West Midlands Regional Assembly

Agenda Item 5c

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Regional Planning and Environment Executive

23 February 2010

Regional Spatial Strategy - Annual Monitoring Report

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To receive a presentation of the key findings of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy 2009 Annual Monitoring Report. A copy of the Draft Foreword and Executive Summary of the document is attached as Appendix 1 to this paper.

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 CLG (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 CLG by 28th February 2010;
ii. **agree and sign-off** the document prior to printing;
iii. **delegate** the sign off of any amendments arising from RPEE to the Chair of RSS Coordination Group and the WMRA Policy Director.

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 2010 AMR therefore considers monitoring data in respect of the period April 2008-March 2009. 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 Following the success of last years document and how it withstood the scrutiny subjected to it via the Phase 2 Examination in Public a similar approach has been taken to last year 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 it will only be possible to submit to Government Office a PDF version of the document on 28th February (thereby satisfying the statutory requirement). The printed version will follow in March 2010.

4. Detail

4.1 Consequent to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act (2009) this year's RSS AMR will be the final document of the series. Next year's AMR will be a different document that considers progress towards the single Strategy for the West Midlands. It has therefore been decided to mark this by printing the entire document rather than the shorter, Executive Summary-based document of the past two editions. As before the document will be accompanied by a CD-ROM which will contain not only the printed elements but also the data tables etc that underpin the analysis contained in the publication.

4.2 The Final Draft version of the 2009 RSS AMR, which reflects comments made at the RSS Coordination Group (3rd February 2010) is available via the WMRA website

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 2009

FOREWORD and EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOREWORD

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the 2009 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which covers the period April 2008 – March 2009, the sixth prepared since the publication of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS). This run of six successful Annual Monitoring Reports is a proud tradition and I believe this document will be of value to you in your work.

I should perhaps explain at the outset one potential complication of which most of you will already be aware. At the time of preparation of this report, the RSS Phase Two Revision had reached a critical point with the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes anticipated in February 2010. This document has had to be finalised in advance of that Proposed Changes document.

In preparing this AMR we have, wherever possible, utilised the RSS Phase 2 Preferred Option as the reference point. This, combined with the impact of the current economic climate on development rates, has highlighted the massive challenge to the Region, its Local Authorities and all partners in implementing the Strategy in the future and delivering the necessary higher development rates.

It is encouraging that this AMR provides continuing evidence of progress towards complementary Urban and Rural Renaissance. In terms of population change key findings are:

- Between 2007 and 2008, the growth rate in the population in urban areas was higher than in rural areas for the first time since 1981.
- Furthermore, the number of people moving from urban areas to other parts of the region was lower than in any year since 1999.
- The rate of growth of population in rural areas is beginning to stabilise, though the ageing population and out-migration of young adults continues to be evident

Latest data (2007) also indicates some positive signs of changes which are complementary to the aims of urban and rural renaissance relating to employment. In particular:

- The range and number of jobs in rural areas has increased since 2001 permitting greater self containment,
- In urban areas, although there has been some reduction in employment the contribution of knowledge intensive industries has increased;
- The qualification gap between urban and rural areas has reduced for young people, with a continuation in positive trends.

The findings referred to above do suggest that the complementary Urban and Rural Renaissance policy drivers required by the RSS are now having a real and positive impact on our Region. It is encouraging that real progress is now being evidenced. This would seem to suggest that the positive view of the RSS emphasis on complementary Urban and Rural Renaissance themes expressed in the RSS Phase 2 Panel Report (September 2009) were well founded. This is supported by the conclusion of the Panel Report:

> *"We conclude that the spatial strategy makes the right balance between providing a strong focus on MUAs and recognising the needs and growth role of the region's other main settlements, while at the same time giving a firm steer to development in support of urban renaissance' (para 2.57)"*

The Annual Monitoring Report paints a rather mixed picture more generally, with strong indications that further progress over the next few years is likely to be impeded by the impact on development of the economic downturn. Data for 2008/9 demonstrates that:

- Whilst there was an increase in the proportion of net housing completions in Major Urban Areas, the overall total for the Region showed a 19% fall on 2007/8 and was 30% below the Preferred Option target; the shortfall was more marked for MUAs.
- The rate of employment land completions overall and the proportion in MUAs remained high, though it is worth noting that many of these schemes commenced prior to the recession.
- There were no major retail completions in 2008/9, with overall retail development remaining at a very low level.
- Activity in the office sector increased and the proportion of out-of-centre completions increased significantly.
- Development levels in the hotel and leisure sectors rose in 2008/9 and there is a healthy development pipeline in both sectors.

