

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

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

Regional Spatial Strategy - Annual Monitoring Report

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To describe the findings from this ongoing work stream. The Executive Report is attached (Annexe 1) and a URL to the latest draft full report is provided.
- 1.2 To request any final advice from Regional Planning and Environment Executive (RPEE) on any further points of analysis to be incorporated prior to publication.
- 1.3 To request clearance by RPEE for submission to DCLG (to achieve the statutory requirement), printing and dissemination of the West Midlands Annual Monitoring Report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that RPEE:
 - i. **agree** to the policy based findings and recommendations to be included in the AMR to be submitted to DCLG by 28th February 2009;
 - ii. **agree and sign-off** the document prior to printing;
 - iii. **delegate** the sign off of any amendments arising from P&EE to the Chair of RSS Coordination Group and the WMRA Policy Director
 - iv. **agree** to a recommendation that the Strategy Advisory Panel should receive a presentation of the AMR for their information at their meeting on 4th March 2009.

3. Background

- 3.1 Colleagues will recall that the Regional Planning Body is required every year to submit to the Minister a RSS Annual Monitoring Report. This should be submitted by 28th February each year and consider data for the most recent financial year. The February 2009 AMR therefore considers monitoring data in respect of the period April 2007-March

2008. This activity requires considerable resource to be expended with the timetable presenting a significant challenge at both local and regional levels and WMRA is extremely grateful for the positive support from planning authorities in compiling the AMR at such a pressured time..

3.2 The AMR is also required to:

- i. identify any policy which in the RPB's view is not being implemented, why it is not being implemented and whether the RPB intends to prepare a draft revision of the RSS which will amend the policy;
- ii. through collaborative working with the sub-regions to ensure a greater level of sub-regional analysis and (ultimately) interplay with the LDF AMRs.

3.3 In view of the forthcoming Phase 2 Examination in Public this year's process has been strengthened to enable greater opportunity for local authorities and other key data providers to:

- i. Validate and quality check their data so that any discrepancies within and between datasets are minimised;
- ii. ensure greater insight and sub-regional texture to the analysis.

3.4 Whilst overall this will result in a stronger document it does mean that some editorial issues are still being progressed at the time of the meeting. This has two implications:

- i. Colleagues will not have before them for consideration an absolutely final draft. Whilst the draft provided is very nearly complete the section on housing trajectories is still under development. This element will build upon the current round of sub-regional meetings. It is anticipated that a draft will be made separately available in advance of the Coordination Group meeting;
- ii. Whilst WMRA will provide to the Minister a .pdf version of the document (thereby satisfying the requirement) it is unlikely that the printed version will be available until shortly after the end of February.

4 Detail

4.1 As with last year the full AMR will be produced on CD Rom. The aim of this change is to create a user friendly report which will encourage user interaction, and to produce the AMR in the most cost effective and environmentally friendly way. The table below describes the split between the hardcopy paper document and the CD Rom.

Paper Document	CD Rom
<p>Executive Report containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Summary – Key Findings • Chapter 1: Introduction • Chapter 2: RSS Revision – Progress 	<p>Executive Report <i>plus</i> The full Annual Monitoring Report containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3: Progress towards UR&RR • Chapter 4: Communities for the Future • Chapter 5: Prosperity for All • Chapter 6: Quality of the Environment • Chapter 7: Transport and Accessibility • Annexe 1: WM RSS Objectives • Annexe 2: Core indicators for Regional Planning <p>Data Appendix containing: Part 1: Spreadsheet – Core indicators Parts 2-6: Spreadsheets – each chapter</p>

4.2 The Draft Executive Summary's Key Findings are attached to this report as Appendix 1.

4.3 The Latest Draft 2008 RSS AMR in its entirety can be downloaded from the WMRA website from

http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy/Monitoring/_AMR_Draft.aspx

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WEST MIDLANDS
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY
ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2008
EXECUTIVE REPORT

FOREWORD

To be inserted

**Cllr Rex Roberts, OBE
Staffordshire County Council
Chairman – West Midlands Regional Assembly Planning and
Environment Executive**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the fifth Annual Monitoring Report of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) published by the West Midlands Regional Assembly (the Assembly) in its capacity of Regional Planning Body (RPB).

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA) requires that every Regional Planning Body submits an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the Secretary of State. It must be published by 28 February each year in respect of the previous financial year. Government further requires that it contains information on the extent to which policies in the WMRSS are being achieved and their implementation.

This 2008 Report (published February 2009) therefore presents the findings of the 2008 Annual Monitoring Cycle (1 April 2007 - 31 March 2008) and examines progress towards the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy as expressed by the January 2008 Revised Version. It does not attempt to monitor the WMRSS Phase 2 Preferred Option published by WMRA (December 2007), but where significant issues for the Preferred Option arise these are highlighted.

The data contained in this AMR is particularly important in that it will provide a significant element of the updated evidence base for the forthcoming Examination in Public (EiP) for the current Phase 2 Revision which will consider a number of key planning issues including:

- How to move towards a more sustainable Region;
- Scale and distribution of housing;
- Employment;
- Centres;
- Waste;
- Some aspects of Transport and Accessibility.

A revised monitoring framework will also be discussed at the EiP.

1.2 Unique Context of the 2008 Annual Monitoring Report – the Credit Crunch

The data period encapsulated by this report is one of particular interest in that part-way through the period (July 2007) the Credit Crunch started to manifest itself. Up to that time Regional confidence – and levels of development – had been good. Linked with this the ability of councils and other public sector

organisations to deliver via planning obligations had been enhanced by these high levels of confidence and commensurate land prices.

Following the commencement of the current economic situation with the Credit Crunch, which started to become apparent in July 2007, many well documented events have taken place. By the end of the 2008 monitoring year (March 2008) it was becoming apparent that the impact of the Credit Crunch was going to be considerable - indicated by key evidence such as the temporary nationalisation of the Northern Rock to prevent its collapse in February 2008 and early evidence of a fall in house prices. These early changes were evidenced in the WMRA "Regional Housing Market Summary" (August 2008). Since the summer of 2008 the scope and scale of the economic situation facing not only the United Kingdom but the whole World has become apparent, for example:

- Globally many countries have experienced significant banking-related difficulties which are now manifesting themselves through the wider international and national economies.
- Nationally several British Banks and Building Societies have been bailed out or acquired to prevent their collapse.
- Levels of development, particularly new development, have plummeted in line with business confidence.
- Levels of activity in the housing market are now exceptionally low; and
- House prices fell by 12% in the year to November 2008 (Land Registry).

Whilst many of these events have taken place outside of the monitoring year in question it is important to recognise that in the last 18 months the economic climate has shifted considerably. As such, the environment in which the planning system will be operating in the future will have changed. It is therefore important that this AMR is thus prefaced for three main reasons.

- (1) The scale of the current economic changes are considerable. At the time of writing (December 2008) the general consensus of forecasting bodies suggests that prospects for 2009 are poor with, at best, a recession lasting for a significant proportion of 2009 being likely. It is inevitable that, at least in the short to medium term, the rate of housing and employment development will be appreciably reduced. The recent Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners "*West Midlands Housing Options Study*" (GOWM, Oct 2008) acknowledges a reduction in housing development levels in the short to medium term via the proposed trajectories.

- (2) Whilst it is possible for Local Authorities to allocate land to proposed uses and to facilitate the development process, the involvement and commitment of the private sector through scheme sponsorship and finance is essential. This is the case not only for the primary scheme but also for any associated social or infrastructure development negotiated by the planning authority as a planning obligation. In harsh financial climes the opportunity for any such development will be reduced.
- (3) Future potential development rates cannot therefore be based on a simple extrapolation of past rates. Nor can we be certain of the ability of the private sector to support necessary infrastructure costs in the current financial climate where many such contributions are facilitated by the realisation of improved land values consequent to the associated development.

In the discussions to be held at the forthcoming EiP it will be necessary for such factors to be taken into account when future development rates are discussed. In doing so consideration should be given to the key principles of the WMRSS - especially complementary Urban and Rural Renaissance - reaffirmed by Government as recently as January 2008 to ensure that this continues to be supported by realistic and achievable development rates.

1.3 Structure of the Annual Monitoring Report

As with last year the full AMR has been produced on CD Rom. The aim of this change was to create a user friendly report which will encourage user interaction, and to produce the AMR in the most cost effective and environmentally friendly way. The table below identifies how the report is split between the hardcopy paper document and the CD Rom.

Paper Document	CD Rom
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Executive Report containing: Executive Report

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (including AMR structure and WMRSS Revision Progress) • Key findings of the AMR | <p>The full Annual Monitoring Report containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Summary – Key Findings • Chapter 1: Introduction • Chapter 2: Regional Spatial Strategy Revision - Progress • Chapter 3: Measuring Progress towards Urban and Rural Renaissance • Chapter 4: Communities for the Future • Chapter 5: Prosperity for All • Chapter 6: Quality of the Environment • Chapter 7: Transport and Accessibility • Annexe 1: West Midlands Spatial Strategy Objectives • Annexe 2: Summary of DCLG’s Core indicators for Regional Planning |
|---|---|

Data Appendix containing:

- Part 1: Spreadsheet – Core indicators
- Part 2: Spreadsheet – Data tables for Urban/Rural Renaissance
- Part 3: Spreadsheet – Data tables for Communities for the Future
- Part 4: Spreadsheet – Data tables for Prosperity for All
- Part 5: Spreadsheet – Data tables for Quality of the Environment
- Part 6: PDF document – Data and Maps for Transportation and Accessibility

Each of the four Topic Chapters (Communities For the Future, Prosperity For All, Quality of the Environment and Transportation and Accessibility) is formatted around an assessment of progress toward the policies (or clusters of policies) contained within that chapter. At the end of the Introduction is a contents table which defines the policies contained within each chapter and where the data and its interpretation can be found.

Annexe 1 lists the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Objectives and Annexe 2 gives the data required for the WMRSS Core Output Indicators of the former ODPM (now DCLG) (ODPM, March 2005). Further detailed

tables of supporting information, including Core Output Indicator data down to Local Authority District level are also contained on the CD Rom.

1.4. Regional Spatial Strategy Revision - Progress

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) was published as Regional Planning Guidance (RPG11) in June 2004. Upon enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in September 2004, RPG 11 assumed the status of RSS.

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. Responsibility for drafting revisions to the WMRSS currently rests with the Regional Planning Body (WMRA) which agreed a three phased approach to the Revision process.

It is important to note that the West Midlands is undertaking a Revision of the WMRSS that will support and develop the underlying strategy – it is not a full review.

1.4.1 Phase One Revision: The Black Country

Following the Phase One Examination in Public in January 2007 a Revised WMRSS incorporating the necessary changes was published by Government in January 2008.

1.4.2 Phase Two Revision

Phase Two focuses on issues around housing, employment land, centres, transport and waste. The Assembly submitted a Draft Revision (Proposed Changes) document on 21 December 2007 to the Secretary of State which was opened to consultation in early January 2008.

Upon submission of the Draft revision document, in light of the Government's agenda to increase house building across the country, the responsible Minister at the time (Baroness Andrews) expressed concern about the housing proposals put forward by the Phase Two Revision. Accordingly she asked the Government Office for the West Midlands to commission further work to look at options which could deliver higher housing numbers for consideration at Examination in Public. Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners were appointed to undertake the Study, which was completed on 7 October 2008.

The aim of the study was to provide the Examination Panel with options that could deliver housing numbers which will start to impact on affordability, whilst maintaining as many of the principles of the Spatial Strategy as possible.

To give regional partners the opportunity to engage with the study and to see its findings prior to making their own submissions, with Government's approval, WMRA extended the consultation so that it closed on 8 December 2008. The "testing" of the draft WMRSS and the further options generated by the Nathaniel Lichfield Study will be considered by an independent panel at the Phase 2 Examination in Public. The EiP will commence on 28 April 2009, is expected to last for seven sitting weeks, and will take place at the Molineux Stadium, Wolverhampton.

Further information can be found at: www.wmra.gov.uk

1.4.3 Phase Three Revision

The Phase 3 revision was launched on 27th November 2007. It covers a range of issues including critical rural services, gypsies, travellers and travelling show people, culture, sport and tourism, environmental issues including flooding and Green Belt and minerals.

The indicative timetable for the remainder of Phase 3 is shown below:

Timescale	Key Tasks / Outputs
Early July 2009	Publish Phase Three Options consultation document (assumes completion Phase 2 EiP)
Early July - mid August 2009	Consultation on Phase Three Options
January 2010 (provisional)	Submit final Preferred Option to Secretary of State
January - March 2010 (provisional)	Consultation on Preferred Option (6 to 12 weeks formal consultation)

Further information can be found at: www.wmra.gov.uk

1.5 Monitoring of WMRSS Policies – Contents

The tables below describe where the data and commentary in respect of the WMRSS Policies (or related clusters of policies) can be found in this document.

As previously stated, this Report presents the findings of the 2008 Annual Monitoring Cycle (1 April 2007 - 31 March 2008) and examines progress towards the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy as expressed by the January 2008 Revised Version. This AMR does not attempt to monitor the WMRSS Phase 2 Preferred Option published by WMRA (December 2007), but where significant issues for the Preferred Option arise these are highlighted.

Consequent to the new policies and amendments included in the January 2008 WMRSS a number of Black Country specific panels have been incorporated for the first time into this report. Following the Examination in Public which will consider the monitoring framework, this approach will be evaluated.

Chapter 4: Communities for the Future

Policy No.	Description	Page No.
CF1 CF2 CF3	Housing within the Major Urban Areas Housing beyond the Major Urban Areas Levels and Distribution of Housing Development	38
Black Country CF3	Levels and Distribution of Housing Development	63
CF4	The Reuse of Land and Buildings for Housing	65
CF5	Delivering Affordable Housing & Mixed Communities	70

Chapter 5: Prosperity for All

Policy No.	Description	Page No.
PA1 PA6	Prosperity for All Portfolio of Employment Land	76
UR1	Implementing Urban Renaissance	79
Black Country UR1A	Black Country Regeneration Priorities	81
Black Country UR1B	Housing and Employment Land	82
PA2 RR2	Urban Regeneration Zones The Rural Regeneration Zone	84
PA3	High Technology Corridors	86

PA6		Portfolio of Employment Land	
PA7		Regional Investment Sites	
PA8		Major Investment Sites	89
PA9		Regional Logistic Sites	
PA10		Tourism and Culture	92
PA11		The Network of Town and City Centres	93
Black Country		Brierley Hill and Dudley	97
PA11A			
Black Country		Strategic Office Development in the Black Country	98
UR1C			
Black Country		Retail Floorspace	100
UR1D			
PA12		Birmingham's Role as a World City	102
PA13		Out of Centre Retail Development	103

Chapter 6: Quality of the Environment

Policy No.	Description	Page No.
QE2	Restoring Degraded Areas and Managing and Creating High Quality New Environments	107
Black Country QE10	Transforming the Environment of the Black Country	110
QE8	Forestry and Woodlands	111
	Development and Flood Risk	113
QE5	Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment	115
QE7	Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the Region's Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources	118
QE9	The Water Environment	121
EN1	Energy Generation	122
M2	Minerals – Aggregates	123
M3	Minerals - The Use of Alternative Sources of Materials	
WD1 WD2	Targets for Waste Management in the Region The Need for Waste Management Facilities by Sub-region	126

Chapter 7: Transport and Accessibility

Policy No.	Description	Page No.
T1	Developing Accessibility and Mobility within the Region to Support the Spatial Strategy	138
T2	Reducing the Need to Travel	
T3	Walking and Cycling	145
T4	Promoting Travel Awareness	148
T5	Public Transport	149
T6	Strategic Park and Ride	161
T7	Car Parking Standards and Management	163
T8	Demand Management	164
T9	The Management and Development of National and Regional Transport Networks	166
T10	Freight	170
T11	Airports	173
T12	Priorities for Investment	177
Black Country T12A	Priorities for Investment (Black Country Additions)	178

Detailed tables of supporting information for each chapter can be found within the Data Appendix as follows:

- Part 1 - Core Output Indicators 2008
- Part 2 - Data Tables for Urban/Rural Renaissance
- Part 3 - Data Tables for Communities for the Future
- Part 4 - Data Tables for Prosperity for All
- Part 5 - Data Tables for Quality of the Environment
- Part 6 - Supporting Information for Transportation and Accessibility

KEY FINDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2008

Population

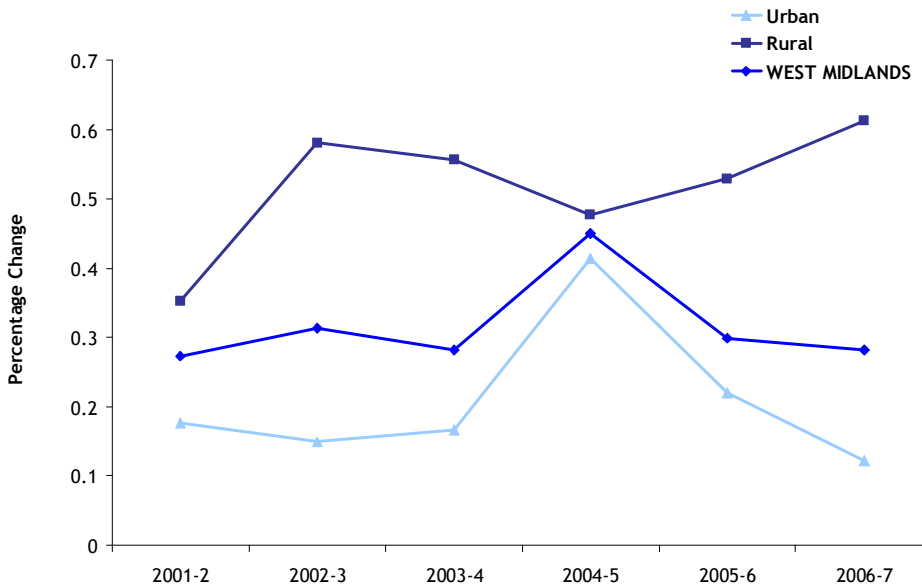
The population of the region as a whole has increased steadily since 2001. It has grown by just over 100,000 between 2001 and 2007 and the latest estimate of its size is 5,381,800 (2007). Within the region, the population of the Metropolitan Area has also shown an increase since 2001 and now stands at just over 2,600,000. The largest growth has been in Birmingham and Warwickshire with Birmingham's population increasing by 25,600 and Warwickshire's by 20,600 between 2001 and 2007.

Migration from the West Midlands continues with the net loss to migration from the West Midlands to the rest of England and Wales at 8,000 in 2007. East Midlands and the South West are the most popular destinations for the out-migrants with East Midlands and the South East providing the largest number of in-migrants.

Figure ER1

(This figure is numbered URR2 in the full AMR)

Annual population growth rate (all ages)



Source: ONS Mid-year population estimates

Progress towards Urban and Rural Renaissance

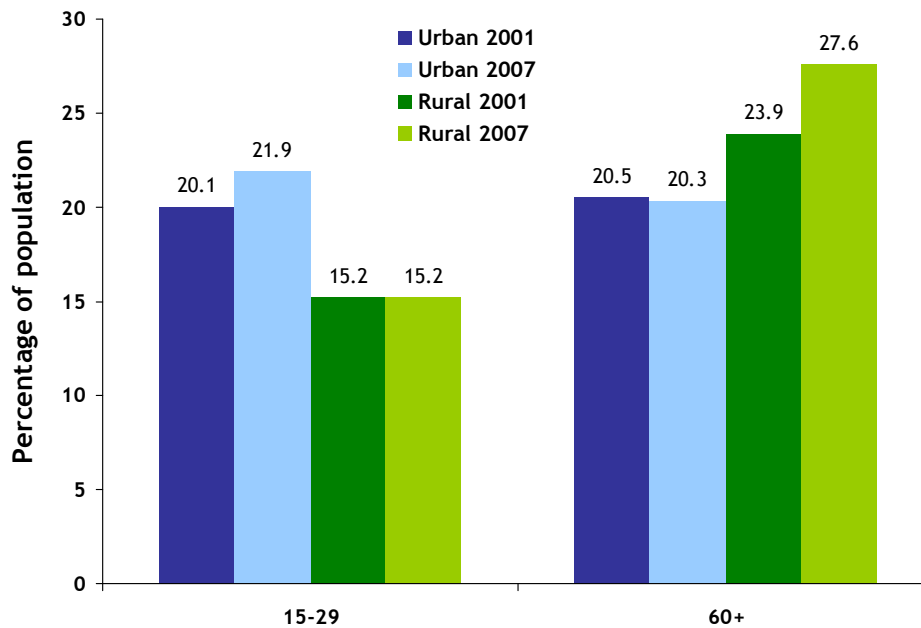
The region is progressing well towards the achievement of rural renaissance. Increasing numbers of jobs are being attracted to rural areas, and more of

these jobs are at a higher level. Educational attainment is high and improving, so there are appropriately skilled people to fill these jobs. These factors should help rural areas to retain and attract a more mixed population in the future. Other indicators are less positive; indicators suggest that there is some way to go yet with the rural population continuing to grow more quickly than other parts of the Region with a continuing over-representation of older age groups. This is reinforced by some re-emergence of traditional migration patterns with young people typically moving to urban areas and older age groups moving to rural areas. This suggests that whilst the foundations for Rural Renaissance are now in place there are still issues, particularly around individuals' attitudes and behaviour, requiring future progress.

Figure ER2

(This figure is numbered URR3 in the full AMR)

Changing age profile of urban and rural areas



Source: ONS Mid-year population estimates

The picture for Urban Renaissance policies is more mixed. There have been significant improvements in educational attainment and increases in the number of knowledge-based jobs. Urban areas in the region seem to be becoming increasingly attractive to young, well qualified people. However, they still face a challenge in retaining them as they get older. This year has seen a stalling of the recent decline in the net out-migration from urban areas: future monitoring will need to keep a close eye on this.

Whilst educational attainment and many other indicators are showing positive signs overall, this improvement isn't universal with little change in the number of people with no qualifications and widening spatial differences on a number

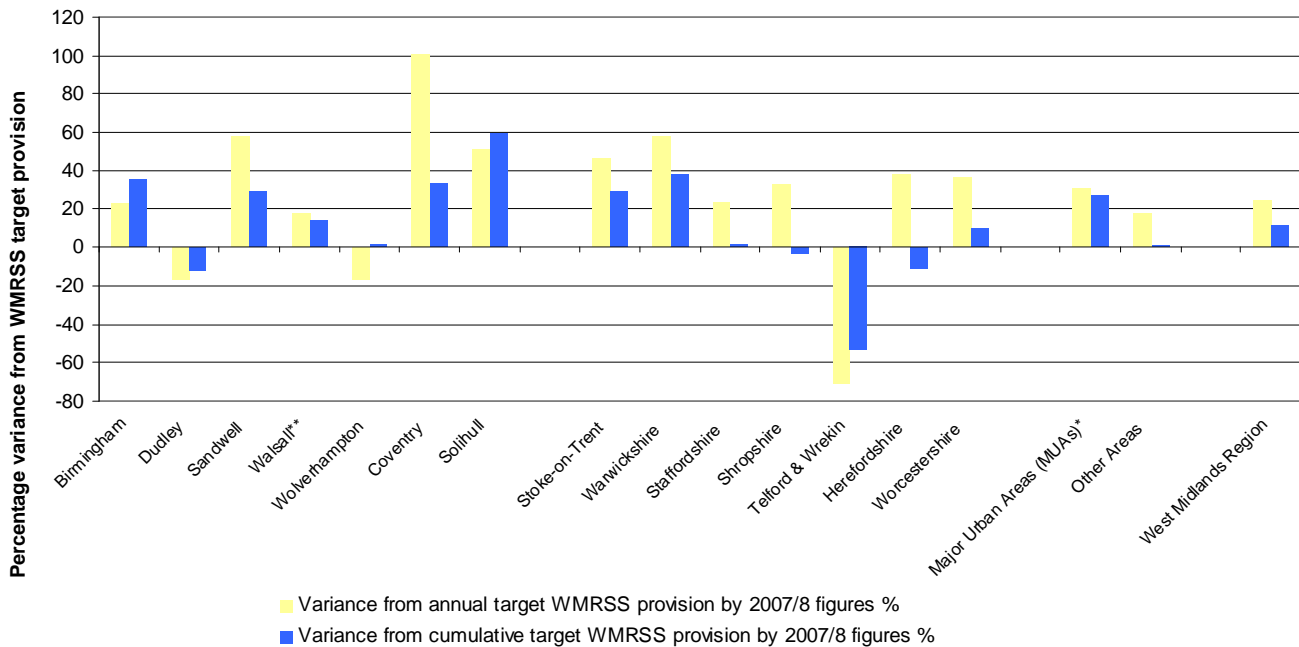
of other indicators. This suggests that whilst Urban Renaissance may be taking root in some parts of the Region this is, as yet, not universal.

The current economic climate will impact on future patterns and rates of development. It is imperative that future monitoring activity takes this context into account when drawing conclusions in respect of future progress made towards the Urban and Rural Renaissance of the West Midlands.

Communities for the Future 2007/8

Total completions (gross) across the region in 2007/8 showed a decrease of approximately 3% on the equivalent figure in 2006/7. This year's completions (gross) were still above the corresponding WMRSS target of 15,280, by 3,709. The policy drive to concentrate development increasingly within the Major Urban Areas (MUAs) continues to be being implemented.

Figure ER3: Completions (gross) 2001-8 v WMRSS targets
(This figure is number CF4 in the full AMR)



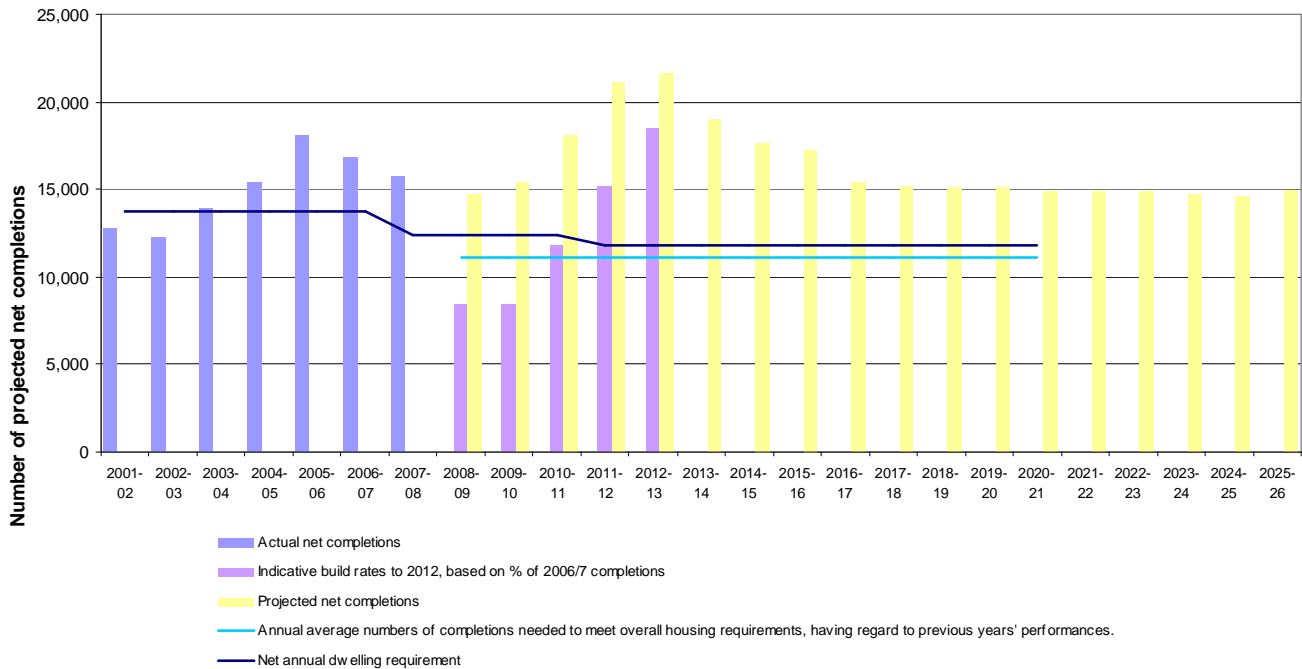
Source: Regional Housing Land Availability Survey, 2008

* Major Urban Areas include the West Midlands Metropolitan Area and Stoke-on-Trent. This total excludes completions in Newcastle, which is part of the MUA but has no RSS target against which to measure. It includes all completions in Solihull, although a number of these are not within the MUA.

It is important, however, to consider the future impact of the raised housing targets that are emerging from the Phase 2 revision of the WMRSS, including

those proposed within the Nathaniel Lichfield Study. These targets are considerably higher than those currently in place, at both regional and sub-regional levels, and, importantly, both within the MUAs and beyond these. The appearance of future performance for the region as a whole is likely to alter as a result of the Phase 2 amendments to levels of housing provision. The challenge of meeting these higher targets is likely to be compounded by current economic conditions. When combining this impact with that of the downturn in economic conditions, it is likely that the assumptions made at the time by local authorities in forecasting future performance for Annual Monitoring Reports are optimistic.

Figure ER4: Housing trajectory for the West Midlands Region
 (This figure is numbered CF1 in the full AMR)



Sources: Regional Housing Land Availability Surveys, 2001-8; Development of Options for the West Midlands Region in response to the NHPAU Report, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners

On a net basis, taking account of demolitions and losses through conversions and change of use, the number of completions in the region this year was approximately 28% above the comparable RSS derived assumption. Cumulatively, net completions continued this year to be higher than the corresponding assumption, in fact, more so than in 2006/7, at 11% above. However, the overall fall in existing WMRSS targets between 2006/7 and 2007/8 should be taken into account when considering performance against targets in this document, and will be very much in contrast with comparable performance against the Preferred Options proposals.

This year, the percentage of total completions (gross) that occurred on previously developed land was 86% (compared with the regional target of 76%), which represents a slight increase on the percentage in the previous year. This year, the proportion of future committed land supply on PDL was 87%, which represents an increase on that in the previous year. Although proportions of both completions and commitments on PDL are above what has been required in WMRSS, such performance may become more difficult to sustain in light of the increased housing targets that have emerged from the Phase 2 revision of the WMRSS.

There were 4,047 social/affordable housing completions across the region this year, which, proportionally, represents a considerable increase on performance in the previous year. Social/affordable completions, have remained, however, significantly below the indicative regional target of 6,000-6,500 per year.

Policy No.	Description	Progress towards Policy			
		Statistical Indicators		Implementation Processes	
		2007	2008	2007	2008
CF1 CF2 CF3	Housing within the Major Urban Areas Housing beyond the Major Urban Areas Levels and Distribution of Housing Development	G	G	G	G
CF4	The Reuse of Land and Buildings for Housing	G	G	G	G
CF5	Delivering Affordable Housing & Mixed Communities	R	R	R	R

(Key: G (green) Moving towards achieving WMRSS policy
A (amber) Neither moving towards or away from achieving WMRSS policy
R (red) Moving away from achieving WMRSS policy)

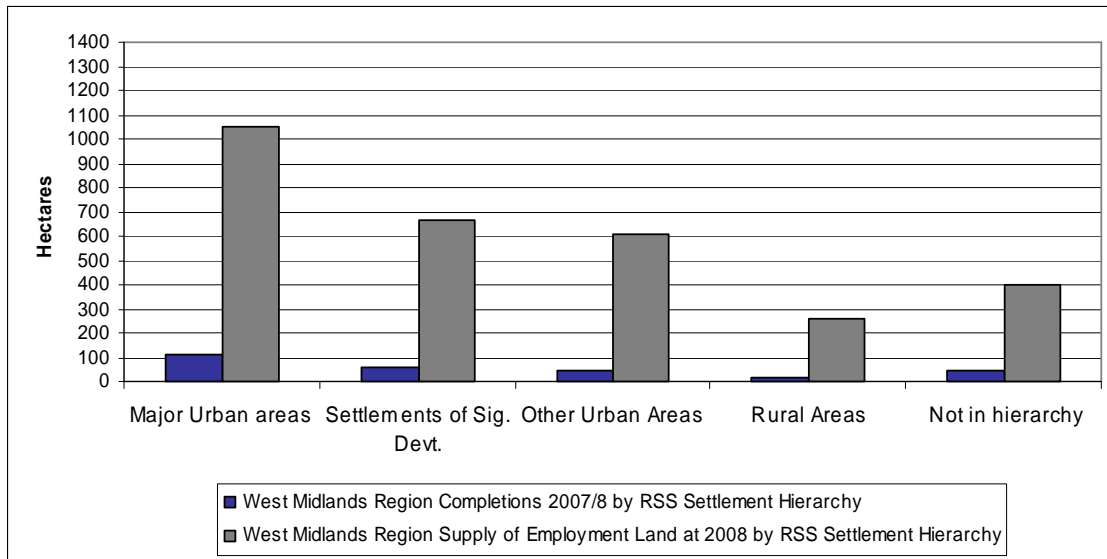
Prosperity for All

Employment land completions increased during 2007/08. Completions in the MUAs also increased and the MUAs were shown to be the main focus for employment development unlike the previous year.

The amount of employment land outside of the settlement hierarchy continued its decline and reflects the successful implementation of WMRSS policies which seeks to focus development within the settlement hierarchy.

Figure ER5: Completions 2007/8 and supply at 2008 by settlement hierarchy

(This figure is numbered PA3 in the full AMR)



Source: Regional Employment Land Survey 2008

Completions in Regeneration Zones increased significantly in 2007/08 in all zones except the North Black Country/South Staffordshire Zone.

The rate of R&D development within the High Technology Corridors increased to one of the highest figures recorded, reflecting the progress of the High-Technology Corridor strategy.

Brownfield development saw a significant increase on the previous year which is encouraging.

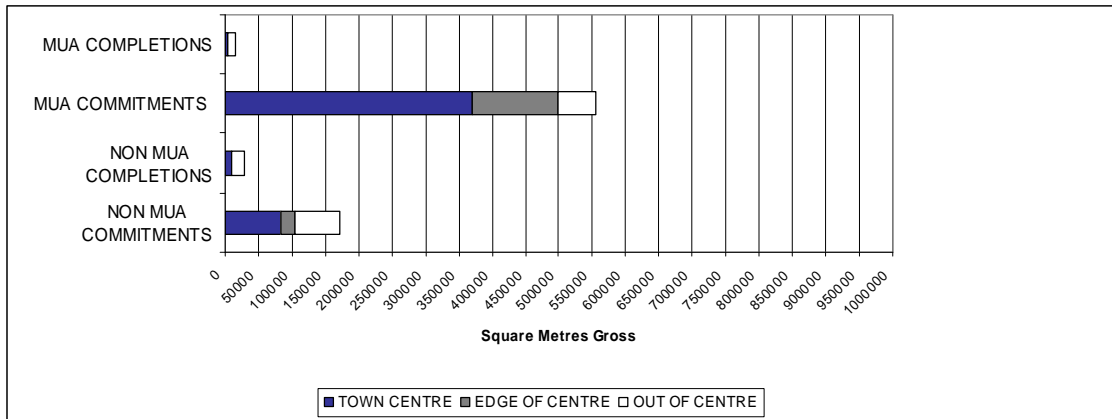
The amount of development for manufacturing however was lower than the preceding year reflecting the continuing uncertainty in the manufacturing sector.

The supply of employment land overall has declined some 176 hectares on the previous year. The supply of employment land is essential for Regional economic prosperity and therefore supply will require further monitoring to ensure the portfolio of employment land is maintained.

Retail completions fell again in 2007/8, with only two small schemes recorded as complete in the strategic centres. Out-of-centre completions also fell, although they increased as a proportion of the small number of developments which were completed over the year. There was a slight reduction in the retail pipeline, which continues to show a strong, and growing, preponderance of in-centre commitments.

Figure ER6: Retail completions 2007 and commitments within and outside MUAs at 2008

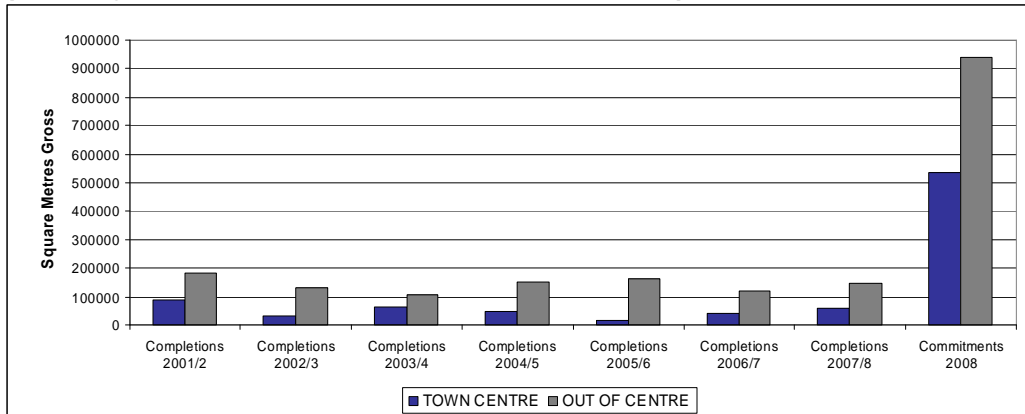
(This figure is numbered PA8 in the full AMR)



Source: Regional Retail Land Survey 2008

There was a recovery in office development rates and the proportion of in and edge of centre completions remained at 50%. There was also an increase in the office development pipeline, with in-centre commitments rising to 36% of the total. However these figures are heavily influenced by Birmingham which provided 80% of the in-centre completions and 87% of the in-centre commitments.

Figure ER7: Office Completions 2001-2008 and Commitments at 2008
 (This figure is numbered PA9 in the full AMR)



Source: Regional Office Survey 2008

Activity in the hotel and leisure sectors declined – although a healthy development pipeline exists in both sectors. The hotel pipeline is dominated by commitments in the Birmingham/Solihull/Warwickshire area.

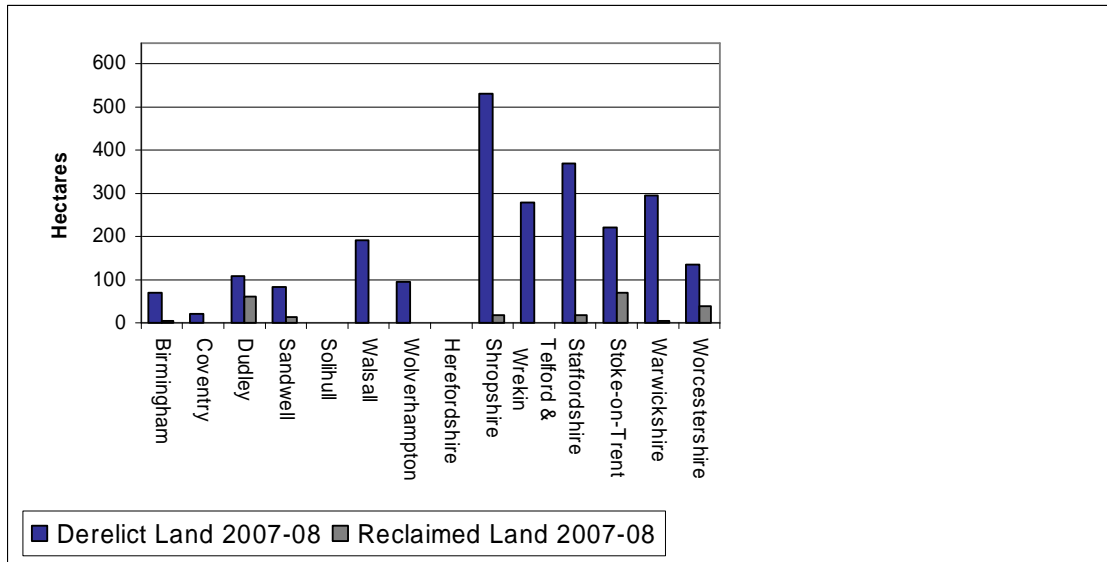
Policy No.	Description	Progress towards Policy			
		Statistical Indicators		Implementation Processes	
		2007	2008	2007	2008
PA1	Prosperity for All	A	G	A	G
PA6	Portfolio of Employment Land				
UR1	Implementing Urban Renaissance	R	G	R	G
PA2	Urban Regeneration Zones	R	G	R	G
RR2	The Rural Regeneration Zone	A	G	A	G
PA3	High Technology Corridors	A	G	A	G
PA6	Portfolio of Employment Land	A	G	A	G
PA7	Regional Investment Sites	A	A	A	A
PA8	Major Investment Sites	A	A	A	A
PA9	Regional Logistic Sites	R	R	R	R
PA10	Tourism and Culture	G	G	G	A
PA11	The Network of Town and City Centres (Retail/Offices)	A/R	A/A	G/R	A/A
PA12	Birmingham's Role as a World City	G	G	G	G
PA13	Out of Centre Retail Development	G	G	G	G

Quality of the Environment

The area of derelict land in the Region is continuing to fall and now stands at just over 2,400 hectares, of which two-thirds is outside the Major Urban Areas. This represents a 25% fall in the derelict land area since 2001. The level of reclamation was close to the peak of 2005-06 at over 230 hectares and is concentrated in the Major Urban Areas. Only a small proportion was reclaimed for soft end uses, although the bulk of this took place in the Major Urban Areas.

Figure ER8: Derelict Land in the West Midlands, April 2008

(This figure is numbered QE1 in the full AMR)



Source: Regional Derelict Land Survey 2008

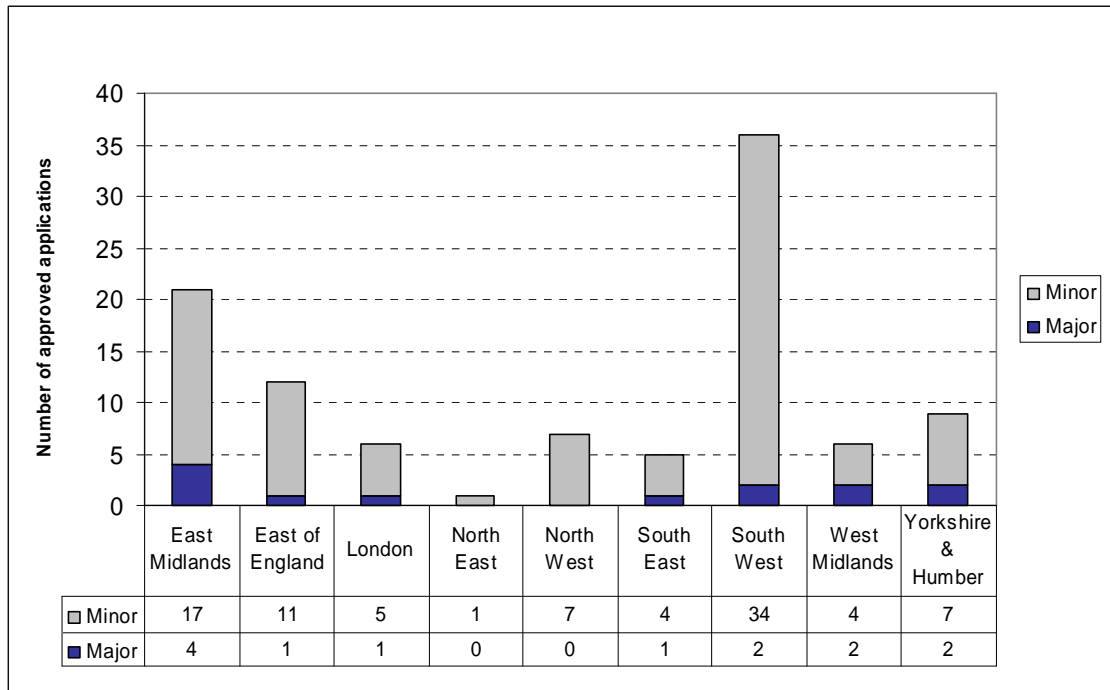
Note: 2005-2006 data used for Wolverhampton

The declining trend in Woodland Grant Scheme planting is continuing, with only 91 hectares planted in 2007-08, mostly concentrated outside the Major Urban Areas in Staffordshire. A review of the indicators for forestry and woodlands, to reflect their wider benefits, will be undertaken during the Phase 3 Revision.

The trend toward a reduction in planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flood risk grounds has been reinstated with six permissions, including two for major developments, the 3rd lowest for English regions. This follows the rise in permissions in 2005/06. The latest data is evidence that planning authorities have taken flood risk into account, although liaison with the Agency on decisions and to ensure its concerns are addressed needs improvement.

Figure ER9: Planning Applications Approved by LPAs contrary to Environment Agency Advice 2006/07

(This figure is numbered QE4 in the full AMR)



Source: Environment Agency

The number of listed buildings and scheduled monument structures at risk in the Region has fallen again to 172, well below the figure for 2001. The Region still has one of the highest proportions of listed buildings at risk, and more than a third are in English Heritage’s highest priority category. The new data on the Heritage at Risk Register shows a high proportion of scheduled monuments and registered battlefields in the Region at risk.

The Region has seen the largest single year improvement in the quality of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with 76% by area in favourable or recovering condition. SSSI represent only a very small proportion of the total area of the Region and are concentrated outside the Major Urban Areas. Data on wild bird populations shows a decrease in farmland bird species in the Region and relative to other regions, although there was no significant change for woodland species.

The data on permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on water quality grounds showed improvement, with only 25 applications attracting an objection. Where permissions were granted subsequently, the Agency’s objections were withdrawn or satisfied in all nine cases.

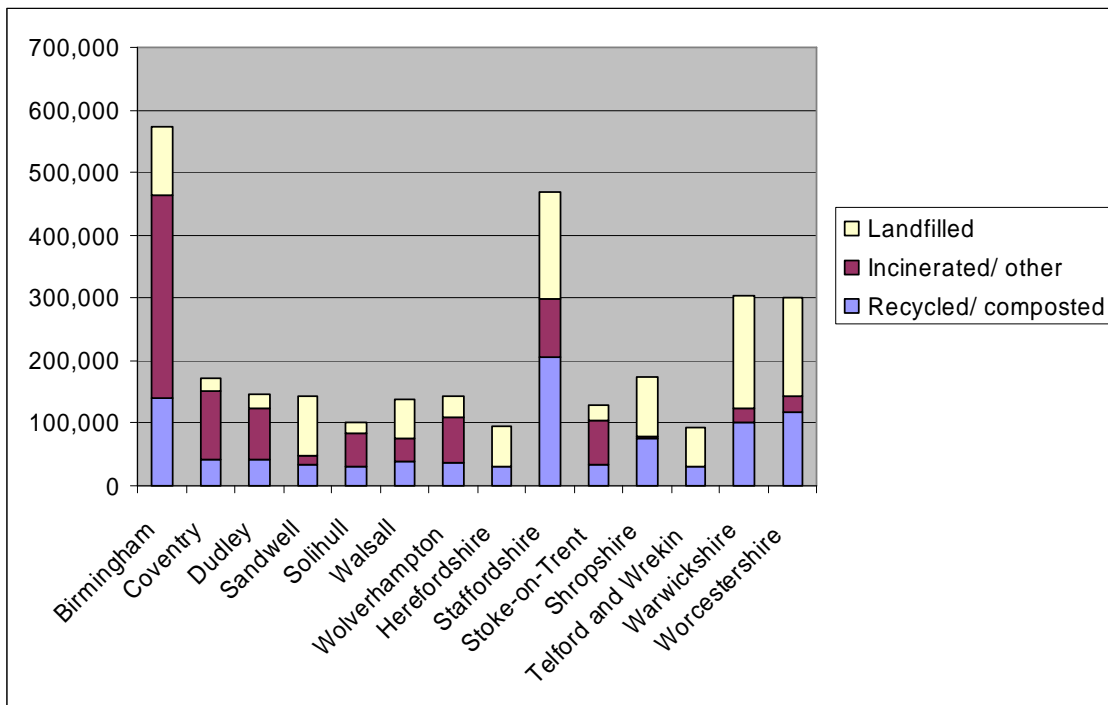
According to nationally derived data, there has been a modest increase in renewable energy generating capacity in the Region from 165MW to 182MW since 2003. Even the modest target in the Regional Energy Strategy is likely

to be challenging, and may depend on the introduction of a requirement for a proportion of energy needs of new development to be provided from on-site renewable sources.

The trend toward the reduction in the sales of sand and gravel in the Region continued in 2005, with levels close to the sub-regional apportionment. Sales of crushed rock are significantly below the apportionment, reflecting a shift in operators’ strategies and a general downturn in the market.

Although there is only limited new data this year, arisings from municipal waste in the Region have stabilised, whilst industrial and commercial waste production has fallen. There has been a 30% reduction in waste deposited at landfill sites, reflecting the target to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill, and to manage waste further up the waste hierarchy. Targets for increasing the recycling of waste remain challenging.

Figure ER10: Methods of Municipal Waste Management 2007/08
 (This figure is numbered WD1 in the full AMR)



The environmental indicators are linked closely to the policies in the Quality of the Environment chapter of the WMRSS. However, a number of other policies influence the quality of the region’s environment, and are covered elsewhere in this report. These include policies promoting urban and rural renaissance, the re-use of land for housing, the location of retail and office development in centres, and travel awareness, and seeking to reduce the need to travel and encourage more sustainable modes of transport.

Policy No.	Description	Progress towards Policy			
		Statistical Indicators		Implementation Processes	
		2007	2008	2007	2008
QE2	Restoring Degraded Areas and Managing and Creating High Quality New Environments	G	G	G	G
QE8	Forestry and Woodlands	G	G	G	G
	Development and Flood Risk	R	G	A	A
QE5	Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment	G	G	A	A
QE7	Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the Region's Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources	A	G	G	G
QE9	The Water Environment	A	G	A	G
EN1	Energy Generation	R	R	G	G
M2	Minerals - Aggregates				
M3	Minerals - The Use of Alternative Sources of Materials	G	G	G	G
WD1	Targets for Waste Management in the Region	A	A	G	G
WD2	The Need for Waste Management Facilities by Sub-region				

Transport and Accessibility

The West Midlands is at the centre of the national road and rail network. This gives rise to competing demands between local, regional, national and international movements of people and goods. Therefore, it is important to balance the needs and interests of an extremely diverse range of users. Progress in the last year shows that:

Policy T1 – Developing Accessibility and Mobility within the Region to Support the Spatial Strategy

Policy T2 – Reducing the Need to Travel

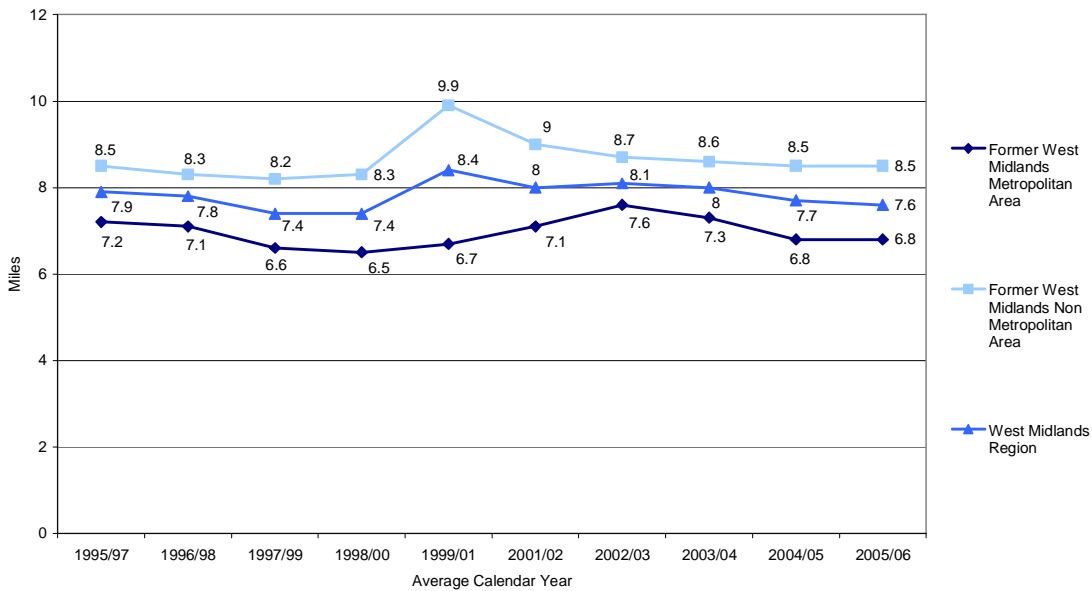
In the Former Metropolitan Area¹, the vast majority (83%) of new housing sites are located within a 10 minute walk of a bus or Metro station with a 20 minute frequency. However, in the Rest of the Region, only one-quarter (25%) of sites have the same level of accessibility. Levels of accessibility to a

¹ The Former Metropolitan Area covers the following local authorities: Wolverhampton, Walsall, Birmingham, Sandwell, Solihull, Dudley, Coventry.

60 minute frequency service are much higher in both the Former Metropolitan Area (97%) and the Rest of the Region (62%). Whilst many of the Region's new residential sites are being built in areas that have good public transport links, greater effort is needed to improve access to bus services with higher frequencies (20 minutes) in areas outside the Metropolitan Area. Unfortunately, the vast majority of bus services in these areas run at less frequent intervals.

Figure ER11: Average West Midlands Commuting Distance
 (This figure is numbered T1 in the full AMR)

Figure T2: Average West Midlands Commuting Distance



Source: National Travel Survey special tabulation November 2007. Years averaged to increase sub-regional sample (prior to 2002 three year average) Average for 2000/01 not available. 2001/02 WMRSS Base Year extrapolated.

In 2007/08, almost three-quarters (74%) of schools in the Region had a School Travel Plan (STP). This exceeded the national milestone target of 70% and national achievement figure of 69%. Over half (50.7%) of children in the West Midlands aged between 5 and 16 years walked to school. This will make a significant contribution towards the implementation of Policies T2 and T4, and will also have longer-term benefits, teaching children to make sustainable travel choices whilst having wider policy impacts such as promoting healthy lifestyles and tackling climate change.

Data relating to the location of residential and employment completions indicates that both residential and employment locational policies are progressing, particularly with regard to residential completions (and commitments) in Major Urban Areas (MUAs). The proportion of employment completions in MUAs increased to 43.4% following a sharp fall in 2006/07. Overall, the trend remains positive in terms of MUAs attracting the largest proportion of employment completions, compared to other settlement types.

The latest data from Department for Transport (DfT) shows that car travel comprises over four-fifths (80.5%) of the total mileage undertaken in the Former Metropolitan Area and 89.7% of the total mileage in the Rest of the Region. Such considerations highlight the importance of pursuing the

locational policies contained within the WMRSS in order to limit overall mileage growth.

Policy T3 – Walking and Cycling

Average mileage walked reduced from being relatively static between 1998 and 2005 at approximately 175 miles, to 165 miles in 2005/06. This is the lowest value of all the English regions and nearly one-fifth (18%) lower than the average for England. If this declining regional trend is not reversed, it will have significant implications for Policy T3.

The regional cycling index shows that between 2005 and 2007 cycling levels increased by 5.0%, meaning that progress is being made regarding the implementation of the cycling element of Policy T3. Further increases in cycling levels should be achieved over the next few years as both Shrewsbury, and Stoke-on-Trent have been awarded Cycling Town status, and have been tasked with generating a 100% increase in cycling by 2011.

Encouraging walking and cycling will contribute to the achievement of outcomes in a number of wider policy areas, including climate change, health, as well as offering real quality of life benefits.

