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*Baroness Andrews*  
10 September 2007

Dear David,

## **REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS PHASE 1 REVISION - THE BLACK COUNTRY**

Following the Examination in Public of the Phase 1 Revision to the West Midlands RSS I have pleasure in enclosing a copy of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes and Reasons.

I am grateful for all of the work of the West Midlands Regional Assembly and its members and the Black Country Consortium in preparing the Draft Revision and in contributing to the Public Examination in January. I am also grateful to Alan Richardson and David Asher and their team for holding that Examination and producing a comprehensive Report.

The Panel Report largely welcomes the changes submitted by the Regional Assembly and considered that the Draft Revision was broadly compatible with the previously agreed principles of the West Midlands RSS.

The Secretary of State is pleased to support most of the changes recommended by the Panel. These include:

- new policies to define broad areas for regeneration and growth,
- a new policy which replaces Dudley with Brierley Hill/Merry Hill as a strategic centre,
- a new policy to emphasise the importance of transforming the environment, and
- revisions to the transport priorities to reflect the current status of transport proposals in the Black Country.

In addition, an Appropriate Assessment of the Proposed Changes has been completed and the recommendations incorporated.

Further minor changes to those proposed by the Panel are identified in the consultation document. The majority aim to clarify the proposed text/policy.

This letter and the consultation document are being sent to all of the Region's Local Authorities, Parish Councils, MP's, MEP's and all those who took part in the Public Examination. It is being made widely available for public inspection. Copies will also be available from Government Office for the West Midlands and on the internet ([www.gowm.gov.uk](http://www.gowm.gov.uk)) Responses should be sent to GOWM by **9 November 2007**. Comments should be returned on the response form to enable their full consideration which will inform the preparation of the Final Revision.

I look forward to your response to the Proposed Changes.

Yours sincerely  
Kerry Andrews

**BARONESS ANDREWS**