

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

**Regional Planning and Environment Executive
23 February 2010.**

Quality of the Environment and Climate Change - Information Report

1. Purpose of Report

To update the Executive on Quality of the Environment and Climate Change matters for information.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the report be noted.

3. Items for Information:-

Sub-Regional Apportionment of Aggregates Provision 2005-2020 Project

3.1 The WMRA and AWM working with the Regional Aggregates Working Party (RAWP) have commissioned consultants to prepare alternative options for the apportionment of aggregates in the West Midlands for the period 2005-2020. The options will have regard to the level of aggregate resources in the West Midlands in relation to planning and environmental considerations and population and household growth projections.

3.2 The options will be subject to an independent Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environment Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment. The Project will be completed in early 2010 and will be used to inform the Interim Policy Recommendations to the Government by March 2010.

West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework Refresh

3.3 The refresh of the Framework follows five years of implementation. This work will update the Framework to align more closely with the National Trees, Woodlands and Forestry Strategy and will lead to the development of new benefits for the trees, woodlands and forestry sector in the region.

- 3.4 The refreshed Framework has been widely discussed and developed by a number of specialised themes groups with wider consultation to key stakeholders. The new Framework will be a web based resource and will lead to the new three year rolling Delivery Plan that will be updated each year together with annual monitoring and evaluation of projects.
- 3.5 As part of the refresh economic activity was highlighted as an area for further work. An Regional Forestry Baseline Study has been produced which provides for the first time a comprehensive overview of this important sector in the West Midlands

River Basin Management Plans for Severn and Humber

- 3.6 The final drafts of the two River Basin Management Plans that cover the West Midlands have been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. This is the culmination of work to set out the pressures facing the water environment in the region and to work required up to 2015 to address them. This will fulfil the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.
- 3.7 The Frameworks set out targets for higher environment standards that will require a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities to be involved. The proposed Strategy for the West Midlands will need to take account of these new statutory plans in the future.

Consultation on draft Catchment Flood Management Plans for the Trent and Humber

- 3.8 The Environment Agency has launched a 12 week consultation on the draft catchment Flood management Plan (CFMP) for the River Trent catchment closing on the 23rd April 2010. These plans assist in helping to understand the causes, size and location of flood risk in each catchment at a strategic level. These are used to identify the appropriate approach for managing flood risk in different parts of the catchment.

Water Resources Strategy-Regional Action Plan for the Midlands Region

- 3.9 The Environment Agency has published the Regional Action Plan for the Midlands Region in late December 2009. This shows that water resources in parts of the area are already stressed and population growth and climate change will add to pressures on resources. Of concern is the large parts of the area where there is no more water available for abstraction during low flows and there are a number of locations where abstraction are causing significant environmental damage.

- 3.10 The Action Plan promotes water efficiency, calls for increased household metering, greater leakage control and promotion of high flow storage reservoirs for agriculture.

Refresh of Environment and Health –West Midlands Health and Well being Strategy

- 3.11 An update of the Environment and Health Chapter of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being facilitated by the Health Protection Agency and other health partners. A conference on the 8th March 2010 will bring together stakeholders to help inform its review and will focus on the relationship between health and pollution, green infrastructure and climate change.
- 3.12 In addition further work is underway to detail the anticipated impacts of a changing climate on health at West Midlands level using the latest 2009 climate projections.

Update of Regional Climate Change Action Plan

- 3.13 The Climate Change Panel have agreed to update the Regional Climate Change Action Plan during 2010 to take account of the Low Carbon Transition Plan and recent research into a changing climate. It is proposed that the Climate Change Office will develop a number of key cross cutting priorities that will enable partners to work together. A recent workshop highlighted priorities around the 20 Impact Investment Locations, on retrofitting, smarter working and transport, renewable energy and low carbon economy, resource efficiency and resilience and adaptation.

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