

NEWS RELEASE



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Have your say on the future shape of Worcestershire

A major consultation launched today (8th January) by the West Midlands Regional Assembly, will give individuals, businesses and organisations in Worcestershire the chance to influence the big planning decisions in the County over the next 15-20 years.

The eight week 'Options' consultation, which runs until the 5th March, is focusing on the major issues of housing, employment land, transport and waste disposal. The Options Consultation is part of the Phase 2 Revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy - which sets out the framework for development across the West Midlands over the next 15 to 20 years. The consultation will give people in Worcestershire the opportunity to tell the Assembly, in its statutory role as the Regional Planning Body, how they want to see the balance between homes, jobs, congestion and the environment by answering key questions such as those below.

- **Housing:** What level and type of new housing development is right for Worcestershire? Can it accommodate up to 62,300 new homes by 2026 and if so where should they be built and how many should be built in your area?
- **Employment:** How much land should be set aside by local authorities in Worcestershire for industry, offices, warehousing and large inward investment sites and business parks, and where should they go? Should Worcester, Redditch and Kidderminster be identified as key centres for office and retail development?
- **Waste:** Should Worcestershire provide alternatives to landfill for all the waste generated in the County? If so where should new waste facilities go?

- **Transport:** Do you think a strategic park and ride facility is needed in Kidderminster, should any other locations in Worcestershire be considered? Should road charging be introduced to reduce traffic congestion in parts of the Region?

Chairman of the West Midlands Regional Assembly, Cllr David S Smith said: “We have developed the Options in consultation with local authorities across the Region as well as technical experts in key areas such as housing, waste and logistics. But it is very important now that we hear from as many individuals, businesses and organisations in Worcestershire. The work that we are doing now and the decisions made following on from the consultation will have a major impact on their area over the next 20 years and beyond.”

Assembly Chief Executive, Olwen Dutton, added: “The overall objective of the West Midlands Spatial Strategy is to reverse the current flow of people and jobs moving out of the major urban areas in the West Midlands and at the same time tackle the challenges faced by the Region’s rural areas, such as affordable housing and transport and accessibility. I hope that by getting involved with this consultation people will take the opportunity to have their say and not only help shape the future of their local area, but of the Region as a whole.”

To get involved and have their say people can complete the Options questionnaire on-line via the Assembly website at www.wmra.gov.uk/wmrss or contact the Assembly on 0121 245 0200 or by email to wmrss@wmra.gov.uk to request a hard copy of the Options Document and questionnaire. The closing date for returning questionnaires is 5th March 2007.

A Sample of the ‘Options’ for Worcestershire

Housing:

There are three different Options concerning the number of new homes which need to be built between 2001 and 2026. Option One is based on the original figures set out in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, Option Two is based on information given by the Strategic Authorities in terms of how many new homes they can provide. Option Three is based on the high levels of

demand set out in the Government’s revised Housing Projections. Which of these figures do you think is the most appropriate and where could the new houses needed in your area be built?

Area	Option One	Option Two	Option Three
West Midlands Total	381,000	491,200	575,000
Worcestershire	31,100	47,300	62,300
Bromsgrove	3,800	4,700	7,200
Malvern Hills	3,600	6,300	6,300
Redditch	4,300	8,200 ¹	13,200 ¹
Worcester	7,200	11,800 ¹	16,800 ¹
Wychavon	7,600	11,600	14,100
Wyre Forest	4,600	4,700	4,700

¹ To accommodate housing growth may imply development in neighbouring districts

Employment Land:

It is important that there is always a pool of land available for employment purposes in each district, to make sure that people have access to work. This can include land which could be used for offices or retail developments as well as more large scale developments such as major manufacturing sites, business parks and even large warehousing and logistic sites (over 50 hectares). In terms of land specifically for office and retail development, the table below shows the recommend amount required in Worcestershire over the next 15 years.

Local Authority	Additional Office space required from 2001-2021	Net Additional Retail Space required from 2005-2021
Wychavon	90,000m ²	
Worcester	60,000m ² - 80,000m ²	Up to 30,000m ² (Worcester Centre)
Redditch	50,000m ² - 60,000m ²	Up to 20,000m ² (Redditch)
Wyre Forest	50,000m ² - 60,000m ²	Up to 20,000m ² (Kidderminster)
Malvern Hills	50,000m ²	
Bromsgrove	10,000m ²	

Waste:

The main principle underpinning the Waste Options is that each Waste Planning Authority, in this case Worcestershire County Council, should in future identify sites to manage all the waste (Municipal/household, Commercial and Industrial and Construction and Demolition Waste) in its area and that only the residues from any waste treatment processes should be landfilled. This means that a variety of new facilities will need to be built across the County ranging from small composting sites to large recycling and recovery plants. In terms of landfill Worcestershire has very little capacity although across the West Midlands there is enough for the next 10-15 years. It is

clear that alternatives need to be developed and a key question being asked in the Waste Options is where new, alternative waste management facilities should go and whether they should be allowed on open land or possibly Green Belt.

Transport

The Transport Options cover a range of issues including Strategic Park and Ride, Car Parking Standards, Road User Charging and the Role of Airports in the Region. For example Kidderminster has been identified as a potential 'External Town' site which could benefit from Strategic Park and Ride sites to reduce congestion, but are there any others in your area? The Options on Car Parking Standards focus on what needs to be done to ensure appropriate levels of parking supply and availability in everything from rural market towns such as Bromsgrove to large city centres like Worcester. Another key area being considered in the introduction of demand management/road user charging to reduce congestion in the busiest parts of the Region, do you think this would work?

- ENDS -

For further information contact:

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Notes to editors:

1. The Regional Planning Partnership carries out the Regional Planning Body function on behalf of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. It has a statutory duty to review matters relating to the Regional Spatial Strategy and matters relating to the ongoing planning and development of the Region.
2. The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy is part of the statutory development plan and includes the Regional Transport Strategy. It provides a framework for all Local Development Frameworks and Local Transport Plans and aims to influence wider strategies and plans. It is the Government who publishes the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and therefore it is Government policy.
3. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') was established in 1999 to give a representative voice to the West Midlands region, an area which covers the metropolitan areas of Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry and Solihull and the Shire Counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire including Telford & Wrekin, Staffordshire including Stoke-on-Trent, and Warwickshire and Worcestershire.
4. The Assembly consists of 100 members including 68 elected councillors nominated by the 38 local authorities in the Region, 16 members elected by the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.
5. The Assembly has three areas of core business: It is the Regional Planning Body, it is responsible for scrutinising the operation of Advantage West Midlands and it acts as the representative voice of the West Midlands.
6. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk