

Chapter 7

Prosperity for All

Introduction

- 7.1 Critical to the success of the Spatial Strategy will be the future performance of the Region's economy. There is a clear and direct link between economic performance and quality of life, particularly for disadvantaged groups and communities who may suffer from high rates of unemployment and poor access to employment opportunities. Improving factors such as housing, environmental quality, transport and access to leisure facilities, will also enhance the attractiveness of the Region to inward investment.
- 7.2 The West Midlands lags behind other regions of the UK and Europe in terms of economic performance, particularly on measures of GDP. This reflects a number of factors including levels of productivity, investment and the Region's industrial structure. The policies in this Chapter encourage the development of new high growth employment sectors and the modernisation of the Region's existing traditional industries, whilst ensuring that the opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and reducing social exclusion.
- 7.3 The approach taken is to establish and maintain a portfolio of sustainably located employment sites, attractive to developers and operators and appropriate to market needs. Spatial focus is given to economic activity through, among other things, the identification of regeneration zones, high technology corridors and a network of strategic town and city centres. The centres identified will form the basis of a multi-centred Region and provide an important strategic focus for social, cultural, economic, commercial and regeneration activity.
- 7.4 The policies in this Chapter must be considered in the context of the full RPG. The Urban and Rural Renaissance and Quality of the Environment Chapters are particularly relevant considerations.

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- 7.5 The policies in this Chapter will contribute to the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth as a key element of the overall strategy for sustainable development by helping to support improvements both in the environment and the quality of life for everyone who lives in the Region. The policies are closely linked with, and support the implementation of, the Regional Economic Strategy.
- 7.6 The diversification of the Regional economy will be encouraged through the promotion of high value-added businesses and the attraction of inward investment. Existing economic activities in the Region will be encouraged to modernise, both to stay competitive and to embrace the opportunities offered by new technologies and ICT, particularly through improvements and innovations in products and processes. The potential for existing industries to apply new technology to help address the implications of global climate change is also recognised.
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POLICY PA1: Prosperity for All

- A. Economic growth should, wherever possible, be focused on the Major Urban Areas (MUAs), with an emphasis on creating greater opportunities for development and support for existing economic activities within agreed regeneration areas.
- B. In the development of related (but essentially non-land-use) policies and programmes, local authorities, AWM and other agencies should:
 - i) ensure that conditions in 'areas of need' are addressed so that they also become 'areas of opportunity'. Particular emphasis in this approach should be given to the Regeneration Zones (PA2, RR2). To the extent that needs and opportunities cannot be matched, then beneficial economic linkages should be developed between areas of economic opportunity and more economically vulnerable areas of employment need;
 - ii) maintain and improve transport accessibility – both of goods and people – by all modes into, within and through all parts of the Region;
 - iii) ensure that the environmental and cultural assets are maintained and enhanced to help attract and develop business activity; and
 - iv) develop the skills and abilities of the West Midlands people by improving access to training, higher education and employment opportunities.
- C. Where growth opportunities are provided outside the MUAs, emphasis should be given to locating development where:
 - i) it can help meet the needs of the MUAs and promote positive economic linkages with them in areas accessible by sustainable forms of transport;
 - ii) it can help meet the needs of rural renaissance, especially of market towns;
 - iii) it can serve the needs of the local regeneration areas; and
 - iv) it can help create more sustainable communities by generally providing a better balance between housing and employment and limit the need for commuting.
- D. Any development proposed on the edge of the MUAs or on other greenfield sites should meet the following criteria:
 - i) there are no suitable alternatives available on previously developed land and buildings within built up areas;
 - ii) the development should be capable of being served by rail or high quality public transport within easy access of centres and facilities; and
 - iii) the development respects the natural environment, built environment and historic heritage in accordance with policies QE1-9.

7.7 With regard to the criterion Bi), development plans should examine the potential for strengthening economic and transport links between areas of need and opportunity particularly within the high-technology corridors (PA3). The aim should be to encourage greater levels of development within the MUAs through a positive relationship with areas of opportunity beyond.

- 7.8 In all cases, the scale and nature of development should be controlled to ensure that it meets local needs and does not encourage a further decentralisation of people and jobs from the MUAs.
- 7.9 Implementation of this policy will require partnership working between all those involved in development and local transport plans, economic development, the environment and education and skills.

Urban Regeneration Zones

- 7.10 In order to focus action, the Regional Economic Strategy identifies six Regeneration Zones (RZs), five urban and one rural (see policy RR2) covering approximately one third of the Region's population and more than half of its unemployed. While the Zones cover the areas of greatest need they also contain substantial opportunities.

POLICY PA2: Urban Regeneration Zones

In order to encourage urban renaissance and help reverse long-standing trends of decentralisation of economic activity and population and to encourage the regeneration of economies, policies and programmes of local authorities, AWM, local economic partnerships and other agencies should focus investment within the following Regeneration Zones:

- i) East Birmingham and North Solihull;
- ii) North Black Country and South Staffs (Future Foundations);
- iii) North Staffordshire;
- iv) Coventry and Nuneaton; and
- v) South Black Country and West Birmingham (Arc of Opportunity).

- 7.11 These Zones are diverse in nature and local partnerships will identify – in Prospectuses and Action Plans – strategic priorities including spatial targeting of investment within each Zone.
- 7.12 Development plans and local transport plans should draw upon the work of the Regeneration Zone Partnerships in setting out priorities for investment in terms of employment land, housing and the renewal of infrastructure provision. Regeneration Zones will be the primary focus for meeting much of the Region's new development needs and where supporting infrastructure should be concentrated.
- 7.13 Within the Regeneration Zones in the MUAs, particular emphasis should be given to the provision of high quality employment sites, the regeneration of town centres and other opportunity areas. In appropriate circumstances, compulsory purchase powers will be used to assemble sites and to create regeneration opportunities.
- 7.14 Where adequate employment opportunities to meet the needs of the Regeneration Zones within the MUAs cannot be provided within these Zones, emphasis should be given to encouraging development in locations accessible to them by public transport.
- 7.15 Specific measures should be introduced in the Regeneration Zones to enhance employment and training opportunities arising from new investment in these areas.
- 7.16 Monitoring procedures should be established by the RPB and AWM in order to assess the progress being made in each Zone and a programme established for regular reviews of performance.

High-Technology Corridors (HTC)

- 7.17** The Rover Task Force, set up in the wake of the BMW decision to sell their interests in Rover Cars, commissioned extensive work which identified three areas of the Region that were particularly vulnerable to any resulting loss of business. The identified corridors also had the potential for the establishment of long-term strategies for the development of high technology clusters of activity.

POLICY PA3: High-Technology Corridors

- A. In order to encourage the diversification of the Regional economy, three High-Technology Corridors (HTC) are identified within which cluster developments, closely linked to the Region's critical research and development capabilities and advanced technologies, will be promoted:
- i) Birmingham to Worcestershire (Central Technology Belt);
 - ii) Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire; and
 - iii) Wolverhampton to Telford.
- B. In land-use terms, new developments within the HTCs should be focused on the MUAs and at specific nodes shown on the Prosperity for All Diagram.
- C. In order to reduce pressure for the development of greenfield sites, it is particularly important that scarce land resources within the HTCs should be used for developments which will reinforce the potential of the particular corridor. Development plans should consider the use of appropriate conditions, legal agreements, or other implementation mechanisms, such as landlord control, to help achieve this.
- 7.18** The term 'corridor' reflects the functional linkages between activities. It does not imply any form of ribbon development will be permitted. Local authorities, AWM, local economic partnerships and other agencies should work together to identify a portfolio of sites and premises (in line with policies PA6-7) to meet the needs and realise the potential within each corridor. This should include the provision of incubator space in close proximity to the critical research bases within each corridor, such as DERA/QinetiQ at Malvern, the universities and their related science parks.
- 7.19** The provision of other land and premises for more mature and growing firms who do not need to be in such close proximity to the research base should be provided within the key nodes. Sites should be attractive to business and have, or be capable of being served by, good quality public transport links. In identifying appropriate sites, account should first be taken of appropriate existing employment land allocations, subject to the re-assessment of sites set out in PA6, followed by other redevelopment opportunities on previously developed land.
- 7.20** Overall, corridor developments should be at key nodes well served by public transport, where there is a high quality environment and supporting infrastructure, including higher education, research facilities, leisure and cultural facilities and attractive housing. The corridors should also provide a focus for transport improvements particularly where this can help enhance links and accessibility within, to and from Regeneration Zones. An example of this is the M54-M6 Toll link which would benefit the Wolverhampton-Telford HTC and the North Black Country and South Staffs Regeneration Zone.
- 7.21** Under the overall guidance of AWM the arrangements for implementation in each corridor are well advanced, although in the short term this is concentrating on projects drawing down funding from the Rover Task Force. It is important that these arrangements also consider the longer-term potential to ensure that the HTCs are a force for Regional prosperity throughout the period covered by this RPG.

- 7.22 Implementation of this policy will require partnership working between all those involved in development and local transport plans, economic development, the environment and education and skills. Monitoring procedures should be established by the RPB and AWM in order to assess the progress being made in each corridor and a programme established for regular reviews of performance.

Innovation and Cluster Development related to Research and Higher/Further Education Establishments

- 7.23 Clusters are defined by the common technology or end product of a group of companies linked through customer and supply chains and associated training, finance and research – unlike sectors that relate to a particular business or industry classification. Innovation is encouraged in all sectors, but in most cases development should be accommodated within the employment land portfolio (PA6).
- 7.24 The Region's higher education and research establishments are important sources of innovation and critical to the future of the Region's economy. Development plans should facilitate their appropriate expansion and the close location of new, emerging and as yet unforeseen forms of economic activity where there is a need for physical proximity to the research or educational establishment.

POLICY PA4: Development related to Higher/Further Education and Research Establishments and incubator units

- A. Development plans should facilitate the needs of higher/further education institutions and research facilities to grow and expand. They should facilitate the development of businesses supportive to the Regional Economic Strategy cluster priorities that are linked to higher/further education institutions and research facilities by the provision of sites, premises and supporting infrastructure, taking into account:
- i) the locational and operational requirements of the businesses;
 - ii) the likely scale and rate of growth;
 - iii) providing employment opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged groups and communities;
 - iv) existing or proposed sustainable forms of transport, particularly good quality public transport; and
 - v) the opportunities to develop previously developed land and the need to protect and enhance the environment.
- B. Sites identified to serve a particular higher/further education institution or research establishment should be reserved for that use through specific designation and the imposition of appropriate conditions or the use of legal agreements.
- 7.25 Development plans should consider the need for the physical enhancement and expansion of existing educational and research facilities to ensure that the educational, training and research potential of the Region can be realised.
- 7.26 In the case of universities, particular emphasis should be given to developing their research and development capabilities and the further encouragement of links with business, particularly with knowledge-based industries.
- 7.27 Implementation of this policy will require partnership working between local planning authorities, the relevant education and research establishments and those involved in economic development. The land-use requirements will vary considerably and should be addressed in detail by development plans. Inward investment agencies should

support these efforts through targeted marketing of particular sites to appropriate businesses and supporting activities.

Employment Areas in Need of Modernisation and Renewal

- 7.28 There is an urgent need to renew many existing employment areas whose worn-out and untidy appearance discourages new investment and encourages further decline.

POLICY PA5: Employment Areas in Need of Modernisation and Renewal

- A. Local authorities, AWM, local economic partnerships and other agencies should work together at a local level to improve significantly and maintain the physical and business environment of the Region's established employment areas.
- B. To assist in this process local planning authorities should consider the designation of those employment areas within their areas which are in particular need of improvement. These areas should then be reflected in development plans and backed up by implementation plans drawing on relevant powers and funding regimes.
- C. Existing companies should be especially encouraged to participate in the revival of their local business 'communities' and to establish local partnerships. Where appropriate, local authorities and AWM should use their powers of land assembly in order to encourage the renewal process through such partnerships.

- 7.29 These initiatives should form part of the "toolkit" for local definition and intervention, along with other mechanisms such as those set out in the Urban Renaissance Chapter (4.12). Local strategic partnerships, the local business community and other stakeholders should play an important role in this process.

Employment Land Provision

- 7.30 Ensuring the provision of employment land in the right amounts, of the right type and in the right places is a key part of the Spatial Strategy. However, experience has shown that certain types of site are very difficult and time-consuming to provide. The "portfolio" of employment sites set out in policy PA6 is intended to ensure that desirable employment development is not lost due to lack of site availability. However, any proposals for employment development should be subject to the other policies of RPG including those which seek to protect the environment.
- 7.31 In assembling the portfolio a greater proportion of employment development should take place within the MUAs. It is important that accessible employment opportunities and attractive sites for developers are provided to support the urban renaissance and Spatial Strategy. Should there be insufficient sites on previously developed land of sufficient size, quality and location, to support the diversification and modernisation of the Region's economy, some greenfield development for employment purposes may be necessary. The RPB should monitor the scale and distribution of employment land allocations and permissions to ensure that it supports the Spatial Strategy.
- 7.32 Local planning authorities should provide a range of sites, but not necessarily the whole portfolio. Regionally and sub-regionally significant, strategic sites will have cross-boundary implications and should be brought forward and monitored by the RPB. To avoid over-provision where strategic sites are located within an authority's area then these should be reflected as part of the portfolio for that authority.
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- 7.33 Only sites where development is a realistic possibility should be included in the portfolio. To inform the review of this guidance the RPB should review the Regional employment designations and, in preparing their development plans, local planning authorities should review all their employment sites for market realism and sustainability in terms of accessibility by public transport.