Some other positive aspects this year include:

- Affordable housing completions closer to target;
- Use of land continues to be increasingly efficient; and
- There has been further progress towards quality of environment policies.

It is clear from the AMR that a number of challenges face the West Midlands in the coming years. In particular:

- The severity of the economic challenge facing the West Midlands in comparison to other regions. This challenge has been compounded by the current recession;
- To meet the higher levels of housing now required, a dramatic increase in the rate of completions will be needed when the economic climate improves.
- Our Transport policies seek to reverse long established trends: the evidence provided by the Report demonstrates that the region is struggling to meet the majority of its transport targets. These will only be achieved by the full implementation and promotion of the RSS and Economic Strategy by the Region's Local Authorities, their partners and the general public.

This is the last AMR before the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (LDEDCA) is fully implemented on 1st April 2009 and the consequent wind up of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. At this time of change, the successful publication of the AMR once again represents a considerable achievement by the Assembly. I would like to record our appreciation to all those involved, particularly the authors and the local authorities and other partners who undertook the extensive data collection required to support this activity. Our tradition of working together has enabled us to build up the reputation as one of the best, if not the best, of the English Regions when it comes to monitoring activity. That longitudinal tradition bodes well for whatever future arrangements may come into operation

From April 2010, West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy will be merged with the other principle strategies – particularly the Regional Economic and Housing Strategies – to form the Strategy for the West Midlands. Annual monitoring will continue to be required by Government . We are currently working with partners to assess the monitoring requirements of the new system and to devise and implement the new arrangements. We shall advise you of these new arrangements as soon as we are able.

I commend this report to you.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – KEY FINDINGS

Population

The population of the region as a whole has increased steadily since 2001 (see figure 3.2). It has grown by around 130,000 between 2001 and 2007 and the latest estimate of its size is 5.41 million (2008). Within the region, the population of the metropolitan area has also shown an increase since 2001 and now stands at 2.62 million.

In the last year, the growth rate in the population in urban areas has been higher than in rural areas for the first time since at least 1981. This is driven partly by an increasing birth rate, particularly in urban areas, but also by a slowing in the traditional migration from urban to rural parts of the region and to other (neither urban nor rural) parts of the region. The number of people moving from urban areas both to rural and to other parts of the region in the year to mid-2008 was lower than in any year since 1999.

Progress towards Urban and Rural Renaissance

Latest data continue to show that the region is progressing well towards the achievement of rural renaissance. The total population in rural areas continues to grow but the rate of growth is beginning to stabilise. According to the Place Survey, 86% of rural residents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Despite this, the traditional concerns of an ageing population and the out-migration of young adults continued to be reflected in the data. For example, 28% of the rural population are 60 years of age or older compared to only 21% of the urban population (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4).

There are also encouraging signs that the range of employment opportunities available in rural areas is improving. The number of jobs in rural areas has increased more rapidly than in the rest of the region, so that in 2007, there were 69 jobs per 100 working age residents compared to just 64 in 2001. More of these jobs were in knowledge intensive industries, up by 5 percentage points since 2001, faster growth than in the rest of the region. Despite this, earnings for those working in most rural areas are still significantly lower than those of people living there but working elsewhere.

The picture for urban renaissance policies is less clear but there are some encouraging signs. The reduction in out-migration from urban areas, now at its lowest level for nearly a decade, is encouraging, especially as movement between urban areas has increased over time. In 2008, 72% of people moving to urban areas were from other urban areas in the region; a 5 percentage point increase from 1999. This suggests that people are more likely to actively choose to live in urban areas, although the effect of the changing housing market conditions is unclear.

The number of jobs in urban areas has fallen slightly, but a higher share of jobs was in knowledge intensive industries. The number of new businesses starting in urban areas was much lower than in rural areas, although the growth in the total business stock was similar in urban and rural areas. Foreign inward investment has increased year on year and is mainly focused on urban areas.

The West Midlands continues to see a positive trend in qualification attainment, particularly amongst young people, with the gap between urban and rural areas also narrowing. However, in terms of qualification levels in the working age population in urban areas there has been little real change between 2005 and 2008. In contrast, qualification levels have improved significantly in rural areas. This suggests that out migration, whilst reduced in level, may still be concentrated amongst those with higher levels of qualification.

