

**Regional Planning & Environment Executive
30 January 2009**

WMRSS Phase Three Revision – Final Project Plan

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To endorse the revised Final Project Plan for Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision. (Appendix A)

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members endorse for publication in February 2009 of the WMRSS Phase Three Revision Final Project Plan, subject to any minor technical amendments prior to printing, which would be approved by the Director of Policy.

3. Background

- 3.1 The WMRSS Phase Three Project Plan describes to stakeholders and the public how the WMRSS Phase Three Revision will be carried out and what topics will be considered.
- 3.2 The Draft WMRSS Phase Three Project Plan was published for consultation from November 2007 to January 2008. RSS Policy Leads and the Assembly Secretariat subsequently undertook an analysis of the responses to the Draft Project Plan consultation and considered how the issues raised in the consultation should be taken forward. The Project Plan was subsequently revised in the light of the consultation responses and presented to the Regional Planning Partnership (RPP) on 24th April 2008 for approval. The RPP agreed that, subject to any minor and inconsequential changes prior to printing the document, the revised Project Plan be adopted to guide the WMRSS Phase Three Revision.
- 3.3 Publication of the Project Plan was then necessarily delayed pending consideration of the Phase Three timetable in relation to the Phase Two Examination in Public (EiP) - the original timetable for consultation of the Phase Three Revision Options would have overlapped with the Phase Two EiP. It was subsequently agreed between the Assembly and GOWM that consultation on the Phase Three Options would commence immediately following the closing of the Phase Two EiP.

- 3.4 The publication of the Final Project Plan was then further delayed pending clarification of where the Regional Planning Body responsibilities would sit following the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration. In November 2008 the Government announced that responsibility for developing the Regional Strategy will be with a new Local Authority Leaders Board and the Regional Development Agency jointly, working closely with local authorities and other partners. Whilst the detailed arrangements in the legislation are still being progressed, it is necessary to publish the Final Project Plan in advance of the Phase Three Options consultation to guide participants in the Phase Three process. The Phase 3 Options consultation report is due for consideration by the RPEE (see separate report) in January and March prior to sign-off by the Assembly Board on 25th March and publication in July 2009.
- 3.5 The revised WMRSS Phase Three Final Project Plan is attached as Appendix A for consideration and endorsement.
- 3.6 Following agreement by the RPEE, the Phase Three Revision Final Project Plan will be published and made publicly available in both hard copy and electronic format.

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West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

Phase Three Revision

Final Project Plan

January 2009

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Introduction

What is this document for?

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) was published in 2004. It provides a policy framework for the future development of the Region and, as such, affects the way people in the West Midlands live, work, travel, shop and spend their leisure time. The WMRSS is currently being revised to develop the strategy further and to adapt it to new challenges. The Revision is carried out in three phases.

This Project Plan is concerned with Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision. The purpose of the document is to:

- provide an overview of the WMRSS and why it is being revised
- describe which elements of the WMRSS are being covered in the Phase Three Revision
- explain how the Revision will be undertaken and how you can input into the process.

What is the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS)?

The WMRSS was issued by the Secretary of State in June 2004. With the commencement of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* in September 2004, the WMRSS became 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.

Why is the WMRSS being revised?

When the WMRSS was published in 2004, the Secretary of State supported the principles of the strategy but suggested several issues needed to be developed further. The Regional Planning Partnership of the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) has been charged with bringing forward the WMRSS Revision in its role as Regional Planning Body (RPB) for the West Midlands.

Given the range of matters, the volume of work and the long timescales involved, the Regional Planning Partnership in liaison with Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) has agreed that the issues raised by the Secretary of State should be considered in three Phases of the WMRSS Revision. These are described in more detail on pages 7-8.

What is the Project Plan?

The Project Plan describes to stakeholders and the public how the WMRSS Revision will be carried out and what topics will be covered. The contents of the Project Plan are prescribed by national guidance in *Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies* which can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/regionallocal/regionalspatialstrategies/>

This Project Plan sets out how the Assembly intends to conduct Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision. The Project Plan will guide the Revision process and the development of revised or new policies in the WMRSS.

This Project Plan sets out particularly:

- the existing WMRSS strategy and principles for the WMRSS Revision, pages 5-6
- the process and timetable for the WMRSS Revision, pages 7-8
- the topics covered in Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision, including the Objectives, Tasks and Evidence Base of the Revision, pages 9-17
- the responsibilities and working arrangements for the Revision, pages 18-22
- the Statement of Public Participation which explains how partners and communities will be engaged, pages 23-26
- how the WMRSS Revision will be aligned with other regional strategies, pages 27-28.

This Project Plan takes into account the comments and suggestions made on the Draft Project Plan which was issued for public consultation between 27 November 2007 and 18 January 2008. A summary of key issues emerging from the consultation responses and the actions taken in response to them is available on the Assembly website at http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy/RSS_Revision/RSS_Revision_Phase_3.aspx. The Project Plan is now being finalised following the Government's Sub National Review (SNR) announcement as explained below.

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 GOWM, Advantage West Midlands (the RDA for the West Midlands) and others to ensure that the issues and emerging policies in the WMRSS Phase Three Revision are subsequently integrated into the single Regional Strategy.

What does this mean for you?

The Assembly strives to carry out the WMRSS Revision in an open, transparent and inclusive way. There will be a number of opportunities for everybody to find out what is going on and to have their say. Key stages in the Revision process and opportunities for getting involved are set out on pages 7-8.

We have also included a Statement of Public Participation, page 23-26,

which explains how regional partners and communities can get involved into the Revision.

Please read this Project Plan to make sure you understand what the WMRSS Phase Three Revision is about and how you can get involved. We are aware that the document uses many technical words so we have set out a Jargon Buster, page 31-33, to help with this task.

Many of the documents mentioned in this Project Plan are available on the Assembly website. If you need a paper copy, please contact us and, as far as possible, we will post you one.

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The 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 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.)