POLICY PA6: Portfolio of Employment Land

- A. Local authorities, AWM, local economic partnerships and other agencies should aim to provide and maintain a range and choice of readily available employment sites to meet the needs of the Regional economy. This portfolio should be developed in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and will include the following hierarchy of sites:
- i) First tier sites/locations of Regional significance including:
 - Regional Investment Sites (RIS) – see policy PA7;
 - Major Investment Sites (MIS) – see policy PA8;
 - Regional Logistics Sites (RLS) – see policy PA9.
 - ii) Second tier, locally-significant employment for which development plans should establish the level and distribution for their areas within the following categories:
 - Sub-regional Employment Sites – high-quality attractive sites, generally 10 to 20 hectares in size in sustainable urban locations – including market towns – with potential to meet both cluster priorities and local needs. Sites in this category should be suitable to attract clients with an international/ national/ regional choice of location. Land in this category would usually need to be located on or have a direct link to the strategic highway network and be, or proposed to be, well served by public transport.
 - Good Quality Employment Sites – good quality sites suitable for locally based investment. Sites in this category are likely to exceed 0.4 hectares in size. This category may include larger sites which are some distance from the strategic highway network as well as sites within rural areas.
 - Other Employment Sites – land likely to be of interest only to local investors. Sites in this category are likely to be either very small (less than 0.4 hectares in size) or only likely to be suitable for marginal or ‘bad neighbour’ activities. This category may also include small sites within rural areas.
- B. In undertaking this task, local authorities, in conjunction with AWM, should identify:
- i) future land needs, working closely with existing businesses and taking account of the needs of inward investors;
 - ii) the strategic priority given to Regeneration Zones in meeting employment needs within the Region;
 - iii) the potential for the maximum use of recycled land for employment purposes to meet these needs but to recognise that the use of some greenfield land will be required, albeit as a last resort;
 - iv) that in all cases land allocations should take account of the need to protect and enhance the Region’s natural, built and historic environment;
 - v) a classification of employment sites within their areas according to the above hierarchy both in development plans and for the purposes of regional monitoring through the RELS database;
 - vi) any deficiencies in the supply of land, especially within the MUAs, and action required to remedy this; and
 - vii) the extent to which office developments should be restricted on certain sites (in accordance with PA11).

POLICY PA6: Portfolio of Employment Land – continued

- C. As part of the review of development plans local planning authorities should review all existing employment sites within their area to establish their continued suitability for employment development. This assessment should take account of:
 - i) the physical suitability of the use of the land for employment purposes;
 - ii) a realistic assessment of the market attractiveness of the site for employment purposes, irrespective of the attractiveness of the land for alternative, higher-value uses;
 - iii) whether the site is or can be served by high-quality public transport; and
 - iv) the likely level of employment land required over the plan period.
- D. Where the above review establishes that existing employment sites have no realistic prospect of development under current market conditions in their current physical state within the plan period, careful consideration should be given to:
 - i) what remedial action/infrastructure works will be required to justify the retention of the site within the portfolio; and
 - ii) identification/re-allocation of the site for an alternative use or uses.

7.34 This policy does not cover land suitable for employment purposes within town centres. In accordance with PA11 and PPG6, large-scale office developments (Class B1(a), more than 5,000m² gross floorspace) should be located within the network of strategic town and city centres. Where large-scale office developments are proposed, particularly outside strategic centres, the views of the RPB's centres working group (7.63) should be an important consideration. Such proposals should be made explicit and justified through the development plan process.

7.35 To ensure that strategic sites are identified, re-assessed for their appropriateness and implemented, progress on RIS, MIS and RLS should be monitored on a continuing basis by the West Midlands Employment Land Advisory Group (WMELAG) on behalf of the RPB. The RPB should encourage the active participation of a broad range of interests, including representatives from the development industry, in this process.

POLICY PA7: Regional Investment Sites

- A. Within the portfolio of employment sites, provision should be made for a series of Regional Investment Sites (RIS) the purpose of which will be to support:
 - i) the diversification and modernisation of the Region's economy; and in particular
 - ii) the development of the Region's cluster priorities as identified in the Regional Economic Strategy.
- B. Regional Investment Sites will be identified within development plans. The RPB should be consulted on such proposals. Sites should generally be:
 - i) between 25-50 hectares;
 - ii) high-quality sites attractive to national and international investors;
 - iii) served or capable of being served by multi-modal transport facilities and broadband IT infrastructure;
 - iv) well related to the motorway and trunk road network;
 - v) located within, or close to, the areas of greatest need; and

POLICY PA7: Regional Investment Sites – continued

- vi) accessible to effective education and training opportunities to ensure that the employment benefits are available to the local workforce.
- C. In identifying such sites, account should be taken of provision of existing Premium Employment Sites (PES), the needs of the High Technology Corridors (PA3), and the potential of existing major sites to fulfil this role.
- D. Taking account of current PES (set out below), at least one RIS should be made available within or linked by public transport to:
 - i) each of the Urban Regeneration Zones; and
 - ii) each of the High-Technology Corridors.
- E. In some circumstances, a particular RIS may serve the needs of more than one Zone/Corridor.
- F. New RIS will be required to meet the needs of the following High-Technology Corridors/Regeneration Zones:
 - i) Birmingham to Worcestershire HTC;
 - ii) Coventry and Nuneaton RZ; and
 - iii) South Black Country and West Birmingham RZ
- G. Additional provision may be required in the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire HTC.
- H. The potential for bringing forward proposals within the Regeneration Zones should be considered first. Development proposed on the edge of MUAs or on other greenfield sites should meet the criteria set out in policy PA1.