Communities for the Future

Performance this year is reflective not only of the economic downturn but also of the fact that the targets being used are considerably higher than those that have been used for the last few years. In 2008/9, the total outturn for net completions was below the Preferred Option proposal by 30% (see Diagram CF1 at the beginning of the Communities for the Future chapter); this represents a decrease from the level in the previous year, when the shortfall was 13%. Net completions in 2008/9 in fact showed a 19% fall on the equivalent figure in the previous year, which suggests that the deterioration of the economy over the last couple of years is now having a real impact on the numbers of additional homes being built. This has coincided with the introduction of the Preferred Option housing targets for monitoring: at the regional level, these targets represent an increase of 41% on those in the adopted RSS. Cumulatively, net completions were 17% below the target; the cumulative figure has been maintained to some extent by the higher level of completions recorded in 2006/7 and 2007/8.

Although the 'Communities for the Future' chapter can only be indicative of performance, due to the stage that has been reached in the current refresh of the RSS, comparing this year's data with the targets in the Preferred Option reveals the scale of the challenge presented by the proposed higher housing targets. The regional housing trajectory (see Figure CF1) shows how, based on committed land supply at April 2009, the rate of completions will need to be dramatically stepped up towards the end of the plan period in order for the region to meet its overall target. The trajectory indicates that most local authorities do not yet see significant prospects for sustained higher levels of housebuilding, following the recession, in the period up to 2026.

Although overall performance this year has struggled to meet the new proposals, regionally, the level of affordable housing completions, though still 15% below the minimum target contained in the Preferred Option, was closer to target than it was in the previous year. In 2007/8, the outturn was 27% below target.

The nature of housing development – that is, the type of housing being built – has shifted a little again this year, in that the proportion of completions that were flats has pulled slightly ahead of that for houses. The high proportion of flats that has been recorded this year may have been brought about by builders now completing work on flat developments that were already underway, and this may therefore change markedly in the next few years. The rise in the proportion of completions that were flats occurred this year both within and outside the MUA. The housing need that is being fulfilled needs to be considered alongside the number of completions.

In 2008/9, performance in the West Midlands Region was above Preferred Option targets for the proportions of both completions and commitments on previously developed land. The proportion of completions and commitments on greenfield land has fallen slightly this year. With the increased targets for housing provision outlined in the Preferred Option, considerable effort will need to be made to maximise the contribution from the re-use of land and buildings in the years to come.

Policy No.	Description	Progress towards Policy			
		Statistical Indicators		Implementation Processes	
		2008	2009	2008	2009
CF1 **CF2** CF3	Housing within the Major Urban Areas Housing beyond the Major Urban Areas Levels and Distribution of Housing Development	R	R	R	R
CF4	The Reuse of Land and Buildings for Housing	G	G	G	G
CF5	Delivering Affordable Housing & Mixed Communities	G	G	G	G

(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

The rate of employment land completions in the Region remained high in spite of the current recession (see Figure PA1). It is possible that the effects of the recession had not fully filtered through to the market during 2008/09 as a high proportion of schemes in this year's report began construction before the recession hit, but nevertheless the high rate of development is encouraging. Brownfield sites remained the main focus for development.

The supply of employment land within the Region continues to decline and will need to be monitored to ensure an adequate supply of land is maintained.

Completions within the High Technology Corridors increased during 2008/9 whereas completions in Regeneration Zones declined but remained at average levels. The North Black Country and South Staffordshire Zone saw an increase in completions which is encouraging, as is the increase in supply of land in the Regeneration Zones.

Completions on RIS and supply/completions on Regional Logistic Sites are low and there is a need to identify additional provision to increase supply. Issues relating to regionally significant employment sites are being addressed through the RSS Revision.

Completions and supply of employment land outside of the hierarchy of settlements continues to decline in line with the objectives of the RSS.

There were no major retail completions in 2008/9, and retail development remained at a very low level. The percentage of out-of-centre completions increased again, but as a proportion of a very low total. In-centre schemes continue to dominate the pipeline, but as no major schemes are currently under construction, this is unlikely to be converted into completions in the near future.

There were no large-scale out-of-centre retail completions (i.e. more than 10,000 sq.m.gross floorspace) and so the policy appears to be being effectively implemented.

Activity increased in the office sector and the proportion of out-of-centre development rose significantly. The office development pipeline also increased with the proportion of in-centre commitments showing a small increase to 38% from 36% last year (see Figure PA9). These figures continue to be heavily influenced by Birmingham and there is a need to increase supply in other strategic centres.

