

Quality of the Environment

Introduction

Improving the quality of the Region's environment is a key element in the implementation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, the achievement of sustainable development, and the underpinning of overall quality of life. The conservation and enhancement of regional environmental assets is important in its own right, but can have significance in helping to realise wider economic and social benefits. A high quality built, natural and historic environment across all parts of the Region will help to attract and retain investment and contribute to the quality of life of its residents.

Improving the quality of the environment of the major urban areas to make them more attractive places for people to live will be particularly important in discouraging unsustainable migration to the surrounding rural areas, and in achieving the targets for the provision of new housing. The ability of the Region to process the waste and contamination from previously developed sites is critical in enabling the reuse of this land.

The increased incidence and severity of flooding in vulnerable parts of the Region has high social and economic costs. Avoiding new development in floodplains and other areas at risk of flooding will help to minimise these adverse consequences and reduce the risk of exacerbating the situation elsewhere.

Flooding is linked to climate change, now recognised as a major threat to the Region. The production of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, is a significant cause of climate change. Reducing carbon emissions will require a range of measures such as more sustainable patterns of development and greater energy efficiency. The Region will also need to contribute to targets aimed at encouraging the development of renewable energy sources.

The Regional Spatial Strategy is establishing a spatial approach that recognises the value of environmental assets at the strategic level. The value of strategic environmental assets is recognised through the Green Infrastructure Planning approach, which is closely linked with other regional strategies, such as the Regional Forestry Framework.

For further information on the Quality of the Environment chapter, contact:

Maurice Barlow,
Planning Services,
Solihull MBC, PO Box 18, Council House,
Solihull B91 3QS

Tel: 0121 704 6393

E-mail: mauricebarlow@solihull.gov.uk

QE2 - Restoring Degraded Areas and Managing and Creating High Quality New Environments

Statement of Purpose

Emphasises the importance of the reuse of derelict land, particularly in the major urban areas where much of the resource is concentrated, for the Spatial Strategy.

Relevant Indicators

Amount of derelict land reclaimed:

- (a) In total and as a proportion of the outstanding supply of derelict land, and
- (b) By end use (particularly soft end uses).

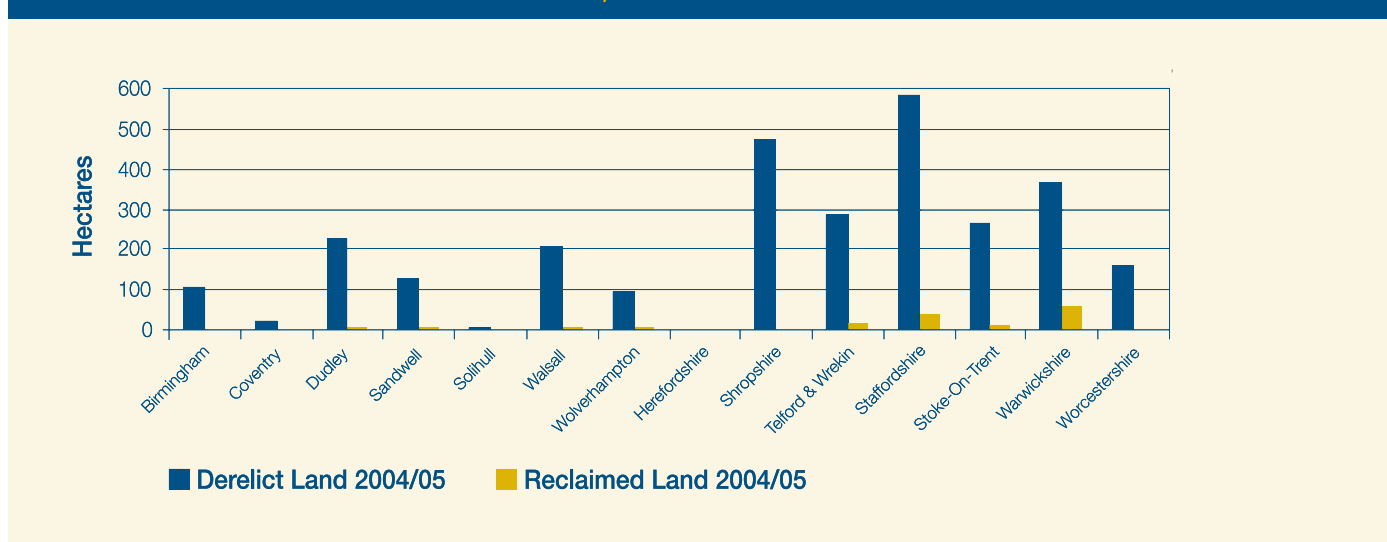
Key Data

TABLE QE1: DERELICT LAND IN THE WEST MIDLANDS 2004-05

	Derelict (ha)	Reclaimed (ha)	Reclaimed (%)	Soft End Uses (ha)
MUAs	1,059	33	3.2	0
Non-MUAs	1,870	111	5.9	20
Total	2,929	144	4.9	20

