

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Regional Strategy Aims to Improve Quality of the Environment in the West Midlands**

Managing flood risk, developing renewable energy and the role of Green Belt land in the Region are just a few of the issues being reviewed in a seven-week consultation as part of the Phase Three Revision of the West Midlands Spatial Strategy (WMRSS).

Prepared by the Assembly, and led by local government, the Strategy sets out targets for homes, the economy, infrastructure and the environment through to 2026. There are a large number of environment policies up for consultation aimed at conserving and enhancing the quality of the Region's environment in both urban and rural areas.

"Improving the quality of the environment needs a "landscape scale approach" if we are to protect important landscapes, increase biodiversity and tackle derelict land." said Mark Middleton, Director of Policy at the Assembly.

"There are a range of wider environmental issues that face the Region and need to be addressed at a policy level. For example, ensuring green belt land is used in positive ways such as nature conservation and finding the most effective ways to generate more electricity from renewable sources to respond to national carbon reduction targets. Another major issue for the West Midlands is flooding, highlighted by floods in Summer 2007 and September 2008 which demonstrated the vulnerability faced by parts of the Region to severe flooding. Only the Regional Spatial Strategy can address complete river catchments and help local authorities locate development in low risk areas."

The consultation will run from 29<sup>th</sup> June – 14<sup>th</sup> August, where the public will have the opportunity to submit their views via an online questionnaire or in writing. A Preferred Option will be drafted based on the consultation feedback later this year, and be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.

**ENDS**

**You can read the Phase Three Options consultation document and fill in the Questionnaire at:**  
[http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning and Regional Spatial Strategy/RSS Revision/RSS Revision Phase 3.aspx](http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning%20and%20Regional%20Spatial%20Strategy/RSS%20Revision/RSS%20Revision%20Phase%203.aspx)

**For further information please contact:**  
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## **Notes to Editors**

1. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands Region.
2. The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 elected members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.
3. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe. It also supports regional policy forums and task groups on social inclusion, faith, housing, life long learning/skills, health, rural and community safety/crime reduction.
4. The Assembly works in partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the regional development agency (RDA), the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) the West Midlands Leaders Board (WMLB) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands Region.
5. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body.
6. For further information, visit our website [www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)