

West Midlands Regional Assembly

Sustainability Appraisal of Draft  
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)  
Phase 2 Revision for the West  
Midlands

SCOPING REPORT – June 2006



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## **CONTENTS**

	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>THE SCOPING REPORT</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>THE WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY AND PHASE TWO REVISION</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY (RSS)</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>THE REVISION PROCESS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>PHASE TWO REVISION OBJECTIVES AND TASKS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>TASK A1 – IDENTIFYING OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES, PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POLICY OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>TASK A2 – COLLECTING BASELINE INFORMATION</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>TASK A3 – IDENTIFYING KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>THE KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>TASK A4 – DEVELOPING THE SA FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>FRAMEWORK PURPOSE</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>CONSULTATION ON THIS SCOPING REPORT</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>8.2</b>	<b>STAGE B. DEVELOPING AND REFINING OPTIONS AND ASSESSING EFFECTS</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>8.3</b>	<b>STAGE C, PREPARING THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>QUALITY ASSURANCE</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>9.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>9.2</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES AND CONTEXT</b>	<b>81</b>

<b>9.3</b>	<b>SCOPING</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>9.4</b>	<b>OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>9.5</b>	<b>BASELINE INFORMATION</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>ANNEX A</b>	<b>REVIEW OF POLICIES, PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES</b>	
<b>ANNEX B</b>	<b>BASELINE DATA REVIEW</b>	

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL**

In brief terms, Sustainability Appraisal:

- aims to **promote sustainable development** through the integration of social, economic and environmental consideration into plans, programmes and strategies.
- is **mandatory for a Regional Spatial Strategy** (RSS), and must be carried out in compliance with the requirements of EU Directive 2001/41, otherwise known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (or SEA) Directive.
- must be **an integral part of the development of an RSS**, an iterative process that identifies and reports on the likely significant economic, social and environmental implications of proposals, so that the RSS can be designed to promote sustainable development more effectively, and as such should follow a series of **stages**, as set out in Government guidance on Sustainability Appraisal.
- should be **based on a clear understanding of what constitutes sustainable development**. In the case of the West Midlands, a definition is provided by the Regional Sustainable Development Framework. The RSDf sets out 29 objectives covering a wide range of economic, social and environment issues, and provides the basis for this Sustainability Appraisal.

### **SCOPING REPORT**

This *Scoping Report* is the product of the first stage in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Phase Two Revision of the West Midlands RSS. **The purpose of this Scoping Report is to set out the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Phase Two Revision of the West Midlands RSS.** In particular, this report sets out the Sustainability Appraisal Framework, which includes questions which will be used to ‘interrogate’ proposals developed as part of the revision process.

In establishing a clear scope for the SA, and in compliance with statutory requirements and guidance, this *Scoping Report* reviews and develops an understanding of:

- other plans, policies and strategies of relevance to the Phase Two Revision;
- baseline information on environmental, social and economic conditions in the region; and
- key sustainability issues facing the region.

An earlier draft of this *Scoping Report* provided a focus for consultation with relevant environmental authorities and other sustainable development stakeholders within the West Midlands, in order to gain feedback on the

various elements which will frame the subsequent appraisal process. Consultation on this report took place between 27 February and 3 April 2006.

### ***KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES***

On the basis of a detailed review of plans, policies and strategies, and of baseline conditions in the Region, a number of key sustainability issues have been identified where:

- the region is approaching or breaching agreed sustainability thresholds or constraints; and/or
- the region performs particularly badly in comparison to agreed targets, standards or comparators; and/or
- there appears to be a common consensus that the issue is a critical issue for the region (based on the review of strategies and data reports); and/or
- the RSS Revision process is likely to significantly affect how the issue or problem develops in the future.

Some of the key sustainability issues affect the West Midlands as a whole, and others are particular problems for specific sub-regions or locations within the Region. In summary, the issues are as follows:

- **Economic Development**, eg a major gap between the best and worst performing parts of the Region.
- **Housing**, eg problems with housing affordability, the need to focus new development in urban areas rather than rural areas.
- **Urban Renaissance**, eg population migration away from the conurbations, resulting in deprivation problems in urban areas, transport infrastructure problems, housing shortages etc.
- **Rural Renaissance**, eg deprivation in remote areas, need to further rejuvenate market towns.
- **Transport**, eg unsustainable transport patterns (characterised by increasing car use and decreasing use of alternative modes), worsening congestion.
- **Water Resources**, eg increasing pressure on existing water resources.
- **Climate Change**, eg major changes in transport, housing etc required to achieve CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets.
- **Flooding**, eg current flood risk areas, and the likelihood of increasing flood risk within the Region over time.
- **Biodiversity**, eg species decline and increasing pressures on natural assets.
- **Waste Management**, eg need for additional waste recycling and recovery infrastructure.

## **SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK**

A Sustainability Appraisal Framework has been developed, which is designed to set out questions that can be used to 'interrogate' proposals, including options drafted during the revision process, to:

- ascertain whether and how specific sustainability issues are being addressed; and
- understand the environmental, social and economic implications of options and proposals.

The Framework is based on the 29 objectives set out in the consultation draft Regional Sustainable Development Framework. These are taken as the objectives for the Sustainability Appraisal, and have been turned into 29 **core appraisal questions**. In addition, a set of **subsidiary appraisal questions** have been developed to address more detailed issues that:

- are particularly relevant to the West Midlands RSS in terms of deliverability (ie the RSS can be expected to deliver key aspects of an RSDF objective) or influence (ie the RSS can be expected to be a major influence on the achievement of an RSDF objective);
- reflect the objectives and targets from the review of other plans and strategies; and
- focus on the key sustainability issues and problems in the Region.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides an introductory guide to:

- Sustainable Development, in the UK and the West Midlands.
- Sustainability Appraisal, objectives, process and work carried out.
- The *Scoping Report*, its purpose and contents.

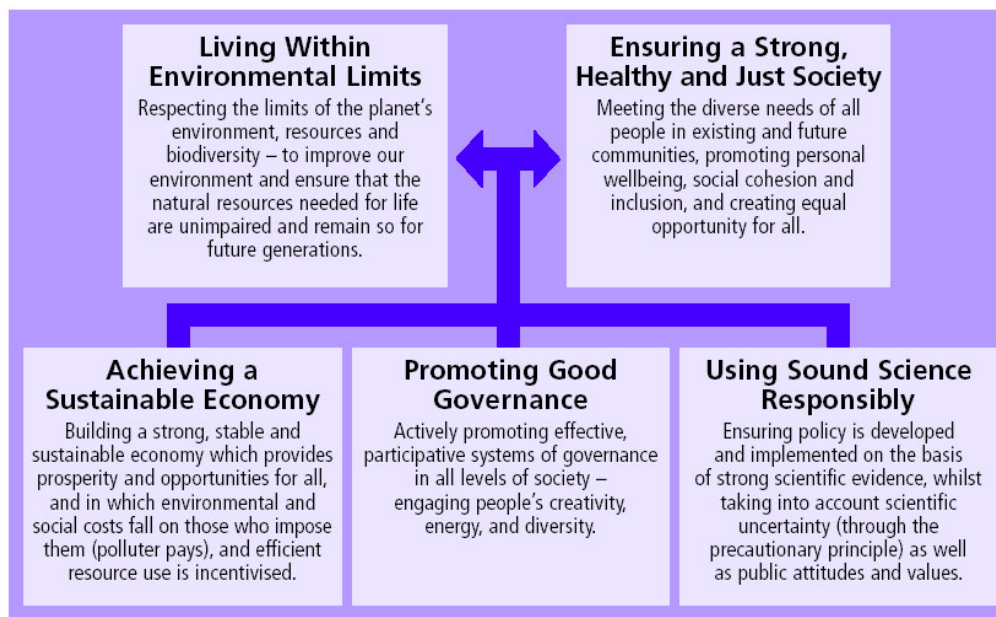
## 1.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### 1.1.1 Sustainable Development in the UK

In March 2005, the Government and the Devolved Administrations published a new national strategy for sustainable development, *Securing the Future*, and a strategic framework called *Our Future – Different Paths*. Both documents build on the Government's first sustainable development strategy, published in 1999, by setting out a new integrated **vision**, five new **principles** with a more explicit focus on environmental limits (see *Figure 1.1*), four agreed **priorities for action** (sustainable consumption and production, climate change and energy, natural resource protection and environmental enhancement, and sustainable communities) and new **indicators**.

*Securing the Future*, states that "The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations". This goal will "be pursued in an integrated way through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment; and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal wellbeing. This will be done in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment, and use resources and energy as efficiently as possible".

**Figure 1.1 The Government's Sustainable Development Principles**



**1.1.2 Sustainable Development in the West Midlands**

Bodies at the regional level are also required to prepare and approve Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks (RSDFs), which 'identify the links between different regional activities and initiatives and set a common and agreed high level vision for sustainable development at regional level' and 'define sustainable development objectives based on wide-ranging support' <sup>1</sup>.

In the West Midlands, *A Sustainable Future for the West Midlands – A Regional Sustainable Development Framework* was published in January 2005. This document is currently being reviewed in light of the Government's new sustainable development strategy.

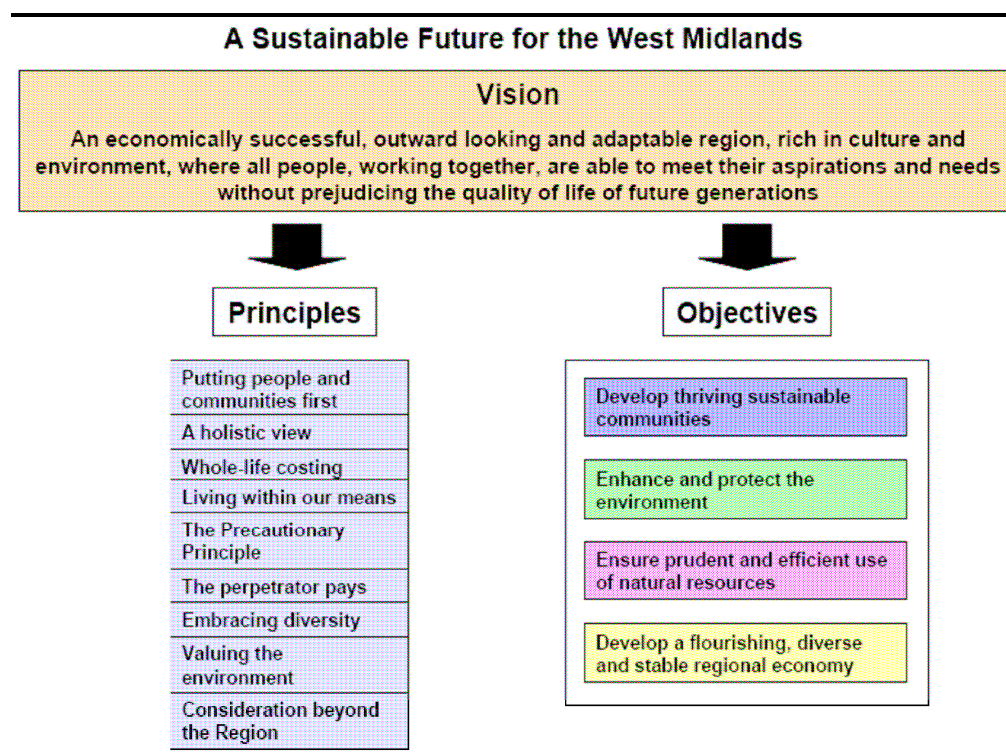
The current version of the RSDF sets out:

- A review of what sustainable development is, and why it is important in the West Midlands, including the Region's Sustainable Development *Vision, Principles and Objectives*; and
- A process for integrating the objectives into key strategies, policies, plans and projects.

The *Vision, Principles and Objectives* are set out in *Figure 1.2*.

<sup>1</sup> Guidance on Preparing Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks, DETR, February 2000

**Figure 1.2 Overview of the West Midlands RSDF**



The RSDF's four strategic objectives are in turn broken down into 29 more detailed sustainable development objectives, which articulate more specifically what sustainable development means for the West Midlands. These are as follows.

Develop thriving sustainable communities	
Access	Ensuring easy and equitable access to services and opportunities, including jobs and learning, regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, background or location
Participation	Enabling communities to participate in the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and quality of life
Poverty	Addressing poverty and disadvantage, taking into account the particular difficulties of those facing multiple disadvantage
Health	Improving health and reducing health inequalities by encouraging and enabling healthy lifestyles as well as protecting health and providing health services
Housing	Providing decent and affordable housing for all, of the right quantity, type, tenure and affordability for local needs, in clean, safe and pleasant local environment
Crime	Reducing crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour
Culture & recreation	Improving opportunities to participate in the diverse cultural and recreational activities the West Midlands can offer
Balanced development	Encouraging physical development with a better balance of jobs, housing and services within each part of the Region in order to meet local needs locally and encourage stable and sustainable integrated communities
Enhance and Protect the Environment	
Environmental assets	Valuing, enhancing and protecting the Region's environmental assets, including the natural and built environment and the historic environment
Biodiversity	Valuing, enhancing and protecting regional biodiversity
Land Use	Land use and development that optimises the use of previously developed land and buildings and creates high quality built environments that incorporate green space, encourage biodiversity, promote local distinctiveness and sense of place, and are well-designed
Stewardship	Local stewardship of local environments

Pollution	Minimising air, water and soil pollution levels
Climate change	Minimising the Region's contribution to the causes of climate change whilst implementing a managed response to its unavoidable impacts
<b>Ensure prudent and efficient use of natural resources</b>	
Energy	Reducing overall energy use through increasing energy efficiency, and increasing the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources
Efficiency	Using natural resources such as water and minerals efficiently
Standards	Promoting and ensuring high standards of sustainable resource-efficient design, construction and maintenance of buildings
Planning	Ensuring the location of development makes efficient use of existing physical infrastructure and helps reduce need to travel, especially by private car
Transport	Increasing use of public transport, cycling and walking and reducing road traffic congestion and pollution
Waste	Encouraging and enabling waste minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery to divert resources away from the waste stream
Local sourcing	Encouraging local sourcing of goods and materials
Resource use	Rewarding efficient resource use and encouraging development of alternative and renewable resources where resources are likely to become depleted
<b>Develop a flourishing, diverse and stable regional economy</b>	
Growth	Achieving sustainable economic growth and prosperity for the benefit of all the Region's inhabitants
Employment	Creating high quality employment opportunities suited to the changing needs of the local workforce, whilst recognising the value and contribution of unpaid work
Investment	Promoting investment in future prosperity
Skills	Encouraging ongoing investment and engagement in learning and skills development
Innovation	Encouraging a culture of enterprise and innovation
Technology	Promoting and supporting the development of new technologies, especially those with high value and low impact
Responsibility	Encouraging corporate social and environmental responsibility, with regional organisations and agencies leading by example

## 1.2 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

### 1.2.1 What is Sustainability Appraisal?

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) aims **to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, economic and environmental consideration into plans, programmes and strategies**. Sustainability Appraisal is mandatory for Regional Spatial Strategies under Section 39(2) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchasing Act 2004*. Therefore, an SA is being carried out as part of the Phase Two Revision of the West Midlands RSS.

This SA is being carried out in line with official guidance provided by ODPM. In particular, the appraisal process has been developed in reference to the ODPM's Guidance for Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities on *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents* (issued in November 2005).

In line with guidance, this SA is designed to meet the requirements of EU *Directive 2001/41*, otherwise known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (or SEA) Directive. SEA is a process for assessing and mitigating the negative environmental impacts of specific plans and programmes, and is required for Regional Spatial Strategies under the Directive as transposed into UK law by the *Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004*.

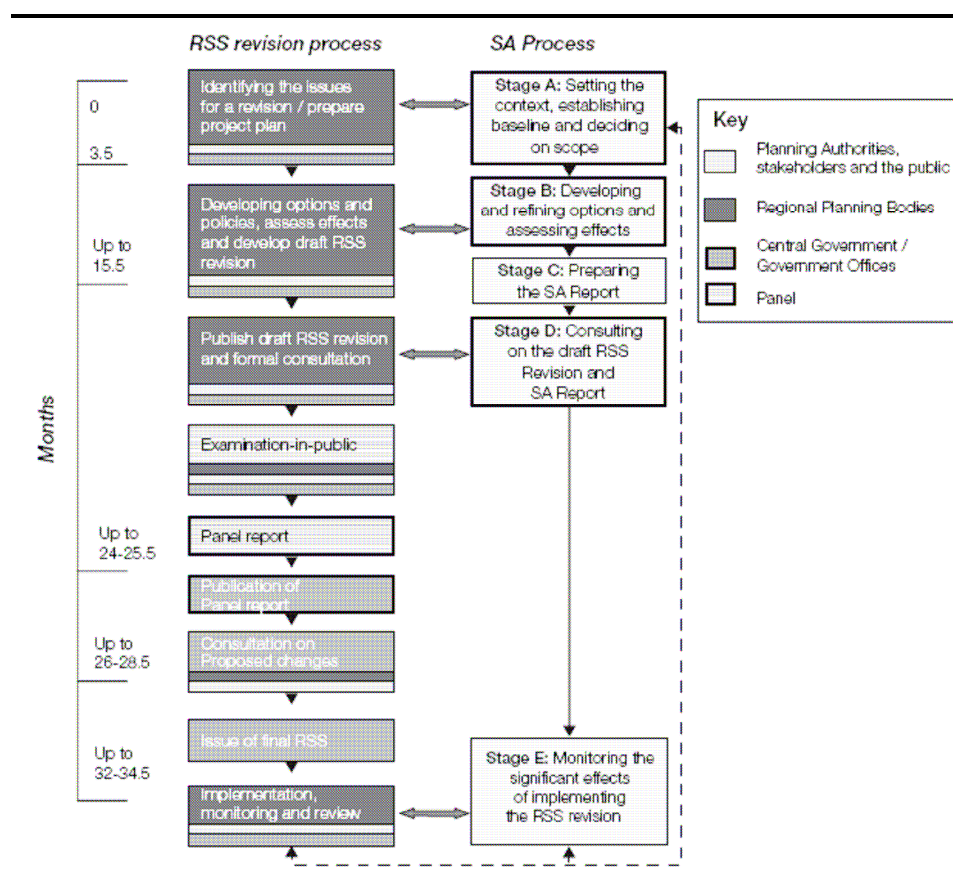
## 1.2.2 Sustainability Appraisal Process

Sustainability Appraisal is an iterative process that identifies and reports on the likely significant effects of the proposed plan, and the extent to which implementation of the plan will achieve the social, environmental and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined. As such, the SA should:

- take a long-term view of whether and how the area covered by the plan is expected to develop;
- provide a mechanism for ensuring that sustainability objectives are translated into sustainable planning policies;
- reflect global, national, regional and local concerns; and
- provide an audit trail of how the plan has been revised to take into account the findings of the appraisal.