Principles for the Revision

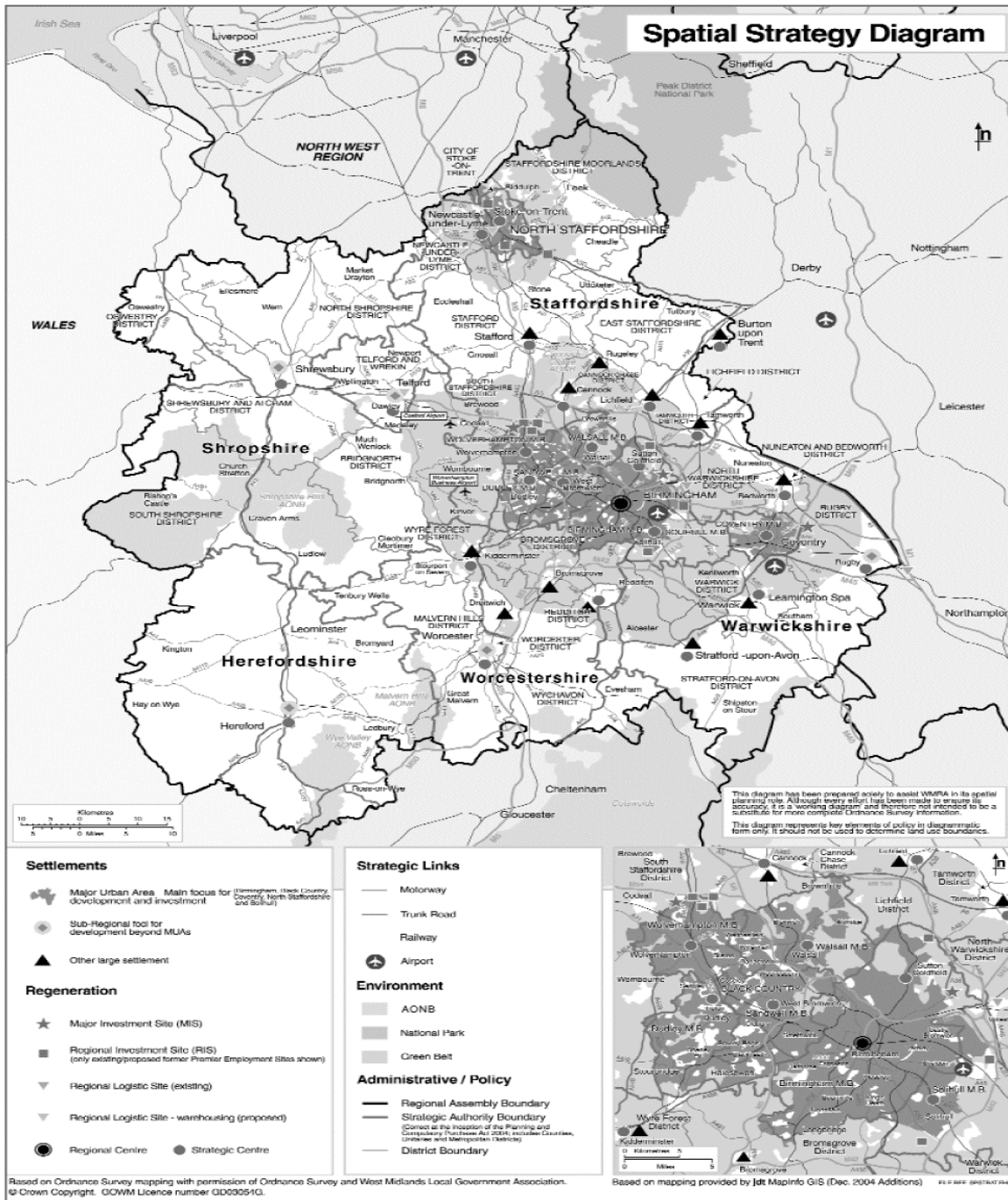
The Revision to the WMRSS will lead to the further development of policies to support the underlying strategy – not a review of fundamental principles of the existing strategy. The WMRSS sets out the approach that the Region should take to move towards sustainable development. The strategy focuses on the restructuring and renaissance of the Major Urban Areas with similar efforts aimed at meeting the renaissance of rural areas.

In carrying out the WMRSS Revision WMRA is committed:

- To adopt a programme and working practices that are open, transparent and inclusive to allow Regional partners and communities to get involved
- To ensure that the objectives of sustainable development are integrated throughout the process, including the need to address the challenge of Climate Change
- To address the issues identified for Revision by the Secretary of State
- To take into consideration the requirements of *Planning Policy Statement 11*
- To complete the Revision process according to the timetable set out on page 8.

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

INSERT MAP FROM PAGE 16 OF CURRENT (JANUARY 2008) VERSION OF RSS



WMRSS Revision Process and Timetable

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, the Regional Planning Partnership (RPP) decided to carry out the WMRSS Revision in three Phases.

It is important to highlight that this is a partial 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 which have not been included in the Revision still remain in place. The WMRSS Revision will lead to the further development of policies to support the underlying existing WMRSS strategy.

The WMRA has also agreed some rules to manage the interrelationship between the Phases. These propose that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, where a policy decision is made in an earlier Phase this will act as a fixed input to subsequent Phases. With the technical work it has been agreed that everything available from whatever Phase, including any different approaches, should be taken into account when decisions are being made in any Phase of the Revision.

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 Revision Draft

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 Spatial Options were launched for consultation in January 2007. The Draft WMRSS Revision was formally submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2007 and an Examination in Public into the submitted document will take 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

WMRSS Phase Three Revision Draft

This Project Plan is about Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision. The topics proposed for Phase Three include Critical Rural Services, Sites for Gypsies, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople, Culture, Sport and Tourism, Quality

of the Environment and Minerals Policy. A detailed description of the topics for Phase Three follows on pages 9-17.

The diagram below shows key stages and an outline timetable for the Phase Three Revision. The first stage of the process which started with this Project Plan is about specifying the issues that will be covered in the Revision. It is also about finding out what revised or new policies might be needed in the WMRSS. The Project Plan also sets out the timetable and process for the WMRSS Revision.