7.36 Developments on RIS will be strictly controlled to ensure that they support the objectives of the Spatial Strategy. In particular, large-scale speculative development which can be more appropriately accommodated within town centres and warehousing-only developments will not be permitted.

7.37 In respect of the RIS serving the following areas; Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire HTC, Birmingham to Worcestershire HTC, Coventry and Nuneaton RZ and the East Birmingham and North Solihull RZ, development should be restricted to high-quality developments falling within Class B1. High-quality developments falling within Class B2 uses will be permissible on the RIS identified to meet the needs of the following areas; Wolverhampton to Telford HTC, North Staffordshire RZ, North Black Country and South Staffs RZ and the South Black Country and West Birmingham RZ.

7.38 The following areas are currently considered to be adequately served by RIS (existing PES); the North Staffordshire RZ; North Black Country and South Staffs RZ; Wolverhampton to Telford HTC; East Birmingham and North Solihull RZ.

7.39 Current PES where development has commenced or is identified in an adopted development plan:

• Birmingham Business Park	Coventry Solihull Warwickshire HTC & E Birmingham/N Solihull RZ
• Blythe Valley Park	Coventry Solihull Warwickshire HTC
• Hilton Cross	N Black Country & S Staffs RZ & Wolverhampton to Telford HTC
• Wolverhampton Business Park	N Black Country & S Staffs RZ & Wolverhampton to Telford HTC
• Wobaston Road	N Black Country & S Staffs RZ & Wolverhampton to Telford HTC
• Trentham Lakes	North Staffordshire RZ

- Blythe Bridge North Staffordshire RZ
- Chatterley Valley North Staffordshire RZ

The principle of a site at Bassetts Pole – E Birmingham/N Solihull RZ – is contained in the adopted Birmingham UDP, the alterations to the UDP have identified a specific site.

7.40 Current PES included in emerging development plans;

- Blythe Valley Park Extension Coventry Solihull Warwickshire HTC

POLICY PA8: Major Investment Sites

- A. Within the portfolio of employment sites, provision should be made for two Major Investment Sites (MIS) the purpose of which will be to meet the need for accommodating very large-scale investment by single users with an international choice of locations in order to help diversify and restructure the Regional economy.
- B. The MIS will be identified within development plans. The RPB should be consulted on such proposals. Sites should generally be:
- i) in the order of 50 hectares;
 - ii) high-quality sites;
 - iii) served or capable of being served by multi-modal transport facilities and broadband IT infrastructure;
 - iv) well related to motorway and trunk road network, but avoiding sites immediately adjacent to motorway junctions where this is likely to exacerbate congestion problems;
 - v) located in areas close to a large pool of labour with employment needs;
 - vi) accessible to effective education and training opportunities to ensure that the employment benefits are available to the local workforce; and
 - vii) supported by the RPB.
- C. The Region should at all times have two sites readily available for development in order to respond quickly to demand. Development proposed on the edge of MUAs or on other greenfield sites should meet the criteria set out in policy PA1.
- D. Three MIS have already been identified in development plans at Peddimore (Birmingham), Wobaston Road (north of Wolverhampton), and Ansty (to the north east of Coventry) and the Regional priority will be to direct suitable investments to these locations.

- 7.41** The need for further sites, including a MIS in North Staffordshire, should be considered in a subsequent review of this RPG. In all cases, MIS should be located within or close to the MUAs and have good quality existing or potential public transport links to areas of employment need.
- 7.42** Development on MIS will be strictly controlled to ensure that they support the objectives of the Spatial Strategy. In particular, large-scale, speculative development, which can be more appropriately accommodated within town centres and warehousing-only developments will not be permitted.
- 7.43** In the event that a MIS is released for a development significantly smaller than 50 hectares, then the balance of the land allocated should remain undeveloped pending either expansion by the user or for its consideration through the development planning process.

- 7.44** Land at Ansty to the north-east of Coventry is identified as a MIS in the Warwickshire Structure Plan and has recently been identified for major new investment by Marconi. If this proposal is not forthcoming as a MIS the RPB should reassess its designation, including consideration as to whether part of the site could be used as a science park serving both the Coventry and Nuneaton RZ and the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire HTC.

Warehousing and Distribution

- 7.45** Warehousing and distribution is an important and fast growing sector within the Regional economy accounting for almost 9% of all jobs. However, traffic generation, particularly from large distribution facilities can make their location within urban areas problematic.