Moreover, Sustainability Appraisal must be an integral part of producing a draft revision of an RSS. As such, it follows five stages that are designed to link into the revision process, presented in *Figure 1.3*.

**Figure 1.3 Regional Spatial Strategy Preparation Process, with SA Stages**



Source: ODPM Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents

Each of the five stages of SA is in turn broken down into a number of tasks with specific outputs, presented in *Figure 1.4* overleaf.

**Figure 1.4 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Stages and Tasks**

RSS Stage	SA Stage	Task	Purpose
<p>1. Identify the issues for an RSS revision, prepare a project plan, including a statement of public participation</p>	<p><b>A. Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</b></p>	<p>A1. Identifying other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives</p>	<p>To document how the plan is affected by outside factors and to suggest ideas for how constraints can be overcome</p>
		<p>A2. Collecting baseline information</p>	<p>To provide an evidence base for the prediction of effects and for monitoring</p>
		<p>A3. Identifying sustainability issues and problems</p>	<p>To ensure that the appraisal is focused, and to streamline subsequent stages, eg baseline data analysis, setting the Appraisal Framework etc</p>
		<p>A4. Developing the SA Framework</p>	<p>To provide a means by which the sustainability of the plan can be assessed</p>
		<p>A5. Consulting on the scope of the SA (5 weeks in duration)</p>	<p>To ensure that the appraisal covers the key sustainability issues, by consulting with statutory authorities and other relevant bodies on a <i>Scoping Report</i></p>
<p>2. Develop options and policies, taking account of assessed effects and developing the draft RSS revision</p>	<p><b>B. Developing and refining options and assessing effects</b></p>	<p>B1. Testing the RSS revision objectives against the SA Framework</p>	<p>To ensure that the overall objectives of the plan are in accordance with agreed sustainability principles, and provide a framework for developing options</p>
		<p>B2. Developing the RSS revision options</p>	<p>To assist in the development and refinement of options, by identifying potential sustainability effects of options for achieving plan objectives</p>
		<p>B3. Predicting the effects of the RSS revision</p>	<p>To identify and describe the social, economic and environmental effects of the plan options</p>
		<p>B4. Evaluating the effects of the RSS revision</p>	<p>To evaluate the significance of the predicted effects, and to assist in the refinement of the plan</p>
		<p>B5. Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects</p>	<p>To ensure all potential mitigation measures and measures for maximising beneficial effects are considered, and as a result residual effects identified</p>
		<p>B6. Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the RSS revision</p>	<p>To detail the means by which the sustainability performance of the plan can be assessed</p>
	<p><b>C. Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report</b></p>	<p>C1. Preparing the <i>SA Report</i></p>	<p>To provide a detailed account of the process, including findings and how it influenced the plan, for consultation</p>

RSS Stage	SA Stage	Task	Purpose
3, 4, 5. Submission of the Draft RSS revision to the Secretary of State, Examination in Public, and the Panel report	<b>D. Consulting on the draft RSS revision and SA Report</b>	D1. Consulting on the draft RSS revision and SA Report (6-12 weeks in duration)	To provide the public and statutory bodies with an opportunity to express their opinion on the <i>SA Report</i> , and to use it as a reference point in commenting on the plan
6, 7. Publication of proposed changes and issue of revised RSS		D2. Appraising any significant changes proposed by the Secretary of State	To ensure that any significant changes to the plan are assessed for their sustainability implications, and to influence the revision of the plan
8. Implementation, monitoring and review		D3. Making decisions and providing information	To provide information on how the <i>SA Report</i> and consultees' opinions were taken into account in preparing the plan
	<b>E. Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the RSS revision</b>	E1. Finalising aims and methods for monitoring	To provide information that can be used to highlight specific performance issues and significant effects associated with plan implementation
E2. Responding to adverse effects		To react to adverse effects identified through monitoring	

### 1.2.3 **Work carried out to date**

Work on this Sustainability Appraisal was commenced in early November 2005. Tasks A1 to A4 (per *Figure 1.4*) have now been completed, covering:

- Task A1 - identifying and reviewing other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives.
- Task A2 - collecting and reviewing baseline information.
- Task A3 - identifying sustainability issues and problems in the West Midlands.
- Task A4 - developing the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.

This *Scoping Report* presents the findings of this work.

### 1.2.4 **The Appraisal Team**

This Sustainability Appraisal is being carried out by URSUS Consulting Ltd, on behalf of the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

To assist the SA process, a Sustainability Appraisal Steering Group has been established, to provide advice to the Assembly and the consultants throughout the process, and to ensure that representatives from outside the Assembly can input into the appraisal process from start to finish.

## 1.3 **THE SCOPING REPORT**

### 1.3.1 **Purpose**

The purpose of this *Scoping Report* is to **set out the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Phase Two Revision of the West Midlands RSS**. In particular, this report sets out the Sustainability Appraisal Framework, which includes questions which will be used to ‘interrogate’ proposals developed as part of the revision process.

In establishing a clear scope for the SA, and in compliance with statutory requirements and guidance, this *Scoping Report* reviews and develops an understanding of:

- other plans, policies and strategies of relevance to the Phase Two Revision;
- baseline information on environmental, social and economic conditions in the region; and
- key sustainability issues facing the region.

This *Scoping Report* is designed to provide a focus for consultation with relevant environmental authorities and other sustainable development stakeholders within the West Midlands, in order to gain feedback on the various elements which will frame the subsequent appraisal process.

The information in this *Scoping Report* will be revised and updated as work progresses and in the light of consultation feedback.

### 1.3.2

#### **Content**

This report contains the following information:

- *Section 2* presents a brief review of the purpose, vision and objectives that have been established for the Phase Two Revision of the West Midlands RSS.
- *Section 3* presents summary information on Task A1, the review of other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives.
- *Section 4* presents summary information on Task A2, a review of baseline economic, social and environmental conditions in the West Midlands.
- *Section 5* presents summary information on Task A3, a review of the key sustainability issues and problems facing the West Midlands.
- *Section 6* presents the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.
- *Section 7* presents a review of how consultation feedback on the draft *Scoping Report* issued in February 2006 has been addressed in this final version of the report
- *Section 8* presents summary information on the next steps that will be carried out in the Sustainability Appraisal
- *Section 9* presents a review of work carried out against a Quality Assurance Checklist.

In addition, the following annexes provide more detailed information:

- *Annex A* presents a full review of other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives.
- *Annex B* presents a full review of baseline economic, social and environmental conditions in the West Midlands.



## **2 THE WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY AND PHASE TWO REVISION**

### **2.1 THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY (RSS)**

#### **2.1.1 Introduction**

The RSS for the West Midlands was published in June 2004, and became a statutory development plan in September 2004. The purpose of the RSS is to guide the preparation of local authority development plans, local waste plans and local transport plans, so that together they can provide a coherent framework for regional development up to 2021.

#### **2.1.2 RSS Vision**

The RSS sets out a vision for the region:

*'The overall vision for the West Midlands is one of an economically successful, outward looking and adaptable Region, which is rich in culture and environment, where all people, working together, are able to meet their aspirations and needs without prejudicing the quality of life of future generations.'*

#### **2.1.3 RSS Challenges**

Four main themes and challenges have been identified in the RSS:

- *Urban Renaissance*: developing the Major Urban Areas in such a way that they can increasingly meet their own economic and social needs in order to counter the unsuitable outward movement of people and jobs facilitated by previous strategies.
- *Rural Renaissance*: addressing more effectively the major changes which are challenging the traditional roles of rural areas and the countryside.
- *Diversifying and modernising the Region's economy*: ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and that they help reduce social exclusion.
- *Modernising the transport infrastructure of the West Midlands*: supporting the sustainable development of the Region.

#### **2.1.4 RSS Objectives**

The strategic objectives of the RSS are as follows

- a) to make the Major Urban Areas of the West Midlands increasingly attractive places where people want to live, work and invest;
- b) to secure the regeneration of the rural areas of the region;
- c) to create a joined up multi-centred Regional structure where all areas/centres have distinct roles to play;
- d) to retain the Green Belt, but allow an adjustment of boundaries where this is necessary to support urban regeneration;

- e) to support the cities and towns of the Region to meet their local and sub-regional development needs;
- f) to support the diversification and modernisation of the Region's economy while ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and reducing social exclusion;
- g) to ensure the quality of the environment is conserved and enhanced across all parts of the Region;
- h) to improve significantly the Region's transport systems;
- i) to promote the development of a network of strategic centres across the Region; and
- j) to promote Birmingham as a world city.

## **2.2 THE REVISION PROCESS**

When the RSS was published, the Secretary of State supported the vision and objectives of the strategy, but suggested that several issues needed to be developed further by the Regional Planning Body (the West Midlands Regional Assembly). Given the range of matters to be considered, it has been agreed that these issues should be looked at in three phases, as follows:

- *Phase 1, Black Country Study*, a plan for the long-term change and development of this sub-region including the City of Wolverhampton and the Boroughs of Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley, launched in February 2005 and to be submitted to the Secretary of State on 31 May 2006.
- *Phase 2*, including housing needs, urban capacity, employment land, airports, road user charging and waste management, to be launched in November 2005 and submitted to the Secretary of State in June 2007.
- *Phase 3*, including rural issues and significant environmental issues, to be launched in the Summer of 2007 and submitted to the Secretary of State in early 2009.

It should be noted that the RSS vision, challenges and objectives are not being included in the RSS revision process.

## **2.3 PHASE TWO REVISION OBJECTIVES AND TASKS**

There are four streams of work under Phase Two, with objectives and tasks for each. These are set out below.

**Table 2.1 Phase Two Objectives and Tasks**

Theme	Objective	Tasks
Communities for the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To re-examine regional and sub-regional housing needs and requirements and how these can be best met in the Region.</li> <li>• In doing so, to consider the timescale for the figures and whether these should be to 2021, the current end date in RSS, or extended to provide longer term guidance for the preparation of Local Development Frameworks.</li> <li>• To examine, within the overall requirement, how additional new affordable housing can be made across the Region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A re-examination of regional housing needs and requirements in the light of updated national projections, the Government's response to the Barker review, any advice from the proposed National Advice Unit, and further work on the shared evidence base.</li> <li>• A re-examination of Urban Capacity across the Region, particularly within the Major Urban Areas (including direct links with Black Country Study outputs) and the implications for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provision of replacement dwellings for cleared housing stock; and</li> <li>• the identification of previously-developed land targets.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A consideration of the role of the Sub-regional Foci, including whether Burton should also be identified.</li> </ul>
Prosperity for All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To re-examine regional and sub-regional employment land needs and requirements.</li> <li>• To re-assess existing strategic land designations.</li> <li>• To identify the number and broad location of regional warehousing and distribution facilities.</li> <li>• To identify investment priorities within the strategic network of centres.</li> <li>• To provide guidance to local authorities across the Region for the location of the new generation of casinos.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A re-examination of employment land needs and requirements in light of updated evidence base.</li> <li>• A re-assessment of existing strategic employment land designations.</li> <li>• The identification of the number and broad location of regional warehousing and distribution facilities.</li> <li>• The identification of investment priorities within the strategic network of centres.</li> </ul>
Quality of the Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide sufficient opportunities to meet identified needs of the West Midlands for waste management of all streams.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste management issues identified by the Secretary of State.</li> </ul>

Theme	Objective	Tasks
Transport and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify broad locations for Strategic Park and Ride sites.</li> <li>• To identify parking standards.</li> <li>• To provide guidance on road user charging.</li> <li>• To establish the implications of the Airports White Paper for the Region and subsequent master planning including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The future roles of Wolverhampton, Coventry and Cosford;</li> <li>• Any necessary revision of Policy T11;</li> <li>• The wider spatial and economic impacts of any proposed airport expansion; and</li> <li>• The policy changes necessary to support and mitigate any such development.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of Strategic Park and Ride sites.</li> <li>• Implications of the Airports White Paper.</li> <li>• Parking Standards.</li> <li>• Guidance on road user charging.</li> </ul>

### **3 TASK A1 – IDENTIFYING OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES, PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

A review has been undertaken of a range of plans, policies, strategies and programmes in order to identify the environmental, economic and social policy objectives which have been established at international, national and regional level and which are relevant to both the RSS and the development of the SA framework.

The details of this review are set out in *Annex A* and the key findings are summarised below.

#### **3.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The strategy documents which have been reviewed set out a wide range of economic, social and environmental policy objectives which represent established policy at international, national and regional level. However, all the plans, policies and strategies reviewed also pay heed to the need for sustainable development, recognising the interconnectedness of economic development, environmental quality and social justice.

The main objectives identified by the review are set out below. These have been grouped into several broad categories although, in the cross-cutting and integrated nature of sustainable development issues, most have clear links across more than one category. The objectives are expressed in a variety of ways and a different levels of specificity, owing to the varied nature of the policy documents in which they are contained.

In setting the framework for future development in the West Midlands, the RSS needs to be consistent wherever appropriate with the policy framework set at national and international level. It is also important that the RSS takes account of policy objectives set at regional level and is consistent where relevant and capitalises on opportunities for synergies. Conversely, where the RSS for good reason is not consistent with specific elements of the policy framework, it is the role of the SA to note this and to document the decisions to depart from policy established at regional or higher levels.

Despite the range and diversity of documents which have been reviewed, the policy objectives are generally consistent across all the documents. The aim of the review is to establish the economic, environmental and social policy context for the RSS and not to seek to evaluate, appraise or amend policy adopted at international, national or regional level. However, there are some areas of potential conflict which should be noted:

- Air transport: The Future of Air Transport, calls for an approach which, while balanced, reflects people's desire to travel further and more often by air, which could be regarded as unsustainable;
- Green belt: national and regional planning guidance documents express policy on green belt in ways which could be interpreted differently. In this

context, the recent Direction published by ODPM on green belt policy should be noted, which clarifies and reaffirms the importance of PPG2.

The SA will test the RSS against the relevant policy objectives identified by the review to ensure that it is consistent with policy framework within which it sits, or if not, that there are good reasons for this. To achieve this, the SA framework has been reviewed in the light of the objectives set out below to ensure that those objectives are reflected in the framework.

**Table 3.1 Environment Policy Objectives**

Objective	Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing carbon dioxide emissions through reduced energy use, increased energy efficiency, increasing use of renewables, combined heat and power and community heating schemes.</li> </ul>	UK SD Strategy, Energy White Paper, PPS1, PPG22, Enriching Our Region, West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing waste production and increasing re-use, recycling, composting and recovery – thereby moving up the waste hierarchy.</li> </ul>	UK SD Strategy, Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003, Waste Strategy 2000 plus amendments, PPS1, PPS10, MPG1, Enriching Our Region, West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging communities to take responsibility for their own waste and providing facilities to meet their needs.</li> </ul>	PPS10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation and sustainable use of water resources, including efficiency measures and resource improvement and development.</li> </ul>	Water Act 2003, Biodiversity Strategy for England, PPS1, A Water Resources Strategy for the West Midlands, Enriching Our Region, West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevention of water, noise and light pollution.</li> </ul>	PPS1, West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving air quality and achieving air quality standards.</li> </ul>	National Air Quality Strategy, Enriching Our Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserving and enhancing the historic environment and adopting a positive approach towards its management which recognises its economic and social benefits</li> </ul>	The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future, Valuing People and Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the quality and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas.</li> </ul>	Rural Strategy, UK SD Strategy, PPS1, PPG23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserving, enhancing and managing the natural, built and historic environment and landscapes.</li> </ul>	UK SD Strategy, Rural Strategy, PPS1, PPG6, PPG13, PPG16, MPG1, Enriching Our Region, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, RPG11, Valuing People and Places, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting and improving public spaces.</li> </ul>	PPG17, Valuing People and Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserving, enhancing and managing biodiversity and geodiversity and taking an area-based approach to restoring wildlife.</li> </ul>	UK SD Strategy Biodiversity Strategy for England, PPS1, PPS7, Enriching Our Region, West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, Valuing People and Places, West Midlands Regional Concordat, Restoring the Region's Wildlife – Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing regional woodland cover and</li> </ul>	Biodiversity Strategy for England, West

Objective	Sources
promoting links between woodland and the historic environment, culture, development, regeneration, recreation, health, biodiversity and environmental quality.	Midlands Regional Forestry Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserving, enhancing and managing all landscapes and respecting their character and distinctiveness</li> </ul>	PPS1, PPS7, Rural Strategy, European Landscape Convention

**Table 3.2** *Transport Policy Objectives*

Objective	Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing the impact of transport on the environment and people</li> </ul>	Transport White Paper, The Future of Air Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing the need to travel, especially by car</li> </ul>	PPS1, PPG6, PPG13, Enriching Our Region, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing use of public transport and enhancing accessibility and integration.</li> </ul>	Transport Ten Year Plan, PPG3, PPG6, PPG13, Enriching Our Region, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing more sustainable choices for people and freight.</li> </ul>	Transport White Paper, Transport Ten Year Plan, PPG3, PPG6, PPG13, Delivering Advantage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good quality transport infrastructure</li> </ul>	Delivering Advantage, RPG11, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No overall increase in road capacity</li> </ul>	Enriching Our Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing congestion and pollution from transport</li> </ul>	Transport White Paper, UK Climate Change Programme, Transport Ten Year Plan, PPG4, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, RPG11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognising the importance of air travel to economic prosperity</li> </ul>	The Future of Air Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflecting people's desire to travel further and more often by air, and to take advantage of the affordability of air travel</li> </ul>	The Future of Air Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balancing the need to travel with the need to improve quality of life</li> </ul>	Transport White Paper
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimising the need for airport development by making best use of existing capacity</li> </ul>	The Future of Air Transport, Enriching Our Region

**Table 3.3** *Economic Policy Objectives*

Objective	Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing thriving economies and high-quality employment opportunities for all</li> </ul>	PPG23, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, RPG11, Rural Renaissance, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributing to sustainable economic development and promoting sustainable economic growth</li> </ul>	PPG6, Delivering Advantage, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, RPG11, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting and enhancing the quality of environmental assets to support local regeneration and economies in urban and rural areas.</li> </ul>	The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future, Delivering Advantage, Rural Renaissance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring the efficient use of resources, including conservation of mineral resources</li> </ul>	UK SD Strategy, PPS1, MPG1, Enriching Our Region, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Favouring the use of local raw materials, local food and local products</li> </ul>	Enriching Our Region, The West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting efficient, competitive, diverse and innovative business, commercial,</li> </ul>	PPS1, PPG6, Delivering Advantage, The West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy,

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Sources</b>
industrial, retail, tourism and leisure sectors	RPG11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting new technologies, especially those with high value and low impact</li> </ul>	UK SD Strategy, West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, Skills Priorities Action Plan, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging a culture of enterprise and innovation</li> </ul>	UK SD Strategy, Delivering Advantage, West Midlands Cluster Strategy, Cultural Life in the West Midlands, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, Skills Priorities Action Plan, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Securing improvements to the region's transport, communication and property infrastructure</li> </ul>	Delivering Advantage, West Midlands Cluster Strategy, Rural Renaissance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging investment to develop deprived areas and focusing resources in areas of greatest need</li> </ul>	PPG6, Delivering Advantage, RPG11, Rural Renaissance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximising the benefits of tourism and the visitor economy while safeguarding the environment and communities</li> </ul>	PPG21, Delivering Advantage, Cultural Life in the West Midlands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging alternative areas for tourism development where needed</li> </ul>	PPG21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging sustainable procurement</li> </ul>	UK SD Strategy

**Table 3.4 Social Policy Objectives**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Sources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing thriving communities with good access to services and facilities for all</li> </ul>	Rural Strategy, PPS1, PPG3, PPG6, Enriching Our Region, Cultural Life in the West Midlands, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, RPG11, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing social inequalities</li> </ul>	PPS1, PPG6, Enriching Our Region, The West Midlands Language Strategy, Cultural Life in the West Midlands, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, RPG11, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling children, young people and adults to develop and improve learning and skills</li> </ul>	Education and Skills: Delivering Results, Delivering Advantage, West Midlands Cluster Strategy, International Trade Strategic Plan for the West Midlands, The West Midlands Language Strategy, West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework, Skills Priorities Action Plan, Rural Renaissance, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing investment and engagement in learning and skills</li> </ul>	Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting better health for all and particularly for disadvantaged and excluded groups, including through better and more responsive services</li> </ul>	Choosing Health White Paper, Tackling Health Inequalities, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, RPG11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting and improving public health and safety and amenity</li> </ul>	Waste Strategy 2000 plus amendments, PPS1, PPG23, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting high quality or valued recreational spaces and avoiding erosion of recreational function</li> </ul>	PPG17, The West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good access to open, recreational and community space</li> </ul>	Enriching Our Region, The West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy, West Midlands

Objective	Sources
	Regional Forestry Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that all residents and visitors have good access to a range of cultural activities</li> </ul>	Cultural Life in the West Midlands, The West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, RPG11, Valuing People and Places, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing opportunities for communities to participate in and contribute to the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and quality of life</li> </ul>	Tackling Health Inequalities, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour</li> </ul>	PPG6 Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Valuing and taking account of population diversity</li> </ul>	Cultural Life in the West Midlands, The West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy, West Midlands Regional Concordat

**Table 3.5** *Housing Policy Objectives*

Objective	Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting the housing needs of the whole community, including for affordable and special needs housing, through new and refurbished homes</li> </ul>	PPG3, Enriching Our Region, Regional Housing Strategy, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing decent homes</li> </ul>	Regional Housing Strategy, Regional Sustainable Development Framework, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linking housing availability and quality with employment opportunities.</li> </ul>	Delivering Advantage, Regional Housing Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering the required range of housing types in the right places</li> </ul>	PPG3, Regional Housing Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote good design in housing developments</li> </ul>	PPG3, Enriching Our Region, Regional Housing Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% of all forms of development on previously-developed land by 2008, in line with the 'sequential approach'</li> </ul>	PPG3

**Table 3.6** *Land Use and Spatial Issues*

Objective	Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making suitable land available for development</li> </ul>	PPS1, Delivering Advantage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation of soil quality.</li> </ul>	Rural Strategy, PPS1, West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design.</li> </ul>	PPS1, PPG6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of good quality open space.</li> </ul>	PPG6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoiding development in areas at risk of flooding and restricted to essential transport and utilities infrastructure</li> </ul>	PPS1, PPG25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopting a risk-based approach to development in and affecting flood risk areas</li> </ul>	PPG25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce flood risk</li> </ul>	West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging sustainable urban drainage systems.</li> </ul>	PPG25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bringing vacant and underused previously developed land back into beneficial use</li> </ul>	PPS1, PPG3, PPG23, Enriching Our Region, Regional Sustainable Development Framework

Objective	Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging the creation of high quality built environments incorporating high quality open space and encouraging biodiversity</li> </ul>	PPG1, PPS7, Enriching Our Region, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring high standards of sustainable resource-efficient design, construction and maintenance of buildings.</li> </ul>	UK SD Strategy, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection of green belt and a presumption against inappropriate development unless there are very special circumstances.</li> </ul>	PPG2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give favourable consideration to proposals for diversification in Green Belts where the development preserves openness</li> </ul>	PPS7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowing adjustment of green belt where necessary to support urban regeneration or sustainable waste management</li> </ul>	PPS10, RPG11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing in locations which take account of transport and accessibility impacts and make best use of existing infrastructure.</li> </ul>	PPS1, PPG3, PPG4, PPG6, Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing development in existing town centres and urban areas</li> </ul>	PPG6, PPS7, Enriching Our Region, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting the renaissance of county and market towns.</li> </ul>	West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting more mixed development</li> </ul>	PPG3, PPG6, Enriching Our Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balancing jobs, housing and services in each part of the region.</li> </ul>	RPG11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making urban areas places where people want to live, work and invest.</li> </ul>	Regional Sustainable Development Framework, RPG11, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reversing migration away from major urban areas.</li> </ul>	PPG4, West Midlands Regional Concordat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a network of strategic centres and promoting Birmingham as a world city.</li> </ul>	RPG11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regeneration and diversification of rural areas and appropriate development.</li> </ul>	RPG11, Rural Renaissance, West Midlands Regional Concordat

This section presents summary information on the review of baseline economic, social and environmental conditions within the West Midlands. Data and information has been collected to illustrate conditions for each of the 29 RSDF objectives, and has been collected from a wide range of reports and sources, including:

- The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Annual Monitoring Reports 2004 and 2005
- *Real Issues, Real Lives*, State of the Region Report 2004 and Data Annex 2005 (West Midlands Regional Observatory)
- Regional Sustainable Development Indicators published by DEFRA's Sustainable Development Unit in December 2005
- West Midlands State of the Nation 2005 (Institute of Civil Engineers)
- Regional Housing Land and Urban Capacity Study 2004
- The Environment Agency
- The Electoral Commission
- British Crime Survey
- ODPM
- Office for National Statistics
- Countryside Agency
- Council for the Protection of Rural England
- DEFRA
- English Nature
- National Land Use Database
- National Air Quality Archive
- National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory

*Table 4.1* summarises the review of data on baseline conditions and a full review is set out in *Annex B*.

**Table 4.1 Summary Review of Data on Baseline Conditions**

<b>RSDF Objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Regional Data</b>	<b>Comparators?</b>	<b>Trends?</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
<b>Develop thriving sustainable communities</b>					
<b>1. Access:</b> Ensuring easy and equitable access to services and opportunities, including jobs and learning, regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, background or location	IMD Access to Housing and Services Road distance to nearest Post Office	Local authorities with communities ranked in the bottom 2% in England: Warwick Shrewsbury and Atcham County of Herefordshire Malvern Hills Stratford-on-Avon South Shropshire	Wychavon Stafford Staffordshire Moorlands Bridgenorth Birmingham Rugby		
	Proportion of Rural Households at Set Distances from Key Services and Facilities	West Midlands: Doctor's surgeries: 84.9% Hospitals: 29.7% Supermarkets: 77.7% Primary schools 89.9%	England: Doctor's surgeries: 86.8% Hospitals: 29.0% Supermarkets: 79.2% Primary schools 92.0%		Data on access to key services in rural areas suggests that, for many services, provision of services to rural communities in the West Midlands is worse in relative terms than the England average, particularly for ATMs, banks and building societies, doctor's surgeries, supermarkets, primary schools, Post Offices and pubs
<b>2. Participation:</b> Enabling communities to participate in the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and quality of life	General Election turnout rates, 2005	Turnout rates vary from 37.2% (Staffordshire South, the lowest in the UK) to 72% (Ludlow)	UK average of 61.4%		Wide range of turnout ranges, with many urban constituencies well below 50%.
<b>3. Poverty:</b> Addressing poverty and disadvantage, taking into account the particular difficulties of those facing multiple disadvantage	Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation IMD Income Deprivation	Local authorities with communities ranked in the bottom 2% in England: Birmingham Coventry Wolverhampton	Stoke on Trent Walsal Sandwell		
	Weekly household income	West Mids urban average £347.25 West Mids rural average £328.95 Variations from £850/week to £280/week	England urban average £384.27 England rural average £336.37		Very low household incomes in parts of Birmingham, Sandwell, Stoke on Trent and Coventry, as well as in the remote rural parts of Herefordshire and Shropshire.
	Fuel Poverty	10.9% of households (240,000) suffering from fuel poverty in 2001	England average of 8.4%	Fallen from 26.9% in 1996	A significant reduction in the numbers of households having to spend more than 10% of their income on fuel, but the Region has the second worst rate in England.

<b>RSDF Objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Regional Data</b>	<b>Comparators?</b>	<b>Trends?</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
<b>4. Health:</b> Improving health and reducing health inequalities by encouraging and enabling healthy lifestyles as well as protecting health and providing health services	Life expectancy at birth 2000-2002	Average (male and female) of 78 years Sub-regional variations from 80.2 (Wychavon) to 76.1 (Stoke on Trent)	UK average 78.4	Male life expectancy increase from 73.2 in 1991-1993 to 75.4 in 2000-2002	Average only slightly below the UK average, but significant intra-regional variation of 4.1 years between local authority areas with lower life expectancy in areas with higher levels of deprivation. Women can expect to live on average 5 years longer than men,
	IMD Health Deprivation 2004	Local authorities with communities ranked in the bottom 2% in England: Birmingham Stoke on Trent Coventry			
	Infant mortality	6.5 per 1,000 live births	UK average of 5.3 per 1,000	Fallen from 11.2 since 1981	Infant mortality rate is worse in the region than anywhere else in England, while the National rate is itself high compared to many other EU States.
	Teenage conceptions	47.2 per 1,000 females aged 15-17	England average of 42.3 per 1,000	Fallen from 51.9 in 1998	Teenage pregnancy in the region is higher than the English average, though not the highest of the English regions. The rate in the conurbations is almost double that in rural parts of the Region, but this rate has been falling in recent years.
	Obesity	25% for males, 28% for females	England average of 23% for males, 25% for females		The West Midlands has one of the highest levels of adult obesity, with a greater proportion of women being obese than men.
	Long-term limiting illness	18.9% of people with a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits their daily activities or the work they can do. Local authorities with high rates are: Stoke on Trent Sandwell Wolverhampton Newcastle under Lyme	England average of 17.9%		Relatively high rates of long-term limiting illness within the Region as a whole, and some extremely high rates in specific deprived communities.

<b>RSDF Objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Regional Data</b>	<b>Comparators?</b>	<b>Trends?</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
<b>5. Housing:</b> Providing decent and affordable housing for all, of the right quantity, type, tenure and affordability for local needs, in clean, safe and pleasant local environment	Housing completions	Gross completions 2001-2005: 69,427 Net completions 2001-2005 (ie including demolitions): 54,998			Gross completions since the beginning of the RSS (2001-2005) have been 4% above targets in the RSS (66,720). At sub-regional level: Dudley, Staffordshire, Telford and Wrekin, and Herefordshire are all below target. Net completions are almost exactly in line with RSS targets at a regional level, although 11% above target in Major Urban Areas and 4% below in other areas.
	% of dwellings not meeting the 'Decent Homes' standard	West Midlands 2001: 38.5%	England: 33%		The West Midlands has the highest rate of dwellings not meeting the Decent Homes standard of any Region.
	Social affordable low-cost completions	2,925 in 2004-2005 (16% of total completions)		2,552 in 2003-4 (14% of total completions)	According to the RSS, an estimated 6,000-6,500 affordable dwellings are required each year between 2001-2011
	House prices	Average prices, 2003: West Midlands £133,583 Black Country £105,477 Worcestershire and Herefordshire £170,556	Average price 2003, England and Wales £161,655	147% increase in house prices between 1992-2003	House price increases have been steady since 1993, and have increased more sharply and irregularly since 1999. The strongest growth in prices has occurred for converted properties for flats; prices have increased 6-fold between 1983 and 2002, although prices rose by nearly 50% in the last two years of the period.
	Affordability index	West Midlands - 7.02, with range from 4 (Stoke on Trent) to 13.5 (South Shropshire) (approximate figures)	England and Wales - 7.77	The gap between incomes and house prices has increased between 1993 and 2003	Regional housing has become increasingly less affordable, as measured by the affordability index. Intra-regional differences indicate the effects of in-migration on housing markets, particularly in rural communities. Lower average earnings and increasing demand have resulted in housing in Hereford and Worcester becoming the least affordable in the region. Parts of Birmingham, Coventry, the Black Country and Stoke-on-Trent are faced with the opposite problem of low demand.
<b>6. Crime:</b> Reducing crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour	Total crime rate 2003-2004	West Midlands Region - 113 per 1,000 population West Midlands Police Force 132 per 1,000	England and Wales average 113 per 1,000	Fall of 17% since 2001-2002	Crime rates are broadly similar to those for England as a whole. Crime rates 20-30% higher in metropolitan areas than in the shires.

RSDF Objective	Indicators	Regional Data	Comparators?	Trends?	Key issues
	Violence against the person 2003-2004	20 per 1,000	England and Wales average 18 per 1,000	Increase of 6% since 2001-2002, but lowest increase of any region	Second highest violent crime rate in England (behind London).
	Fear of crime	2004-2005 figures: 12.9% of the population 'worried about burglary' 15% with high level of fear about car crime 17% with high level of fear about violent crime	2004-2005 England ave: 12.1% of the population 'worried about burglary' 13.4% with high level of fear about car crime 16.3% with high level of fear about violent crime	2001-2002 figures: 18.1% of the population 'worried about burglary' 21.3% with high level of fear about car crime 25% with high level of fear about violent crime	Fear of crime rates have declined in the Region in recent years (as they have across England) and are now close to average rates for England as a whole.
	IMD Crime and Disorder 2004	Local authorities with communities ranked in the bottom 2% in England: Birmingham Coventry Wolverhampton Telford and Wrekin Worcester Stoke on Trent Newcastle under Lyme			
<b>7. Culture &amp; recreation:</b> Improving opportunities to participate in the diverse cultural and recreational activities the West Midlands can offer	Access to woodlands	9.42% of the population within 500m of a wood >2ha 54.66% of the population within 4km of a wood >20ha	England: 10.18%  England: 55.18%		The Woodland Trust and English Nature recommends that everyone should be within 500m of a woodland of 2ha in size, and within 4km of a woodland of 20ha. It would be necessary to create a further 4,834ha of woodland to achieve the first objective, or a further 914ha to achieve the second.
	Visits to public libraries	4,735 visits per 1000 population in 2002-03	England average of 5,533 per 1,000 population	An increase of 0.94% on the previous year	

<b>RSDF Objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Regional Data</b>	<b>Comparators?</b>	<b>Trends?</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
<b>8. Balanced development:</b> Encouraging physical development with a better balance of jobs, housing and services within each part of the Region in order to meet local needs locally and encourage stable and sustainable integrated communities	Population change in urban and rural locations, 1981-2002	Accessible rural +9% Remote rural +18% Other urban +11% Conurbations -4%			There has been an overall decline in the population of the conurbations of 119,000 since 1981, and an increase of 236,740 in the rural and 'other urban' parts of the Region. In terms of intra-regional migration, in the last 20 years there has been an average annual movement of 20,000 from West Midlands and Stoke-on-Trent conurbations to the rest of the region, and 12,000 per annum moving in the opposite direction.
<b>Enhance and Protect the Environment</b>					
<b>9. Environmental assets:</b> Valuing, enhancing and protecting the Region's environmental assets, including the natural and built environment and the historic environment	IMD Living Environment	Local authorities with communities ranked in the bottom 2% in England: Warwick Birmingham Cannock Chase Coventry Dudley East Staffordshire Herefordshire, County of Newcastle-under-Lyme Nuneaton and Bedworth Oswestry Redditch Rugby	Sandwell Shrewsbury and Atcham South Shropshire Stoke-on-Trent Tamworth Telford and Wrekin Walsall Warwick Wolverhampton Worcester Wychavon		The West Midlands has some of the most heavily urbanised areas in the country, and also some of the most remote and tranquil countryside. Environmental assets are at risk in specific locations within the Region; it is not possible to identify key sites at risk in the context of this report.
	Change in countryside character	33% of the region's landscapes experienced 'marked changes inconsistent with the existing character' between 1990 and 1998	23% of the landscapes of England as a whole experienced marked changes		Although 58% of the Region has not changed (compared to the England average of 40%), the Region actually has the highest proportion of landscapes which show marked changes that are inconsistent with existing character descriptions.
	Extent of Green Belt	273,100ha (in 1997)		Stable	
	Listed Buildings	34,307 in 2005 (9.2% of England total)			The Region has a higher proportion of Grade I and II* Listed Buildings and SAMs at risk than elsewhere, with a national average of 3.5%, and a third of the buildings are in the highest
	Scheduled Ancient Monuments	1,421 in 2005 (7.2% of England total)			

<b>RSDF Objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Regional Data</b>	<b>Comparators?</b>	<b>Trends?</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
	Buildings at risk	186 in 2005 (10.4% of England total)	1,789 for England as a whole (3.5%)	7 removed from register in 2005, a further 28 expected to be removed in 2006 (although additional buildings will also probably be added to the list).	priority category (immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric) compared to a fifth nationally. The total cost of repair, and, where appropriate, conversion of these buildings to their optimum viable use is estimated to be £61.8 million
<b>10. Biodiversity:</b> Valuing, enhancing and protecting regional biodiversity	Woodland birds	Number of woodland species with: Population increasing, 16 Population declining, 5 Population stable, 1	England as a whole, number of woodland species with: Population increasing, 15 Population declining, 12 Population stable, 4	Woodland bird populations down in the West Midlands by 3% since 1994	Bird species provide a good indication of the state of wildlife in the countryside, and on this measure the West Midlands is doing better than England as a whole. More species of both woodland and farmland birds are increasing than decreasing, although overall populations have declined somewhat since 1994.
	Farmland birds			Farmland bird populations 5% down in the West Midlands since 1994	
	SSSI conditions	71.63% 'favourable' or 'unfavourable recovering' (2006)	Target of 95% by 2010	Proportion of sites in this condition is increasing.	SSSIs cover 2% of the Region's land area, and 10% of the England's SSSIs are found in the Region. The West Midlands is still some distance off the national target for SSSI status. Within this there are considerable sub-regional variations – in 2005, 94% of the SSSIs in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area were in favourable/unfavourable recovering status, compared to only 38% in Herefordshire. However, the overall trend is positive.
	Ancient woodlands	39,612ha (3.04% of the land area of the West Midlands)	348,318ha in England as a whole (2.4% of the total land area)	Under pressure from development, inappropriate land use intensification, fragmentation and climate change	The West Midlands accounts for 11.4% of the total ancient woodlands in England.
<b>11. Land Use:</b> Land use and development that optimises the use of previously developed land and buildings and creates high quality built environments that incorporate green space, encourage biodiversity,	Extent of derelict land	2,928ha of derelict land in 2004-2005. Large amounts of derelict land in Staffordshire (almost 600ha), Shropshire (over 400ha), and Warwickshire (almost 400ha).		Down from 3,155ha in 2002-2003 Largest reductions through use of derelict land in Warwickshire and Staffordshire.	There has been only a marginal reduction in the area of derelict land and only small amounts being reclaimed. Whilst the general trend remains in the right direction, the amount and proportion of derelict land reclaimed since 2001 has been relatively small. At present levels of reclamation, it will take many years to bring back the Region's derelict land into beneficial use.

RSDF Objective	Indicators	Regional Data	Comparators?	Trends?	Key issues
promote local distinctiveness and sense of place, and are well-designed	Housing densities	West Midlands average of 34 dwellings/hectare (2004) 75% of all completions built at densities over 30 dwellings per hectare	England 39/ha London 73/ha Yorks and Humber 28/ha	An increase from 26/ha in 1994	Housing densities in the West Midlands are the second lowest among all the English regions, although there has been a strong increase from 24/ha in 2000
	Average annual total land development	1996-1999: 1,465ha			
	Total development on PDL (1996-1999)	54% PDL 46% 'greenfield' (80% PDL in West Midlands conurbation)	51% PDL 49% greenfield		
	Dwellings built on PDL	West Midlands 82% (2004-05)  Sub-regional figures (2004-2005): West Midlands Met 94% Shires and Unitaries 73% Dudley 99% Warwickshire 62%	England 68% London 94% East Midlands 52%	Up from 49% in 1994	Figures from the Annual Monitoring Report suggest that, during 2004-2005, there were 15,270 housing completions on PDL, or 82% of the total (in the RSS). 82% of housing commitments in 2005 are also on PDL, up from 72% in 2003.
<b>12. Stewardship:</b> Local stewardship of local environments	No data.				
<b>13. Pollution:</b> Minimising air, water and soil pollution levels	Ambient air quality (NO <sub>2</sub> , PM <sub>10</sub> , SO <sub>2</sub> )	Modelled data suggests: No breaches of air quality standards for PM <sub>10</sub> , SO <sub>2</sub> Possible breach for NO <sub>2</sub>	National air quality objectives: PM10 40 µgm-3 SO2 20 µgm-3 NO2, 40 µgm-3		Air quality is generally lower in urban areas and (for NO <sub>2</sub> ) along transport corridors. Rural parts of the region enjoy very good ambient air quality.
	Air Quality Management Zones	35 AQMAs declared in 16 local authority areas			All AQMAs have been declared in urban areas. The whole of Birmingham and Wolverhampton, and much of the M6 corridor, has been declared an AQMA.
	Water quality: % of river length declared as 'good' or 'fair' quality	West Midlands (2002): 94% for chemical quality 91% for biological quality	England (2002) 94% for chemical quality 95% for biological quality	West Midlands (1990): 82% for chemical quality in 1990 89% for biological quality in 1990	Improvements in water quality since 1990, more dramatically in terms of chemical water quality (which is now in line with the England average). Biological water quality still less than the England average. Low water quality located in urban areas, particularly the watercourses in Birmingham, Solihull, Stoke on Trent, Coventry, the Black Country.

<b>RSDF Objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Regional Data</b>	<b>Comparators?</b>	<b>Trends?</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
	Pollution events	3,046 in 2003 2,537 in 2004		14% reduction between 2003 and 2004	Pollution events clustered around urban areas.
	Light pollution			22% of the Region became more light saturated between 1993-2000	The remote rural western parts of the Region are still within the darkest classification band, but the central and eastern parts of the Region are becoming increasingly light saturated.
<b>14. Climate change:</b> Minimising the Region's contribution to the causes of climate change whilst implementing a managed response to its unavoidable impacts	Total CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	16.5m tonnes (UNCE <sup>2</sup> figures 2003)	UK 146.3m tonnes (UNCE figures 2003)	On a national level, CO <sub>2</sub> emissions have fallen by 15% from 1990 to 2002, and this trend is probably mirrored in the West Midlands.	West Midlands Energy Strategy states that the Region's emissions were in fact 42m tonnes in 2002.
	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions per capita	3.13 tonnes (UNCE 2003)	UK average: 2.49 tonnes (UNCE 2003)		Figures suggest that the Region produces more CO <sub>2</sub> per head than the average for the UK as a whole. In 1999, 32% of emissions arose from road transport, which is the fastest growing source.
	Extent of flood zone	6% of land area	12% for the whole of England		In relative terms the region does not have a large area of land vulnerable to flooding, and few new houses are being constructed on this land.
	Planning applications given permission in flood plains against the advice of the Environment Agency	11 in 2003-2004		18 in 2001-2002	However, the incidence of flooding has been increasing in the Region with more frequent wetter periods associated with global warming.
	% of new houses built on flood zone	4% (between 1998-2001)	11% (between 1998-2001)		This is exacerbated by the use of drainage systems that are designed to discharge surface water into watercourses more quickly.
<b>Ensure prudent and efficient use of natural resources</b>					
<b>15. Energy:</b> Reducing overall energy use through increasing energy efficiency, and increasing the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources	Installed capacity of electricity from renewable sources	West Midlands (2002): Total 144.4MW Hydro 2MW Landfill gas 38MW Other biofuels and waste 104.4MW	North East 44.3MW East Midlands 75.3MW East Midlands 225.2MW		In 2002, the West Midlands was generating 2% of its electricity requirements from renewables, compared to a target of 5% by 2010.
<b>16. Efficiency:</b> Using natural resources such as water and minerals efficiently	Production and consumption of primary aggregates	19.2m tonnes consumed in 2001 89% of which produced in the Region			Aggregate production continues to take place in vulnerable environments. 14% of crushed rock was extracted from sites within AONBs and 38% was from SSSIs, while 44% of sand and gravel was from sites in the Greenbelt.

<sup>2</sup> These figures are compiled from the UK's national atmospheric emissions inventory, sponsored by DEFRA, which calculates emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> for each km<sup>2</sup>

RSDF Objective	Indicators	Regional Data	Comparators?	Trends?	Key issues
	Use of recycled aggregate (construction and demolition waste)	4.29m tonnes produced 2003			
	Water consumption	127 litres/head/day (2002)		No recent increase overall. More use by households and agriculture offsetting reduced use by industry.	in most parts of the Region river abstraction levels are committed to their sustainable limits with no surplus water available in summer when demand is highest The increase in single-person households, long-run changes in the structure of the population, and increasing affluence (and demand for water using appliances) will cause increased water demand per person.
<b>17. Standards:</b> Promoting and ensuring high standards of sustainable resource-efficient design, construction and maintenance of buildings	BREEAM rated buildings	283 buildings with BREEAM or EcoHomes rating (Feb 2006) in the Midlands	South East 1,362 buildings Scotland 49 buildings		
<b>18. Planning:</b> Ensuring the location of development makes efficient use of existing physical infrastructure and helps reduce need to travel, especially by private car <b>19. Transport:</b> Increasing use of public transport, cycling and walking and reducing road traffic congestion and pollution	Traffic flow – regional level	47.5bn vehicle kilometres, 11.3% of England's total (2002)	South East: 85.2bn km (20.4% of England's total) North East: 19.4bn km (4.6%)	Increase of 17.3% since 1993	Journey distances are increasing as homes, work and services become more dispersed. Accessibility by public transport has been declining because of this, and it has also become relatively more expensive compared to car travel. Road traffic and congestion is growing. While easily comparable congestion data is not generally available, accord to the Annual Monitoring Report 2004, 'the West Midlands, London and the South-East generally experienced the largest decreases in average speedson trunk roads between 1995 and 2003. The West Midlands Region also demonstrates the highest proportion of vehicles in the lower trunk road speed bands outside London in both morning and evening peaks at 2003.'
	Traffic flow – sub-regional level	Percentage of regional traffic flow total: Staffordshire 17% Warwickshire 17% Worcestershire 13% Birmingham 12%		Increases since 1993 range from 8.8% (Birmingham) to 23.3% (Worcestershire)	
	Number of trips by mode	Number of trips per person: 1,044 (2004)	England average: 992	Stable since the early 1990s	

RSDf Objective	Indicators	Regional Data	Comparators?	Trends?	Key issues
		32.5% of trips by public transport, on foot, or by bike in 2004	England average: 35.8%	Decline from 35.8% in 1992-1994	than all other Regions except the South West in 2004. The number of trips per person has declined across England over the last decade. The proportion of journeys by non-car means in the West Midlands is well below the England average, and has fallen steadily in recent years.
	Distance travelled per person per year	6,513 miles (1999-2001 average)	6,819 England average	Annual increase in mileage 1999-2002: 6% in metropolitan areas 2% in non-metropolitan areas	While the number of journeys made per person has remained relatively stable over the last two decades, the average distance travelled per person per year continues to increase in the West Midlands, as it has nationally. The RSS target is to effectively stabilise the overall regional mileage at approximately the 1999/01 average level by 2011.
	Car miles travelled per person per year	5,611 miles (1999-2001 average)	5,579 England average		Although the percentage of journeys made by car in the West Midlands (65%), is broadly similar to the England as a whole (63%), people in the Region use cars for a greater percentage of miles travelled than for any other region. By contrast, bus patronage continues to decline.
	Walking and cycling miles travelled per person per year	179 miles (2003-2004)	195 England average	4% increase since 1998-2000	
	% of total miles travelled per year accounted for by car journeys	86% (1999-2001 average)	82% England average		
<b>20. Waste:</b> Encouraging and enabling waste minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery to divert resources away from the waste stream	Total waste arisings	12.19m tonnes (2000-2001)			Domestic waste generation levels are high and rising. The growing volumes of waste are largely the result of changing styles of living and shopping, with a higher proportion of goods now packaged or processed.
	Municipal waste arisings	2.99m tonnes (2002)		15.3% increase from 1996 (2.57m tonnes)	
	Household waste arisings	Ranges from 557.5kg/head in Wolverhampton to 312kg/head in Malvern Hills (2004-2005)			

RSDf Objective	Indicators	Regional Data	Comparators?	Trends?	Key issues
	Local authority recycling/composting	% recycled/composted (2004-05): West Midlands: 19.7% Lichfield: 46.35% Sandwell: 10.76%	North East: 15.3% East: 29.4% (West Midlands ranked 5th out of 9 regions)	Increasing, from approximately 6% in 1996-97	The percentage of waste disposed to landfill has steadily decreased since the mid-1990s, and the Region now landfills less of its waste than any other region, as incineration (energy from waste) capacity has been increased. Recycling and composting is still a very small aspect of the waste management infrastructure in the Region, and is only growing slowly. The region's landfill capacity is due to run out in seven years' time.
<b>21. Local sourcing:</b> Encouraging local sourcing of goods and materials	No data.				
<b>22. Resource use:</b> Rewarding efficient resource use and encouraging development of alternative and renewable resources where resources are likely to become depleted	See data on IRF Objectives 15, 16, 17 and 20				
<b>Develop a flourishing, diverse and stable regional economy</b>					
<b>23. Growth:</b> Achieving sustainable economic growth and prosperity for the benefit of all the Region's inhabitants	GVA per head	£ per person, 2001: West Midlands £13,072 Coventry (highest in Region) £15,979 Shropshire (lowest in Region) £10,392	London £19,526 UK £14,852 North East £11,019 (West Midlands ranked 5 <sup>th</sup> out of 9 regions)	78% increase since 1989	The West Midlands is in a middling group of regions in terms of prosperity, both in the current (15 country) European Union (38th of 73) and UK (6th of 12). The gap in GVA per head between the Midlands/North of England and the South/East of the country is growing.
<b>24. Employment:</b> Creating high quality employment opportunities suited to the changing needs of the local workforce, whilst recognising the value and contribution of unpaid work	Employment rate	Rate for 2004 West Midlands 74.1% Sandwell, Birmingham 65.4% South Staffordshire, Worcester 83%	England average 75.2%	Change in total number of jobs in the Region 1998-2002: 1.7% (an extra 38,100 jobs) Local authorities with a decline in total number of jobs: Stoke-on Trent, Telford and Wrekin, Warwickshire, Worcestershire	Over the last 10 years, as new jobs have been created in the region, the unemployment rate has declined steadily, approaching levels generally regarded as representing full employment. According to the State of the Region Report 2004, 'there will be a very significant shift in sectoral employment patterns, as over 100,000 jobs are lost from manufacturing by 2010 but over 130,000 new jobs are created in the

RSDF Objective	Indicators	Regional Data	Comparators?	Trends?	Key issues
	Unemployment rate	Rate in 2003 6.0%	England 2003: 4.9	Rate in 1992: 10.9%	service sectors, representing a net increase of 34,000 jobs'.
	IMD Employment	Local authorities with communities ranked in the bottom 2% in England: Birmingham Coventry Stoke-on-Trent Wolverhampton	Sandwell Walsall Newcastle-under-Lyme		At a regional level the claimant rate of unemployment is now around 3%, but there are three wards with rates still in double figures (Aston, Sparkbrook and Soho in Birmingham), and a total of 44 wards, all in the former West Midlands metropolitan county, with rates over 5%.
	Employment by sector	Rates in 2003 Manufacturing 18% Wholesale and retail 18% Real estate 14%		Rates in 1998 Manufacturing 24% Wholesale and retail 18% Real estate 13%	
<b>25. Investment:</b> Promoting investment in future prosperity <b>28. Technology:</b> Promoting and supporting the development of new technologies, especially those with high value and low impact	Investment in Research and Development	West Midlands (2001) £1.125bn (6.7% of England total)	England: £16.926bn	11.5% reduction since 1999	The West Midlands is 7 <sup>th</sup> out of 9 English regions in terms of total R&D spending, and spending per head of population.
		£213.58 per head of population	England: £343.44 East of England: £659.97 North East: £104.95		
	Employment in 'knowledge-driven sectors'			Increase of 29% between 1991 and 2001 in West Midlands	
<b>26. Skills:</b> Encouraging ongoing investment and engagement in learning and skills development	Proportion of the population with poor literacy and numeracy skills	West Midlands 2001: Poor literacy – 17% Poor numeracy – 22%	England 2001: Poor literacy – 16% Poor numeracy – 21%		
	IMD Skills and Education Development	Local authorities with communities ranked in the bottom 2% in England: Sandwell Wyre Forest Dudley Wolverhampton Walsall Stoke on Trent Coventry	Worcester Birmingham Nuneaton and Bedworth Cannock Chase East Staffordshire Reddich		
	Proportion of the population aged 16-74 with no qualifications	West Midlands 34% Sandwell 45.6% Warwick 22%			

<b>RSDF Objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Regional Data</b>	<b>Comparators?</b>	<b>Trends?</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
<b>27. Innovation:</b> Encouraging a culture of enterprise and innovation	VAT registrations per 10,000 population	2003: West Midlands 37 Warwickshire 43.9 Stoke-on-Trent 27.9		8.5% increase in VAT registrations 1994-2004	
	VAT registered businesses survival rates	Proportion of new businesses in the West Midlands surviving 12 months (2001): 92.1%	UK average: 92.2% South East: 93.4%	Proportion of new businesses in the West Midlands surviving 12 months (1993): 84.8%	
<b>28. Technology:</b> Promoting and supporting the development of new technologies, especially those with high value and low impact	See Objective 24, Investment				
<b>29. Responsibility:</b> Encouraging corporate social and environmental responsibility, with regional organisations and agencies leading by example	Formal and informal volunteering	46% of the population in 2003	England average: 50% South West: 57% Yorks and Humberside: 45%	Decline from 45% in 2001	The West Midlands has the second lowest level of volunteering (with London) of all the England regions, and volunteering rates have declined slightly in recent years whereas levels across England in general are increasing.

## **5 TASK A3 – IDENTIFYING KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **5.1.1 What is a Key Sustainability Issue?**

This report reviews data and information from a number of sources to identify a list of key sustainable development issues in the West Midlands. These are issues which both the RSS Revision process and the Sustainability Appraisal will need to bear in mind and address.

In the context of this study, a 'key sustainability issue' would be where:

- the region is approaching or breaching agreed sustainability thresholds or constraints; and/or
- the region performs particularly badly in comparison to agreed targets, standards or comparators; and/or
- there appears to be a common consensus that the issue is a critical issue for the region (based on the review of strategies and data reports); and/or
- the RSS Revision process is likely to significantly affect how the issue or problem develops in the future.

#### **5.1.2 How have they been identified?**

The issues have been identified by reviewing:

- a range of strategy documents produced by different regional bodies, which themselves have highlighted the key challenges for the region and to which they provide a policy response; and
- data contained either within the same strategy documents, regional monitoring reports or other sources of data.

In summarising the issues, we have accepted the interpretation and analysis contained within these reports.

Some of the key sustainability issues affect the West Midlands as a whole, and others are particular problems for specific sub-regions or locations within the Region. Each issue is outlined in turn below.

### **5.2 THE KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

#### **5.2.1 Economic Development**

Whilst the region's economy has performed reasonably well over the last four years, its relative economic position within the UK and Europe remains static. The West Midlands economy must continue to reinvent and transform itself to take advantage of the opportunities available, and in particular to carry out the modernisation and diversification essential in the manufacturing industry to combat falling employment and productivity. The region must work in

partnership to tackle the barriers inhibiting growth, and to build upon those areas and successes where the West Midlands outstrips other regions.<sup>3</sup>

The region needs to develop high growth and high value added industry sectors<sup>4</sup>, increase overall levels of productivity and narrow the GVA (Gross Value Added) gap between the best and worst performing parts of the Region.

The region's workforce must meet the demands of existing and future employers. This means tackling the basic skills deficit while providing routes for people to develop higher skills, and improved opportunities for people in deprived areas of the West Midlands such as North Staffordshire and the Black Country. This means focusing resources on the people and places where there is most need and most potential for improvement. Changing demographic conditions in the region must be taken into account when implementing strategies which affect people's ability to take up training and employment opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

Transport, property and communications infrastructure needs to keep pace with the needs of modern businesses and communities. Without this, commerce will fail to thrive and private firms and individuals will choose to invest elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

To ensure the greatest impact, efforts need to be focused in the region's Regeneration Zones, Business Clusters and High Technology Corridors.<sup>7</sup>

## **5.2.2 Housing**

In the last few years, according to the Annual Monitoring Report 2004: 'The level of housing completions across the Region as a whole is at about the right level to implement RSS while the balance between housing completions in the Major Urban Areas and elsewhere is changing. The proportion of development on previously development sites continues to remain high and has been increasing. Housing densities are also increasing, particularly in the Major Urban Areas.'

However, the Region faces a longer-term failure in the housing markets to provide many people with housing they want which has resulted in little or, in some cases no substantial range of choice whether in price or type.<sup>8</sup> In many areas there are severe problem of affordability.<sup>9</sup> Although the RSS estimates that over 6,000 affordable dwellings must be constructed each year between 2001-2011 to meet demand, only 2,552 were constructed in 2003-4. This was only 14% of the total number of houses built in the Region that year. In addition, the housing markets in some parts of Birmingham, Coventry, the Black Country and Stoke-on-Trent face problems of low demand.

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<sup>3</sup> *Delivering Advantage: The West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan 2004-2010*, Advantage West Midlands and West Midlands Regional Assembly, 2004

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *Delivering Advantage: The West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan 2004-2010*, Advantage West Midlands and West Midlands Regional Assembly, 2004

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> *West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy 2005*, Regional Housing Board, June 2005

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

There are cross-border movements of people to take into account in housing markets, both in the peripheral remoter authorities where cross border migration pressures are being felt in the housing markets and in the Major Urban Areas where international migration is focused. The Regional Housing Board also seeks to work with adjoining Regions in finding ways to stem the destabilising pressures of retirement migration into the housing markets of the West Midlands.<sup>10</sup>

Housing growth also needs to be carefully managed in order to avoid potential negative impacts associated with, for example, traffic and congestion growth, noise, air pollution and landscape and townscape impacts, particularly in high growth parts of the region.

There is a need to secure long term changes to the housing choices on offer in the region to provide a range of housing types, tenure, sizes and affordability so that communities are genuinely mixed and economically and socially sustainable. This will involve moving from the recent position of two houses built outside the Major Urban Areas (MUAs) for each one built within them, to less than one outside for each one within. At the same time new housing provision in the other areas will need to be reduced to levels where it is largely meeting local needs.<sup>11</sup>

### **5.2.3 Urban Renaissance**

The total population of the West Midlands Region is growing slowly (+3% over the last 20 years), however, the distribution of population between the regional conurbations (the former West Midlands Metropolitan County, and Stoke and Newcastle under Lyme) and the rest of the region is also slowly changing. The greatest growth is taking place in urban areas outside the conurbations, with slower growth in the rural areas. Of the local authorities covering the Major Urban Areas only Birmingham, Solihull and Dudley did not experience a net loss of population between 1991 and 2001<sup>12</sup>. Over the last 20 years an average of around 20,000 people moved from the conurbations to the rest of the region each year, with 12,000 moving the other way. Many of the people leaving are the most economically active<sup>13</sup>.

This outward movement is associated with an increasing return flow of commuting into urban areas, and a fall in 'self-containment' in the Region's towns. In addition, the social make-up of urban areas, especially inner urban areas and outer, overspill estates, is skewed towards those with lower incomes. House prices in the areas most in demand from commuters have tended to increase, pricing out people with lower-paid local jobs. In contrast, the less desirable urban neighbourhoods suffer the opposite problems of low demand and associated social and physical decline, and in some areas, increased traffic from commuting.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> *West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy 2005*, Regional Housing Board, June 2005

<sup>12</sup> *Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11)*, Government Office for the West Midlands, June 2004

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

<sup>14</sup> *State of the Region Report 2004*, West Midlands Regional Observatory

Past efforts at regeneration have often failed to provide urban areas which are attractive to a broad range of people's expectations and lifestyles<sup>15</sup>. It is critical for the Spatial Strategy that all of the Region's urban areas once again become vital, attractive places for people of a wide range of circumstances and lifestyles<sup>16</sup>. This focus on urban renaissance implicitly places a high priority on the reuse of derelict land and increasing the amount and quality of urban greenspace and the maximising the potential of the historic environment.

#### **5.2.4 Rural Renaissance**

The rural areas of the West Midlands continue to play an important role in the Region's economic, social and environmental fabric. These cover four fifths of the territory and contain one fifth of its population. There is great diversity within these rural areas which must be recognised and addressed. Areas such as southern Staffordshire, northern Worcestershire and much of Warwickshire, are heavily influenced by proximity to and functional linkages with MUAs and share some of their characteristics. The remoter areas, particularly parts of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire on the western side of the Region, have distinct needs partly arising from high levels of deprivation and low population densities.<sup>17</sup> Priorities for rural areas include developing higher growth economic sectors, rejuvenating market towns, diversifying employment opportunities outside declining land based sectors, developing new opportunities within new land-based sectors, housing affordability and protecting and enhancing the high quality rural environment ('environmental capital') to support local regeneration and rural economies. It is also crucially important that the quality of the environment (eg landscape character and quality, tranquillity, biodiversity etc) is protected and enhanced, both as a resource for economic activity and in its own right.

#### **5.2.5 Transport**

The Panel Report into the Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (2002) identified transport as the single greatest challenge for the West Midlands out of all those covered in the draft RSS.

The West Midlands is at the centre of the national road and rail network and its four MUAs lie astride it. This gives rise to competing demands between local, regional, national and international movements often using the same elements of the network. The region's network is diminishing in its ability as a whole to cater for the range of demands placed upon it, leading in particular to increasing congestion in the MUAs and on the strategic transport corridors. Journey distances are increasing as homes, work and services become more dispersed. Accessibility by public transport has been declining because of this, and it has also become relatively more expensive compared to car travel.<sup>18</sup> People in the West Midlands use cars for a greater percentage of miles travelled than any other region. Economic growth in the region needs to be de-coupled from increases in road travel and congestion.

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

<sup>18</sup> Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11), Government Office for the West Midlands, June 2004

Congestion on the motorways is extending over an increasing proportion of the working day, and this is exacerbated by the impacts of accidents and incidents. Traffic attempting to avoid motorway congestion diverts to unsuitable local roads, resulting in a deterioration of conditions across a wide area.<sup>19</sup>

This widespread congestion has a major impact on businesses. Goods cannot be transported reliably and workers have difficulty in getting to their place of work. Quality of life is also affected, with pollution reaching excessive levels in some MUAs and streets becoming unsafe for walking and cycling. Public transport becomes more unreliable, less attractive and more costly to operate, directly affecting those who do not have access to a car and are most susceptible to social exclusion.<sup>20</sup>

Land for future airport-related development may be safeguarded within RSS. Proposals have been made for expansion at Birmingham International Airport in order to provide capacity for almost 35 million passengers a year, although it should be noted that this would be subject to consultation and planning processes before it could be formally approved for implementation. It is important that surface access strategies and schemes are reflected, as appropriate, within the RSS. Improved rail, bus and coach services will need to contribute to this.<sup>21</sup>

A central cross-cutting theme is the need for behavioural change across the West Midlands. Access within and across the region needs to be improved in a way that supports the Spatial Strategy, reduces the need for travel, expands travel choice, tackles congestion, improves safety and protects the environment. However, the Spatial Strategy relies on continuing development of the Region and this is unlikely to be achieved without increasing the demand for the transport of people and goods. There will therefore be a need to continue to remove bottlenecks from the strategic networks and provide improved accessibility for regeneration areas. These infrastructure improvements must not undermine the objectives of the Spatial Strategy, for example by encouraging longer distance commuting.<sup>22</sup>

### **5.2.6 Water Resources**

Surface water throughout the majority of the West Midlands is already fully committed to existing abstractions and the environment in the summer, and, with a couple of exceptions, no significant further resource is reliably available. However, there is scope for winter abstraction from most of the rivers. The licensed groundwater abstractions exceed the sustainable limit in a number of areas, potentially affecting rivers and wetlands, although in other areas there is some groundwater resource available.<sup>23</sup>

The timing and location of new development must respect water resources and environmental constraints. Development must be sustainable in terms of water demand, water abstraction, treatment, supply and disposal. Continued

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

<sup>21</sup> *The Future of Air Transport*, Department for Transport, December 2003

<sup>22</sup> *Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands* (RPG11), Government Office for the West Midlands, June 2004

<sup>23</sup> *A Water Resources Strategy for the West Midlands*, Environment Agency, (no date)

availability of reliable public water supply is essential. Some of this will be achieved through efficiency savings; some through improvements to existing schemes and the way in which they are managed. Some new resource schemes will also be needed.<sup>24</sup> Flood prevention and management is also a high priority in some parts of the region, for example, the Severn and Avon valleys.<sup>25</sup>

### **5.2.7 Climate Change**

Climate change is recognised as one of the greatest threats facing the world, with climate models indicating that the West Midlands will continue to get warmer with wetter winters and drier summers. Within the West Midlands, climate change impacts will for example affect the availability/supply of and demand for water resources. The major cause of climate change is the production of greenhouse gases, mainly through the combustion of fossil fuels to make energy for homes, industry, businesses and transport.<sup>26</sup>

The Government's Energy White Paper sets a challenge of cutting UK carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050, with real progress already to be made by 2020. Achieving these goals will be a challenge that must be addressed not only at the international and national level, but also through regional efforts. A positive response from the West Midlands towards the development of a low carbon economy will bring the region a range of benefits, including: improved competitiveness through improved energy efficiency, fewer homes which are not adequately or affordably heated, improved air quality, diverse business opportunities in the development and deployment of new technologies, as well as a reduced regional contribution to the emission of climate change gases. Action will also be required to address the emissions arising from the transport sector, where cars are used more than any other Region, and where the proposed airports expansion will be accompanied by further increases in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. To be in line with the national target for tackling climate change, emissions in the West Midlands need to reduce from 42 million tonnes (Mt) in 2002 to approximately 38 Mt by 2010, to 33 Mt by 2020 and to 17 Mt by 2050.<sup>27</sup>

### **5.2.8 Flooding**

As well as addressing the causes of climate change, the Region will also need to plan for the future impacts of that change. Recent experiences of flooding have shown how climate change can cause social disruption and, through reducing property prices and raising insurance premiums, affect people economically. The West Midlands region remains one of the most susceptible to flooding, notably on the Severn and Avon<sup>28</sup>. Some 62,000 properties are at risk, with flood warnings becoming a more common event<sup>29</sup>. The incidence of flooding has been increasing in the Region with more frequent wetter periods

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> *Enriching Our Region: An Environmental Manifesto for the West Midlands*, West Midlands Regional Sustainability Forum, 2005

<sup>26</sup> *Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11)*, Government Office for the West Midlands, June 2004

<sup>27</sup> *West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy*, West Midlands Regional Assembly, Advantage West Midlands and Government Office for the West Midlands, November 2004

<sup>28</sup> *Enriching Our Region: An Environmental Manifesto for the West Midlands*, West Midlands Regional Sustainability Forum, 2005

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*

associated with global warming. The severity of flooding is further exacerbated by the use of drainage systems that are designed to discharge surface water into watercourses more quickly. According to an assessment of the West Midlands' infrastructure by the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Region will need to develop 'a strategic approach to providing floodwater capacity along open areas in flood plains'.<sup>30</sup>

### **5.2.9 Biodiversity**

The region faces some difficult challenges in relation to biodiversity. The Region's plants and animals have suffered major declines in recent decades, and there are continuing pressures from changing land uses and more indirect factors such as climate change<sup>31</sup>. The natural environment has an economic value in rural and urban areas and assets play an important role in supporting economic development, regeneration and quality of life<sup>32</sup>. The existing RSS highlights the importance of biodiversity, and includes a statutory policy requiring local authorities and others to provide for biodiversity in their plans and programmes. A spatial approach to biodiversity conservation is set out, including the identification of areas of concentrations of high quality biodiversity sites.

### **5.2.10 Waste Management**

Although the West Midlands is largely self-sufficient in waste treatment and disposal capacity, it remains heavily reliant on landfill. Recycling rates for household waste are low, although with more incinerators than any other Region in England, recovery rates are relatively good.<sup>33</sup> To meet projected growth in waste arisings, according to the Annual Monitoring Report 2004, there is a significant need for additional recycling and recovery capacity. This is particularly true for municipal waste where a 12-fold increase in capacity is required by 2021, half of which would be to meet the needs of the Metropolitan Area.

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<sup>30</sup> *West Midlands – The State of the Nation 2005*, Institution of Civil Engineers

<sup>31</sup> *Restoring the Region's Wildlife: The Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands*, Final Draft, January 2005

<sup>32</sup> *ibid*

<sup>33</sup> *Enriching Our Region: An Environmental Manifesto for the West Midlands*, West Midlands Regional Sustainability Forum, 2005



**6.1 FRAMEWORK PURPOSE**

This section sets out the Sustainability Appraisal Framework for the SA of the Phase Two Revision of the West Midlands RSS. The Framework is designed to set out questions that can be used to 'interrogate' proposals, including options drafted during the revision process, to:

- ascertain whether and how specific sustainability issues are being addressed; and
- understand the environmental, social and economic implications of options and proposals.

The questions reflect an understanding of:

- the RSS vision, challenges and objectives, and the objectives and tasks developed for the Phase Two Revision, as described in *Section 2*;
- objectives and targets identified through the review of plans and strategies, as described in *Section 3*;
- baseline conditions within the Region, as described in *Section 4*; and
- key sustainability issues in the Region, as described in *Section 5*.

**6.2 FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE****6.2.1 Basis for the Framework – Appraisal Objectives**

The Framework is based on the 29 objectives set out in the Regional Sustainable Development Framework. These are taken as the objectives for the Sustainability Appraisal.

These 29 objectives have been tested, to ascertain whether there are any mutual incompatibilities and tensions between them. This internal incompatibility test is presented below.



As the table shows, many of the objectives are broadly compatible or have no clear links. There are, however, some obvious areas where there are potential incompatibilities or tensions between objectives, in particular:

- between the objective of providing decent and affordable housing for all (Objective 5), and objectives relating to the protection of environmental assets, resource use and climate change (eg Objectives 10, 14, 20 and 22); and
- between the objective to achieve sustainable economic growth and prosperity (Objective 23) and many of the same environmental sustainability objectives.

At this stage, all 29 RSDF objectives have been taken forward as objectives for the SA.

### **6.2.2 Core Objectives**

The objectives of the RSDF have been turned into 29 **core appraisal questions**, which can be used to interrogate options and proposals, and/or to present an overall assessment of the implications of the revision for that RSDF issue.

### **6.2.3 Subsidiary Questions**

Some of the 29 appraisal objectives are self-explanatory, and can act as stand-alone appraisal questions in their own right. However, others are generic and do not on their own provide a suitable basis for appraising proposals. Therefore, a set of **subsidiary appraisal questions** have been developed to address more detailed issues that:

- are particularly relevant to the West Midlands RSS in terms of deliverability (ie the RSS can be expected to deliver key aspects of an RSDF objective) or influence (ie the RSS can be expected to be a major influence on the achievement of an RSDF objective);
- reflect the objectives and targets from the review of other plans and strategies; and
- focus on the key sustainability issues and problems in the Region.

### **6.2.4 Indicators and Targets**

Indicators and targets are included for many of the core and subsidiary objectives. This is to ensure that the appraisal is linked to quantified measures of performance wherever possible, rather than being entirely qualitative in nature.

### **6.2.5 Use of the Framework Questions**

All core and subsidiary appraisal questions will be used for appraising work done under the Phase Two Revision.

It should be noted that some appraisal questions are more useful for appraising the implications of broad strategic options, while others are more

focused on issues at policy level. This reflects the nature and scope of the RSS.

### **6.3**      ***THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK***

The Sustainability Appraisal Framework is set out in *Table 6.2* overleaf. **Core appraisal questions are set out in bold.**

A review of how the Framework covers the issues specified in the Strategic Environment Assessment Directive is presented in *Table 6.3*.