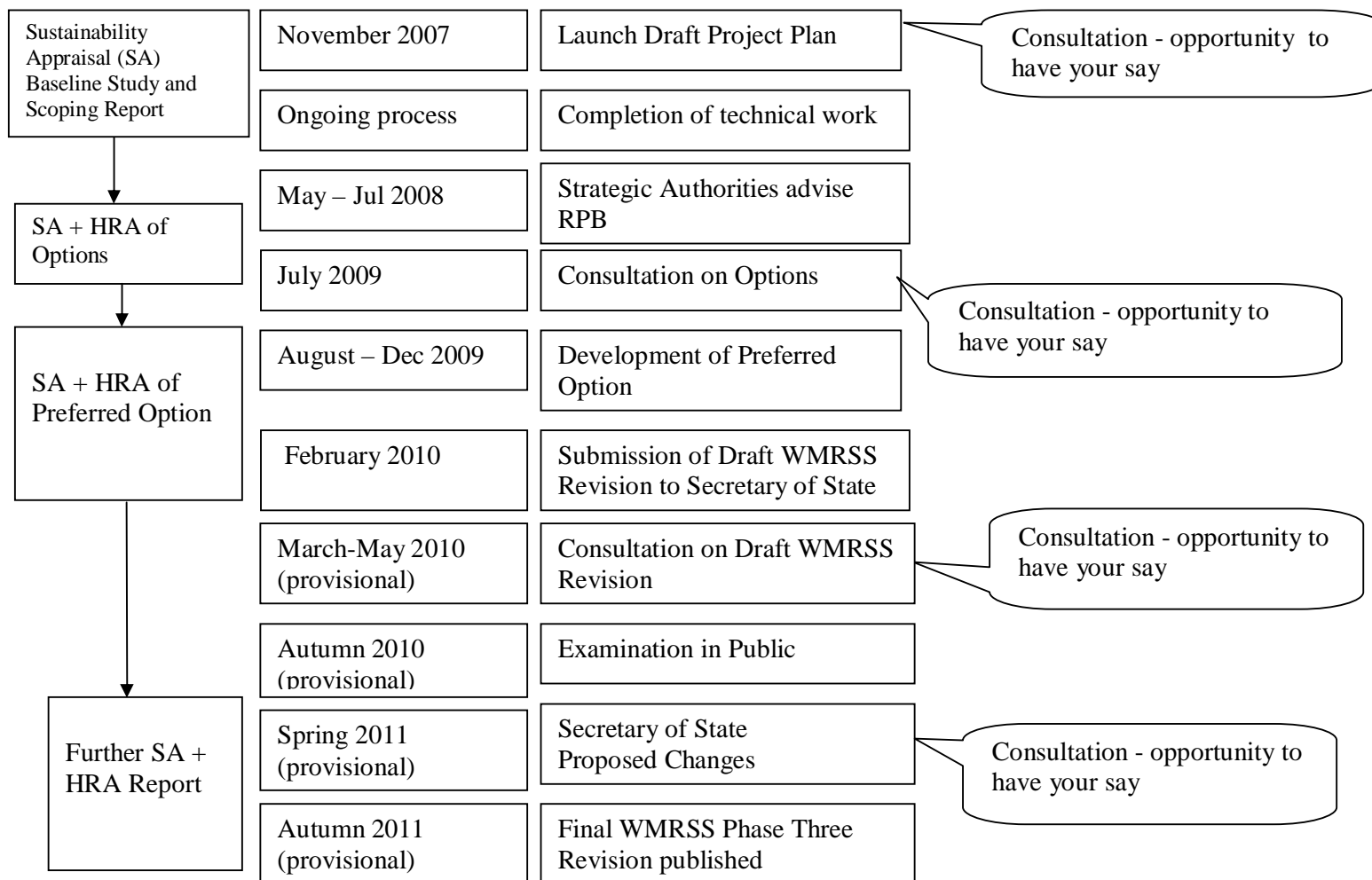
Following this, because there are likely to be a number of choices as to the nature and content of new or revised policies, an Options document will be published that will identify those choices and the consequences of adopting them. At that stage, policies will not be fixed and everybody will have a chance to say what they think about the Options before a Preferred Option is developed. The Preferred Option, which is called formally the 'WMRSS Phase Three Revision Draft', will then be submitted to the Secretary of State. The submitted Draft WMRSS Revision will be subject to another period of public consultation.

Once the RPB has submitted the Draft WMRSS Revision to the Secretary of State, management of the final stages of the process will be led by the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM).

At each stage in the process, the options and policies being developed as part of Phase Three will be considered in a holistic way to make sure that they are integrated with each other and with all other WMRSS policies, including those not being looked at in this Phase of the Revision.

As integral elements of the Revision process, various appraisals and assessments will be carried out, including a Sustainability Appraisal, Habitat Regulation Assessment and a Rural Proofing, see page 29-30. In bringing forward the WMRSS Revision, consideration will also be given to other Regional strategies and programmes, see page 25.

Overall there will be a number of opportunities for everybody to get involved in the WMRSS Revision and to have their say as shown in the diagram below.



WMRSS Phase Three Revision – Objectives, Tasks and Evidence Base

The issues identified by the Secretary of State have been the starting point in defining the topics for Phase Three. However, since national policy and the Regional context have moved on since the existing WMRSS was published, WMRA undertook a Scoping Study in early 2007 which assessed the continuing relevance of the original topics and whether additional topics should be included in Phase Three. The Scoping Study is available at www.wmra.gov.uk/download.asp?id=1899. The Revision topics specified below also take into account the comments and suggestions made on the Draft Project Plan which was out for public consultation between 27 November 2007 and 18 January 2008.

Against this background, five areas of work are proposed under the Phase Three Revision grouped under the headings Rural Renaissance, Communities for the Future, Culture, Sport and Tourism, Quality of the Environment, and Minerals Policy. It is important to remember that this is only a partial Revision of selected elements of the WMRSS – not a full review. The overall strategy and those elements of the WMRSS not covered in Phase Three are not subject to review and will continue to be in place.

The following section describes the Objectives, Tasks and Evidence Base for each of the topic areas covered in Phase Three.

The **Objectives** in the Project Plan define the scope of the Revision and will help to assess the options and policies that emerge later in the process. The Phase Three Revision will update the policy areas listed below, in the context of the current overarching WMRSS objectives and strategy, see page 5-6, and relevant regional strategies, see page 28.

The Revision **Tasks** set out what specific 'jobs' need to be carried out for the Revision in relation to each of the Objectives. The section below also shows the **evidence base** or technical work that exists for each of the Revision topics and identifies additional technical work that needs to be undertaken.

Each stream of work is being led by a WMRSS Policy Lead, contact information can be found in the Contact Us section, page 34. For more information on the role of WMRSS Policy Leads see Working with Partners on page 20-22.

In bringing forward the Revision, the below topics will be looked at in an integrated way to ensure that appropriate cross-linkages are made, both between the Revision topics and between the Phase Three Revision and the rest of the WMRSS.

Rural Renaissance – Critical Rural Services

Revision Objectives

The WMRSS Revision aims 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 areas. This will be important towards addressing the regional rural renaissance objective.

The WMRSS Revision will also aim to identify and prioritise those services that are critical to the sustainability of rural communities in different types of rural areas, especially to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups and communities.

