derbyshire coalfields. If indigenous resources of fireclay can be fully utilised then they can play an important part in maintaining the supply of raw materials to the regional brick industry and reducing reliance on imports.

MPS1 says that “Where scarce reserves of Etruria Formulation clays or fireclays cannot be used when extracted, consideration should be given to the potential for stockpiling the material on an environmentally acceptable site, either on or in the ground, until it is needed. Proper account should be taken of the environmental impacts that are associated with stockpiling sites when considering whether these should be provided.”

As with brick clays the creation of strategic stockpiles for fireclays offers the opportunity to avoid the permanent sterilisation of these valuable minerals and to provide medium to long term supplies of valuable raw materials to the brick industry.

**Options**

	<b>Implications</b>
<p><b>Option 1 Regional Supply Requirement.</b> Apply a 25 year production supply requirement the region.</p> <p>This means that resources of brick clays and fireclays in the region will need to be released in order to meet the regional wide requirement for a 25 year supply.</p>	<p>This makes no allowance for imports from other regions or allowances for the closure or rationalisation of brickworks /tileries in the region.</p> <p>This will increase the impacts of mineral extraction across the region.</p> <p>This will ensure that the brick industry has sufficient supplies to maintain production and to respond to the long term economic growth of the region.</p>
<p><b>Option 2 Supplies for Individual Brickworks.</b> Apply a 25 year production supply requirement for individual brickworks.</p> <p>This means that only supplies of resources will be required for brickworks which are operational.</p>	<p>This will reduce the level of impact of mineral extraction across the region.</p> <p>Where brickworks/tileries already have a 25 year supply then no additional resources will be required to be released.</p> <p>Release of resources will be directly linked to the continued investment and operations of brick works /tileries in the region</p>
<p><b>Option 3 Future Supplies from Resource Areas.</b> Apply a 25 year production supply requirement to only MPA’s with brick clay resources.</p> <p>This means that MPAs with mineral resources will be required to release those resources where there is a shortfall in supplies anywhere in the</p>	<p>This will concentrate working into certain areas possible prolonging harm to the environment and local communities.</p> <p>This will ensure that the brick industry have sufficient supplies to maintain production.</p>

region.	<p>This could lead to more transportation of minerals across the region.</p> <p>This will avoid local restrictions being imposed on the release of mineral resources for brick works /tileries in the region</p>
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## Questions

Question M12: What policies do you think would best ensure that separate long term off site stockpiling of Etruria marl and fireclays can be provided in the region?

<p>Do you have any suggestions for policies to ensure that separate long term off site stockpiling of Etruria marl and fireclays can be provided in the region?</p>
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Question M13: Which of the Options would provide the most sustainable way of meeting the industry's future needs?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Option 1: Regional Supply Requirement	
Option 2: Supplies for Individual Brickworks	
Option 3: Future Supplies from Resource Areas	
Please provide reasons for your answer.	

Question M14: Do you think that the 13 million shortfalls in clay supplies could be met from quarries within the region?

	<b>Please tick one box</b>
Yes	
No	
Please provide reasons (and where possible, evidence) for your answer.	

Question M15: What planning and environmental criteria should be used to identify broad locations for the development of long term off site stockpiles of clays (including fireclays)? Please provide evidence to support your views. Please list your suggestions for inclusion into any criteria devised to determine future locations.

<b>Suggested Planning and Environmental Criteria</b>	<b>Reasons to Support Your Suggestions</b>


### **Evidence Base**

1. MPS1 “Minerals and Planning” together with the Practice Guide
2. Brick Clays : Issues for Planning
3. The Economic Importance of Minerals in the UK. (ODPM 2004)
4. Minerals Planning Fact sheets - Brick Clays and Fireclays. (BGS)
5. MPG3 Coal Mining and Colliery Spoil Disposal

# Appendices



# Responsibilities for Revising the WMRSS

The **West Midlands Regional Assembly** (WMRA) is the Regional Planning Body (RPB) for the West Midlands, and it is the RPB that is responsible for preparing the WMRSS and Revisions to it.

The WMRA established a **Regional Planning and Environment Executive** (RPEE) to set planning policies and priorities for the Region and aid the implementation of the WMRSS. The RPEE is made up of Councillors from Local Authorities across the Region and representatives from the business sector and from the Other Stakeholders Group. The RPEE has some **15** members, and the ratio between Local Authority, business sector and Other Stakeholders Group is 4:1:1. If you would like to see who is on the RPEE, when they meet and what is discussed please visit the Assembly website.

