

NEWS RELEASE

Ref: 2009/2809

Date: 28th September 2009

PANEL REPORT REVEALS HOUSING FIGURES FOR REGION

398,000 new homes are being recommended by the Planning Inspectors Panel in a report published today, following the Examination in Public into the Regional Spatial Strategy which took place between April and June this year.

Prepared by the West Midlands Regional Assembly, and led by local government, the Regional Spatial Strategy sets out targets for homes, the economy, infrastructure and the environment through to 2026.

The housing figure recommended in today's report is higher than the Regional Assembly's preferred figure of 365,000, but considerably less than the numbers promoted by some groups at the Examination in Public. The annual building rates being recommended in the first ten years are lower than those suggested by the Assembly, with much of the increased housing being placed in major urban areas, in line with the Regional Spatial Strategy's aim to promote urban and rural renaissance.

The Report sets out the conclusions reached by the independent Panel which conducted the Examination in Public. The key conclusion is the that "the principles and essential spatial strategy of the RSS remain sound and do not need changing in order to meet the housing and other challenges now confronting the Region."

The next steps are for the Government Office to publish proposed changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy for a final round of consultation, which is anticipated to be by December 2009. The Spatial Strategy is due to be approved finally by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government next year.

ENDS

You can read the Panels Report at

<http://www.gos.gov.uk/gowm/Planning/515750/panelreport09/?a=42496>

**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