Revision Tasks

- To establish a working definition of a 'sustainable rural community' that is applicable, or modified, for different types of rural areas, with particular reference to the importance of fair access to services for disadvantaged groups and communities.
- To identify and prioritise services which are critical to maintaining sustainable rural communities in different types of rural areas with particular reference to the interdependence between urban and rural areas. For example, rural areas with sparser populations may experience different issues and may have different critical needs from rural areas that are strongly influenced by Major Urban Areas and other large urban centres.
- To identify the policies required to support the protection, enhancement and provision of critical rural services particularly to support 'fair access' to a choice of services to enable disadvantaged groups and communities to meet their service needs.

Technical Work

The Revision of this topic will draw on various existing and additional studies undertaken by the Regional Assembly and other organisations. Among other things, the technical work will investigate the impact of service provision on the sustainability of rural communities. This should also highlight policy levers required, including revisions to the Rural Renaissance Policies in the WMRSS and Policy RR4 in particular.

A first phase of research, the Rural Services Scoping Study, was undertaken by the Regional Assembly in 2006. A second phase, the Sustainable Rural Communities, was carried out jointly by the Assembly and Advantage West Midlands (AWM) in early 2008. This has taken forward the findings of the scoping study and reviewed recent and current research undertaken by AWM, together with other recent studies by the Commission for Rural Communities and the Carnegie Commission for Rural Community Development. Among other things, this included an analysis of policy approaches and mechanisms that can be used to promote service provision such as multi-use buildings/one-stop-shops and remote access.

Other recent studies include the Matthew Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing - Living Working Countryside – 2008 which seeks better integration of new development and services to ensure the sustainability of a community.

Further information and a list of studies and background documents relating to this Revision topic is available on the WMRA website at <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=385> .

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

Following developments in national policy on Gypsy and Traveller sites (ODPM Circular 01/2006) and Travelling Showpeople (CLG Circular 04/2007), the Phase Three Revision will address the accommodation and wider needs of these communities. Government policy stresses that all members of these communities have the same rights and responsibilities as every other citizen.

WMRA published an Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Provision Policy in March 2007 and has prepared a Supplement to that Statement on Travelling Showpeople in October 2007. The Interim Statement highlighted a number of issues, beyond purely the accommodation of additional pitch numbers, which WMRSS Phase Three needs to consider, for example the diversity and complexity of the Gypsy and Traveller community and the need for both permanent and transit sites.

Revision Objectives

1. To increase significantly the number of Gypsy and Traveller sites across the West Midlands, to address existing under-provision as indicated in the Regional Interim Statement and anticipated in the sub-regional housing market area¹ Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs).
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.

Revision Tasks

- To identify the number of pitches required for Gypsies and Travellers (but not their location) for each Local Planning Authority in the light of the GTAAs, the Regional Interim Statement and a strategic view of needs across the Region.
- To identify the number of plots required for Travelling Showpeople (but not their location) for each Local Planning Authority in the light of GTAAs, the Supplement to the Regional Interim Statement and a strategic view of needs across the Region.
- To investigate the potential of identifying pitch numbers by sub-regional housing market areas or other joint local authority areas in case joint Development Plan Documents are proposed to be produced.
- To seek engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling showpeople communities, to ensure that all new policies are formulated with the intention of sensitively meeting the accommodation needs of both travelling and settled communities.

¹ As defined in the Regional Housing Strategy 2005, Chapter 3, page 40, Fig 3.1(d).

- To ensure that, where appropriate, wider issues are considered in revising relevant policy, for example, health, homelessness, environmental factors, employment opportunities or transport links.

Technical Work

A range of information and studies will be used to inform the Revision. This includes research into housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers undertaken for the Regional Housing Strategy, the Interim Statement on Gypsy & Traveller Policy and additional research into the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople undertaken by WMRA. In addition, the findings from the six sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAS) which are being undertaken across the West Midlands Region will form a key element of the evidence base for Phase Three.

Culture, Sport and Tourism

Culture and Sport are recognised in the WMRSS as important elements to the success of delivering sustainable communities and achieving Urban and Rural Renaissance (see e.g. Policies UR3, RR4 and PA10 and draft Policy SR2 proposed in the WMRSS Phase Two Revision). In the same context, culture, through its creative, tourism, sport and recreation industries, has an important role in contributing to the vitality, growth and diversification of the regional economy.

Revision Objectives

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..

Ultimately, revised WMRSS policy will seek to contribute to:

- Improve physical and mental well-being by encouraging healthier, more active lifestyles and greater and more inclusive access to, and participation in, cultural activities building on the legacy of London 2012.
- Make the Region more attractive to businesses, residents, visitors and in-movers as a result of the cultural offer.
- Support the growth and diversification of the regional economy to create a 'world class' visitor destination.

Building on existing WMRSS policy, this partial Revision will focus on developing policy on the provision of, and access to, strategic cultural, sports and tourism assets, including a Revision of the portfolio of regionally significant assets in Policy PA10. In developing this topic,

appropriate linkages to related topic areas such as the natural, built and historic environment will be made to ensure policies are mutually supportive.

Revision Tasks

- To identify international, national, regional and sub-regionally significant cultural assets and associated spatial issues (for example accessibility and quality).
- To identify current and future strategic gaps in relevant provision, along with qualitative (e.g. ageing stock) and access issues, and establish priorities to address any shortfalls or improvements.
- To identify mechanisms or policy approaches that ensure/facilitate appropriate provision at regional and local levels.

Technical Work

Some background evidence exists particularly in relation to sport facilities and sports participation collated by Sport England (Active People Survey, Active Places database, Regional Sports Facilities Framework). Data is less comprehensive for other cultural assets, although some evidence is provided in the Taking Part Survey (DCMS) and other local/specialist studies.

Technical work was commissioned to gather, where practicable, information about quantity, accessibility, usage etc. of international, national, regional and sub-regional cultural assets and cultural demand in the West Midlands. The results help to:

- Establish existing provision and associated spatial issues such as accessibility;
- Identify strategic gaps.
- Map and establish priorities and opportunities to address any current and future shortfalls and spatial issues.
- Identify the most effective policy mechanisms of delivery
- Identify trends in demand.

Culture defined (Department for Culture Media and Sport) – the term is a catch all term used by Government to describe the following sub-sectors:

- Arts
- Sports
- Museums, Libraries and Archives
- Heritage
- the Historic and Built Environment
- Parks and open spaces
- Tourism
- Creative Industries (film and radio, architecture, fashion, design and music)

- Children's play
- Festivals and Events

There are also clear links to private/public sector activity, e.g. bars, clubs and restaurants, countryside, volunteering.

