

NEWS RELEASE



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Have your say – Planning the future of the West Midlands

People in the West Midlands are to be given an opportunity to share their views on a number of issues which affect the regional population such as flooding, greenbelt, services in rural areas, cultural and recreational provision and accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers.

The public's views will form part of a consultation process for the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) Revision Phase Three– Draft Project Plan, which is launched on Tuesday 27 November at the Burlington Hotel, Birmingham.

Everyone across the Region is urged to get involved and share their views on the Draft Project Plan which sets out how West Midlands Regional Assembly proposes to carry out this phase of the WMRSS Revision and how organisations and members of the public can engage in developing proposals for the future development of the Region.

This phase of the WMRSS Revision includes the provision of services in rural areas and how the Region can ensure its rural communities have access to a range of services now and in future.

It will also address a series of environmental matters such as flooding and greenbelt. For example, it will aim to develop a strategy for managing flood risk and provide a regional response to climate change. Other topics that will be considered are the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, minerals policy as well as cultural and recreational provision.

The 27 November launch marks the start of a public consultation period which runs until 18 January 2008. The launch of the Draft Project Plan is the first step in the WMRSS Revision Phase Three process. Following the consultation on the Draft Project Plan, there will be a number of further opportunities for regional stakeholders and members of the public to influence the development of new policies and proposals.

Councillor Rex Roberts, Chair of the Assembly's Regional Planning Partnership said: "This is an important opportunity to get involved in planning the future of the West Midlands. The Regional Assembly is committed to carrying out the revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy in an open, transparent and inclusive way. We strongly encourage all communities and organisations from across the Region to engage and have their say in shaping the future development of the Region.

“The proposed revision will pick up issues which are of real concern to the people in this Region. For example, we want to work together with partners to ensure the provision of services that are critical to the sustainability of our rural communities. The Assembly is also keen to address issues around flooding and how we can develop a strategy to minimise and manage future risks.”

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Notes to editors:

Everybody is invited to attend the launch event which will take the form of a 'drop-in' session. Please do come along anytime between 9.30am and 1pm to learn more about the Draft Project Plan and to discuss the proposed WMRSS Revision with our team. A brief welcome and introduction by the Chairman of the Regional Planning Partnership and the Chief Executive of the Regional Assembly will be given at 9.30am. If you wish to attend this event, please log your interest by email (wmrss@wmra.gov.uk) or telephone (0121 678 1042). Further details can be found at www.wmra.gov.uk/rssphase3

1. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands region.
2. The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.
3. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe. It also supports regional policy forums and task groups on social inclusion, faith, housing, life long learning/skills, health, rural and community safety/crime reduction.
4. The Assembly works in partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the regional development agency (RDA), the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands region.
5. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body, and is also responsible for scrutinising the operation of the region's RDA, Advantage West Midlands.
6. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk

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