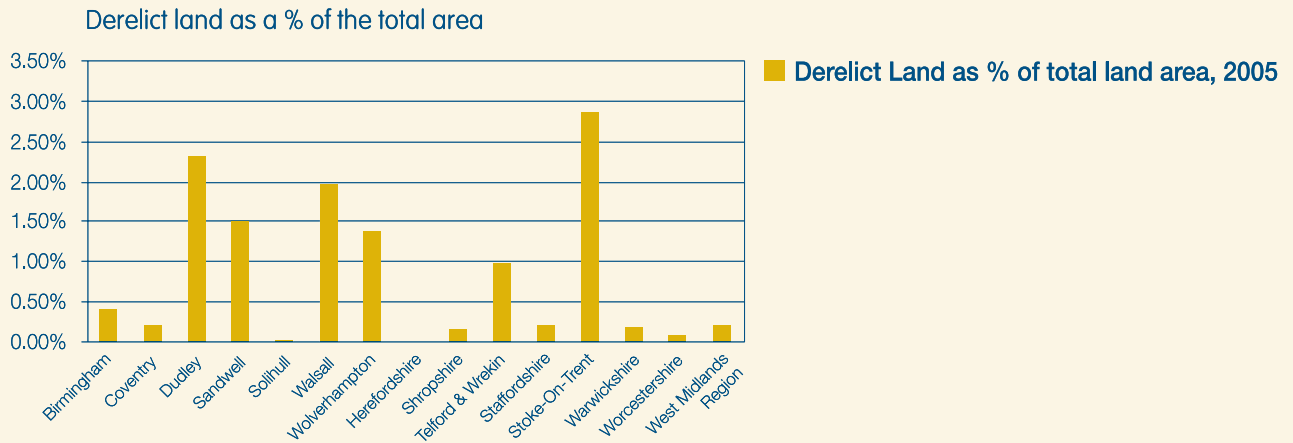
Source: Regional Derelict Land Survey, 2005

FIGURE QE1: DERELICT LAND IN THE WEST MIDLANDS, APRIL 2005



Source: Regional Derelict Land Survey, 2005

FIGURE QE2: DERELICT LAND AS PROPORTION OF TOTAL LAND AREA, APRIL 2005



Source: Regional Derelict Land Survey, 2005

Analysis and Interpretation

The majority of derelict land in the Region lies in the Metropolitan area, Staffordshire/Stoke-on-Trent, and Shropshire/Telford and Wrekin, with over 60% by area in the Shire Counties, including Telford and Wrekin. The table shows a 6% reduction in the overall levels of derelict land for the Region as a whole, from 3,122 hectares in 2003/04, continuing the improvement in previous years. However, the change stems from a review of derelict land in Stoke-on-Trent, which resulted in a reduction in the area of its derelict land from 375 hectares in 2003-04 to 268.5 hectares in 2004-05, although only 13 hectares were reclaimed. The Stoke-on-Trent review removed a number of sites that were not, or are no longer derelict, including 60 hectares at the former Corus steel works in use as a depot for the west coast main line improvements, and 15 hectares at Trentham Lakes where levelling works have enabled development.

Sub-regionally, the majority of strategic authorities have experienced little change or a marginal reduction only in the amount of derelict land this year, with the exception of Wolverhampton and Worcestershire. The largest reductions occurred in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire and Warwickshire. However, there was no significant reduction in area in the Black Country, where physical and environmental renewal is

a key element of the Spatial Strategy.

Most of the derelict land reclaimed was for hard end uses such as housing, industry and retail, with only Warwickshire reporting reclamation for green space (19% of the total area reclaimed). Reclamation for soft end uses offers potential for improvement to the quality of the environment which would be of particular benefit to the Major Urban Areas.

Whilst the general trend remains in the right direction, the amount and proportion of derelict land reclaimed since 2001 has been relatively small. The most significant reclamation took place outside the Major Urban Areas, in Staffordshire (6%) and Warwickshire (15%). At present levels of reclamation, less than 5% of the total area in 2004-05, it will take many years to bring back the Region's derelict land into beneficial use.

Only a small number of derelict land sites are included on contaminated land registers, suggesting that the barriers to reclamation may not be the severity of contamination of sites. However, the number of contaminated sites may be underestimated, as it was not possible to identify all contaminated sites in the regional derelict land survey.

Progress Towards Implementation

No change to the policy in the Regional Spatial Strategy is required at present, as it is too early to identify its impact on the Region's derelict land. The policy emphasis on the re-use of previously developed land in urban areas should

encourage greater reclamation in the future, although there remain concerns that the potential redefinition of contamination on derelict land as waste requiring licensing could impact on future reclamation rates.

QE8 - Forestry and Woodlands

Statement of Purpose

Seeks to conserve and protect woodlands and encourages new tree and woodland planting in ways that reinforce the Spatial Strategy.

Relevant Indicators

Area of new woodland planting:

(a) In total

(b) Amount and proportion on derelict, contaminated and former industrial land.

Key Data

TABLE QE2: AREA PLANTED UNDER WOODLAND GRANT SCHEME 2001-2005 (HA)

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Herefordshire	26	45	52	31
Shropshire	26	107	60	109
Staffordshire	67	85	58	71
Warwickshire	43	135	133	108
West Midlands Met Area	36	16	11	10
Worcestershire	83	96	89	54
West Midlands Region	280	484	403	382

Source: Forestry Commission.

NB. Figures exclude planting in National Forest (Staffs): 2003/04 = 40 2004/05 = 30

Source: The National Forest Company.

Woodland Cover in West Midlands for 2001: 96,474 hectares.

Source: National Inventory of Trees and Woodlands - West Midlands Region 2001.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table QE2 shows a significant increase in area of planting under the Woodland Grant Scheme since 2001, although there is a fall in 2004-05 from the previous year. Woodland Grant Scheme planting in the Metropolitan area has reduced and is a lower proportion of overall planting in the Region, reflecting the completion of the Black Country Urban Forest Millennium programme in 2001. This suggests that the potential to improve the quality of the environment of the Major Urban Areas, and the physical and environmental renewal of the Black Country, is not being achieved with these Grants. The reduction in area since 2002-03 may be partially accounted for by some refocusing of targets onto existing woodland areas, and also reflects the completion of the M6 toll motorway planting in Staffordshire and Warwickshire. Planting under the National Forest Tender Scheme, which incorporates the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme, is included for the last two years.