**Table 6.2 Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
<b>Develop thriving sustainable communities</b>			
<b>1. Access</b>	<b>ensure easy and equitable access to services, facilities and opportunities, including jobs and learning, regardless of culture, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality, age, disability or location?</b>	Changes in the level of accessibility to housing and key services in different parts of the region (IMD) Households finding it very or fairly difficult to get to a corner shop or supermarket; post office; doctor or hospital (UKSD)	
	ensure that existing services and opportunities are retained and, where possible, developed?		
	promote compact, mixed-use developments with good accessibility to local facilities and services that reduce the need to travel?		
<b>2. Participation</b>	<b>enable communities to influence the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and quality of life?</b>	% participation rates in community and volunteering activities	
	promote the use of community-based planning tools?		
<b>3. Poverty</b>	<b>address poverty and disadvantage, taking into account the particular difficulties of those facing multiple disadvantage?</b>	Wage/income levels – gross weekly pay Indices of deprivation – % of wards in bottom 10% of UK wards Working age people/children living in workless households (UKSD) Children/pensioners in relative low-income households before/after housing costs (UKSD)	
	ensure the provision of employment land in, or accessible to, the most deprived communities in the Region?		
<b>4. Health</b>	<b>improve health and reduce health inequalities by encouraging and enabling healthy active lifestyles and protecting health, as well as providing equitable access to health services?</b>		
	diminish inequalities in mortality, health	Healthy life expectancy (UKSD)	

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
	and wellbeing across the Region?	Infant mortality (UKSD) Death rates from circulatory disease; cancer; suicides (UKSD) Prevalence of cigarette smoking (UKSD) Life expectancy at birth (LQOL 32)	
	ensure that infrastructure for healthcare is provided to meet projected future demand and need?		
	promote healthy lifestyles and opportunities for exercise (eg through environmental infrastructure and design)?		
	promote opportunities to participate in sport?	Area of outdoor playing space per 1,000 pop Percentage of population within 20 minutes travel time (urban – walking; rural – by car) of different sports facility types (LQOL 9)	National Playing Fields Association standard: 2.4ha per 1,000 pop
<b>5. Housing</b>	<b>provide decent and affordable housing for all, of the right quantity, type, tenure and affordability for local needs, in clean, safe and pleasant local environments?</b>	Numbers, types, tenures and locations of newly built housing Housing starts and completions (market and affordable) Percentage of housing that is unfit (LQOL 40) Households living in fuel poverty (UKSD) Number of rough sleepers (UKSD) Households in temporary accommodation (UKSD) Household accommodation without central heating (LQOL 38)	Halve the numbers living in temporary accommodation by 2010. Ensure that all social housing meets set standards of decency by 2010 Eradicate fuel poverty for vulnerable households by 2010 and for all households by 2016. Ensuring the number of vulnerable households in decent housing is at least 65% by 2006, 70% by 2010 and 75% by 2020.
	deliver genuine 'pathways of housing choice'? <sup>34</sup>		

<sup>34</sup> 'Pathways of Housing Choice' means providing a variety of housing opportunities for people in terms of type, tenure and location over the length of their housing career, so that people can exercise different choices within a locality rather than having to make choices between localities when they want to adjust their housing situation

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
	increase the supply of affordable housing?	Affordable dwellings completed as a percentage of all new housing completions (LQOL 37) House price to income ratio (LQOL 41) House prices relative to national and regional averages Vacancy rates and Concealed Households	
	reduce the percentage of unfit/non-decent homes?	% of unfit/non-decent homes	
	encourage housing development which makes more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net); and seek greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility (such as city, town, district and local centres or around major nodes along good quality public transport corridors)?		
	promote the renovation and reuse of existing building stock, rather than the construction of new houses, where appropriate?		
	ensure the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in housing?	Numbers of houses with EcoHomes 'very good' or 'excellent' ratings	
	<b>6. Crime</b>	<b>reduce crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour?</b>	
	promote the reduction of crime rates?	Percentage of residents that think people being attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion is a very or fairly big problem in their area (LQOL 2) Percentage of residents who say they feel very or fairly safe outside a) during the day; b) after dark (LQOL 5)	
	encourage the adoption of principles to 'design out' crime in housing and employment sites?		

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
<b>7. Culture &amp; recreation</b>	<b>improve opportunities to participate in the diverse cultural, sport and recreational opportunities the West Midlands can offer?</b>	Percentage of residents that think over the past three years community activities for their area have got better or stayed the same (LQOL 3) Percentage of residents that think over the past three years for their area a) activities for teenagers; b) cultural facilities; c) facilities for young children; d) sport and leisure facilities and e) parks and open spaces have got better or stayed the same (LQOL 10) number of school pupil visits to museums and galleries number of visits to libraries per capita	
	ensure that facilities and locations for cultural activities are protected and provided?		
	protect and create high quality or valued recreational spaces and avoid erosion of recreational function?		
<b>8. Balanced development</b>	<b>encourage physical development with a better balance of jobs, housing, services and facilities within each part of the Region in order to meet local needs locally and encourage stable and sustainable communities?</b>		
	Focus retail and office development in town centres?	Percentage of resident population travelling over 20km to work (LQOL 43)	
	link housing development and employment opportunities?		
	reverse the pattern of people migrating from metropolitan areas to rural parts of the Region?	Pattern of population movement to and from the Major Urban Areas and changes over time	

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
<b>Enhance and Protect the Environment</b>			
<b>9. Environmental assets</b>	<b>value, protect, enhance and restore the Region's environmental assets, including the natural and built environment and the historic environment?</b>	Area of land designated as a local nature reserve per 1,000 population (LQOL 30) Proportion of developed land that is derelict (LQOL 22) Employment and economic value associated with environmental economy activities – such as environment based tourism and recreation (as estimated in the 'Environmental Economy of the West Midlands').	
	value, enhance and protect the Region's natural environmental assets (eg Green Belt, parks and open spaces, AONBs etc)?		
	value, enhance and protect the Region's historic environment assets (eg World Heritage Sites, archaeological remains, historic buildings, parks and gardens, and landscapes, and conservation areas, battlefields and other architectural and historically important features and areas, and their settings)?	Number of listed buildings (Grade I and II*); monuments (Scheduled Monuments); and landscapes (Registered Parks and Gardens) at risk	
	promote heritage-led regeneration?		
	promote the repair and reuse of historic buildings?		
	enhance the amenity value of the countryside, meeting the recreational and leisure needs of communities?		
	protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the region's landscapes and townscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place?	Percentage of Joint Character Areas showing no change or showing change consistent with existing character area descriptions. Number of Village or Local Area Design Statements that have been adopted by the relevant local planning authority as planning guidance	
	<b>10. Biodiversity</b>	<b>value, maintain, restore and re-create regional biodiversity?</b>	Percentage area of land designated as sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) within the Region in favourable condition (LQOL 30)

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
		Extent of ancient woodland Farmland bird populations (UKSD) Woodland bird populations (UKSD)	
	value, enhance and protect the Region's designated sites, including sites designated for geodiversity?		
	value, enhance and protect the Region's priority habitats and species, and promote the delivery of regional biodiversity targets?	Area of priority habitats protected and restored in the region Change (additions and subtractions) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>priority biodiversity habitats (by type)</li> <li>areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value, including sites of international, regional or subregional significance</li> </ul>	Twenty three priority habitats have targets set for both protection and restoration
	support development that incorporates improvements to wildlife habitats?		
	<b>11. Land Use</b>	<b>encourage land use and development that optimises the use of previously developed land and buildings and creates high quality built environments that incorporate green space, encourage biodiversity, promote local distinctiveness and sense of place, and are well-designed?</b>	
	require good urban design to create attractive, high quality environments where people will choose to live, work and invest?	Percentage of residents satisfied with living in their local community	
	increase access to good quality green space (eg increase the number of people in towns and cities with accessible greenspace within 300m of their homes)?	Area/accessibility of greenspace in towns and cities % of population within 500m access to woodland of no less than 2ha in size % of population within 4km access to woodland of no less than 20ha in size Parks/open spaces attaining 'Green Flag' status	2 ha of accessible greenspace within 300m of home 1 ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1000 population At least 1 greenspace of 20 ha within 2 km of home One 100ha site within 5km of home One 500ha site within 10km of home
	encourage the provision of housing and employment land on previously-developed land (in line with the sequential approach)?	New dwellings built on previously developed land (UKSD)	
	protect existing and encourage the		

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
	development of new biodiversity assets in developments?		
<b>12. Stewardship</b>	<b>encourage local stewardship of local environments?</b>		
<b>13. Pollution</b>	<b>minimise air, water and soil pollution levels?</b>		
	promote more sustainable transport patterns in areas of low air quality?	SO <sub>2</sub> , NO <sub>2</sub> , PM <sub>10</sub> levels Number of AQMAs	
	address air quality impacts arising from specific development activities?		
	protect and enhance the quality of watercourses in the Region?	% of watercourses in 'good' or 'fair' biological and chemical quality	
	reduce the quantity of contaminated land in the Region?	Amount of derelict and contaminated land in different parts of the region	
	prevent noise and light pollution?	Tranquility	
<b>14. Climate change</b>	<b>minimise the Region's contribution to the causes of climate change by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from transport, domestic, commercial and industrial sources?</b>	Carbon dioxide emissions by sector and per capita (LQOL 25)	Industry: Reduce CO <sub>2</sub> emissions by 2.4 Mt (18%) by 2010 and an additional 4.3 Mt (32%) by 2020. Commercial and public sector: Reduce emissions by 2.0 Mt (36%) by 2010 and an additional 1.5Mt (26%) by 2020. Domestic: Reduce emissions by 2.4 Mt (19%) by 2010, and an additional 3.7 Mt (29%) by 2020. Transport: Stabilise emissions by 2010 and reduce by 0.7 Mt (7%) by 2020.
	reduce the Region's contribution to climate change?		
	prevent all inappropriate development in areas of flood risk?	% of new houses built in flood risk areas	
	promote sustainable urban drainage systems?		
	promote the adoption of climate change adaptation and climate proofing principles in planning and design?		

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
<b>Ensure prudent and efficient use of natural resources</b>			
<b>15. Energy</b>	<b>reduce overall energy use through increased energy efficiency, and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable and low carbon sources, including by micro-generation, CHP, district heating, and in transportation?</b>	% of energy generated from renewables and CHP	Renewable generation equivalent to 5% of electricity consumption by 2010 and 10% by 2020. Heat from renewable sources providing 250 GWh (0.3% of consumption) by 2010 and 650 GWh (1% of consumption) by 2020. Production of 460 GWh of liquid biofuels per year (approximately 44 million litres - 2% of current diesel sales) by 2010. Combined Heat and Power: 1,000 MWe by 2010
	raise energy efficiency to current Building Regulations standards in refurbishments for Decent Homes Standard? (Also see question on EcoHomes standard under issue 5, Housing).		
	promote energy generation from CHP and community heating?		
<b>16. Efficiency</b>	<b>using natural resources such as water and minerals efficiently, including by incorporating efficiency measures into new land use and developments?</b>		
	promote the balance of water supply and demand?	Daily domestic water use (per capita) (LQOL 27) Groundwater licenses Water savings	Reduction in groundwater licences. 25% water efficiency savings in new homes ODPM proposals – 125 litres per head per day in new homes Water savings of up to 140 Ml/d compared to the highest growth scenario, in addition to water savings through maintaining current active leakage control targets.
	reduce the use of primary aggregates?		
<b>17. Standards</b>	<b>promote and ensure high standards of sustainable resource-efficient design, construction and maintenance of buildings, where possible exceeding the requirements of the Building Regulations?</b>		
	ensure the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in all buildings?	Numbers of buildings built with BREEAM 'very good' or 'excellent' ratings	
<b>18. Planning</b>	<b>ensure the location of development makes efficient use of existing physical infrastructure and helps</b>		

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
	<b>reduce need to travel, especially by private car?</b>		
	reduce the number and length of journeys made by car?	Number/length of car journeys	
	reduce the need to travel?		
	promote alternative, more sustainable, modes of transport to the car (including walking and cycling) through location of housing, employment sites, services and facilities, and appropriate infrastructure for sustainable modes of transport?	Public transport usage Walking and cycling trips per person	
<b>19. Transport</b>	<b>increase use of public transport, cycling and walking as a proportion of total travel in order to reduce road traffic congestion, pollution and accidents, and improve health through increased physical activity?</b>	Walking and cycling as a percentage of all trips (UKSD) Public transport as a percentage of all trips (UKSD) Children who walk or cycle to school (UKSD) Percentage of resident population that travels to work a) by private motor vehicle; b) by public transport; c) on foot or by cycle (LQOL 42)	10% growth in bus patronage by 2010 50% growth in rail passengers 2000-2015
	promote more sustainable transport patterns in areas suffering from congestion?	Congestion/journey times – mean travel time to work (minutes). Congestion/journey times – % of average trunk road speed achieved at a.m. peak.	
	promote a shift of freight from road to rail?	Tonnes of freight transported by rail and road per annum	Increase rail share of market by 10% by 2010
	Improve the quality of transport infrastructure?		
	make best use of existing airport capacity?		
<b>20. Waste</b>	<b>encourage and enable waste minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery to divert resources away from the waste stream?</b>		
	reduce waste arisings?	Total waste arisings	
	ensure that sustainable waste management can be carried out in the Region?	Amount of waste being generated, recycled, recovered, going to landfill etc	Recycle 30% of domestic waste by 2010

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
	enable communities to take responsibility for their own waste and meet their own needs (self-sufficiency)?		
<b>21. Local sourcing</b>	<b>encourage local sourcing of goods and materials?</b>		
<b>22. Resource Use</b>	<b>reward efficient resource use and encouraging development of alternative and renewable resources where resources are likely to become depleted?</b>		
	See questions under Objective 5 (Housing), Objective 15 (Energy), Objective 16 (Efficiency), Objective 17 (Standards) and Objective 20 (Waste)		
<b>Develop a flourishing, diverse and stable regional economy</b>			
<b>23. Growth</b>	<b>achieve a strong, stable and sustainable economy and prosperity for the benefit of all the Region's inhabitants?</b>		
	narrow the GVA gap between the best and worst performing parts of the Region?	GVA per capita	To raise GVA per capita above the national average.
	support efficient, competitive, diverse and innovative business, commercial, industrial, retail, tourism and leisure sectors?		
<b>24. Employment</b>	<b>ensure that the Region's workforce is equipped with the skills to access high quality employment opportunities suited to the changing needs of the Regional economy?</b>		
	reduce inequalities in employment rates across the Region?	People of working age in employment (UKSD) Working age people economically inactive (UKSD) 16-18 year olds not in employment, education or training (UKSD) Percentage of population of working age claiming key benefits (LQOL 15) Employment rate by local authority	

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets
	Will the option/proposal...		
		IMD Employment deprivation	
	provide employment land near to the potential workforce?		
25. Investment	<b>promote investment in future prosperity, including ensuring an appropriate supply of employment sites within the region to support sustainable economic development?</b>	R&D investment levels	
	Encourage investment to develop deprived areas and focusing resources in areas of greatest need		
26. Skills	<b>encourage ongoing investment and engagement in learning and skills development?</b>	% of workforce qualified to NVQ 3+ % of school leavers staying on to FE/structured training	50% of young people moving into higher education by 2010
	ensure that education and skills infrastructure meets projected future demand and need?	Numbers of organisations employing graduates Percentage of employers reporting skills gaps	
	reduce inequalities in education and skills across the Region?		
27. Innovation	<b>encourage a culture of enterprise and innovation?</b>	Business survival rates – % of new companies surviving 3 years Levels of business innovation – % of companies reporting innovative activity	
28. Technology	<b>promote and support the development of new technologies, especially those with high value and low impact and green technology initiatives?</b>	Percentage of employment in K1 and K2 knowledge intensive sectors	
	promote the development of technologies to address climate change, eg new energy generators using renewable sources, more efficient industrial technology and processes to minimise or mitigate for the impacts of climate change?		
	secure improvements to communication infrastructure?	Accessibility to broadband – % of households and businesses with access to broadband	All businesses and 97% of households with access to broadband
29. Responsibility	<b>encourage corporate social and environmental responsibility, with regional organisations and agencies</b>	Number of companies with ISO14001 registration	

RSDF Objective	Appraisal Questions	Indicators	Targets

**Table 6.3 Review of how the environmental issues listed by the SEA Directive are covered by the Appraisal Framework**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Coverage in Appraisal Framework: will the option/proposal...</b>
Biodiversity  Fauna Flora	<b>value, maintain, restore and re-create regional biodiversity?</b>
	value, enhance and protect the Region's designated sites, including sites designated for geodiversity?
	value, enhance and protect the Region's priority habitats and species, and promote the delivery of regional biodiversity targets?
	support development that incorporates improvements to wildlife habitats?
	<b>encourage land use and development that optimises the use of previously developed land and buildings and creates high quality built environments that incorporate green space, encourage biodiversity, promote local distinctiveness and sense of place, and are well-designed?</b>
	protect existing and encourage the development of new biodiversity assets in developments?
	<b>value, protect, enhance and restore the Region's environmental assets, including the natural and built environment and the historic environment?</b>
	value, enhance and protect the Region's natural environmental assets (eg Green Belt, parks and open spaces, AONBs etc)?
Population	Many of the questions within the Framework address 'population' impacts, including
	<b>enable communities to influence the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and quality of life?</b>
	<b>address poverty and disadvantage, taking into account the particular difficulties of those facing multiple disadvantage?</b>
	<b>provide decent and affordable housing for all, of the right quantity, type, tenure and affordability for local needs, in clean, safe and pleasant local environments?</b>
	<b>reduce crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour?</b>
	<b>ensure that the Region's workforce is equipped with the skills to access high quality employment opportunities suited to the changing needs of the Regional economy?</b>
	<b>encourage ongoing investment and engagement in learning and skills development?</b>
Human health	<b>improve health and reduce health inequalities by encouraging and enabling healthy active lifestyles and protecting health, as well as providing equitable access to health services?</b>
	diminish inequalities in mortality, health and wellbeing across the Region?
	ensure that infrastructure for healthcare is provided to meet projected future demand and need?
	promote healthy lifestyles and opportunities for exercise (eg through environmental infrastructure and design)?
	promote opportunities to participate in sport?
Soil	<b>minimise air, water and soil pollution levels?</b>
	value, enhance and protect the Region's designated sites, including sites designated for geodiversity?
	reduce the quantity of contaminated land in the Region?
Water	<b>minimise air, water and soil pollution levels?</b>
	protect and enhance the quality of watercourses in the Region?
	<b>using natural resources such as water and minerals efficiently, including by incorporating efficiency measures into new land use and developments?</b>
	promote the balance of water supply and demand?
	prevent all inappropriate development in areas of flood risk?
	promote sustainable urban drainage systems?