POLICY PA9: Regional Logistics Sites

- A. Within the portfolio of employment sites, provision should be made for Regional Logistics Sites (RLS) the purpose of which will be to provide opportunities for the concentrated development of warehousing and distribution uses.
- B. RLS will be identified within development plans. The RPB should be consulted on such proposals. Sites should generally:
- i) be in the order of 50 hectares or more;
 - ii) possess good quality access to the Regional rail and highway networks and public transport links, or capable of having such links provided;
 - iii) be served or proposed to be served by multi-modal transport facilities and broadband IT infrastructure;
 - iv) have easy access to an appropriate labour supply and education and training opportunities; and
 - v) aim to minimise compromise to the local environment.
- C. The Region should have a choice of RLS available at any point in time and consideration and priority should be given to bringing forward previously developed sites in North Staffordshire and Telford. Development proposed on the edge of MUAs or on other greenfield sites should meet the criteria set out in policy PA1.
- 7.46** In order to ensure an adequate supply of RLS to meet the Region's needs, the RPB, working in conjunction with local authorities, the private sector, the Strategic Rail Authority, the Highways Agency, and AWM, should co-operate in the production of a study. This should identify the number, size and broad location of additional facilities, if any, taking into account existing supply and the implications and desirability of further concentrating such developments in locations such as the Rugby area. Further locations will be brought forward as necessary in the next review of RPG. Appropriate sites will then be allocated in the reviews of development plans.
- 7.47** Development uses on RLS will be strictly controlled to ensure that they support the objectives of the Spatial Strategy, with B1/B2 development not being permitted unless it is demonstrated that this is essential to support the primary purpose of the site.
- 7.48** Major concentrations of warehousing and distribution will be discouraged both within urban areas and immediately adjacent to motorway junctions, where a high level of heavy goods traffic would further exacerbate congestion.

Tourism and Culture

- 7.49** Local authorities, AWM, the Regional Cultural Consortium, tourism bodies and other cultural agencies should encourage the further development of tourism and culture, including media and sport, as a key element in the diversification of the Regional economy. In so doing, recognition will be given to the important contribution that tourism and culture can make to employment generation, to local business development, environmental quality, educational opportunities and regeneration.
- 7.50** Tourism and culture should be developed in an integrated and sustainable way through a partnership approach, taking into account existing national and Regional policies in the Regional Cultural Strategy and the Regional Sustainable Tourism Strategy to be produced by AWM. In developing policies and programmes, all organisations will be encouraged to contribute to the Region's distinctiveness, diversity and multi-cultural strengths carefully considering the need to balance the needs of visitors and the host community, and to avoid significant damage to the environment.

POLICY PA10: Tourism and Culture

- A. Development plans should generally encourage both the improvement of existing provision as well as the creation of new facilities, subject to the capacity of infrastructure and the environment to accommodate the new facilities and visitors associated with them. They should include policies that support the further development and success of key Regional tourism and cultural assets such as:
- The National Exhibition Centre.
 - Birmingham International Airport.
 - The International Convention Centre and Eastside regeneration in Birmingham.
 - Historic town and city centres such as Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Worcester and Lichfield.
 - Stratford-upon-Avon and Shakespeare Country.
 - Warwick Castle.
 - The Region's network of live theatre and music venues.
 - The Malvern Hills and the Marches and the small parts of the Peak District National Park (covered by RPG for the East Midlands) and the Cotswolds that lie within the West Midlands Region.
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- Black Country Heritage Attractions in particular Dudley Town Centre and its surroundings.
 - Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, the Severn Valley Steam Railway and West Midlands Safari Park.
 - Alton Towers and Drayton Manor Park.
 - Stoke and the ceramics and pottery heritage.
 - The canal network.
 - The Region's significant historic sites, buildings and gardens.
 - The Region's registered museum collections, major libraries and archive collections.
 - Indoor and outdoor sports stadia and venues of all types.

POLICY PA10: Tourism and Culture – continued

- B. Where large-scale, innovative projects can contribute to the overall “offer” of the Region, these should also be encouraged in suitable locations well served by public transport and where this can make an appropriate contribution to urban or rural regeneration. In this respect it is important that development plans take forward and carefully consider the long-term potential of the National Forest.
- C. Within development plans, local authorities should identify those areas where the development of sustainable tourism can be encouraged to the benefit of the local economy and employment without damaging local environment or character. In doing so, they should assess the cumulative impact of tourism on the environmental assets (including biodiversity), character, infrastructure and local economy of each area, and on the needs of local residents. In the light of these factors, it may be necessary to limit development to particular types or scales of tourism. Plans should also include proposals to mitigate any problems caused by existing tourism.