Data from the Derelict Land Survey suggests that none of this planting took place on previously derelict land, although 4 hectares of planting under the Woodland Grant Scheme took place on brownfield sites.

The overall woodland cover in the Region is included for the first time as a baseline. The figure is taken from the woodland inventory, undertaken every ten years or so, and

Progress Towards Implementation

No change to the policy in the Regional Spatial Strategy is required at present, as it is too early to identify its impact on the Region's woodlands.

in 2001 shows 7.6% of the Region's area is woodland. It is hoped to use future monitoring to show the change in coverage, although this will not be on an annual basis.

There is a need to monitor more comprehensively the woodland planting in the Region delivered via other mechanisms, as the Woodland Grant Scheme only represents a proportion of the total planting. The low proportion of new woodlands in the Metropolitan area suggests that the potential of woodlands to contribute to the economy is not being realised within the Woodland Grant Scheme. Initiatives such as the Sites Opportunities Mapping project being undertaken by the Forestry Commission, in partnership with AWM, the Environment Agency and Groundwork, should help to address this. This project aims to identify and create high quality green infrastructure on brownfield sites as part of the reclamation strategy, to improve the quality of the Region's living and working space, whether such sites go for predominantly hard or soft end uses. There remains a need to promote urban and community forestry as recognised in the Regional Forestry Framework.

It should be noted that the figures for 2003-04 are significantly lower than shown in the Annual Monitoring Report 2004, due to corrections in the areas planted for Staffordshire and Worcestershire.

Development and Flood Risk

Statement of Purpose

Avoid exacerbating the risk of flooding through new development.

Relevant Indicators

Number and area of planning permissions given permission in flood plains against the advice of the Environment Agency.

Key Data

TABLE QE3: APPLICATIONS APPROVED CONTRARY TO ENVIRONMENT AGENCY ADVICE			
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
No. of permissions	18	15	11
Major developments (in excess of 0.5ha/ 10 dwellings)	0	3	1

Source: Environment Agency.

Analysis and Interpretation

The incidence of flooding has been increasing in the Region with more frequent wetter periods, potentially associated with global warming. This is exacerbated by the use of drainage systems that are designed to discharge surface water into watercourses more quickly. PPG25 includes a policy imperative against built development in floodplains or areas liable to flooding. Whilst the Government rejected the draft flood risk policy proposed during the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy as insufficiently regionally specific, it has recognised that this is an important issue for further consideration as part of future reviews. It is therefore appropriate that developments in the floodplain are monitored.

The Environment Agency collects data on the number of planning applications granted in floodplains contrary to Agency advice, for submission to Defra. A total of 11

planning applications were approved contrary to Agency advice in 2003-04, of which only 1 was for major development (in excess of 0.5 hectares/10 dwellings), a change of use of a development previously approved. Of the remainder, two applications were to redesign development previously granted planning permission, three for conversion schemes, three for minor residential development, one for minor industrial development, and one for a culvert. In most of these cases, the Agency recommended preparation of a Flood Risk Assessment, which was not forthcoming.

This represents a reduction from the two previous years, although there were no major developments approved in 2001-02. These figures are broadly equivalent or lower than for other regions. Data for 2004-05 was not available in time for inclusion in this report.

Progress Towards Implementation

The identification of regionally significant flooding areas is one of the issues highlighted by GOWM for future reviews of the Regional Spatial Strategy, although monitoring

suggests that development contrary to Environment Agency advice is declining.

Policy QE5 - Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Statement of Purpose

Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment, and recognise the positive role of buildings of historic and architectural value as a focus for regeneration.

Relevant Indicators

- (a) Number and percentage of listed buildings and ancient monuments at risk of neglect or decay.
- (b) Number and proportion of listed buildings demolished.

Key Data

TABLE QE4: LISTED BUILDINGS (GRADES I AND II*) AND SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS (STRUCTURES) AT RISK^A

	Number	Proportion (%)
2004-05	186	5.3
2003-04	183	5.2
2002-03	183	5.2
2001-02	182	5.4

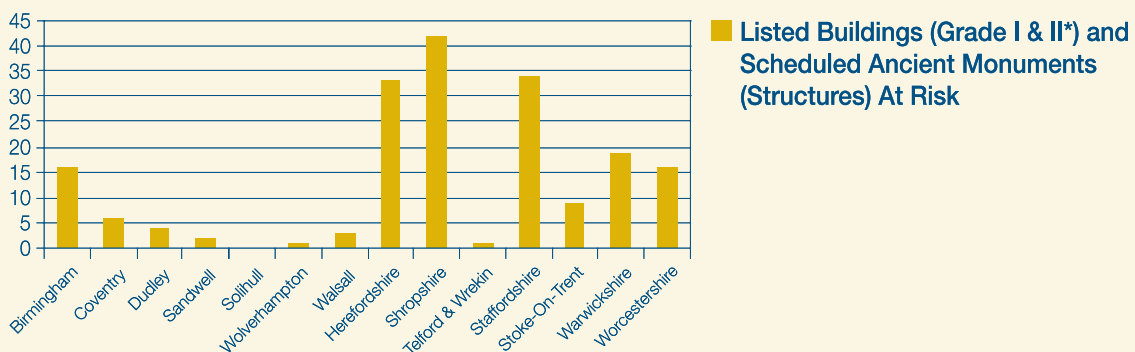
Source: English Heritage.

TABLE QE5: LISTED BUILDING CONSENT DECISIONS

	Number	Proportion (%)
2004-05	2,733	89
2003-04	2,549	90.3
2002-03	2,554	89.9

Source: English Heritage.