This topic however will focus on Arts, Sports, Museums, libraries and archives and Tourism only (other sectors being covered by other topic areas or considered non-strategic or non spatial).

Quality of the Environment

A number of environmental issues are proposed for Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision. A summary of technical work underpinning these topics can be found below.

1) Update of the environmental policies in the WMRSS

Revision 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.

Revision Task

- To update policies QE2-9 of the existing WMRSS to reflect changes in national planning policy guidance and regional plans, strategies and initiatives, and to take account of the implications of the Habitat Regulations Assessment undertaken as part of the WMRSS Phase Two Revision.

2) Integrated approach to the management of environmental resources

Revision 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.

Revision Tasks

- To develop an overarching environmental policy to set the context for the more specific environmental policies in the Quality of the Environment chapter.

- To investigate the potential of the environmental capacity approach as a means of informing the consideration of the Region's environmental limits, one of the guiding principles of sustainable development in the national strategy.
- To establish a set of criteria or principles for guiding the protection, conservation, enhancement and management of the Region's environmental assets, including its green infrastructure, its landscape and tranquillity assets and the quality of its built environment, in terms of their current status, condition and future potential, and the wider social and economic benefits that the environmental assets are capable of delivering.

3) Flood Risk

Revision 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.

Revision Tasks

- To undertake and review the Regional Flood Risk Appraisal.
- To develop criteria for considering the flood risk of regionally significant development.
- To bring forward adaptation options for existing development in any likely vulnerable areas and consider impact of flooding on key infrastructure.
- To develop a regionally specific Flood Risk Policy and consider the need for a surface water management policy.

4) Energy

Revision Objective

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

Revision Tasks

- To review regional targets for renewable energy, as set by the Regional Energy Strategy.
- To develop a criteria-based policy for considering the provision of renewable energy resources.

- To develop a policy to promote the introduction of decentralised energy and renewable energy technologies into the region.
- To consider the potential for a requirement that a percentage of the energy needs of new development be provided by on-site or local generation of renewable energy resources/ energy efficiency measures.

5) Positive Uses of the Green Belt

Revision 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.

NB. The Revision will not involve a review of Green Belt boundaries which will be dealt with as necessary as part of the WMRSS Phase Two process.

Revision Tasks

- To consider the recent pressures and changes in the West Midlands Green Belts and the need for a regional policy response.
- To define the specific roles of the different parts of the Green Belts in the Region.
- To examine the ways in which more positive uses of the Green Belts could contribute to the WMRSS, whilst remaining consistent with national Green Belt policy.

Climate Change

In order to address the challenge of Climate Change, WMRA has taken various initiatives such as the preparation of a Climate Change Action Plan. Climate Change considerations and possible responses by the planning system have also been integrated into Phases One and Two of the WMRSS Revision, including new policies relating to Climate Change, sustainable communities and sustainable design and construction. Climate Change considerations will be integral to the Phase Three Revision and, at this stage, it is therefore not proposed as a specific separate topic for this Phase of the WMRSS Revision.

Overview of Technical Work for the environmental topics

The Revision of these topics will draw on a wide range of studies and technical work. Much of this work already exists and some additional work will be undertaken. Existing studies undertaken by WMRA which will inform the Revision of the above topics include:

- WMRSS Phase Two Revision Infrastructure Implications of Housing Options 2006;
- Regional Flood Risk Appraisal 2007;
- Habitat Regulation Assessment as part of Phases One and Two.

In addition, work undertaken by other organisations will be drawn upon, including:

- Potential Impacts of Climate Change in the West Midlands 2004.
- Heat and Energy Mapping study – Advantage West Midlands 2008
- Environmental Capacity and Environmental Assets - David Tyldesley & Associates 2006.
- WMRSS Impact of Housing Growth on Public Water Supplies - Environment Agency 2007.
- WMRSS Impact of Housing Growth on Water Quality & Waste Water Infrastructure - Environment Agency 2007.

Additional technical work that will be required to underpin the Revision includes:

- Development of carbon emission trajectories for the Region
- Assessment of proportion of energy needs and thresholds for on-site renewable energy generation.
- Assessment of land uses and functions of the Green Belt, and the potential for encouraging positive uses and enhancement
- Review evidence base to identify any other necessary work.

An extensive list of studies and background documents is available on the WMRA website at <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=385> .

Minerals Policy

Minerals Policy is a distinct element of the Quality of the Environment chapter in the WMRSS. The existing Mineral Policies need to be revised to reflect updated and revised national planning policy for minerals. As a result, the following three work streams are proposed for the Phase Three Revision, in addition to any general updating or revision of specific Policies M1-M4 in the current WMRSS.

1) Safeguarding Mineral Resources

Revision 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.

Revision Tasks

- To prepare a diagrammatic map of regionally important mineral resources – brick clays (including fireclays), natural building and roofing stone and aggregates.
- To develop a new policy on safeguarding regionally important mineral resources using existing mineral resource information and minerals and mineral related infrastructure.

Technical Work

Information on the mineral resources in the Region is already available and will be used to develop the new policy and the preparation of any diagrammatic map of regionally important mineral resources.

2) Future Supplies of Construction Aggregates

Revision Objectives

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 regional provision is apportioned sub-regionally through the WMRSS and currently covers the period up to 2016. The regional provision needs to be extended until 2026 and apportioned sub-regionally to reflect the occurrence, accessibility and availability of resources across the Region. This new 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.

Revision Tasks

- To examine and produce new sub-regional apportionments for the period 2007-2026.

Technical Work

New information is awaited on the consumption, utilisation and distribution of construction aggregates at the national level and the implications and requirements for each region. This information in the form of revised national and regional guidelines is expected to be finalised and published by Government in the Spring 2009. In certain areas local studies of the distribution and utilisation of aggregates are required in order to deliver agreed contributions to the future regional provision. In other areas the accessibility and availability of potential resources needs to be examined. If there are any shortfalls in production in the Region, they will have to be addressed in the new sub-regional apportionment.

3) Future Brick Clay Provision

Revision 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 objective is to examine the supply of and demand for brick clays and ensure that appropriate provision is made in the Region. National planning policy guidance requires the safeguarding and, where necessary, the stockpiling of clays especially brick clays from the Etruria Formation and fireclay. One method of stockpiling is long term off site locations.

Revision Tasks

- To examine the supply of and demand for brick clays in the Region.
- To examine the development of strategic stockpiles of brick clays (including fireclays) across the Region.

Technical Work

The new national planning policy guidance on brick clays set out in MPS1, and Annex 2 was underpinned by a detailed study of brick clays, their occurrence, utilisation and future demands commissioned by Government. In the West Midlands work is required to collect, collate and analyse data and information on the distribution of brick clay resources (including fireclays), on the level of future demand for clay products and the

industry's manufacturing capacity to sustain the Region's requirements for built development until 2026.

Work is also required on identifying the mechanisms for delivering possible strategic stockpiles of clays within the region to help provide long term supplies of materials for the brick industry.

Arrangements and Responsibilities for the Revision

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 Revisions to the WMRSS.

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 RPP 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 22 members, and the ratio between Local Authority, business sector and Other Stakeholders Group is approximately 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 continued to adopt the “decentralised” working arrangements where much of the technical and policy development work is done by a network of **RSS Policy Leads**, predominantly drawn from local authorities across the Region. This enables the WMRA to draw on the expertise held throughout the Region. There is a Policy Lead for each topic area of the WMRSS Revision and their contact information can be found in Contact Us on page [x](#). The Policy Leads have set up a number of task and finish technical groups to carry out and oversee specific pieces of technical work.

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

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.

Similar arrangements exist for the **Rural Proofing** which 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 page [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 rests with GOWM on behalf of the Secretary of State. Duties for this will include; organising the formal consultation on the Draft WMRSS Revision, programming the Examination in Public and publishing the final WMRSS Revision. More information about GOWM can be found at www.gowm.gov.uk

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Working with Partners

The WMRA is made up of 100 Assembly Members drawn from the 38 local authorities that make up the West Midlands Region, as well as representatives from the business sector and other social and economic groups, ranging from trade unions to faith and community groups. The WMRA membership is set at a ratio of four local authority representatives to one business sector representative to one Other Stakeholders Group representative. The WMRA works in partnership with AWM, GOWM, Regional Action West Midlands, the West Midlands Local Government Association and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands.

Assembly Partnerships

The WMRA has a series of formal Partnerships to support its various functions and these groups will be fully engaged in the WMRSS Revision process. Further information on the Partnerships can be found at www.wmra.gov.uk/xxx

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. It is intended that WMRSS Reference Groups will cover:

- Business
- Culture
- Environment
- Equalities and Diversity
- Europe
- Health
- Housing
- Transport and Accessibility
- Urban and Rural Renaissance

These WMRSS Reference Groups will inform and help the work of the WMRSS Coordination Group. If you would like more information about the WMRA Partnerships or the WMRSS Reference Groups, what they do, who is a member and what they are discussing please visit our website at <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/xxx>

The Role of Strategic Authorities

The Strategic Authorities in the Region (also known as Section 4(4) Authorities) 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. At key stages, the WMRA seek Strategic Authorities advice on the policy issues covered in the WMRSS Revision. This advice provides a valuable additional resource available to the RPB, feeds into the development of the Options, and will help in developing draft policies. A summary of the advice provided by Strategic Authorities will be available on the WMRA website at www.wmra.xxx

The process of seeking Section 4(4) authority advice is carried out through informal 'partnership' arrangements. This allows flexibility for Strategic Authorities to work with, where appropriate, both their District Authorities (i.e. in the case of Counties) and adjoining Strategic Authorities. In some cases, these wider relationships may be based on traditional partnership linkages, for example the Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire Forum, whilst new functional relationships may also need to be considered such as the Housing Market Areas identified within the Regional Housing Strategy.

Strategic Authorities within the West Midlands are;

Metropolitan & Unitary Authorities County Councils

Birmingham City Council	Shropshire County Council*
Coventry City Council	Staffordshire County Council
Dudley MBC	Warwickshire County Council
Herefordshire Council	Worcestershire County Council
Sandwell MBC	
Solihull MBC	
Stoke on Trent City Council	
Telford & Wrekin Council	
Walsall MBC	
Wolverhampton City Council	

* Will become Shropshire Council (Unitary Authority) in April 2009.

More information about this role for Strategic Authorities can be found by looking at the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* on the www.communities.gov.uk website.

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. This role has not been formalised as it works extremely well in the West Midlands on a partnership basis.

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. In addition, Strategic Authorities are asked to work with neighbouring authorities, including in other English regions and Wales, and to liaise with other Regional Assemblies and the Welsh Assembly Government where an issue has cross boundary implications.

Statement of Public Participation

What is the Statement of Public Participation?

The Assembly aims to conduct the WMRSS Revision in an open, transparent and inclusive manner. There will be a number of opportunities for everybody to get involved. The WMRA is required to publish and keep under review a Statement of Public Participation. This sets out what we will do to ensure that all communities in the West Midlands are given the opportunity to participate in the WMRSS Revision process. It includes how we involve partners and communities, how we will make information available, and how we will monitor our procedures and provide feedback.

Why should I be interested?

Put simply, it is your future that is being planned for now. Planning shapes the places where we all live and work, and it is vital that as many people, from as many different backgrounds as possible should be enabled to take part in building a better future for all of us. Therefore we would like to encourage everybody to play an active role in the WMRSS Revision.

The Principle of Partnership Working

In bringing forward the WMRSS Revision, the Assembly is committed to working in close partnership with organisations and communities from across the West Midlands and neighbouring regions. The roles of WMRA, its networks and partners in revising the WMRSS are set out above, see pages x-x. The engagement undertaken as part of the WMRSS Revision will build on these well established and extensive mechanisms to ensure that a wide spectrum of views and interests is taken into account.

When and how can I get involved?

There will be several ways of how partners and communities can get involved at various stages of the WMRSS Revision, including consultation documents, public meetings and events. The process and timetable for the Revision process are described in more detail above, see page 9.

The Assembly has a **consultation database** which includes a large number and wide range of individuals and organisations from across the West Midlands and beyond. Those on the database will be automatically informed at various stages in the process. If you are interested in getting involved, and like to add your details onto the database, please email your contact details to wmrss@wmra.gov.uk or call us on 0121 245 0200.

Key stages of the WMRSS Revision that you can get involved in are:

Draft Project Plan

The Draft Project Plan was launched at a public event in November 2007 and was out for public consultation for seven weeks. The comments and suggestions received through the consultation exercise have been taken into account in finalising this Project Plan.

Options

An event will be held in July 2009 to launch the Options document, and for a minimum of **eight** weeks you will be able to feed back your views. The comments and suggestions received will be used to inform the next stage of the process, the shaping of the Preferred Option.

Preferred Option

The Preferred Option will be developed during 2009. We will welcome your views on the Preferred Option during that time, before it will be formally submitted to the Secretary of State as the Draft WMRSS Revision. Following that submission, there will be further consultation opportunities which, at that stage, will be led by GOWM on behalf of the Secretary of State.

How will Feedback Work?

The Assembly will ensure that engagement is a two-way process. We encourage individuals and organisations to get involved and tell us what they think about the options and policies that are developed during the WMRSS Revision. In return, we will provide feedback at key stages of the process to show what comments and suggestions were received and how they have been taken into account. A summary of consultation responses and an explanation of how they have been acted upon will be made available to the RPP and on request to anyone interested.

Updates on the WMRSS Revision will be distributed at key points in the process to keep everybody informed about progress and how they can get involved. The Assembly is also required to publish a "Pre-submission Consultation Statement" when it submits the Draft WMRSS Revision to the Secretary of State in early 2010. This will explain how the participation and consultation were actually carried out and how the views of partners and communities were taken into account.

Communications Commitments

In preparing the Phase Three Revision, we will strive to make sure that:

- Documents and information will be written in a clear way and produced in a variety of formats. Technical work will also include an easy-to-read summary
- Information will be made available across the West Midlands Region
- Information will be placed on the WMRA website
- Databases will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that the most up to date information is readily available
- Views and comments will be sought at appropriate times during the process
- Sub regional networks will be used to make sure that local views are fed into the process
- Feedback on how responses have been considered will be made available
- All those interested will be provided with appropriate opportunities to take an active part in the process, irrespective of age, ethnicity, background or gender.

Interaction, awareness raising and engagement between the Assembly, partners and communities will be particularly via the following means:

Media

We will work together with the media through local newspapers, radio and TV stations, press releases, planning journals, community and other publications to disseminate information about the WMRSS Revision, particularly at key stages such as consultation periods.

Assembly Website

- The Assembly website will be regularly updated with information about events, meetings, reports and consultations.
- Provide links to the websites of other key organisations and encourage other organisations to place links to the WMRSS Revision on their websites.
- Provide an online response form so that consultation responses can be submitted directly on the Assembly website.
- Once completed, all relevant technical work will be placed on the WMRA website.
- Meeting agendas, terms of reference, meeting schedules and membership of groups relating to the WMRSS Revision will be available online.

Public Events and Campaigns

- Public events open to everybody will be held at key points in the Revision process to launch consultation documents.
- Consultation opportunities will be provided around the Region using the established sub regional and partnership networks.
- We will try to enhance community engagement by publicising the Revision within community buildings, schools, transport interchanges and retail outlets.
- A visual poster campaign backed up by a WMRSS Revision leaflet drop will be carried out throughout the Region at local authority offices, public libraries, parish councils and other public buildings.

Publications and Consultation Documents

- Documents and information leaflets will be produced throughout the process to inform partners and communities about the WMRSS Revision.
- Documents will be made widely available, including on the Assembly website and in libraries and local authority offices across the Region.
- E-mail and paper WMRSS Updates will be distributed at key points in the process to provide an update on progress and indicate when new information has become available, e.g. technical work, and how this can be viewed.
- As not everyone has access to a computer, we will continue to produce paper versions of key documents for the foreseeable future. Please contact us if you require a hard copy.
- On request, all consultation documents will be made available in various languages, large text and on audio tape.

- By making an appointment, all documents relating to the Revision can be looked at, at the Assembly offices (see page 30 for contact details).

'Hard to Reach' Groups

The Assembly seeks to achieve involvement of all sections of society, including of groups and communities that may usually be underrepresented in policy making processes. It will achieve this in particular by working through related regional bodies, such as the Regional Equality and Diversity Partnership (page x).

This Partnership works closely with organisations and networks across the Region who engage with those key groups identified by Government, which are more likely for one reason or another to be disadvantaged by less access to opportunities or exclusion from society. These groups are defined as follows by:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Trans [proposed, commenced or completed reassignment of gender]
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation

'Socially Excluded' People

The Cabinet Office, Social Exclusion Task Force has defined social exclusion as being about more than income poverty. It is a short-hand term for what can happen when people or areas have a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown. These problems are linked and mutually reinforcing. Social exclusion is an extreme consequence of what happens when people do not get a fair deal throughout their lives, often because of disadvantage they face at birth, and this disadvantage can be transmitted from one generation to the next.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

As the Phase Three Revision covers the accommodation needs of these communities, their engagement in the process will be essential. This will be promoted, for example, through the joint production of a film with other Regional Assemblies that explores the lifestyles and needs of these communities.

Through analysis of consultation responses, the Assembly will be able to establish, where and how to reach, many of the socially excluded groups within the Region which will enable it to take a proactive approach to further engagement.

West Midlands Planning Aid

West Midlands Planning Aid provides a free, independent and professional advice and support on planning matters to people and communities who cannot afford to pay professional consultants. Planning Aid is run by the Royal Town Planning Institute and is a charitable organisation independent of central and local government.

The Assembly will continue to work together with West Midlands Planning Aid to promote engagement in the WMRSS Revision, for example, through newsletters and consultation events. We also encourage those seeking advice and assistance to contact:

West Midlands Planning Aid, Unit 319, The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham, B9 4AA.

Planning Advice Helpline: Available Monday – Friday on 0121 766 8044;

Email - wmcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Regional Strategy Alignment

The WMRSS is one of a range of strategies and programmes that aim to shape the future of the West Midlands and, as such, affect the life of people in the Region. The role of the WMRSS is to provide a long term planning framework for these other strategies and programmes. It is essential that all these strategies and programmes, including the WMRSS, match each other and pull in the same direction. Otherwise resources may be wasted and the Region's ability to deliver sustainable development will be compromised.

Therefore, in revising the WMRSS, consideration needs to be given to other regional strategies and programmes. It is important that the WMRSS Revision both shapes and is shaped by those strategies and programmes. Working in partnership is key to this, and details of how we propose to work with partners are set out above, see page xx.

The table on page xx gives an overview of other relevant regional strategies and programmes and the schedule for their respective review. WMRA and its partners will need to make sure that the necessary links between those strategies and programmes and the WMRSS Revision are made.