- 7.51 Where it is appropriate to encourage tourism development, plans should identify the facilities needed to support it. These may include, for example, accommodation, improvements to public transport, Regional footpaths or cycle routes, alterations to the rights of way system and opening up of inland waterways. Particular attention should be given to promoting links between urban areas and the countryside.
- 7.52 Proposals for large-scale tourism developments in particular will need to demonstrate that they are compatible with the environment and character of the countryside and the other criteria in the final part of this policy. Those which cannot do so should not be permitted in rural areas.
- 7.53 AWM, local authorities, Visit Heart of England and other industry bodies should continue to develop aspects of the tourism package of the Region and encourage the development of networks of complementary attractions and facilities in an effort to maximise the value of visitors to the Region. The quality of the natural, built and historic environment and the availability of cultural facilities, including sport, and recreation are important aspects of this policy and regard should be had to the relevant sections of the Quality of the Environment Chapter.

Town and City Centres

- 7.54 Town and city centres are at the heart of communities throughout the Region and their future health and attractiveness will be a major determinant of the quality of life for everyone.
 - 7.55 Policies PA11 to PA13 together with UR2 and UR3 address the key strategic issues affecting town and city centres and the location of development. The network of town and city centres in policy PA11 should be seen as a network within the polycentric concept of complementary centres rather than one of centres competing with each other.
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POLICY PA11: The Network of Town and City Centres

A. A network of strategic town and city centres will be developed across the Region as set out below:

Birmingham	Kidderminster	Shrewsbury	Walsall
Brierley Hill	Leamington Spa	Solihull	West Bromwich
Burton-upon-Trent	Lichfield	Stafford	Wolverhampton
Cannock	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Stratford-upon-Avon	Worcester
Coventry	Nuneaton	Sutton Coldfield	
Hanley (Stoke-on-Trent)	Redditch	Tamworth	
Hereford	Rugby	Telford	

B. This network of 25 town and city centres will be the focus for:

- i) major retail developments (i.e. those of more than 10,000m² gross floorspace, excluding floorspace dedicated to the retailing of convenience goods);
- ii) uses which attract large numbers of people including major cultural, tourist, social and community venues (see also PA10 and UR3); and
- iii) large scale leisure and office (Class B1 a) developments (i.e. those of 5,000m² or more gross floorspace).

C. There are many other centres within the Region that meet local needs and development plans should identify and develop policies for such centres within their respective areas which best meet local needs. Local authorities should be proactive in encouraging appropriate development to maintain and enhance their function as town centres (UR3, RR3).

7.56 Town and city centres are the drivers of the Regional and sub-regional economies and are of crucial importance to the Region's economic and social well-being and to the achievement of a sustainable pattern of development. Centres should be a key focus for future regeneration activities as well as investment in public transport.

7.57 Significant growth is forecast in non-food retailing, leisure and other town centre activities¹. In some areas this will be substantially taken up by existing commitments, at least in the short term. Significant retail development should be targeted to town and city centres having regard to sustainability issues, and to assist in regeneration.

7.58 The RPB should undertake further work to inform an early review of the strategy for town and city centres. This should identify the centres where major new retail, leisure and office investment should be focused in order to achieve a balanced network, taking into account where investment could be accommodated without significant harm elsewhere, where it would assist the regeneration of vulnerable centres and where it would support sustainability objectives. In doing so it should also indicate where further significant development would not be appropriate for the health of the network.

7.59 Local authorities should take a proactive approach through their town centre strategies to identifying potential sites and premises for development within these centres, including, where necessary and appropriate, the wider use of compulsory purchase powers. Priority should be given to encouraging balanced development of a wide range of town centre uses and thereby avoiding the vulnerability associated with excessive reliance on a single function. Where major education or health institutions, public administration or other community uses are located within or in close proximity to town or city centres particular attention should be paid to facilitating their retention and expansion (UR4).

7.60 It is not intended to impose a formal hierarchy of distinctive roles for the strategic centres – other than to recognise the unique character of Birmingham as the Regional capital and an international city (PA12).

¹ A Study into the West Midlands Hierarchy of Centres, Chesterton 2001.

- 7.61** The following factors are of particular importance in developing strategies for individual centres:
- a) the ten centres in the network within the MUAs (Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Hanley, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Solihull, Sutton Coldfield, Walsall, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton), have a key role to play in achieving Urban Renaissance;
 - b) strategies for all the major town and city centres within the Regional network will be expected to have regard to their potential complementary roles in providing supporting services and activities for each other; and
 - c) a number of centres inside and outside the Regional network, including Dudley, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Bromsgrove, West Bromwich, Kidderminster and Stourbridge are highlighted as particularly vulnerable. These centres should be identified in development plans for targeted improvements to the range and quality of services they offer in order to rejuvenate their vitality and viability and fulfil their regeneration potential.
- 7.62** The emphasis on larger centres should not preclude development plans identifying more local centres (UR3) where similar local strategies and town centre management approaches might be developed, particularly where this can support urban and rural regeneration.
- 7.63** A centres working group has been established by the RPB. This group should oversee the review of the region's strategic centres and in particular advise on the appropriateness of large-scale development proposals for all key town centre uses as set out in PPG6. Where large-scale developments (PA11) are proposed, the views of the RPB should be sought and its view should be an important consideration. The membership of the group should be widened and include, for example, representatives from the private sector and town centre management groups.