A small team at the **Assembly Secretariat** is responsible for co-ordinating the WMRSS Revision process, making sure that all work streams are pulled together and put to the Secretary of State as a joined-up package. See Contact Us, page x, for details.

For revising the WMRSS, the WMRA has adopted “decentralised” working arrangements where much of the technical and policy development work is done by a network of **Policy Leads**, predominantly drawn from local authorities across the Region. This enables the WMRA to draw on expertise within the Region. There is a Policy Lead for each topic area of the WMRSS Revision and their contact information can be found on page x.

A **WMRSS Coordination Group**, made up of high level representatives from local authorities and other sectors, provides advice to the RPB on matters of strategic importance in relation to the WMRSS Revision. The membership is at least 30% non local authority representatives.

The **Sustainability Appraisal**, see Appendix X, is carried out through a Steering Group. The Steering Group includes representatives from the social, environmental and economic sectors, the statutory environmental agencies, WMRA, AWM and GOWM. It is supported by Sustainability West Midlands and the Sustainable Development Officer Network. Consultants have been appointed to give advice, carry out workshops and record the process.

**Rural Proofing** is undertaken by the Rural Proofing Team which was set up by the West Midlands Rural Accord and the West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum, see Appendix X.

Once the RPB has submitted the Draft WMRSS Revision to the **Secretary of State**, the lead responsibility for the final stages of the Revision process currently rests with GOWM on behalf of the Secretary of State. More information about GOWM can be found at [www.gowm.gov.uk](http://www.gowm.gov.uk).

## Working with Partners

The WMRA also has a series of formal Partnerships to support its various functions and these groups will be fully engaged in the WMRSS Revision process. Some partnerships will set up specific **WMRSS Reference Groups** to further broaden the possibility for people to have a say about the Revision to the WMRSS. If you would like more information about the WMRA Partnerships or the WMRSS Reference Groups, please visit the WMRA website.

## The Role of Strategic Authorities

The Strategic Authorities (also known as Section 4(4) Authorities) in the Region play an important role in the WMRSS Revision. This involves giving advice to WMRA on matters relating to the Revision, particularly as regards specific sub-regional or local issues and circumstances. This advice provides a valuable additional resource available to the RPB and has fed into the development of the Options and will help in developing draft policies.

Strategic Authorities within the West Midlands are;

**Metropolitan & Unitary Authorities**

Birmingham City Council  
Coventry City Council  
Dudley MBC  
Herefordshire Council  
Sandwell MBC  
Solihull MBC  
Stoke on Trent City Council  
Telford and Wrekin Council  
Walsall MBC  
Wolverhampton City Council

**County Councils**

Shropshire County Council\*  
Staffordshire County Council  
Warwickshire County Council  
Worcestershire County Council

\* Will become Shropshire Council Unitary Authority in April 2009.

**The Role of Districts and Boroughs**

All Districts and Borough Councils in the Region are formally consulted as part of the Revision process. The Strategic Authorities are asked to involve District and Borough colleagues when providing Section 4(4) advice so they have an opportunity to feed into the advice.

**Cross Boundary Working**

In bringing forward the WMRSS Revision, the RPB will involve authorities from neighbouring regions, including Wales, and consider relevant cross-boundary issues.

# Sustainability Appraisal, Habitat Regulation Assessment and Rural Proofing

In undertaking the WMRSS Revision, the RPB will take into account a series of appraisals, including a Sustainability Appraisal, a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and a Rural Proofing. The SA, HRA and Rural Proofing challenge and test the RSS Revision at each stage of development.

A **Sustainability Appraisal** (SA) is mandatory for Regional Spatial Strategies under Section 39(2) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchasing Act 2004*. The aim of the SA is to promote a better quality of life through the achievement of sustainable development. The SA will incorporate the requirements of the EU's **Strategic Environmental Assessment** (SEA) Directive. SEA is a process for assessing and mitigating the negative environmental impacts of specific plans and programmes, and is required for Regional Spatial Strategies under the Directive as transposed into UK law by the *Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004*.

SA is an iterative process that identifies and reports on the likely significant effects of the proposed plan, and the extent to which implementation of the plan will achieve the social, environmental and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined.

The SA of the WMRSS Phase Three Revision will build on the SA's carried out for Phases One and Two of the WMRSS Revision, to make sure that the principles of the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the Regional Sustainable Development Framework are incorporated into the revised policies at all stage of the revision process. The SA will also set out mitigation measures and propose monitoring indicators for any significant effects of implementing the WMRSS Revision.

URSUS Consulting Ltd have been commissioned by the WMRA to undertake the SA of the WMRSS Phase Three Revision. The SA/SEA will be overseen by an SA Steering Group (see page x) and published on the WMRA website.

Under EU *Directive 92/43*, the RPB is required to undertake a **Habitats Regulation Assessment** (HRA). The purpose of the HRA is to assess the impacts of the WMRSS Revision against the conservation objectives of the European habitat sites within the West Midlands and beyond, and to ascertain that the Revision does not adversely affect the integrity of any of these sites. The HRA for the WMRSS Phase Three Revisions will be undertaken by Treweek Consulting Limited and URSUS Consulting Ltd, and will build on the HRA which was undertaken as part of Phase Two of the WMRSS Revision.

**Rural Proofing** is the process by which strategies, plans and policies are evaluated for their impact on those who live and work in the countryside, to ensure that rural needs are not overlooked. It also assesses the different impacts that a strategy or policy might have in rural areas compared to elsewhere. Rural Proofing of the WMRSS Phase Three Revisions is led by the Rural Accord's Rural Proofing Team.

The findings of these appraisals are publicly available on the WMRA website at [www.wmra/xxx/xxx](http://www.wmra/xxx/xxx).

# List of WMRSS Policies

<b>Towards a More Sustainable Region</b>	
SR1: Climate Change	Phase 2 Revision
SR2: Creating Sustainable Communities	Phase 2 Revision
SR3: Sustainable Design and Construction	Phase 2 Revision
SR4: Improving Air Quality for Sensitive Ecosystems	Phase 2 Revision
<b>Urban Renaissance</b>	
UR1: Implementing Urban Renaissance – the MUAs	June 2004
UR1A: Black Country Regeneration Policies	Phase 1 Revision
UR1B: Housing and Employment Land	Phase 1 Revision
UR1C: Strategic Office Development in the Black Country	Phase 1 Revision
UR1D: Retail Floorspace	Phase 1 Revision
UR2: Towns and Cities Outside Major Urban Areas	June 2004
UR3: Enhancing the role of City, Town and District Centres	June 2004
UR4: Social Infrastructure	June 2004
<b>Rural Renaissance</b>	
RR1: Rural Renaissance	June 2004
RR2: The Rural Regeneration Zone	June 2004
RR3: Market Towns	June 2004
RR4: Rural Services	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
<b>Communities for the Future</b>	
CF1: Housing within the Major Urban Areas	Phase 2 Revision
CF2: Housing beyond the Major Urban Areas	Phase 2 Revision
CF3: Levels and Distribution of New Housing Development	Phase 2 Revision
CF4: Phasing of New Development	Phase 2 Revision
CF5: The Re-use of Land and Buildings for Housing	Phase 2 Revision
CF6: Making Efficient Use of Land	Phase 2 Revision
CF7: Delivering Affordable Housing	Phase 2 Revision
CF8: Delivering Mixed Communities	Phase 2 Revision
CF9: Sites for Gypsies and Travellers	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
CF10: Managing Housing Land Supply	Phase 2 Revision
<b>Prosperity for All</b>	
PA1: Prosperity for All	June 2004
PA2: Urban Regeneration Zones	June 2004
PA3: High-Technology Corridors	June 2004
PA4: Development related to Higher/Further Education and Research Establishments and incubator units	June 2004

PA5: Employment Areas in Need of Modernisation and Renewal	June 2004
PA6: Portfolio of Employment Land	Phase 2 Revision
PA6A: Employment Land Provision	Phase 2 Revision
PA6B: Protection of Employment Land	Phase 2 Revision
PA7: Regional Investment Sites	June 2004
PA8: Major Investment Sites	June 2004
PA9: Regional Logistics Sites	June 2004
PA10: Tourism and Culture	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
PA11: The Network of Town and City Centres	June 2004
PA11A: Brierley Hill and Dudley	Phase 1 Revision
PA12: Birmingham's Role as a Global City	June 2004
PA12A: Comparison Retail Floorspace Requirements	Phase 2 Revision
PA12B: Non-Strategic Centres	Phase 2 Revision
PA13: Out-of-Centre Retail Development	Phase 2 Revision
PA13A: Office Development Requirements	Phase 2 Revision
PA13B: Out-of-Centre Office Development	Phase 2 Revision
PA13C: Regional Casinos	Phase 2 Revision
PA14: Economic Development and the Rural Economy	June 2004
PA15: Agriculture and Farm Diversification	June 2004
<b>Quality of the Environment</b>	
QE1: Conserving and Enhancing the Environment	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
QE2: Restoring degraded areas and managing and creating high quality new environments	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
QE3: Creating a high quality built environment for all	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
QE4: Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Spaces	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
QE5: Protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
QE6: The conservation, enhancement and restoration of the Region's landscape	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
QE7: Protecting, managing and enhancing the Region's Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
QE8: Forestry and Woodlands	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
QE9: The Water Environment	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
EN1: Energy Generation	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
EN2: Energy Conservation	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
M1: Mineral Working for Non-Energy Minerals	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
M2: Minerals - Aggregates	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
M3: Minerals - The Use of Alternative Sources of Materials	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>
M4: Energy Minerals	<b>Phase 3 Revision</b>

W1: Waste Strategy	Phase 2 Revision
W2: Targets for Waste Management	Phase 2 Revision
W3: The Need for Waste Management Facilities	Phase 2 Revision
W4: Protection of Existing Waste Management Facilities	Phase 2 Revision
W5: The Location of New Waste Management Facilities	Phase 2 Revision
W6: Sites outside the Major Urban Areas and Other Larger Settlements	Phase 2 Revision
W7: Waste Management Facilities and Open Land	Phase 2 Revision
W8: Hazardous Waste – Safeguarding Sites	Phase 2 Revision
W9: Construction and Demolition Waste	Phase 2 Revision
W10: Sites for Contaminated Soils	Phase 2 Revision
W11: New Sites for Landfill	Phase 2 Revision
W12: Hazardous Waste – Final Disposal Sites	Phase 2 Revision
<b>Transport &amp; Accessibility</b>	
T1: Developing accessibility and mobility within the Region to support the Spatial Strategy	June 2004
T2: Reducing the need to travel	June 2004
T3: Walking and cycling	June 2004
T4: Promoting travel awareness	June 2004
T5: Public Transport	June 2004
T6: Strategic Park & Ride	Phase 2 Revision
T7: Car Parking Standards and Management	Phase 2 Revision
T8: Demand Management	Phase 2 Revision
T9: The Management and Development of National and Regional Transport Networks	June 2004
T10: Freight	June 2004
T11: Airports	Phase 2 Revision
T12: Priorities for Investment	Phase 2 Revision

# Jargon Buster

We have tried to define the technical words and phrases used throughout this Options consultation document below.

## **AWM – Advantage West Midlands**

The Regional Development Agency for the West Midlands Region. AWM's role is to lead the economic development of the Region, working alongside a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector partners. AWM is responsible for preparing the West Midlands Economic Strategy.

**Biomass** - is the biodegradable fraction of products, waste and residues from agriculture (including plant and animal substances), forestry and related industries, as well as the biodegradable fraction of industrial and municipal waste.

## **Black Country Study – WMRSS Phase One Revision**

A dynamic study to develop the long term renaissance of the whole of the Black Country, i.e. Wolverhampton City Council and the Boroughs of Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley.

## **CLG – Department for Communities and Local Government**

Central Government department responsible for planning, including RSSs.

## **Combined Heat and Power**

The simultaneous generation of usable heat and power (usually electricity) in a single process, thereby reducing wasted heat and putting to use heat that would normally be wasted to the atmosphere, rivers or seas. CHP is an efficient form of decentralised energy supply providing heating and electricity at the same time.

## **Communities for the Future**

The distribution, location and type of housing within the Region and how it will deliver Urban and Rural Renaissance.

## **Decentralised Energy Supply**

Energy supply from local renewable and local low-carbon sources (ie on-site and near-site, but not remote off-site) usually on a relatively small scale. Decentralised energy is a broad term used to denote a diverse range of technologies, including micro-renewables, which can locally serve an individual building, development or wider community and includes heating and cooling energy.

## **Development Plan**

Statutory planning documents for the development and use of land and buildings in an area, consisting of the RSS and the policies and proposals prepared by local planning authorities.

## **Draft WMRSS Revision**

The proposed revisions to the WMRSS formally submitted by the Regional Planning Body to the Secretary of State for public consultation and testing at the Examination in Public. This is also called the 'Preferred Option' (see below).

## **EHRC - Equality and Human Rights Commission**

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights is a corporate body established under the provisions of the Equality Act 2006 with new powers to enforce legislation and to encourage and promote equality for all. (Its working name will be the Equality and Human Rights Commission.)

## **EiP – Examination in Public**

Planning regulations require an Examination in Public following the submission of the Draft WMRSS Revision to the Secretary of State. The purpose of an EiP is to provide an opportunity for public discussion and testing of the Draft WMRSS Revision before a panel of inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State.

## **Emissions**

The release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases 'trap' energy radiated by the Earth within the atmosphere and include carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases. Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas in the UK.

## **European Landscape Convention**

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is the first international treaty devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. The ELC came into force in the UK on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007

## **Geodiversity**

Geodiversity can be defined as 'the variety of rocks, minerals, fossils, landforms and soils, along with the natural processes that shape the landscape.' (Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice, ODPM, Defra, English Nature, March 2006). Geodiversity encompasses both natural and built environments.

### **Green infrastructure**

Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. It is the open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage and open countryside. Green infrastructure provides multiple benefits for the economy, the environment and people.

### **GOWM – Government Office for the West Midlands**

Government body representing a range of central Government departments and responsible for delivering government policy in the Region. It aims to help people understand how government policy affects them and informs Ministers on the Region's needs.

### **HRA – Habitat Regulation Assessment**

Formal process of assessing the impacts of the WMRSS Revision against the conservation objectives of the European habitat sites within the West Midlands and beyond, and to ascertain that the Revision does not adversely affect the integrity of any of these sites.

### **Joint Character Areas (JCAs)**

England has been divided into areas with similar landscape character. These have been called Joint Character Areas (JCAs).

### **Landscape**

'An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'

### **Landscape Character Assessment**

A technique used to develop a consistent and comprehensive understanding of what gives the countryside of England its character. It uses statistical analysis and application of structured landscape assessment techniques

### **Landscape Management**

Means action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes.

### **Landscape Protection**

Means actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity.

### **Local Development Framework**

Planning document prepared by local planning authorities which has to be in general conformity with the WMRSS.

### **Major Urban Areas**

Focus for Urban Renaissance in the West Midlands, covering Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry and the North Staffordshire Conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

**Merton Rule** - A policy requiring that new developments incorporate renewable or low carbon energy equipment to meet a proportion of the developments energy needs.

### **Options**

Different choices about possible new or revised WMRSS policies that are proposed to guide development across the West Midlands. The Options are for public consultation and, the comments and suggestions received by stakeholders will inform the development of the Preferred Option which will be formally submitted to the Secretary of State as the 'Draft WMRSS Revision'.

### **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

Law which sets out the legal framework for the statutory planning system, including RSSs. This Act updates elements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### **Planning Policy Statements**

Issued by Central Government, these replace Planning Policy Guidance notes. They explain statutory provisions and provide guidance to local authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system.

### **PPS11 – Planning Policy Statement 11**

Issued by Central Government, this document provides policy and guidance for developing,

implementing, monitoring and revising RSSs. It also contains advice on the arrangements for revising RSSs, including public consultation.

### **Preferred Option**

After the consultation on the Options, the WMRA as the Regional Planning Body will choose its preferred way forward which will be formally submitted to the Secretary of State as the 'Draft WMRSS Revision' (see above).

### **Project Plan**

The Project Plan describes to stakeholders and the public how the WMRSS Revision will be carried out and what topics will be considered. It guides the Revision process and the development of revised or new policies in the WMRSS.

### **Protected Landscapes**

Landscapes that are protected by a statutory designation e.g. National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

### **Regional Economic Strategy**

Provides the framework and defines the actions necessary for the Region's economic development and regeneration. Produced by AWM.

**Renewable Energy** - Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass. Renewable energy therefore covers technologies such as onshore wind generation, hydro, photovoltaics, passive solar, biomass and energy crops, energy from waste (but not energy from mass incineration of domestic waste), and landfill and sewage gas.

### **RHS – Regional Housing Strategy**

Strategy providing a framework for housing investment in the Region and aims to reinforce the principles of Urban and Rural Renaissance as set out in the WMRSS.

### **RPB – Regional Planning Body**

The West Midlands Regional Assembly is the Regional Planning Body for the West Midlands and as such charged with revising, implementing and monitoring the WMRSS.

### **RPG – Regional Planning Guidance**

A forerunner to the Regional Spatial Strategy see below.

### **RSS – Regional Spatial Strategy**

A statutory planning framework to show how the Region should develop over the next 20 years or so. Among other things, it identifies the scale and distribution of new housing, indicates areas for regeneration and specifies priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals and waste management.

### **Rural Proofing**

The process by which strategies, plans and policies are evaluated for their impact on those who live and work in the countryside, to ensure that rural needs are not overlooked. It also assesses the different impacts that a strategy or policy might have in rural areas compared to elsewhere.

### **Rural Renaissance**

Creating attractive, viable and sustainable rural communities for residents, businesses and visitors.

### **SA – Sustainability Appraisal**

A formal assessment to consider the social, environmental and economic impacts of the WMRSS Revision. The SA is carried out in a way so that it also incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment, assessing the potential impact of the WMRSS Revision on the environment.

### **Secretary of State**

The Minister responsible for all policies relating to Town and Country Planning, including the publications of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

### **SEA – Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The process of assessing plans, programmes and strategies for their environmental impact.

### **Section 4(4) Advice**

Detailed advice from the Strategic Authorities to the RPB.

### **Spatial Planning**

Spatial Planning brings together, and integrates, policies on land use with other guidance designed to influence the nature of places and how they function.

### **Stakeholders**

Organisations and representative bodies who have an involvement or interest in the development of the Region, including the Regional Spatial Strategy.

**Strategic Authorities**

County Council, Metropolitan and Unitary Authorities.

**Sustainable Development**

This is about meeting the needs of the current generation without compromising the needs of future generations. Aims to find a balance between social, economic and environmental objectives.

**Urban Fringe**

The urban fringe is the extensive area around towns and cities which accounts for more than 20% of the land area of England.

**Urban Renaissance**

The creation and marketing of sustainable communities in towns and cities where people will choose to live, work and invest.

**WMES – West Midlands Economic Strategy**

Document prepared by Advantage West Midlands that sets out what the Region needs to do to improve its economic performance.

**WMRA – West Midlands Regional Assembly**

Responsible for developing and co-ordinating a strategic vision for the Region. It is made up of 100 members drawn from all local authorities across the Region along with business and other sector representatives. It is the Regional Planning Body.

**WMRA Partnerships**

Based on topic areas these are formal WMRA partnerships that put forward views and shape Regional policy.

**WMRSS**

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (see also 'RSS').

**WMRSS Reference Groups**

Working groups set up by WMRA Partnerships to allow more people to be involved and focus solely on the WMRSS Revision.

**WMRSS Revision**

The process of preparing revised or new policies in the WMRSS to develop and improve the strategy.

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# Questions At A Glance

All Options consultation questions to be listed in detachable “pull-out”

# Contact Information

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## Key Websites

[www.advantagewm.co.uk](http://www.advantagewm.co.uk)  
[www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk](http://www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk)  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)  
[www.gowm.gov.uk](http://www.gowm.gov.uk)  
[www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)  
[www.rawm.net/new/](http://www.rawm.net/new/)  
[www.regenwm.org.uk](http://www.regenwm.org.uk)  
[www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk](http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk)  
[www.westmidlands.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.westmidlands.rtpi.org.uk)  
[www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)

Requests for translation, interpretation, large text and audio tape will be dealt with on an individual basis, and should be directed to: [access@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:access@wmra.gov.uk) or telephone 0121 245 0200.

To join our **WMRSS consultation database** please email your organisations full details and mailing information to: [wmrss@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:wmrss@wmra.gov.uk) or call 0121 245 0200.

The Regional Planning Body will conduct the WMRSS Revision within the framework of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

For any issues or complaints regarding this Options consultation document please contact: Olwen Dutton, Chief Executive of West Midlands Regional Assembly, [o.dutton@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:o.dutton@wmra.gov.uk), 0121 678 1031.