FIGURE QE3: LISTED BUILDINGS (GRADES I & II*) AND SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS (STRUCTURES) AT RISK BY STRATEGIC AUTHORITY



Analysis and Interpretation

English Heritage collects data on Grade I and II* Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments that are structures, which are at risk of neglect or decay. Protection and enhancement of historic buildings and structures makes an important contribution to the quality of the environment, particularly in the Major Urban Areas, and offers potential for the physical and environmental renewal of the Black Country and North Staffordshire conurbations. It is also important in the major Shire towns and cities, and market towns, where new investment is being encouraged, as well as the wider countryside. The condition and management of the Region's rural heritage is a central theme of the 2005 report *Heritage Counts: The State of the West Midlands' Historic Environment*, produced by English Heritage in conjunction with the West Midlands Historic Environment Forum.

There has been little change in the overall proportion of buildings and structures that are at risk since 2001, with the small number of buildings removed from the register replaced by new buildings at risk. The Region has one of the highest proportions of buildings (Grade I and II*) at risk, with a national average of 3.4%, and nearly a third of the buildings are in the highest 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 £72.2 million (the conservation deficit) – with nearly half of the buildings involving repair costs of £62,000 or more (*Buildings at Risk Register 2005*,

English Heritage). This underlines the long term value of actively maintaining and encouraging the continued use of historic buildings. A significant proportion of entries on the at risk register occur across the Region's shire counties and in particular in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire, hence safeguarding the Region's historic environment is a priority issue for both urban and rural areas.

English Heritage has commenced an at risk survey of the remaining Scheduled Ancient Monuments and this data will be available as baseline information next year. Grade I and II* Listed Buildings only represent about 10% of the total Listed Buildings nationally. No data is collected on a national basis for Grade II Listed Buildings at risk, although some local authorities have compiled local registers covering all historic buildings at risk. In the West Midlands, 50% of local authorities have not compiled, or do not have an up-to-date, register of Grade II listed buildings at risk (*Heritage Counts 2004*, English Heritage). English Heritage is encouraging local authorities to establish local At Risk registers, which will improve the quality of regional monitoring in the future.

Data on the number of Listed Buildings demolished is collected, but it includes alterations that involve the demolition of part of a Listed Building as well. Whilst the number and proportion of Listed Building Consent Decisions is a useful indication that listing does not stifle development, it does not give a picture of the Listed Buildings demolished completely.

Progress Towards Implementation

No change to the policy in the Regional Spatial Strategy is required at present, as it is too early to identify its impact on the historic environment of the Region.

Policy QE7 - Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the Region's Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources

Statement of Purpose

Encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the Region's biodiversity in accordance with UK Biodiversity Action Plan targets.

Relevant Indicators

- (a) Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) habitats - percentage of SSSI which are in a favourable condition, by strategic planning area.
 (b) Change (additions and subtractions) by County, District and Unitary Planning Authority due to new development, management programme and planning agreement in areas of biodiversity importance:
 (i) priority biodiversity habitats (by type)
 and
 (ii) areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value, including sites of international, regional or sub-regional significance.

Key Data

TABLE QE6: CONDITION OF ASSESSED SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI) HABITATS 2005

	SSSI Area (ha)	Area in Favourable/Recovering Condition (%)		
		2003	2004	2005
Herefordshire	4,366	38	37	38
Shropshire	7,345	45	65	69
Staffordshire	8,235	66	71	75
Warwickshire	1,346	96	88	89
West Midlands Met Area	1,138	43	93	94
Worcestershire	3,750	65	68	72
West Midlands Region	26,181	56	65	68

Source: English Nature.

Analysis and Interpretation

English Nature assesses the condition of SSSIs, which cover 2% of the Region's area, on a six year rolling programme. Sites are placed in one of 6 categories, used throughout the UK, based on progress towards their Conservation Objectives. Areas of SSSI that meet their Conservation Objectives, or are moving towards them are in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable/recovering' condition and are included in the figures above. The national Public Service Agreement target requires 95% of SSSIs by area to be in favourable or recovering condition by 2010.

The figures show an increase in the area of SSSIs in favourable or recovering condition, from 56% in 2003 to 68% in 2005. This reflects the increased targeting of schemes and initiatives aimed at improving the condition of SSSIs. These include the use of management agreements by English Nature to encourage landowners to manage SSSIs in ways that protect and enhance their conservation value, agri-environment schemes such as Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Area agreements, and asset management programmes implemented by Water Companies.

There is considerable variation in the condition of SSSIs across the Region. The Metropolitan Area has the highest proportion with 94% of SSSIs meeting the PSA target, a result of improvements to the heathland at Sutton Park, whilst Herefordshire has the lowest proportion at 38%. The low figure in Herefordshire is due to the presence of several large complex cross-border sites in unfavourable condition, such as the Black Mountains and the river network affected by diffuse pollution, from a range of sources, such as septic tanks, sewage treatment plants, land management and conifer plantations. The decline in

the proportion of SSSIs in favourable/recovering condition in Warwickshire may be due to the effect of better reporting based on the Conservation Objectives, rather than actual deterioration. This effect will gradually become less significant as assessments are updated.

Data on the second indicator relating to the change in area due to development by (i) priority biodiversity habitat and by (ii) areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value is not currently available. This is an important omission, which needs to be addressed by local planning authorities working through the Regional Environmental Monitoring Group and Biodiversity Partnerships. The requirement for Annual Monitoring Reports for Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) should provide a mechanism to gather information as the same indicator is used as a Core Output Indicator in ODPM Guidance to Local Authorities on monitoring of LDFs (March 2005). The potential of the Biodiversity Action Reporting System, highlighted in the ODPM Good Practice Guide, will be explored, although it is primarily an information tool for those working in the biodiversity sector.