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Coverage in Appraisal Framework: will the option/proposal...</b>
Air	<p><b>minimise air, water and soil pollution levels?</b></p> <p>promote more sustainable transport patterns in areas of low air quality?</p> <p>address air quality impacts arising from specific development activities?</p>
Climatic factors	<p><b>minimise the Region's contribution to the causes of climate change by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from transport, domestic, commercial and industrial sources?</b></p> <p>reduce the Region's contribution to climate change?</p> <p>prevent all inappropriate development in areas of flood risk?</p> <p>promote sustainable urban drainage systems?</p> <p>require the adoption of climate change adaptation and climate proofing principles in planning and design?</p> <p><b>reduce overall energy use through increased energy efficiency, and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable and low carbon sources, including by micro-generation, CHP, district heating, and in transportation?</b></p> <p>raise energy efficiency to current Building Regulations standards in refurbishments for Decent Homes Standard? (Also see question on EcoHomes standard under issue 5, Housing).</p> <p>promote energy generation from CHP and community heating?</p>
Material assets	<p><b>using natural resources such as water and minerals efficiently?</b></p> <p>reduce the use of primary aggregates?</p> <p><b>provide decent and affordable housing for all, of the right quantity, type, tenure and affordability for local needs, in clean, safe and pleasant local environment?</b></p> <p>deliver genuine 'pathways of housing choice'?<sup>35</sup></p> <p>increase the supply of affordable housing?</p> <p>reduce the percentage of unfit/non-decent homes?</p> <p>encourage housing development which makes more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net); and seek greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility (such as city, town, district and local centres or around major nodes along good quality public transport corridors)?</p> <p>promote the renovation and reuse of existing building stock, rather than the construction of new houses, where appropriate?</p> <p>ensure the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in housing?</p> <p><b>promote and ensure high standards of sustainable resource-efficient design, construction and maintenance of buildings, where possible exceeding the requirements of the Building Regulations?</b></p> <p>ensure the adoption of sustainable design and construction practices in all buildings?</p>

<sup>35</sup> 'Pathways of Housing Choice' means providing a variety of housing opportunities for people in terms of type, tenure and location over the length of their housing career, so that people can exercise different choices within a locality rather than having to make choices between localities when they want to adjust their housing situation

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Coverage in Appraisal Framework: will the option/proposal...</b>
Cultural heritage	<b>improve opportunities to participate in the diverse cultural, sport and recreational opportunities the West Midlands can offer?</b>
	ensure that facilities and locations for cultural activities are protected and provided?
	<b>value, protect, enhance and restore the Region's environmental assets, including the natural and built environment and the historic environment?</b>
	value, enhance and protect the Region's historic environment assets (eg World Heritage Sites, archaeological remains, historic buildings, parks and gardens, and landscapes, and conservation areas, battlefields and other architectural and historically important features and areas, and their settings)?
	promote heritage-led regeneration?
	promote the repair and reuse of existing buildings?
Landscape	protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the region's landscapes and townscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place?



**CONSULTATION ON THIS SCOPING REPORT**

In line with statutory requirements, consultation with statutory (and non-statutory) consultees on this Scoping Report was carried out between 27 February and 3 April 2006. Written responses were received from:

- The Countryside Agency
- The Council for the Protection of Rural England
- English Heritage
- English Nature
- The Environment Agency
- Natural England
- The Woodland Trust
- Taylor Woodrow
- The RSS Monitoring Policy Lead

In addition, a number of follow-up telephone discussions were held with consultees on points which the consultants were initially unable to deal with.

The following table sets out the consultation responses, and explains the actions that have been taken to address those responses in finalising this *Scoping Report*.

**Table 7.1 Consultation Feedback and Response**

Section	Issue	Raised by	Response
General	RSDf does not accord with UK SD Strategy, the RSS, the Regional Concordat etc etc – comments already passed to Sust West Mids The current RSDf Version 2 should be substantially revised to reflect the 2005 UK Strategy	Countryside Agency	The appraisal is based primarily on the RSDf, which is currently being amended, even if it may conflict with other (eg national) objectives. As the RSDf is amended to reflect this change in Government policy, the Appraisal Framework can also be amended. However, the Appraisal Framework will not be amended until changes to the RSDf have been formally approved.
	I would like to reinforce the point that a key issue for the Scoping Report to consider is the application of regional and national guidance on Sustainable Development. Nick Young's letter has drawn attention to the inconsistency that arises from mixing elements of version 1 of the RSDf and the draft of version 2 of the RSDf. As is noted in his letter, a response to the draft RSDf has been submitted by CA on behalf of the Natural England Partnership which raises concerns about the mismatch between the RSDf and the national objectives and priorities for Sustainable Development, as set out in Securing the Future (2005). I would also like to refer you to that response.	English Nature	
	As a general comment, the sustainability appraisal must clearly indicate how the provisions of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive have been met	English Heritage	The SA Report must demonstrate how the SEA Directive has been addressed, but there is no requirement that the Scoping Report does this.
	It is not clear how the requirements of the SEA Regulations are being met ... Although we appreciate that this is not the Sustainability Appraisal Report, it our view that it would have been helpful to specifically refer to areas in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report that met the SEA Regulations. This could possibly be included in an expanded Section 8: Quality Assurance, or merged into the text, where appropriate and relevant	Taylor Woodrow	It should also be noted that, as the Scoping Report has been drawn up to meet the requirements of the statutory guidance on SA and SEA, the report already meets the requirements of the SEA Directive. However, an additional table has been inserted ( <i>Table 6.3</i> ) to illustrate how the Appraisal Framework covers the issues which the SEA Directive especially seeks to address.
	The structure and content of the Scoping Report needs to better demonstrate the link between the review in Section 3, the objectives of the revised RSDf (subject to the outcomes of the consultation process), and the requirements of the SEA Directive	English Heritage	It is not clear how this comment can be addressed. In any case, the structure and content of the Scoping Report reflects statutory guidance on SA and SEA. It is not proposed that the structure of the Scoping Report should deviate from this guidance.
	The Scoping Report nowhere mentions the implications of the Water Framework Directive. This is clearly an important omission as much of the improvements to water quality are likely to be delivered through the planning system: Add Question "...help meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive?"	Environment Agency	The Water Framework Directive is mentioned in Annex A, the review of PPPs. It is also unclear how the proposed question would be answered in an appraisal of the RSS, since the Directive contains many different requirements.
	We could not find any reference in the study to the environmental footprint work for the West Midlands, which we understand will soon be producing results. At the very least, this should provide an invaluable cross-check on the indicators you are developing. The Worldwide Fund for Nature should be able to provide up to date information on this area of work	CPRE	Ecological Footprint information has now been included in Annex A and the main text of the report.
Figure 1.2	From the old version of the RSDf	Countryside	The new version of the RSDf is now referred to

Section	Issue	Raised by	Response
		Agency	throughout the Scoping Report.
Section 3	How do the Policy objectives 'relate to the 29 RSDF Objectives (which form the principle questions) and the additional subsidiary questions in Table 6.2', and 'how have they been derived and how have the particular topics been selected?'	Countryside Agency	This is a review of all economic, social and environmental objectives established at all levels, which may be relevant to the RSS and the SA. It is not a review solely of SD objectives, although many of the objectives may be SD objectives.
	it is not entirely clear how these 'policy objectives' relate to the RSDF principles and hence to the 29 main questions in the Proposed Sustainability Appraisal Framework in Table 6.2	Countryside Agency	
	We also suggest that you should add the Government's new policies on planning for housing to the list	CPRE	PPS3 on Housing is still a draft policy, and the Scoping Report is only covering policies which have been approved
Table 3.1.	We suggest that the clarity of the first could be reworded e.g. 'Preserving and enhancing the historic environment and adopting a positive approach towards its management which recognises its economic and social benefits'.	English Heritage	Amendment made.
	Relevant sources would also include PPS1, PPG15, PPG16.	English Heritage	Reference is made in Annex A and Section 3 of the main report to PPS1, PPG15, PPG16.
	Sources for Objective 11 (biodiversity): the Regional Biodiversity Strategy is entitled " <b>Restoring</b> the Region's Wildlife	Environment Agency	Amendment made.
	'we would also like to see a complimentary reference under 'Sources' to the important regional strategy 'Restoring the Region's Wildlife – Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands' (West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership 2005).	Woodland Trust	Amendment made.
	There should be a Policy Objective that specifically refers to landscape. I suggest 'Conserving, enhancing and managing all landscapes and respecting their character and distinctiveness.' Sources would be – PPS 1, PPS 7, Rural Strategy, European Landscape Convention (signed by the UK Government in February 2006)	Countryside Agency	Amendment made.
	Reference to public spaces and amenity value should be expanded to include access, green networks/green infrastructure, and urban – rural links	Countryside Agency	These objectives can only be inserted where they arise from specific strategies.
	Consideration to amending the wording 'protecting and enhancing' to 'conserving, enhancing and managing'	Countryside Agency	Amendment made.
Table 3.3	I would draw attention to the retention of the principle relating to 'economic growth' rather than 'achieving a sustainable economy'.	Countryside Agency	At present, economic growth is still an objective set out in all of these strategies, including the RSDF.
	The principle regarding local sourcing of goods is clumsily worded and could be interpreted as encouraging consumption	Countryside Agency	Amended to 'Favouring the use of local raw materials, local food and local products'
Table 3.5	The housing policy objectives in table 3.5 (page 23) seem rather thin. In addition to the points made above, what about, for example, 'brownfield first'?	CPRE	Reference inserted to PDL target and sequential approach
Table 4.1.	'Under 'RSDF Objective' no.7 – Culture and recreation, we would like to see a reference to publicly accessible greenspace such as woodland'	Woodland Trust	Amendment made.
	Objective 9 – the wording of the headline objective is still inconsistent with the updated consultation version of the RSDF e.g. 'historic environment' – not environmental heritage	English Heritage	Amendment made.
	Objective 10 – have data on ancient woodland cover, trends, comparators, key issues etc	Woodland Trust	Ancient woodland map included in Annex B.

Section	Issue	Raised by	Response
	This translates into the West Midlands region as set out below, with a comparison against all of England. The data used is now available and, as it has been collected in GIS form, we are able to supply this information both in map and in numerical form		
	The absence of any measure relating to the effect of policy on Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species would appear to be a significant omission. The RSS monitoring strategy includes an indicator which might be adapted or applied, which covers change in areas of biodiversity importance including priority habitat types	English Nature	Added indicators on change to priority habitat types and areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value, including sites of international, regional or subregional significance
	We would also recommend including the standard for Access to Natural Greenspace (ANGST) in this table, which is included within RSS consideration of urban greenspace (RSS 8.15, and Annex B). This is a measure of the opportunity people have to access high quality natural open spaces and contributes to sustainable communities	English Nature	There is a question on access to greenspace, plus the ANGST target, under objective 11 in the Appraisal Framework
	the text in table 4.1 relating to SSSI condition is incorrect and is not consistent with either the WM RSS Annual Monitoring Report 2005, or English Nature's Regional Report on SSSI condition, Target 2010 West Midlands (Feb 2006). The latter covers the most recent reporting period and illustrates that the former WM County has 94% of SSSIs in target condition, while Herefordshire has the lowest proportion of 36% in target condition. Overall the regional figure is 70.5% which is a fraction higher than the national average. It is also worth noting that although the WM has a relatively small area of SSSI in national terms, by number it holds 10% of England's SSSIs.	English Nature	Amendments made.
	the SSSI condition report recently published by English Nature, has revised the county figures. Warwickshire now has 90% favourable SSSI land; West Midlands has 94% (highest); Herefordshire is lowest at 36%.	Environment Agency	
	The 2005 national Heritage Counts Report produced a series of maps showing a series of data sets in the context of the Joint Character Areas. This could be included as part of the baseline, and I would be happy to discuss this further	English Heritage	It is not thought that including maps showing the locations of Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, local authority designated conservation areas etc would be helpful to the report, as there is already data on the numbers of these heritage assets in the Annex and Table 4.1.
	A general comment is that there appears to be no baseline data on groundwater, soils, or fisheries	Environment Agency	No data available online for these issues.
	Objective 16 (Efficiency) – for Water consumption, consider using the following indicators: - 25% water efficiency savings in new homes incorporate ODPM's proposals for introducing Code for Sustainable Homes eg no greater than 125 litres per head per day in new homes	Environment Agency	Amendment made to the Appraisal Framework.
	Objective 20 (Waste) – the figures here on local authority recycling could be updated from the DEFRA monitoring report released on 24 March 2006	Environment Agency	Amendments made.
5.2	English Heritage has reservations regarding the approach adopted to identifying key sustainability issues. The identification of issues is heavily based on the review of existing strategies. This places the historic environment at a disadvantage, since in contrast to a number of environmental sectors (e.g. Biodiversity) the heritage	English Heritage	The key issues have been identified using baseline data as well as strategies. Unfortunately, we do not have access to any other information on which to base our judgements.

Section	Issue	Raised by	Response
	sector has yet to prepare a regional strategy		
	I could not see the inclusion of any issues relating to minerals. This could be a sustainability issue if the build rates increase as part of the Review. There is a need to provide for construction materials and the promotion of the use of recycled aggregates. Extraction of primary land-won aggregates could also have knock on effects environmentally	Monitoring Policy Lead	This may be a key issues, but there is no clear data to support this at present.
	just as a general comment the issues are siloed into policy areas. Are there any cross cutting issues that need to be teased out, e.g. knock on effects of increased house building on waste management, water resources, minerals extraction etc?	Monitoring Policy Lead	The key issues cover both the sectoral issues which create pressures (eg housing, transport, economic development), and the 'receptors' which are affected by these pressures, eg water resources, waste infrastructure, biodiversity, and as a result deals with the 'cross cutting' issues raised.
5.2.4, p42	Rural renaissance – The final sentence needs qualification. The rural environment should be seen as valuable in its own right, and not simply as an aid to the rural economy	Countryside Agency	Amendment made.
	We generally agree with section 5.2.4 on rural renaissance. Protecting and enhancing the <u>character</u> of rural areas, not just the environment, seems to us critically important. The nature and quality of development and other change taking place in rural areas is vital. Finally, although land-based sectors may be declining in purely economic terms, they still have a big part to play in managing the land for wider public benefit.	CPRE	Amendments made.
5.2.5	We would add to section 5.2.5 that present levels of car dependency and use in the region are unsustainable.	CPRE	It is unclear what 'unsustainable' means in this context, and there is no clear data which demonstrates that levels of car use cannot be sustained for the foreseeable future.
	It is not clear that the consultants have taken into account the Midlands Aviation Master Plan, published last year, which, we believe, provides a critique of the Government's Air Transport White Paper from a sustainable development point of view.	CPRE	The Midlands Aviation Masterplan is a briefing paper produced by regional and local campaigners rather than a formal 'strategy' produced by statutory policy-makers, and therefore would not be included in the review of PPPs.
	On a more specific point, it is not true to say that approval has been given for the expansion of Birmingham International Airport. This is currently subject to consultation on the BIA draft master plan. Even if this is finalised in something like its present form, there will need to be at least two major planning inquiries to establish whether proposals for an extension to the present runway and for the construction of a second runway can be justified in planning terms	CPRE	Amendment made.
5.2.7, p44	This section underplays the challenge that we face in addressing climate change, eg. the statement 'A positive response from the West Midlands..... will bring the region a range of benefits' could be interpreted as suggesting that this is easily within our reach	Countryside Agency	It is clear that action to develop a low carbon economy is likely to bring direct benefits to the Region in a number of ways, regardless of whether these actions are sufficient to meet the challenge posed by the Government's CO <sub>2</sub> reduction targets.
5.2.7	The comments on climate change in 5.2.7 need to be linked more closely to the transport and particularly aviation sections. Our response to the Regional Energy Strategy demonstrated the failure of current transport policies to deal with CO <sub>2</sub>	CPRE	An additional reference to the impact that the transport sector is having on greenhouse gas emissions has been inserted.

Section	Issue	Raised by	Response
	emissions and highlighted the impact of aviation. We can provide a copy if required. Road schemes such as the M6 Expressway / M6 Widening appear to us to be contrary to sustainable development principles and the RSS strategy, and are likely to result in a significant increase in CO2 emissions		
	There is a need to emphasise that climate change will also have an effect on demand and availability of water as well as having an impact on the natural environment	Environment Agency	Amendment made.
5.2.8	<p>We are pleased that flooding has been highlighted as a key issue in its own right. However, this section might be amended as follows:</p> <p>The West Midlands region <del>remains one of the most</del> is susceptible to regular flooding, notably on from the Rivers Severn, and Avon and Trent and their tributaries. Some <del>62,000</del> 57,000* properties are at risk, with over 130,000 people living in areas at risk of flooding.* Recent experiences of <del>flooding</del> have shown how <del>climate change</del> flooding can cause social disruption and, through reducing property prices and raising insurance premiums, affect people economically.</p> <p>The incidence of flooding has been increasing in the Region with more frequent wetter periods associated with global warming. As well as addressing the causes of climate change, the Region will also need to plan for the future impacts of, and adapt to, that change. <del>flood warnings becoming a more common event.</del></p> <p>In urban areas, runoff from impermeable surfaces increases the severity of flooding which is further exacerbated by localised downpours overwhelming the sewer and drainage systems. However, urban flood risk cannot be considered in isolation and it will be necessary for the Region to develop a strategic approach across the West Midlands for all types of flood risk. This will be best achieved by the preparation of a Regional Flood Risk Assessment for the West Midlands.</p> <p>the use of drainage systems that are designed to discharge surface water into watercourses more quickly. According to an assessment of the West Midlands' infrastructure by the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Region will need to develop 'a strategic approach to providing floodwater capacity along open areas in flood plains'.</p>	Environment Agency	Amendment made.
Table 6.1	It is not clear how it has been determined which principles conflicted/reinforced each other. I suspect that there might be more conflicts indicated against the transport policies. I suggest that these are indicated x rather than ?.	Countryside Agency	The assessment of links and tensions is a subjective, and not a scientific objective, process. The objective on 'transport' proposes the increased use of sustainable modes and the reduction of congestion/pollution, which is likely to contribute to the achievement of many of the other objectives. The symbol has been changed to 'x'
	There are a number of blank spaces in Table 6.1. Whilst we consider that this means that there are no links between the two objectives, a key stating indicating	Taylor Woodrow	Amendment made.