Policy T4 – Promoting Travel Awareness

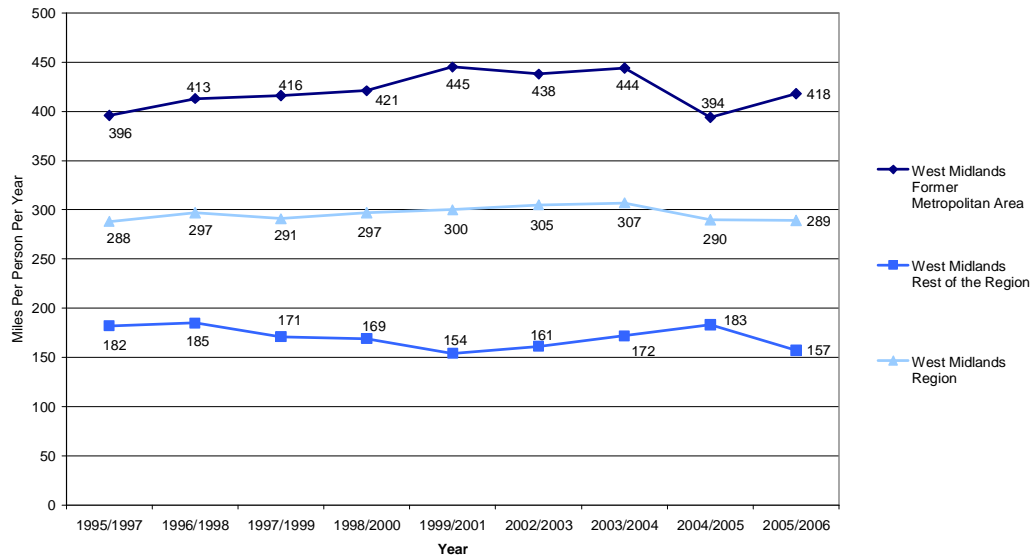
All local authorities within the Region are pursuing the promotion of sustainable transport. However, this will not be achieved in the short-term and will require continuing emphasis and encouragement from national, regional and local partners and stakeholders.

Policy T5 – Public Transport

Patronage data indicates that overall bus usage between 2001/02 and 2007/08 fell in the Region by 8.8% (40 million). In comparison, the rest of England (excluding London) remained static. However, comparisons of local authority patronage data for 2006/07 and 2007/08 shows that patronage in the West Midlands has increased by 2,317,123 passengers or 0.6%. Whilst this increase can potentially be attributed to the introduction of the national free concessionary fare scheme in April 2006, the target remains 'not on track'.

Figure ER12: Miles travelled per person per annum in the West Midlands by Local Bus as a Main Mode

(This figure is numbered T4 in the full AMR)



Source: National Travel Survey special tabulation November 2007. Years are averaged to increase sub-regional sample (prior to 2002, three year average). Average for 2000/01 not available. 2001/02 WMRSS Base Year extrapolated.

National Travel Survey data indicates that access levels to bus services have been relatively stable in recent years ranging from 92% in 1995/97 to 89% in 2006/07 of households within 13 minutes' walk to a service with at least an hourly frequency. Regional monitoring of accessibility levels to public transport highlights that more than twice as many people in the Former Metropolitan Area have access to a 20 minute public transport service compared to those in the Rest of the Region.

Despite Metro patronage increasing from 4.9 million in 2006/07 to 5.0 million in 2007/08, the WMRSS target remains 'not on track'. To achieve any significant increase in Metro patronage further expansion of the network would be required. In the absence of this a revised target has been proposed in the Partial Revision of the WMRSS.

During 2006/07 the index of rail patronage for the Region increased by 73% to 173, compared to 69% (169) for England as a whole. Since the beginning of the WMRSS period, rail patronage has increased by 33.1% in the Region compared to 30% in England. This represents a positive contribution towards the achievement of Policy T5.

Policy T6 – Strategic Park and Ride

The target to increase the number of car parking spaces at metropolitan rail stations will not be fully achieved on current performance. In metropolitan areas, local authorities will need to work with Network Rail, Virgin Trains and the private sector in order to identify further opportunities to increase the number of car parking spaces at rail stations. This will take many years to

realise and is unlikely to be achieved by 2011. However, now that data for the remaining relevant indicators has been collected, progress towards the implementation of Policy T6 can begin to be fully assessed from 2008/09 onwards. Further in April 2007, Network Rail announced proposals to significantly increase car parking at a number of rail stations in the Region by creating an additional 1,869 spaces. Many of these proposals are likely to be completed by autumn 2009.

Policy T7 – Car Parking Standards and Management

Following changes in the national core indicators and a shortage of local data, it has not been possible to assess progress towards the targets set out in the current WMRSS. However, baseline data has been collected for the new indicators and associated targets proposed as part of the Partial Revision of the WMRSS. These include the number of parking spaces at rail stations, and strategic park and ride facilities. Progress will be reported in future Annual Monitoring Reports.

Policy T8 – Demand Management

Between 2001 and 2007, the Region experienced lower increases in overall traffic levels (7.7%) than England as a whole (8.7%). Whilst this indicates that the Region is making progress towards limiting the demand for travel, data contained within Policy T9 suggests that more work is still needed. It is crucial for the Region's local authorities to continue to limit traffic growth in order to minimise congestion on the Region's busiest roads.

Policy T9 – The Management and Development of National and Regional Transport Networks

The average peak period speed of traffic within the Region (on 'A' and 'B' class roads) is between 25 mph and 29 mph, whilst average motorway speeds between the peaks stayed the same at 52 mph. Average delay of traffic for the entire Region indicates that 27% of the sampled road network has a delay greater than 30% of average free flow link time, with 52% of the sampled road network in the Former Metropolitan Area congested, compared to 19% in the Rest of the Region. Currently no conclusions can be drawn from the data relating to Policy T9 as it is the first year of data collection. Progress towards the implementation of Policy T9 can begin to be fully assessed from 2008/09 onwards.

Policy T10 - Freight

The publication of the Regional Freight Strategy demonstrates a significant step towards having a regional approach to freight issues in support of the WMRSS. A number of new freight indicators and targets have been proposed as part of the Partial Revision of the WMRSS, and progress will be reported on these in future Annual Monitoring Reports.

Policy T11 - Airports

Birmingham International Airport (BIA) achieved its WMRSS target in 2005, and has subsequently developed three further targets. These targets are particularly ambitious and will require continuing efforts by BIA and their partners, to encourage greater use of public transport.

Policy T12 – Priorities for Investment

The majority of the schemes outlined in Policy T12 are ongoing and progress continues to be made on an individual scheme basis. The region has recently published its “Regional Transport Priorities Action Plan” (http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/Images/Regional%20Transport%20Priorities_080109_tcm9-16564.pdf) and is working to develop its second round of Regional Funding Advice. However, the Region has yet to witness the step-change in travel behaviour that it aspires to..

Summary

The transport policies contained within the WMRSS largely seek to reverse long established national and local trends, such as increasing car ownership and declining bus patronage. This approach is consistent with national policy. For the majority of these policies, whilst progress is being made, the Region’s efforts are failing to be evidenced by the step-change in both residents’ and businesses’ travel patterns.

Whilst several indicators showed progress towards the WMRSS’s transport objectives during 2007/08, the majority (where data was available) showed little or no progress. It is disappointing to see that those transport indicators, which can be defined as being ‘significant’ to the WMRSS (public transport and walking) are ‘not on track’. Whilst several of the specified WMRSS indicators currently have no data available, considerable progress in creating alternatives and collecting baseline data has been made during 2007/08, and progress on many of these will be reported in future Annual Monitoring Reports. The recently published West Midlands Regional Priorities Action Plan provides a new opportunity to improve delivery.

Currently the Region will struggle to meet the majority of its transport targets. Achievement of these targets will only come from the full implementation and promotion of the RSS and Economic Strategy by the Region’s local authorities, their partners, and the general public.

Policy No.	Description	Progress towards Policy			
		Statistical Indicators		Implementation Processes	
		2007	2008	2007	2008
T1	Developing Accessibility and Mobility within the Region to Support the Spatial Strategy	A	G	A	G
T2	Reducing the Need to Travel	A	G	G	G
T3	Walking and Cycling	G	G	G	G
T4	Promoting Travel Awareness	G	G	G	G
T5	Public Transport	R	R	A	R
T6	Strategic Park and Ride	R	A	A	A
T7	Car Parking Standards and Management	A	A	A	A
T8	Demand Management	A	A	A	A
T9	The Management and Development of National and Regional Transport Networks	A	A	G	A
T10	Freight	A	A	G	A
T11	Airports	G	A	G	G
T12	Priorities for Investment	A	A	A	A

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