This report has been compiled using spatial analysis to give the condition of SSSIs within each county or metropolitan area. The method has been applied retrospectively for 2003 and 2004, which accounts for any slight differences in condition statistics from previous reports. The areas of SSSI by County and Region differ from the previous reports, which excluded sites within the Peak District National Park, and any SSSI area that had not been subject to condition assessment. The total area of SSSI now aligns fully with the regional boundary.

Progress Towards Implementation

No change to the policy in the Regional Spatial Strategy is required at present, as it is too early to identify its impact on the biodiversity of the Region.

Policy EN1 - Energy Generation

Statement of Purpose

Encourage the use of renewable energy resources subject to environmental and other criteria.

Relevant Indicators

Provision of new renewable energy capacity by type.

Key Data

TABLE EN1: RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATING CAPACITY BY TYPE (MW)

	2002	2004
Hydro-electric	2.0	1.3
Landfill gas	38.0	45.3
Other biofuels ¹	104.4	127.9
Total²	144.4	174.5

Source: DTI Energy Trends Publication: September 2005 (2004 data), September 2003 (2002 data)

Notes:

¹ Other biofuels includes electricity generation capacity from waste incineration, sewage gas and co-firing capability.

² Solar Photovoltaics are not included in DTI regional statistics as currently estimated on a UK wide basis.

Analysis and Interpretation

The Government has set a national target of 10% of electricity to be produced from renewable energy by 2010, with an aspiration to double this by 2020. The Regional Energy Strategy published in 2004 sets a more modest target for renewable energy for the Region of 5%, reflecting its low baseline of renewable energy and the potential opportunities. This 5% target does not include any contribution from mass burn waste incineration or generation from co-firing at the large power stations.

The Regional Energy Strategy identifies the need for monitoring of renewable energy on a more regular basis.

Progress Towards Implementation

No change to the policy in the Regional Spatial Strategy is required at present, as it is too early to identify its impact on the provision for renewable energy capacity in the Region.

Work has been commissioned with the West Midlands Regional Observatory to provide this renewable energy data for the Region excluding mass burn waste incineration & co-firing to enable progress against the 5% target to be tracked. This work has only just commenced so was not available for this monitoring report. In its absence, DTI data shows an increase in generating capacity since 2002, although this is mainly due to use of biofuels. Achievement of even the reduced target for the Region is likely to be challenging, although landfill gas contribution has risen.

Policy M2 - Minerals – Aggregates

Policy M3 - Minerals - The Use of Alternative Sources of Materials

Statement of Purpose

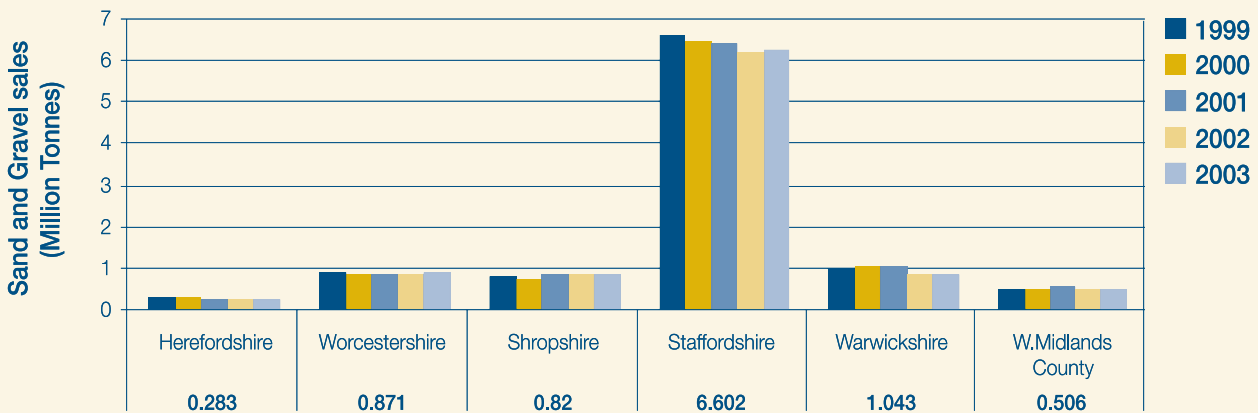
Make adequate provision for primary aggregates whilst increasing the contribution of alternative sources of materials.

Relevant Indicators

- (a) Provision for the production of primary land-won aggregates (by Minerals Planning Authority area) in relation to the sub-regional apportionment in Policy M2.
- (b) Production of secondary/recycled aggregates (by Minerals Planning Authority area).

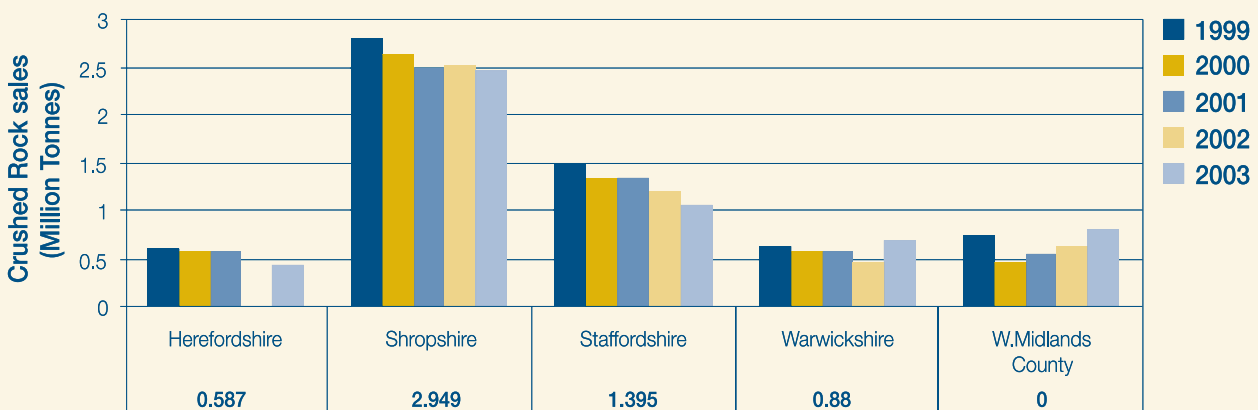
Key Data

FIGURE M1: SAND & GRAVEL SALES FOR AGGREGATE PURPOSES 1999-2003



Source: West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party Annual Report 2003.