Development levels in the hotel and leisure sectors rose in 2008/9 and there is a healthy development pipeline in both sectors. This is particularly true of the hotel sector, where the pipeline increased by about a third.

Policy No.	Description	Progress towards Policy			
		Statistical Indicators		Implementation Processes	
		2008	2009	2008	2009
PA1 PA6	Prosperity for All Portfolio of Employment Land	G	G	G	A
UR1	Implementing Urban Renaissance	G	A	G	G
PA2 RR2	Urban Regeneration Zones The Rural Regeneration Zone	G G	A G	G G	A G
PA3	High Technology Corridors	G	A	G	A
PA6 PA7 PA8 PA9	Portfolio of Employment Land Regional Investment Sites Major Investment Sites Regional Logistic Sites	G A A R	G A A R	G A A R	A A A R
PA10	Tourism and Culture	G	G	G	G
PA11	The Network of Town and City Centres (Retail/Offices)	A/A	A/A	A/A	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 (see Figures QE1 to QE3) and in March 2009 was just over 2,140 hectares, of which over two-thirds is outside the Major Urban Areas. This represents a 33% fall in the derelict land area since 2001, and a 23% fall since 2006. Although the amount of derelict land reclaimed fell to 179 hectares, the level remains higher than in 2006/07. A quality audit of sites in Telford & Wrekin resulted in the removal of a further 90 hectares from the stock. Only 27 hectares was reclaimed for soft end uses, such as open space and woodlands, with over half the total in Telford & Wrekin.

The declining trend in Woodland Grant Scheme planting was arrested in 2007-08, and there was a marginal increase in area to 187 hectares in 2008/09, mostly concentrated outside the Major Urban Areas in Warwickshire and Worcestershire. However, no new woodland planting took place on derelict land.

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 maintained in 2007/08 with 5 permissions, including 2 for major developments, the 4th 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, and shows that liaison with the Agency on decisions and to ensure its concerns are addressed has improved.

The number of listed buildings and scheduled monument structures at risk in the Region has fallen again to 166, 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 for the Region shows 20% of scheduled monuments, over 7% of conservation areas and a similar proportion of parks and gardens to be at risk.

The Region has seen the largest single year improvement in the quality of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) from 76% in 2008 to 84% in 2009 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. In an attempt to address this deficiency, data on wild bird populations is included as a good indicator of the broad state of wildlife and countryside. The latest data shows a further decrease in farmland bird species in the Region and relative to other regions, with a marginal fall in woodland and all bird species.

The data on permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on water quality grounds showed improvement, with only 11 applications attracting an objection. Where permissions were granted subsequently, the Agency's objections were withdrawn or satisfied in all 4 cases.

According to nationally derived data, there has been a modest increase in renewable energy generating capacity in the Region from 165MW in 2003 to 182MW in 2008. Data on electricity consumption for the region for 2008 suggests that 2.7% comes from renewable sources. Even the modest target in the Regional Energy Strategy of 5% from renewable energy sources will prove unattainable. Progress will depend on the introduction of a requirement for a proportion of energy needs of new development to be provided from on-site or neighbourhood renewable sources.

Sales of sand and gravel in the Region in 2007 were similar to the previous year (see Figure M1), 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. There remains a need for up to date data on secondary and recycled materials sold as aggregates, and to maximise this source as an alternative to primary mineral resources.

Although there is only limited new data for 2008/09, arisings from municipal waste in the Region have stabilised, whilst industrial and commercial waste production has fallen. There has been a 41% reduction in waste deposited at landfill sites since 2001/02, reflecting the target to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill, and to manage waste further up the waste hierarchy. Planning permissions have been granted for substantial amounts of new waste management capacity across the Region, in line with the identified gap in provision. Targets for increasing the recycling of waste remain challenging.

The environmental indicators are linked closely to the policies in the Quality of the Environment chapter of the RSS. 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, including seeking to reduce the need to travel and encourage more sustainable modes of transport.

Policy No.	Description	Progress towards Policy			
		Statistical Indicators		Implementation Processes	
		2008	2009	2008	2009
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	G	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	G	A	G	G
QE9	The Water Environment	G	G	G	G
EN1	Energy Generation	R	R	G	G
M2 **M3**	Minerals - Aggregates Minerals - The Use of Alternative Sources of Materials	G	G	G	G
WD1 **WD2**	Targets for Waste Management in the Region The Need for Waste Management Facilities by Sub-region	A	A	G	G

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 and Policy T2 – Reducing the Need to Travel

In the Former Metropolitan Area[1], the vast majority (84%) 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, whilst the number of sites with the same level of accessibility has increased from 25% in 2007/08 levels still only equate to 31%. Levels of accessibility to a 60 minute frequency service are much higher in both the Former Metropolitan Area (97%) and the Rest of the

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

Region (66%). Whilst many of the Region's new residential sites are being built in areas that have good public transport links, further work 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.