Section	Issue	Raised by	Response
	what this means would clarify this		
	Some discussion of how in general such conflicts are to be resolved would be helpful	CPRE	We have identified conflicts, but not proposed how to address them because this would require amendments to the RSDF objectives – and it is not for the SA to comment on how the RSDF should be changed.
	We would query what is being done about the incompatible Sustainability Appraisal Objectives in Table 6.1 (growth and housing when compared with several of the other objectives)? The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report does not make it clear how these are being treated / amended once they were highlighted as being potentially incompatible	Taylor Woodrow	
6.2	the SA framework to my mind is the most important output of the scoping report. Should this be brought more up front in the document?	Monitoring Policy Lead	It is the most important output, but it is derived from the work in the earlier chapters, and therefore is logically located towards the end of the report.
6.2.4	I am assuming that the indicators identified here are purely to help the process of the sustainability appraisal of options. Presumably a refined set will be proposed as part of task B6 (i.e. identifying significant effects indicators). I would wish to be involved in the B6 process as this has a knock on effect for monitoring resources	Monitoring Policy Lead	Yes.
Table 6.2 - General	We believe it will be very difficult to establish a clear link between the revised RSS and a number of the objectives and indicators. In general, we would prefer the use of a smaller number of objectives and indicators which more directly bear on the role of the RSS	CPRE	It is arguable that some of the RSDF objectives should be removed from the Appraisal Framework. However, it has been decided that, as this is a regional strategy, all of the RSDF objectives should be included in the appraisal.
	Generally, it is difficult to see how all the objectives listed will be applicable to all the policy areas being put forward in the options stage	Monitoring Policy Lead	
	In view of the ongoing Phase 1 review of the RSS, and its accompanying sustainability appraisal, a review of the sustainability appraisal framework used in this earlier stage might also be helpful	English Heritage	This has been reviewed.
	To what extent have the interlinkages between the subsidiary questions (under each objective) been explored and tested?	English Heritage	The interlinkages between the various questions and objectives covered by the Appraisal Framework are immensely complex, and no formal process has been used to explore and test them. We are not sure how we could usefully do this.
	I am not sure about how useful indicators will be in measuring the options against the objectives. All they can do is provide a baseline, they can not tell the effect of a particular policy option. E.g. take the first one, level of accessibility from the IMD. Using this indicator will not help us predict whether an option is sustainable or not. It is a one off snap-shot at 2004	Monitoring Policy Officer	Indicators are not always helpful in improving the quality of the appraisal. However, inclusion of indicators in the Appraisal Framework is regarded as good practice, and is included in the ODPM guidance on SA, and we have aimed to include them where possible.
	We note that many of the Appraisal Questions do not have an Indicator and / or target associated with them. Indicators and targets are important in helping to increase levels of sustainability. These indicators and targets will also be useful when undertaking local level Sustainability Appraisals, and therefore should be as comprehensive as possible	Taylor Woodrow	
	It is our view that a number of the Appraisal Questions will be difficult to measure / assess	Taylor Woodrow	We have tried to ensure that all the questions are answerable. Not all questions will relate to strategic

Section	Issue	Raised by	Response
			options, and not all questions will relate to detailed policy issues, but all of the questions will be considered at relevant points in the appraisal process.
	Finally, we consider that the environmental indicators tend to give too much weight to designated sites and areas. The overall quality of the rural environment is equally important	CPRE	At present we are not aware of any indicators which relate to the overall quality of the rural environment.
Table 6.2 – Specific	'Poverty' objective (3)- not sure that the RSS can <u>address</u> poverty and disadvantage. All it can do is support the reduction of poverty and disadvantage.	Monitoring Policy Lead	The RSDF objectives have been used directly for the core appraisal objectives, and the wording has not been changed.
	Objective 4: the importance of the environment in bolstering good health should be recognised – Add Question "...promote health through environmental infrastructure and design that supports healthy living choices?"	Environment Agency	The question has been changed to 'promote healthy lifestyles and opportunities for exercise (eg through environmental infrastructure and design)?'
	Section 17 of the Table refers to BREEAM very good / excellent being obtained, and Section 5 refers to EcoHomes. These should be modified to recognise other assessment forms, apart from the BRE versions. This would include the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes which is likely to be issued in final version in 2006, and also assessment methods including CEEQUAL and other similar methods	Taylor Woodrow	BREEAM and EcoHomes are mentioned in the indicators, because data is available. The questions simply refer to 'sustainable design and construction practices' and there is no need to add anything about other codes of practice or assessment methods.
	Under 'RSDF Objective no.7 'Culture & recreation', we would like to propose <b>publicly accessible woodland</b> as an Indicator	Woodland Trust	Amendment made.
	Objective 7: It should be made clear that recreation includes water-based recreation	Environment Agency	The question does not list any types of recreation activities, so it would be inappropriate to list one specific type.
	8 - Balanced development - Focus development in town centres. I think this should be focus for retail and office development in town centres.	Monitoring Policy Lead	Amendment made.
	Objective 9: Indicators against the first question might include statistics such as length of river with riverside footpath, or area of country parks	Environment Agency	Need specific indicators – cannot find data for these.
	there is an issue of consistency in cross-references to the original and revised RSDF both in the text and in Table 6.2 (e.g. Objective 9 page 53)	English Heritage	Amendment made.
	Under Objective 9 the proposed subsidiary question on the historic environment should be comprehensive, as far as possible, in reflecting the broad scope of the historic environment [rather than the limited range of examples given]. For example: 'preserve, enhance and manage World Heritage Sites, archaeological remains, historic buildings, parks and gardens, and landscapes, and conservation areas, battlefields and other architectural and historically important features and areas, and their settings'	English Heritage	Amendment made.
	As a result of the current structure of the framework the subsidiary questions vary in their level of specificity, and a further suite of questions could be posed. For example in relation to the historic environment other questions (relevant to environment, social and economic objectives) might include: Will it provide increased access to and understanding of the historic environment? Will it promote heritage-led regeneration?	English Heritage	Amendment made.

Section	Issue	Raised by	Response
	Will it support the repair and reuse of existing buildings? Will it increase the social and/or economic benefit derived from the region's historic environment?		
	Objective 9 appraisal questions: to distinguish the question on the reuse and repair of buildings (with say the housing objective) – suggest refer to 'historic buildings' rather than existing ones?	English Heritage	Amendment made.
	My main emphasis would be on protected landscapes and landscape character. Indicators are difficult but I have made suggestions. We in Countryside Agency are doing a lot of work through a project called 'Countryside Quality Counts' (CQC). This evolved out of a requirement to develop an indicator of change in countryside quality that was highlighted in the Rural White Paper. The indicator of change is based on the Joint Character Areas (JCAs). I can provide more information if required - I think here it should be flagged up as a way of assessing change at a strategic level. Ultimately I would see this as the means to monitor landscape change through the RSS. The indicator would be something like - Percentage of Joint Character Areas showing no change or showing change consistent with existing character area descriptions. In other words we should seek to minimise the number of JCAs showing change that is inconsistent with character.	Countryside Agency	Amendment made – indicator included alongside question 'protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the region's landscapes and townscapes?'
	The CQC indicator could be added here as the 'headline' landscape indicator.	Countryside Agency	
	Amenity value of the countryside - I am not sure that this is needed as worded - character and condition can be picked up in the next one. I think it would be better to replace this with something that covers recreation and leisure. I suggest : Will the proposal/option assist in meeting the recreational and leisure needs of communities?	Countryside Agency	Amenity value is distinct from the character and condition of the countryside, so the question has been retained although reference to the recreation/leisure needs of communities has been inserted.
	Under 'RSDF' Objective no.10 - Biodiversity, we would like to see <b>ancient woodland</b> as an Indicator	Woodland Trust	
	Under Objective 9, the clarity of the last two subsidiary questions could also be improved. In considering landscapes – this must include the character of the region's townscapes as well as the wider rural landscape and take into account their there historic character. One possible approach could be: 'Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the region's landscapes and townscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place'.	English Heritage	Amendment made.
	it is suggested that the proposed indicator on Buildings at Risk is too narrow to adequately reflect the scope of the historic environment, and as explained above is limited in its coverage to Grade I and II* buildings. A broader 'heritage at risk' indicator could be used – comprising listed buildings (Grade I and II*); monuments (Scheduled Monuments); and landscapes (Registered Parks and Gardens) at risk. We acknowledge that this is essentially a proxy indicator for the wider historic environment, and that all the data sets are not yet available.	English Heritage	Amendment made.
	May I suggest that as an Indicator for this you use "Number of Village or Local Area Design Statements that have been adopted by the relevant local planning authority as planning guidance"	Valerie Burton (email 26.4.06)	Amendment made.

Section	Issue	Raised by	Response
	We regard it as extremely important to add an indicator of tranquillity to the list of environmental indicators. CPRE is engaged in further work to bring the information on tranquillity up to date for each region. The results should be available towards the end of this year	CPRE	Amendment made.
	Objective 10: it should be recognised that much of the region's biodiversity lies outside protected sites – Add Question "...support development that incorporates improvements to wildlife habitats?"; Target "All major developments to mitigate environmental damage by incorporating an appropriate area of high quality green space"; Indicator "Number of developments that incorporate green space for wildlife".	Environment Agency	Amendment made.
	Objective 11: Another possible indicator could be derived from parks/open spaces attaining 'Green Flag' status	Countryside Agency	Amendment made
	Objective 13: one of the key tools in tackling urban pollution is the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems – there should be a cross-reference to the SUDS question under Climate Change	Environment Agency	There is already a question on SUDS under question 14 on climate change, it is not clear how adding another under question 13 will add to the appraisal framework.
	Objective 14: given that flood risk is a key issue, the question relating to development in flood risk areas should perhaps be a core appraisal question rather than a secondary question	Environment Agency	Core appraisal questions are taken directly from the RSDF and have not been amended to reflect key sustainability issues.
	Objective 16: The RSS does not have the power to ensure that the water supply and demand are in balance, as the water efficiency targets are outside the control of the planning system – the question might better be phrased "...support the sustainable use of water resources?" Targets – amend first sentence to "Reduction in groundwater licences". We are not sure where the 140 Ml/d figure comes from. Indicators - consider using the following indicators: 25% water efficiency savings in new homes incorporate ODPM's proposals for introducing Code for Sustainable Homes eg no greater than 125 litres per head per day in new homes	Environment Agency	Changed question to 'promote' rather than 'ensure'. Indicators and targets added.
	Indicator for 16 - On aggregate use, the quarry products association produces regional statistics, although a visit to their website, <a href="http://www.qpa.org">www.qpa.org</a> shows that these have not been updated since 2000	Countryside Agency	The QPA do not have regional indicators.
	Better indicators for aviation need to be developed in item 19. Again, the Midlands Aviation Master Plan should help here	CPRE	No indicators in Masterplan suitable for the Appraisal Framework.
	19 - Transport - I think there should be an objective included about movement of freight by more sustainable means, i.e. rail.	Monitoring Policy Lead	Amendment made.
	Question for 23 – This is the predicted question about achieving economic growth, which I feel needs to be amended to reflect the 2005 UK SD Strategy (thereby reducing the number of conflicts in table 6.1).	Countryside Agency	The RSDF is currently being amended in light of the new national SD strategy. We will consider amending the appraisal framework once amendments to the RSDF have been agreed.
	We do not accept that GVA is an acceptable measure of <u>sustainable</u> economic growth. Enriching Our Region talks about more holistic measures such as the Indicator of Sustainable Economic Welfare	CPRE	There is no data on the ISEW for the West Midlands.
	Question/Indicator 28 – I think it is important to add another regional category re	Countryside	Amendment made.

Section	Issue	Raised by	Response
	developing innovative technology to address climate change issues eg new energy generators using renewable sources, more efficient industrial technology and processes to minimise or mitigate for the impacts of climate change	Agency	
	Question/indicator 29 – I suggest the inclusion of 'encourage achievement and reporting of environmental management standards' as a subsidiary question	Countryside Agency	This is not an issue which the RSS can have any impact on
7.3.2	Just wondering if the B6 task ought to be mentioned in this section. I would like to see it in here. It could be added in at the end after the bullet points	Monitoring Policy Lead	Amendment made.
Annex A	Under European Policy, reference should also be made to the European Landscape Convention, UNESCO World Heritage Convention, Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Valetta Convention)	English Heritage	Amendment made.
	Under the national policy heading, whilst we welcome the inclusion of the DCMS statement The Historic Environment: A Force For Our Future, it is considered that the supporting summary could better reflect the headline messages of the document (page 9). Similarly, the summary for PPG16 is understated	English Heritage	Amendment made.
Annex B	The national Buildings at Risk Register (which includes a regional section) should also be used, although with suitable caveats regarding its coverage (i.e. it does not include Grade II listed buildings).	English Heritage	This data is already presented in the Annex (Section B11.5)
	Other designated sites should be referred to: Registered Parks and Gardens; Registered Battlefields; local authority designated conservation areas.	English Heritage	It is not thought that including maps showing the locations of Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, local authority designated conservation areas etc would be helpful to the report, as there is already data on the numbers of these heritage assets in the Annex and Table 4.1.



## **8 NEXT STEPS**

### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section sets out a summary of future work that will be carried out on the Sustainability Appraisal during 2006.

### **8.2 STAGE B. DEVELOPING AND REFINING OPTIONS AND ASSESSING EFFECTS**

From February to May 2006, the Regional Assembly (the Regional Planning Body) will seek the advice of the Strategic Authorities (seven Metropolitan District Councils, three Unitary Authorities and four Shire Counties, known as 'Section 4(4) Authorities)) on Phase Two of the Revision. The Authorities will be asked to respond to a Section 4(4) Brief, which will set out a range of issues and questions for them to consider, and their responses will be crucial in shaping the development of an initial set of strategic Options for the RSS.

Options development will formally begin in May 2006. In September 2006, an eight-week consultation period will be held on a set of possible Options. Following consultation, a Preferred Option for the RSS will be developed in November 2006.

The Sustainability Appraisal will run alongside, and interact with, this process, in line with Government Guidance on RSS and Sustainability Appraisal. Specific activities are explained below.

#### **8.2.1 Task B1, Testing Draft RSS Revision Objectives against the SA Framework**

This will be carried out as soon as the SA Framework is finalised, following consultation. The conclusions from this activity will be fed into the Options development process.

#### **8.2.2 Tasks B2-B6, Developing and Appraising the RSS Revision Options etc**

The primary purpose of this Sustainability Appraisal is to **predict and assess** the economic, social and environmental implications of proposals developed during the Phase Two Revision process, in order to **influence and improve** the development of the Options, the selection of the Preferred Option, and the development of the strategic proposals and policies which will be set out in the final Phase Two Revision document that is submitted to the Secretary of State. This appraisal work will be carried out under tasks B2 to B6.

The appraisal of RSS options will be an iterative and consultative process. As Options are refined, the Sustainability Appraisal Framework will be used to inform the development of a commentary on the key sustainability issues and problems arising from each Option, with recommendations on how the Option could be improved (eg through mitigation measures).

The appraisal of initial Options will be designed to provide regular feedback to those responsible for options development, and the Preferred Option will be subject to a more detailed appraisal.

Specific activities carried out as part of the ongoing appraisal process will include:

- Independent appraisal work by consultants, eg reviewing technical reports explaining and describing the Options with reference to the SA Framework;
- Joint work with technical experts and those responsible for developing Options (eg meetings, phone conversations, sharing of work etc). This work will begin before the deadline for Strategic Authorities to respond to the Section 4(4) Brief, ie before the formal commencement of Options development;
- Workshops with experts and stakeholders, using the SA Framework to assess the likely implications of Options as they develop; and
- The production of a formal report on the initial appraisal of Options for consultation in September 2006, prior to the selection of the Preferred Option.

### **8.3**

#### ***STAGE C, PREPARING THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT***

The Sustainability Appraisal Report will explain how the appraisal has been carried out, and will present a detailed review of the effects and implications of the Preferred Option and policies that the Regional Assembly submits for public consultation. The SA Report will also be made available for public consultation at this time.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report will also be submitted to the Secretary of State alongside the Phase Two Revision document following public consultation.

## **9 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

### **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

This *Scoping Report* meets the requirements of the Quality Assurance Checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the ODPM's Guidance for Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities on *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents* (issued in November 2005), and thereby satisfies the requirements of the SEA Directive.

The following sections review how this *Scoping Report* fulfils these requirements.

### **9.2 OBJECTIVES AND CONTEXT**

The plan's purpose and objectives are clearly explained in *Section 2.1*.

Sustainability issues are set out in *Section 5*. These have been identified through the review of Policies, Plans and Programmes (in Annex A and *Section 3*) and through the review of baseline data (in Annex B and *Section 4*), and have been key in developing objectives and targets.

The 29 RSDF objectives have been taken as the objectives for the SA. The Appraisal Framework, presented in *Section 6.3*, links these objectives to indicators and targets where appropriate.

Links with other related plans, programmes and policies are identified and explained in Annex A and *Section 3*.

*Section 6.2.1* sets out a review of the proposed SA objectives, and examines internal consistency issues relating to those objectives.

### **9.3 SCOPING**

The environmental consultation bodies, and a wide range of other stakeholders, have been consulted on the content and scope of the SA Report. This consultation provided an opportunity for these groups and individuals to comment on the proposed SA scope, including the questions posed by the Appraisal Framework. A full review of consultation feedback, and how that feedback has been used in the development of this *Scoping Report*, is presented in *Table 7.1*.

*Section 5* of this *Scoping Report* identifies a number of key sustainability issues that the RSS and the SA will need to consider, as follows:

- Economic Development, eg a major gap between the best and worst performing parts of the Region.
- Housing, eg problems with housing affordability, the need to focus new development in urban areas rather than rural areas.

- Urban Renaissance, eg population migration away from the conurbations, resulting in deprivation problems in urban areas, transport infrastructure problems, housing shortages etc.
- Rural Renaissance, eg deprivation in remote areas, need to further rejuvenate market towns.
- Transport, eg unsustainable transport patterns (characterised by increasing car use and decreasing use of alternative modes), worsening congestion.
- Water Resources, eg increasing pressure on existing water resources.
- Climate Change, eg major changes in transport, housing etc required to achieve CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets.
- Flooding, eg current flood risk areas, and the likelihood of increasing flood risk within the Region over time.
- Biodiversity, eg species decline and increasing pressures on natural assets.
- Waste Management, eg need for additional waste recycling and recovery infrastructure.

These issues are reflected in the Appraisal Framework.

Where this *Scoping Report* sets out analysis that is based on assumptions or uncertainties, these issues are explained. For example, the key sustainability issues have been identified partly in reference to analysis set out in other strategies (rather than on the basis of data or evidence collected for this *Scoping Report*), and so are based on assumptions about the accuracy of these types of analysis. Where other analysis from other strategies is used, full references are provided.

At this stage, the Appraisal Framework has not eliminated any issues from further consideration, although as a result of consultation it may be decided that the Appraisal should focus on a narrower range of issues.

#### **9.4            *OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES***

Options development begins in the summer of 2006.

#### **9.5            *BASELINE INFORMATION***

Annex B and *Section 4* present information on the current state of the environment in the West Midlands, as well as information on trends. Characteristics of significance have been identified through the review of baseline data, and are presented in *Section 5*.

Data is not available to illustrate conditions for a small number of the RSDF objectives, and these gaps are highlighted in *Section 4*. However, we believe that the data that has been collected is more than adequate to present a full review of baseline conditions for all of the remaining RSDF objectives.