Regional Sustainable Development Framework

The West Midlands Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF) has been prepared by Sustainability West Midlands on behalf of WMRA. The RSDF sets out a vision and objectives for the sustainable development of the Region. It is designed to help policy makers to ensure that their strategies, programmes and actions play their part in contributing to a sustainable future for the West Midlands. The common framework provided by the RSDF is also intended to make sure that strategies are developed in a way that is complementary and mutually supportive. The RSDF will also inform the Sustainability Appraisal which will be carried out as part of the WMRSS Revision, see page 29. More information about the RSDF can be found at www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/rsdf

Regional Housing Strategy

The Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) has been prepared by WMRA in partnership with a wide variety of stakeholders. The RHS aims to drive the housing market interventions which deliver the housing aspects of Urban and Rural Renaissance as set out in the WMRSS. The RHS also gives a broad framework for long term housing investment in the Region. The short term investment intentions are set out in the Regional Housing Allocation Strategy 2008-2011. Key linkages between the RHS and Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision exist, for example, in relation to the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople topic, see page 19 and pages 103-108 of the RHS. While the planning system has a key role to play in providing accommodation for these communities, the RHS provides an overarching framework for the provision of all types of accommodation across the Region. One of the Government's ambitions is to mainstream

Gypsies and Travellers accommodation within wider housing provision. Therefore 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.

West Midlands Economic Strategy

The review of the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES), Connecting To Success, was undertaken in 2007, and AWM, the West Midlands' Regional Development Agency, launched the revised WMES in December 2007. The WMES sets out what the Region needs to do to improve its economic performance. It will be accompanied by an Action Plan which will set out how the objectives of the strategy are to be achieved. WMRA has been working closely with AWM to ensure that the review of the WMES and the different Phases of the WMRSS Revision are well coordinated. Key links between the WMES and the WMRSS Phase Three Revision exist, among others, in relation to critical rural services. WMRA and AWM jointly commissioned a study into sustainable rural communities to be part of a common evidence base on this topic.

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 integrated regional strategy.

Regional strategies for culture, sport and tourism

Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision also needs to be aligned with various strategies in the field of culture, sport and tourism, including the Regional Cultural Strategy, the Regional Plan for Sport, the Regional Visitor Economy Strategy and the Regional Historic Environment Strategy. For example, WMRSS Phase Three will run in parallel to the review of the Regional Cultural Strategy which is to be completed by xxx 2009.

Key Regional Documents Relevant to WMRSS Phase Three Revision	Review schedule (as at July 2009)
Regional Biodiversity Strategy	Delivery Plan 2007/08 published
Regional Climate Change Action Plan	Published in December 2007
Regional Cultural Strategy	Review to be completed in January 2009
Regional Economic Strategy	Review completed in December 2007
Regional Energy Strategy	Review possibly in 2009
Regional Forestry Framework	Review to be completed in 2009-2010; Delivery Plan 2008-2011 published
Regional Housing Strategy	Partial Review potentially in 2009
Regional Plan for Sport	Review to be completed in 2007/08

Regional Rural Renaissance Framework	Mainstreamed within Regional Economic Strategy
Regional Rural Delivery Framework	Published April 2006 – Now partially mainstreamed within Regional Economic Strategy
Regional Sports Facility Framework	
Regional Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the West Midlands	Published in September 2006; to be reviewed after 3 years
Regional Sustainable Development Framework	Review anticipated Spring 2009
Regional Visitor Economy Strategy	Review completed in early 2008
Regional Water Resources Strategy	National strategy to be reviewed with regional data modules by December 2008

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 Habitat Regulation Assessment and a Rural Proofing.

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. The Rural Proofing will be led by the Rural Accord's Rural Proofing Team (see page x) and published on the WMRA website at www.wmra.xxx

Under a Directive of the European Union, the RPB is required to undertake a so-called **Habitat 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 Phase Three will build on the HRA which was undertaken as part of Phase Two of the WMRSS Revision.

Another important element of the Revision process is the **Sustainability Appraisal** (SA) which will be overseen by an SA Steering Group, see page x. The SA is required by law and includes an environmental assessment to meet European Union requirements, called **Strategic Environmental Assessment** (SEA). The SA/SEA is published on the WMRA website at www.wmra.xxxx

The aim of the SA is to promote better quality of life through sustainable development. To do this requires the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the Revision of the WMRSS. It makes sure the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the Regional Sustainable Development Framework are incorporated at an early stage. The SA's purpose is to influence the shape and direction of the Revision as it is developing. This includes setting out mitigation measures and proposing monitoring the significant effects of implementing the WMRSS Revision.

There are five main stages (A-E) to the SA process:

Stage A: The production of an SA Scoping Report. This includes;

- setting the context and objectives of the sustainability framework, used to assess the Revision
- gathering of baseline data at a regional level and describing the current and likely future state of the RSS Revision area
- Identifying the key sustainability issues and problems.

There was consultation with sustainability bodies on the draft SA Scoping

Report in Spring 2008. Following the consultation, a final SA Scoping Report was prepared and agreed by the SA Steering Group for use in the WMRSS Revision process. This is available at the WMRA website at www.wmra.xxx

Stage B: Developing and refining options. This includes;

- Appraising the plan and modifying the Options as they are developed
- Detailed assessment of the Preferred Option and proposals for monitoring
- Predicting the social, environmental and economic effects of the Options under consideration using the baseline information.

As each Option is refined a commentary on the key sustainability issues and problems arising has to be prepared. The focus is on recommendations on how each of the Options could be improved.

Stage C: Preparation of the SA Report.

The SA Report will form an integral part of the Draft WMRSS Revision submitted to the Secretary of State. It must also clearly show that the SEA Directive requirements have been met.

Stage D: Consultation on the Revision and SA Report, led by GOWM.

Following submission to the Secretary of State, subsequent stages of the WMRSS Revision are carried out by GOWM; however, there is a fifth stage (E) concerning monitoring and responding to adverse effects which is the responsibility of the RPB.

Jargon Buster

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.

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.

Communities for the Future

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Regional Economic Strategy

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

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 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.

Contact Us

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Key Websites

www.advantagewm.co.uk
www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk
www.communities.gov.uk
www.equalityhumanrights.com
www.gowm.gov.uk
www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
www.rawm.net/new/
www.regenwm.org.uk
www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk
www.westmidlands.rtpi.org.uk
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 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 or call 0121 245 0200.

The Regional Planning Body has prepared this Project Plan/Statement of Public Participation and will conduct the Revision within the framework of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

For any issues or complaints regarding this Project Plan please contact: Olwen Dutton, Chief Executive of West Midlands Regional Assembly, o.dutton@wmra.gov.uk, 0121 678 1031.

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