FIGURE M2: CRUSHED ROCK SALES FOR AGGREGATE PURPOSES 1999-2003



Source: West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party Annual Report 2003.

TABLE M1: SECONDARY/RECYCLED MATERIALS SOLD AS AGGREGATE (MILLION TONES)

	2001	2002	2003
West Midlands	4.26	1.21	4.29

Source: West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party Annual Report 2003.

Analysis and Interpretation

Although sales of sand and gravel in the Region increased slightly in 2003, the latest figures continue an overall downward trend since 1998. The sales for individual minerals planning authorities, other than Staffordshire (95%) and Warwickshire (80%), are close to the new sub-regional apportionment, which is based on recent production levels. A similar picture emerges for crushed rock sales. The National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregate Provision in England, 2001-16 (the Guidelines), on which the sub-regional apportionment is based, are monitored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The second monitoring report for the Guidelines, produced in November 2005, concludes that there is no need to revise the Guidelines.

Figures for secondary and recycled materials sold as aggregates are only collected for the Region as a whole, and show a total of 4.26 million tonnes in 2001, a six-fold increase in the total for 2000, and 1.21 million tonnes in 2002. The 2001 figure is based on a national survey undertaken on behalf of ODPM, which suggests that the quantities of recycled aggregates are much higher than shown by the data collected by the Regional Aggregates Working Party. A survey report produced on behalf of

ODPM in October 2004 indicates that national production of recycled aggregate has increased since 2001 and estimates that recycled aggregate produced in the West Midlands in 2003 was 4.29 million tonnes. This figure remains below the 5.5 million tonnes per year of alternative materials assumed by the Guidelines, and suggests a continued need to encourage the supply of alternative materials, especially in the Major Urban Areas where opportunities are likely to be greatest.

A further 301,429 tonnes of road planings became available in 2003 from local authority road works, although this does not represent all planings. This figure is lower than for 2002, but is almost 30% higher than the figure for 2001, which was in turn 22% higher than the figure for 2000. Better record keeping, rather than increased road maintenance, may account for the differences, especially as aggregate demand has not increased correspondingly.

Data on aggregates is collected by the Regional Aggregates Working Party and more detailed information is available from the West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party Annual Report, 2003.

Progress Towards Implementation

Monitoring indicates that sales of aggregates are broadly in line with the Regional Guidelines and the sub-regional apportionment, and that the use of secondary/recycled

materials is increasing, so there is no need for a change to the policy in the Regional Spatial Strategy at present.

Policy WD1 - Targets for Waste Management in the Region

Policy WD2 - The Need for Waste Management Facilities by Sub-region

Statement of Purpose

Regional targets for municipal, household and industrial and commercial waste and to provide for waste management and treatment facilities for all major waste streams to enable the targets to be met.

Relevant Indicators

(a) Capacity of waste management facilities by type (e.g. landfill, recycling, recovery and other alternatives) by Waste Planning Authority area, compared with targets set out in the regional waste strategy (Core output indicator 6a).

(b) Amount of waste managed by management type (e.g. recycling, landfill, etc) by Waste Planning Authority area.

(c) Amount of municipal waste arising and managed by management type and the percentage each management type represents of the total waste managed: by waste planning authority (Core output indicator 6b).

(d) Amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill each year to be reduced in line with the EU Landfill Directive.

Key Data

TABLE WD1: WEST MIDLANDS REGION – ESTIMATES OF WASTE PRODUCTION ('000 TONNES)

Type of Waste	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Municipal ⁴	2,744	2,875	2,880	2,985	3,046	3,031
Industrial & commercial ⁵	7,558	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,888	N/A
Construction & demolition ⁶	N/A	6,308	N/A	8,624	N/A	8,130
Special/hazardous ⁷	599	599	576	581	542	665

Sources: See footnotes.

TABLE WD2: WEST MIDLANDS REGION - METHODS OF MUNICIPAL WASTE DISPOSAL 2001/02 - 2003/04) ('000 TONNES) (CORE OUTPUT INDICATOR 6B)

	2001/02		2002/03		2003/04	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Landfilled	1,688	57	1,650	54	1,594	53
Recycled/composted	331	11	427	14	505	17
Incinerated/other	965	32	969	32	933	31
Total disposal	2,984		3,046		3,032	

Source: Defra Annual Returns.

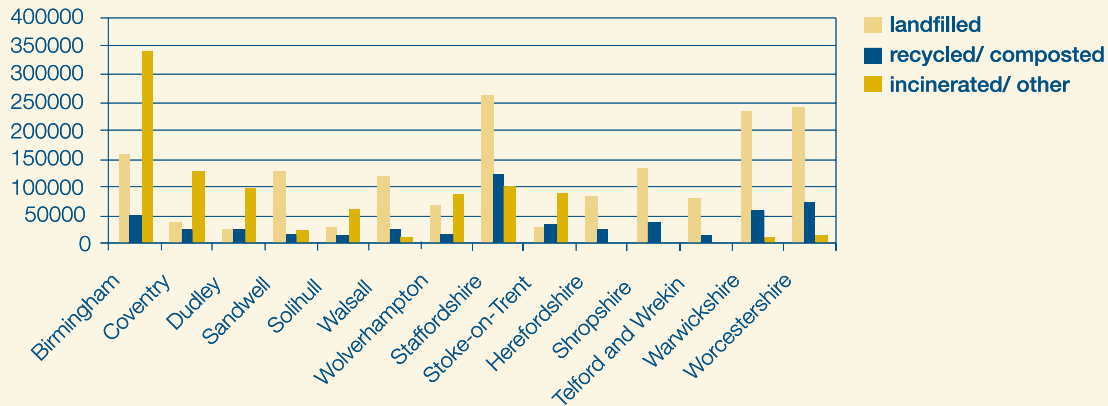
⁴ Defra annual surveys.

⁵ Environment Agency surveys.

⁶ ODPM/ Capita Symonds surveys.

⁷ Environment Agency SwaT data.

FIGURE WD1: MANAGEMENT OF MUNICIPAL WASTE 2003/04 (TONNES) (CORE OUTPUT INDICATOR 6B)



Source: Defra Annual Returns.

TABLE WD3: WEST MIDLANDS REGION: INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL WASTE ARISING 1998/99 AND 2002/03 ('000 TONNES)

	1998/99		2002/03	
	No.	%	No.	%
Land disposal	3,205	42	2,721	39
Land recovery	23	0	80	1
Re-used	404	5	696	10
Recycled	2,282	30	2,465	36
Thermal	408	5	69	1
Transfer	2,215	29	102	1
Treatment	628	8	480	7
Unrecorded	388	5	212	3
Unsampled	4	0	65	1
Total	7,558		6,888	

NB. Data not available at Waste Planning Authority level.
 Source: Environment Agency SWMA (2000), and sample surveys (2003).

TABLE WD4: INDICATIVE CAPACITY REQUIRED TO MANAGE WASTE IN THE WEST MIDLANDS REGION BY TYPE OF CAPACITY 2001- 2021 ('000 TONNES)

Future Requirement by Type of Capacity	Existing Capacity 2001	Capacity required by				RSS Table 4 (1998/99 – 2020/21)
		2005	2010	2015	2020	
Recycling & Recovery						
Municipal Recycling	109	750	1,070	1,205	1,248	1,734
Municipal Recovery	990	1,207	1,119	1,433	1,450	1,940
Industrial & Commercial Recycling & Recovery	2,286	4,255	4,360	4,482	4,607	-
Construction & Demolition Recycling	336	6,101	5,967	6,020	6,020	-
Construction & Demolition Engineering Uses	11,205	14,633	24,532	33,069	41,605	-
Hazardous Recycling & Recovery	466	411	474	477	477	-
Disposal (Landfill)						
Non-Hazardous	76,515	22,348	41,981	59,559	76,194	142,725
Hazardous	0	1,420	2,921	4,241	5,561	

Source: Environment Agency SWMA update; Future Capacity Requirements Study, 2004 Table 6.2; RSS Table 4.

Analysis and Interpretation

Municipal Waste

Table WD1 shows that the Region produced just over 3 million tonnes of municipal waste in 2003/04, an increase of 11% since 1998/99, but a slight reduction from 2002/03. In 2003/04, 53% of the Region's municipal waste was disposed of to landfill, down from 60% in 1998/99, with an absolute reduction in 2002/03 and 2003/04 (Table WD2). The West Midlands continues to have the lowest reliance on landfill of all English regions. The significant reduction in landfill is due to the increase in capacity for incineration with energy recovery in the major urban areas, and an increase in household recycling rates.

The Region had exceeded its targets for 2005 and 2010 for recovering value from municipal waste by 2003/04, with a rate of 48%, the highest of all English regions. Whilst the percentage of waste from which value is recovered through incineration remained fairly constant between 1998/99 and 2003/04, the municipal recycling rate increased from 8% to 17%. Household waste recycling and composting has increased by 150% since 1998/99, a significantly greater rate than for England (111%). Nevertheless, at 16% the Region's household

recycling rate remains below the average for England (17.7%), and well below the target of 25% for 2005.

The pattern of management continues to vary considerably across the Region (see Figure WD1), with greater reliance on landfill but higher recycling rates in the shire areas, and a higher level of energy recovery by incineration in the Major Urban Areas.

Household waste recycling rates continue to vary considerably, from the Country's top performing rate of 46% in Lichfield, to levels in several local authorities at around 10%. Almost all local authorities have increased their recycling/ composting rate significantly over the last 5 years, but several did not achieve their statutory target for 2003/04. However, these statistics do not yet fully reflect the investment made by local authorities, with funding from central Government, in a large number and wide range of kerbside recycling initiatives.

EU landfill targets require the Region to reduce progressively the amount of biodegradable municipal waste landfilled from the 1.17 million tonnes deposited in 1995. Last year's Report showed a reduction to below both the aggregated allocations for 2005/06 and the targets for 2010, although a small number of authorities

still needed to reduce the landfill of biodegradable municipal waste to meet their allocation for 2005-06. More recent data is not currently available, but the WasteDataFlow system will enable regular monitoring of the situation in future years.

Industrial and Commercial Waste

There appears to have been a fall in the production of industrial and commercial waste in the Region between 1998/99 and 2002/03 from 7.6 to 6.9 million tonnes (Table WD3). Recycling of industrial and commercial waste increased from 2.3 to 2.5 million tonnes, and in proportional terms from 30% to 36%.

The data indicates a dramatic reduction in the amount of waste taken through transfer sites, and a significant

reduction in the amount of industrial and commercial waste sent to landfill, to about 2.7 million tonnes, on track to achieve the National Waste Strategy and Regional Spatial Strategy target for 2005. This reduction is likely to be the result of the progressive impact of the Landfill Tax and other national policy initiatives. (This figure is based on a very narrow survey of industry and there were problems with the data. A confidence level for reliance on the data is not available.)

