

NEWS RELEASE

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Birmingham Development Plans the Focus of Public Examination

Will Birmingham's ambitious housing targets produce a good mix of housing to meet all needs? Do new development plans recognise the international status of Birmingham as a world city? These are just two of the questions due to come under scrutiny on Tuesday 2nd June at a major inquiry into the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.

Prepared by the West Midlands Regional Assembly, and submitted to government, this Strategy sets out targets for homes, the economy, infrastructure and waste reduction across the Region through to 2026. Controversial policies directly related to Birmingham will come under review at the Examination in Public next Tuesday.

Amongst the many issues being debated, major concerns undoubtedly surround the level and distribution of additional housing development, as well as Birmingham's ability to provide the required employment land and infrastructure to match this growth. Up for discussion will be the study on behalf of government which proposes up to 60,600 new homes in Birmingham, a figure much higher than the 50,600 net total of homes that the Assembly has proposed.

"At the heart of the Regional Spatial Strategy is the aim of creating sustainable communities across all parts of the Region, and next week's session will be an opportunity to test the feasibility and deliverability of the overall Strategy in Birmingham." said Regional Assembly Director, Mark Middleton.

The Examination in Public is conducted by an independent Panel of experts, and held at the Molineux Stadium in Wolverhampton. Whilst Birmingham & Solihull will be up for discussion on 2nd June, other areas in the Region will also be covered over the next two weeks.

ENDS

For further information on the Examination in Public please contact Mark Middleton, Director of Policy on 0121 678 1024

**For further information or to arrange a briefing please contact:
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Notes to Editors

1. The Examination in Public programme is available at http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/rss/west_midlands_phase_two/documents/WMRSSEiPTimetableFinal12Mar09.pdf
2. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands Region.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 Local Government Association (WMLGA) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands region.
6. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body,
7. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk