

West Midlands Regional Assembly

8 July 2009

**West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS)
Phase Three**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on consultation arrangements related to the RSS Phase Three Revision Options consultation document and the proposed process for completing the RSS Phase Three Revision.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Assembly is recommended to note:
- (a) the consultation arrangements for the RSS Phase Three Revision Options and
 - (b) arrangements for the Assembly and GOWM to review the process for taking forward the Phase Three work through either a revised RSS or single Regional Strategy following the Phase Three Options consultation.

3. Options Consultation

- 3.1 The RSS Phase Three Options consultation document was launched on 29th June 2009. The consultation period will last for seven weeks, closing on 14th August 2009.
- 3.2 The consultation document is accompanied by five Background Papers covering the Phase Three topics:
- Critical Rural Services
 - Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
 - Culture, Sport and Tourism
 - Quality of the Environment
 - Minerals Policy

- 3.3 The Options consultation document, questionnaire and Background Papers are available on the WMRA website at:

http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy/RSS_Revision/RSS_Revision_Phase_3.aspx

- 3.4 An Options consultation event has been arranged for 2nd July at the Burlington Hotel in Birmingham. There will also be a consultation event for RSS Reference Groups in Birmingham on 30th July. Sub-regional consultation events are in the process of being arranged. Bespoke consultation workshops are also being arranged with gypsy and traveller communities. Details of the events and workshops will be posted on the WMRA website as they are finalized.

4. Proposed Process For Completing RSS Phase Three Revision

- 4.1 Members will be aware that the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill which is currently before Parliament proposes the introduction of a Single Regional Strategy to replace the existing RSS and Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The Government's intention is for the Bill to receive Royal Assent in July 2009, with an operational date of April 2010.
- 4.2 The timetable below shows how the Revision would be completed under the existing Regulations. However, in the current circumstances the timetable can only be provisional.

RSS Phase Three Revision – Provisional Timetable

29 th June to 14 th August 2009	Options document issued for consultation
Autumn/Winter 2009 (provisional)	Development of a Preferred Option
February 2010 (provisional)	Submission of Preferred Option to Secretary of State
Spring 2010 (provisional)	Consultation on the Preferred Option
Autumn 2010 (provisional)	Examination in Public
Spring 2011 (provisional)	Secretary of State's Proposed Changes

Autumn 2011 (provisional)	Final RSS Phase Three Revision published
------------------------------	---

- 4.3 The Assembly and the GO-WM have agreed to review the situation together following the Phase Three Options consultation. This review will agree how to take account of emerging legislative certainty and the Phase Two Revision's Panel Report. It therefore remains to be seen whether the partially completed Phase Three work will be incorporated into a revised RSS or the new Regional Strategy. In either event, the policy content of the Phase Three Revision will remain relevant to regional interests and necessary to fill policy gaps until the new Regional Strategy is developed.

Contact Officer: David Clarke 0121 678 1023
d.clarke@wmra.gov.uk