

How does it link to the Community Strategy?

Community Strategies are prepared by all councils in response to the priority concerns expressed by local people. Many of these concerns will relate to such things as crime, old people's welfare or health promotion that can't be tackled through the formal development planning process. However, Development Plan Documents will take on board such concerns as affordable housing and public transport facilities that have development implications.

Who are the Assembly Members from West Midlands Business Council and the Other Stakeholders Group?

Look at the website: www.wmra.gov.uk to see who the Assembly Members are.

For more information about the Other Stakeholders Group visit www.rawm@rawm.co.uk

For more information about West Midlands Business Council visit www.wmbusinesscouncil.org.uk

Who is my Assembly Member?

To find out look at the West Midlands Regional Assembly website www.wmra.gov.uk.

Where can I find further information on the planning system?

Visit www.odpm.gov.uk for government guidance such as Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks and Creating Local Development Frameworks



What does it mean?

Development Plans are sometimes called:

- Local Plans
- Unitary Development Plans
- Development Plan Documents
- Local Development Documents
- Supplementary Planning Documents
- Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Structure Plans
- Minerals Local Plan
- Waste Local Plan

The West Midlands Spatial Strategy was previously called Regional Planning Guidance No 11.

West Midlands Regional Assembly is the Regional Planning Body, and has responsibility for preparing the region's Spatial Strategy. It is a body of 100 Members, made up of elected local councillors and representatives from West Midlands Business Council and the Other Stakeholders Group. For more information about the Assembly look on the website www.wmra.gov.uk

Central government (the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) publishes the Spatial Strategy. For more information about the West Midlands Spatial Strategy there is a leaflet summarising the main points on the website www.wmra.gov.uk/documents/20211.pdf

You can find out more about the Assembly, acting as the Regional Planning Body, by phoning **0121 245 0200**, or by emailing info@wmra.gov.uk.

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Conforming with the Region's Spatial Strategy



Planning is all about getting the right sort of development in the right places to meet people's many needs. It is also about protecting sensitive landscapes and places with special qualities for future generations to enjoy. This leaflet tells you how new planning laws will work in the West Midlands region to ensure that regional and local planning is effective and properly co-ordinated.

West Midlands
Regional Assembly
Speaking out for the region



Checking the planslooking for general conformity

From September 2004 the Regional Assembly in its role as Regional Planning Body (RPB) has had the duty to look at all Development Plan Documents to see if they are going to make the region's Spatial Strategy happen. The RPB then writes to the Local Planning Authority to give its opinion. This is called an opinion of "general conformity".

What is the Regional Spatial Strategy?

This is the government's statement of its development policies for the whole West Midlands region over the next seventeen years. All other regional strategies - for example, the Regional Transport Strategy - are expected to comply with it. The RPB is responsible for its preparation, review and updating on behalf of government.



Geographic Areas of Responsibility	
Regional Conformity Advisor	Authority
Shropshire County Council Andy Mortimer 01743 252566 andy.mortimer@shropshire-cc.gov.uk	Bridgnorth District Council North Shropshire District Council Oswestry Borough Council Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council South Shropshire District Council
Staffordshire County Council Tony Lovett 01785 277363 tony.lovett@staffordshire.gov.uk	Cannock Chase Council East Staffordshire Borough Lichfield District Council Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council South Staffordshire Council Stafford Borough Council Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Tamworth Borough Council
Principal Assistants Group Andrew Donnelly 0121 214 7338 andrewdonnelly@centro.org.uk	Birmingham City Council Coventry City Council Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council Wolverhampton City Council
Warwickshire County Council Pam Brown 01926 412061 pambrown@warwickshire.gov.uk	North Warwickshire Borough Council Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council Rugby Borough Council Stratford-on-Avon District Council Warwick District Council
Worcestershire County Council Mark Middleton 01905 766720 mmiddleton@worcestershire.gov.uk	Bromsgrove District Council Malvern Hills District Council Redditch Borough Council Worcester City Council Wychavon District Council Wyre Forest District Council
Tri-partite arrangements Jim Kerrigan 01952 203037 jim.kerrigan@telford.gov.uk Christine Ide 01782 232302 christine.ide@stoke.gov.uk Kevin Singleton 01432 260137 ks1@herefordshire.gov.uk	Borough of Telford & Wrekin Council Stoke-on-Trent City Council Herefordshire Council



What are Development Plan Documents?

Documents that set out in more detail the development strategy for an area for the immediate future, up to 2011. For example they might decide how many houses can be built in your area and which sites can be built on. All councils will be producing these documents under various titles from now on (see "what does it mean?").

Why is "general conformity" important?

By comparing the two sorts of documents, we can make sure that planning policies across the region are clear and consistent with the Spatial Strategy. In this way, we can help the region's social, economic and environmental priorities become reality. We can also help to make sure the right sort of development happens in the right places at the right time so as to protect areas of natural beauty or important nature conservation sites. For example, the West Midlands Spatial Strategy lays great stress on the regeneration of the major urban areas. This means a much lower level of housing development elsewhere in the region than we have been used to in recent years. This aim needs to be clearly shown in Development Plan Documents in order to happen.

How can people who are not part of a local planning authority get involved?

Development Plan Documents (DPDs) will be made widely available for comment at various stages during their preparation. This consultation process leads to a formal six week period when anybody can make their views known to the Local Planning Authority (usually your local council) if their concerns have not already been met.

The Regional Planning Body sees all DPDs, and has six weeks to give its views to the Local Planning Authority and Government Office for the West Midlands.

If you have concerns that are regional rather than local - for example that a promise or idea in the Spatial Strategy that you feel is not in the document - then you can contact the Regional Planning Body in two ways.

1. Via the Regional Conformity Advisor who represents the Regional Planning Body in your area. See the table opposite for contacts.
2. Through the Regional Assembly Other Stakeholder Group or Business Council. Their contact details are shown at the end of this leaflet.

Who decides on the opinion?

Once the Regional Planning Body has received an assessment by the Regional Conformity Advisor it is passed to the chair and vice chairs of the Regional Planning Partnership. Together they decide whether there are any tricky issues that need to be discussed by the larger group of Regional Assembly Members who make up the Regional Planning Partnership.

If there are no tricky issues, and the Development Plan Document reflects the Spatial Strategy and will make it happen on the ground then they can send an opinion of "general conformity" to the Local Planning Authority and central government.

What if the opinion is that the Development Plan will harm the Spatial Strategy?

If the chair and vice chairs agree that there are tricky issues that need to be discussed more fully, then the Local Planning Authority will be told that the development plan does not generally conform. The Regional Planning Partnership, a larger grouping of Assembly Members, will then discuss it. The Partnership can either uphold or overrule the opinion of nonconformity, and will let the local planning authority know.