Construction and Demolition Waste

In 2003-04, the quantity of construction and demolition waste produced in the Region had reduced since 2001-02 by 6% to 8.13 million tonnes. The proportion recycled increased from 50% to 61%, the highest performance for any region in England, and the quantity of material used at

exempt sites was halved to the lowest level of any region other than London. Indications are that at least some parts of the construction industry are securing significant reductions in waste.

Hazardous Waste

The Region produced some 665,000 tonnes of hazardous waste in 2003, an increase of 23% compared with 2002. This contrasts with England and Wales, where there was a 6% reduction between 2002 and 2003, largely due to falls in the production of oils and oily waste and hazardous construction and demolition wastes. In 2003, 708,000 tonnes of hazardous waste was deposited in the Region,

of which 286,000 tonnes was sent to landfill, much of which was accounted for by one large contaminated land clearance scheme in Coventry. As highlighted in previous monitoring reports, the emphasis in the Regional Spatial Strategy on the redevelopment of brownfield land may have significant implications for the management of hazardous waste.

Waste Management Capacity

There remains a need for a step-change in the provision of waste management facilities in the Region. Table WD4 restates the indicative requirement being used to inform the development of 'scenarios' for the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, compared with estimated existing capacity at 2001. No more recent information on existing capacity is available. However, a simple analysis of the numbers of waste licences issued by the Environment Agency suggests a quickening in the pace of change; of the 224 licenses issued since 2000, a third were issued in 2004 and the first half of 2005.

During 2004/05, 59 planning applications for waste

management developments were determined in the Region, of which 42 were approved, 33 in the Shire areas, and 9 in the Metropolitan area. The proposals were for a range of types of facility, including waste transfer stations (14), facilities to process green waste (7), materials recycling facilities (4), and metal recycling/ end of life vehicles (4). There were 8 permissions relating to landfill, of which 5 related to new, relatively small voids. The largest proposal related to a municipal waste treatment and recycling facility is at Hartlebury in Worcestershire, with a projected annual throughput of 100,000 tonnes. Three proposals had throughput capacities of over 50,000 tonnes per year, but most common were smaller scale

proposals of less than 10,000 tonnes per year throughput capacity. Not all the returns included capacity data, so total capacities for Waste Planning Authorities and the Region cannot be calculated.⁸

Progress Towards Implementation

A number of waste management issues are amongst those highlighted by GOWM for future reviews of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The Phase 2 Revision Draft Project Plan includes an objective to provide sufficient opportunities to meet the identified needs for all waste

management streams, and identifies waste management issues amongst the tasks for the Revision. However, monitoring suggests that it is too early to identify the impact of the Regional Spatial Strategy on waste management in the Region.

Conclusions – Quality of the Environment

The key element of the spatial strategy for the environment is the need to improve the quality of the environment, particularly in the Major Urban Areas. There is concern that the level of derelict and contaminated land could be a barrier to the policy emphasis on development of previously developed land in the urban areas. Other regional concerns are the potential threat of flooding, and the need to exploit renewable energy resources.

There has been a marginal reduction only in the area of derelict land across the Region, other than in Stoke on Trent where a review has resulted in a significant reduction in the total area of derelict land. Derelict land is concentrated in the Major Urban Areas, although more than 60% by area is spread across the Shire Counties. The reclamation levels suggest that the policy emphasis on the re-use of previously developed land has yet to have a significant impact on the Region's derelict land. The possible classification of contamination as waste requiring licensing is a potential threat to the reclamation of derelict land, which is a key element of the spatial strategy.

New woodland planting has been concentrated in the Shire Counties rather than the urban areas where the need to improve the quality of the environment is greatest. This highlights the importance of new initiatives such as the Sites Opportunities Mapping project aimed at encouraging woodland planting on derelict land, and a strategic approach to greening through the development of Green Infrastructure Planning.

Monitoring suggests that Environment Agency advice on development proposals in areas subject to risk of flooding is being heeded, although not all proposals are being subjected to flood risk assessments.

The proportion of listed buildings and scheduled ancient

monuments at risk in the Region has increased slightly, and remains one of the highest for the English regions. This reflects the scale of the problem in the Region and the difficulty of progressing cases with significant conservation deficits. Greater and sustained investment in the historic environment will, however, benefit the quality of the environment and encourage regeneration.

Good progress has been made in improving the quality of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the Region, partly reflecting the priority that English Nature has given to negotiating management agreements with landowners. However, the sites represent only a very small proportion of the total area of the Region and, like woodland planting, are concentrated in the Shire Counties.

The Region is starting from a very low baseline of renewable energy, which is reflected in the modest, though still challenging regional target. However, revised national guidance and the Regional Energy Strategy, along with technological developments, should help to encourage greater exploitation of the potential renewable energy resources.

The level of secondary and recycled aggregate in the Region remains below the annual requirement to meet national assumptions, although the figures for alternative materials and road planings are likely to be underestimated. Nevertheless, continued efforts are needed to ensure that opportunities for recycling and re-use of aggregate material are maximised.

A significant need for new waste management capacity in the Region, especially in the Major Urban Areas, has been identified, which will need to be addressed in the Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy. A survey of waste management facilities was introduced this year, which will

⁸ This is the first year for which this data has been collected; in future years, it will be possible to identify trends in the number, nature, scale and location of proposals coming forward for planning permission in the Region.

provide a baseline for future monitoring. The waste management data suggests that a step-change in the recycling of household waste is required, but the indications are that significant improvements are in the pipeline as a result of the challenging targets set. Good progress has been made in reducing the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill.