In 2008/09 86% of schools in the Region had a School Travel Plan (STP). This exceeded the national achievement figure of 81% and will make a significant contribution towards the implementation of Policies T2 and T4. However, focus is now shifting to help schools implement, monitor and update STPs. Modal shift continues to be the main measure of success and in 2008/09 whilst over half (50.7%) of children in the West Midlands aged between 5 and 16 years walked to school disappointingly only 1.3% cycled. It is hoped that this work will have long-term benefits, teaching children to make sustainable travel choices whilst having wider policy impacts supporting local and national education, health and sustainability priorities including tackling child obesity through physical inactivity, reducing carbon emissions 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 residential completions is increasing in MUAs and currently stands at 49.1% of total residential completions in 2008/09. The proportion of employment completions in MUAs fell slightly to 36.2% following the sharp increase from 30.0% in 2006/07 to 43.4% in 2007/08. This decline could be due to the depressed economic market currently being experienced. However, 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 nearly four-fifths (77.9%) of the total mileage undertaken in the Former Metropolitan Area and 87.3% 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 162 miles in 2007/08. This is the lowest value of all the English regions and nearly one-sixth (16%) 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 2005/06 and 2008/09 cycling levels increased by 21.1%, 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 and quality of life benefits. For most people, walking and cycling provides the best overall physical activity for maintaining and improving fitness and health, and as such, contributes towards the national fight against obesity and heart disease. Furthermore, replacing car trips with walking and cycling can make a positive contribution to reducing carbon emissions.

Policy T4 – Promoting Travel Awareness
All local authorities within the Region are pursuing the promotion of sustainable transport and smarter choices. 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 declined in the Region by 8.8% (40 million) (See Figure T4). In comparison, the rest of England (excluding London) remained static. On a positive note comparison of local authority patronage data for 2006/07 and 2008/09 shows that patronage in the West Midlands has increased by 4,945,532 passengers or 1.21%. It is likely that the national free concessionary fare scheme has had an impact on patronage levels since 2006/07 onwards. In addition, there are early indications that the current economic recession and recent high fuel prices may also have had a slight impact on patronage levels. However, the target remains 'not on track'.

National Travel Survey data indicates that access levels to bus services in the Region have been relatively stable in recent years ranging from 92% in 1995/97 to 89% in 2007/08 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 nearly twice the proportion of people in the Former Metropolitan Area have access to a 20 minute public transport service compared to those in the Rest of the Region.

Metro patronage in 2008/09 remained at the same level as that in 2007/08 (5.0 million). Consequently the WMRSS target remains 'not on track'. To achieve any significant increase in Metro patronage further expansion of the network would be required. Work continues on developing a business case for the expansion of the network. However, a more realistic target has been proposed as part of the Partial Revision of the WMRSS.

During 2007/08 the index of rail patronage for the Region increased by 83% to 183, which is the same as the level for England as a whole. Since the beginning of the WMRSS period, rail patronage has increased in both the Region and in England by 40.8% respectively. This is seen to be a positive contribution towards the achievement of Policy T5.

Policy T6 – Strategic Park and Ride
There have been increases in the number of car parking spaces (1,064 spaces) at metropolitan rail stations and also rail stations in the Rest of the Region (650 spaces) during the last year. These increases are the result of West Coast Mainline Modernisation Works undertaken by Network Rail. However, the targets to increase the number of car parking spaces at metropolitan rail stations and rail stations in the Rest of the Region are not 'on-track' to be fully achieved on current performance. Local authorities will need to continue to work with Network Rail, Train Operating Companies 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.

The number of Park and Ride facilities that serve town centres has not shown any increase during 2008/09. To progress this target further will require the construction of new facilities and the costs and time-scales to deliver such schemes mean that this target is unlikely to be achieved by 2011.

Positive progress has been made during 2008/09 towards the Strategic Park and Ride target (an additional 2,000 car parking spaces by 2011) in the absence of any newly built facilities. This has been through the identification of an additional facility (Stoke-on-Trent Rail Station) which now meets the Strategic Park and Ride criteria and the increase in car-parking capacity at Birmingham International Station. However, no further improvement works or new facilities are planned before 2011 and it is, therefore, unlikely that this target will be realised in the near future.

Policy T7 – Car Parking Standards and Management

Following changes in the national core indicators and appropriate local data not being available it has not been possible to assess progress towards the implementation of Policy T7. However, new indicators and associated targets have been proposed as part of the Partial Revision of the WMRSS, and include the number of parking spaces at rail stations and strategic park and ride facilities. Progress towards these has been discussed in Policy T6.

Policy T8 – Demand Management

Between 2001 and 2008, the Region experienced lower increases in overall traffic levels (7.1%) than England as a whole (7.8%). This indicates that the Region is making progress towards limiting the demand for travel. In addition data contained within Policy T9 suggests that whilst no definitive conclusions towards the implementation of Policy T9 can be made the targets would seem to be tentatively ‘on-track’. However, It is crucial for regional partners, and 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 speeds within the Region (on ‘A’ and ‘B’ class roads) are between 25-35 mph. This was between 0-6 mph quicker than previous reported data. Average Motorway speed between the peaks was between 52-53 mph, and shows relatively little change. Average delay of traffic for the entire Region indicates that 21% of the sampled road network has a delay greater than 30% of average free flow link time compared to 27% reported in 2008. Comparisons between the two years of data indicate that the average delay for the entire Region has decreased, which suggests an improvement in congestion levels. With regards to road reliability, in the Metropolitan Area 53% of the sampled road network was considered unreliable compared to 18% in the Rest of the Region. The data suggests very little change in road reliability between the two datasets has occurred. Currently no definitive conclusions towards the implementation of Policy T9 can be made due to the relatively limited time-period for which there is available data. However, indications suggest that the targets can be classified as ‘on-track’.

Policy T10 – Freight

Calculations for average peak period HGV speeds shows that for the two years of data available very little change has occurred on the network and suggests that at the very least journeys should be reliable. Average delay of HGV traffic for the entire region indicates that 23% of the sampled road network experienced delays and congestion. With regards, to HGV road reliability, within the Former Metropolitan Area, 47% of the sampled road network was considered unreliable compared to 12% in the Rest of the Region. The development of regional freight targets in support of Policy T10 demonstrates a significant step towards identifying and tackling freight issues within the Region.

Policy T11 – Airports

During 2008/09 Birmingham International Airports' (BIA) targets all progressed positively. However, these targets are particularly ambitious and will require continuing efforts by BIA and their partners, to encourage greater use of public transport. Following the recent closure of Coventry Airport its future and business focus is uncertain. Once this becomes clear the implications in terms of Policy T11 will be assessed and incorporated within the policy as necessary.

Policy T12 – Priorities for Investment

The Region is continuing to implement Policy T12 within the context of available resources. In December 2008 the West Midlands Regional Assembly and Advantage West Midlands published the West Midlands Transport Priorities Action Plan which seeks to progress these schemes. In addition, a second round of Regional Funding Advice was submitted to Government at the end of February 2009, which covers the period 2009/2019. It is necessary that all lead authorities and their partners ensure that momentum is maintained and delivery achieved. However, it is acknowledged that this is dependent upon a number of factors included central Government support and finance.

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. At a Regional level the statistical data shows a relatively static picture overall. As a consequence, for the majority of these policies, whilst progress is being made, the Region's efforts are failing to be evidenced by a step-change in both residents' and businesses' travel patterns.

A number of indicators showed positive progress towards the WMRSS's transport objectives during 2008/09. However, the greater 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'. Historically several of the specified WMRSS indicators have had no data available. Over the last two years considerable progress has been made in creating alternatives and collecting baseline data. Progress on many of these has been able to be reported for the first time in this year's Annual Monitoring Report and this will be strengthened as trends become apparent in future Annual Monitoring Reports.

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	
		2008	2009	2008	2009
T1	Developing Accessibility and Mobility within the Region to Support the Spatial Strategy	G	G	G	G
T2	Reducing the Need to Travel	G	G	G	G
T3	Walking and Cycling	G/A	G/A	G/A	G/A
T4	Promoting Travel Awareness	G	G	G	G
T5	Public Transport	R	A/R	R	A/R
T6	Strategic Park and Ride	A	A	A	A
T7	Car Parking Standards and Management	A	A	A	A
T8	Demand Management	A	G/A	A	G
T9	The Management and Development of National and Regional Transport Networks	A	G/A	G	G
T10	Freight	A	G/A	G	G
T11	Airports	A	A	G	G
T12	Priorities for Investment	A	A	A	A