

NEWS RELEASE

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Strengthening our town and city centres

A move to create an integrated approach for the development of town and city centres is one of the major proposals in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, due to be tested at an independent public examination next spring.

West Midlands Regional Assembly believes that thriving town and city centres play a key role in creating a successful Region and driving the economic vitality of the West Midlands. They are also needed to support the needs of a growing population.

The Assembly has been working with local authorities and other partners to develop an integrated approach to strengthen town and city centres which will benefit the whole Region.

The Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision, submitted by the Assembly to government last December, proposes a range of policies designed to focus retail, office and service provision in a network of strategic town and city centres. Floor space targets for office and retail growth, related to local housing provision proposals in the strategy, are suggested to provide guidance for developers and for local councils producing detailed development plans. The strategy also sets out policies to protect and promote the Region's smaller centres which meet people's local shopping needs and to restrict out of centre shopping developments that can seriously undermine the health of town centres.

Cllr Rex Roberts said: "Town centres are of crucial importance to the Region's economic and social wellbeing and to the achievement of a sustainable pattern of development. Such places need to be attractive places in which people can live, work, shop and have access to a full range of facilities.

"We are working hard to demonstrate the benefits of an integrated approach towards our town and city centres and how this approach will contribute to the quality of life of the entire West Midlands Region."

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For further information please contact Jay Rana, press officer on 0121 245 0181.

Notes to Editors

About the West Midlands Regional Assembly

1. For further information regarding town and city centre policies please see the second half of chapter seven, page 107 of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision – Draft.
2. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands region.
3. The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.
4. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe. It also supports regional policy forums and task groups on social inclusion, faith, housing, life long learning/skills, health, rural and community safety/crime reduction.
5. The Assembly works in partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the regional development agency (RDA), the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands region.
6. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body, and is also responsible for scrutinising the operation of the region's RDA, Advantage West Midlands.
7. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk

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