Strategic Centres in the Black Country

- 7.64** Growth will be planned in the four strategic centres in the Black Country leading to the development of a balanced network of centres. Their success will play a pivotal role in the sustainable growth of the sub-region. The designation of Brierley Hill as a strategic town centre in place of Dudley will provide a fourth major centre in the Black Country together with the centres of Walsall, Wolverhampton and West Bromwich. The Area Action Plan for Brierley Hill must integrate the existing elements of Brierley Hill High Street, the Waterfront commercial complex and the regional shopping centre at Merry Hill, and ensure that growth in main town centre uses at Brierley Hill is managed carefully to enable it to play an important role in the sustainable regeneration of the sub-region.

POLICY PA11A: Brierley Hill and Dudley

- A. A new strategic town centre is designated at Brierley Hill, to include Brierley Hill High Street, the commercial centre at the Waterfront and Merry Hill shopping centre. The new town centre will play an important role in the regeneration of the Black Country and will develop as part of a balanced network of four strategic town and city centres in the sub-region with the centres of Walsall, Wolverhampton and West Bromwich.
- B. Development at the new Brierley Hill will be guided by an Area Action Plan for the whole area which will define the extent of the centre, to combine the three elements of the High Street, Waterfront and Merry Hill. It will provide a clear framework for phased development and regeneration to create a sustainable town centre. It will provide for mixed use development, including residential and employment uses, public transport and improved accessibility to and within the centre. The Area Action Plan will define a northern limit to development south of the SSSI surrounding the SAC Fens Pool to ensure supporting habitats outside the site are not compromised.
- C. Retail development at the new Brierley Hill within the allocation of 51,000m² gross* in the period 2004 to 2021 will be carefully controlled so that no new comparison retail floorspace is brought into operation until all the following conditions are met:
 - a) adoption by the Local Planning Authority of the Area Action Plan for Brierley Hill; and
 - b) implementation of improvements to public transport, including completion of initiatives of equivalent quality and attractiveness to the proposed Metro extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill, and improvements to bus services connecting the centre with other locations in the Black Country and beyond, and other measures to improve accessibility to and circulation within the centre by non-car modes; and
 - c) introduction of a car parking management regime including the use of parking charges compatible with those in the region's network of major centres.
- D. Once these conditions have been met any further retail development at the new Brierley Hill strategic town centre will be subject to review and assessment of the progress of the strategy for regeneration and balanced growth.
- E. Dudley will continue to perform an important role as a non-strategic town centre in the Black Country. Its future renaissance will be founded upon the town's unique tourism and cultural assets and major residential development as well as retail and other uses appropriate to a non-strategic centre.

* Subject to revision as a result of the RSS Phase Two Revision.

7.64A Policy T12 as revised identifies the importance of the proposals for extension of the Metro network to the area's renaissance. This includes the proposed extension of the Metro to Brierley Hill. Its importance is endorsed by commitment of private sector investment to delivery of this scheme. Further improvements to transport links to other destinations will be needed to effect a significant increase in the proportion of journeys made to Brierley Hill by non-car modes. Such public transport initiatives would need to take account of bus quality contracts / franchising arrangements.

7.64B Policies PA11 and PA11A recognise the reality of the importance of Brierley Hill, and the potential it has to contribute to the regeneration of the sub-region. However, its circumstances are exceptional and future retail growth at Merry Hill needs to be strictly controlled in order to ensure that Brierley Hill as a whole evolves as a sustainable town centre. Policy PA11A sets out the conditions that will need to be satisfied before additional comparison retail floorspace comes into operation at the centre. Thereafter any further retail expansion there will be managed in accordance with

PPS 6 and will be subject to monitoring and review of the impact and effectiveness of policies for the growth of the four strategic centres and the role they play in the economic regeneration of the sub-region. This will include assessment of the overall need in the Black Country and the region for additional floorspace, especially for comparison retail, leisure and office development, and, having regard to the capacity and accessibility of the strategic centres, identification of where this need would best be met. Further comparison retail growth will depend, among other things, on the extent to which the adopted Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country and Area Action Plan for Brierley Hill are being implemented.

Birmingham's Role as a World City

- 7.65 Birmingham City Centre sits at the heart of the West Midlands Region and provides many important facilities and services for the wider Region. It is recognised that, as a Regional capital, it has a special role to play in the network of centres and should continue to be developed as a major Regional capital of European and World standing.

POLICY PA12: Birmingham's Role as a World City

- A. Birmingham should continue to be developed as a major Regional capital of European and international standing by providing further development opportunities and supporting infrastructure, including telecommunications, and by:
- i) the further expansion and development of Birmingham City Centre as a focus for international financial and business services;
 - ii) the development of Birmingham as a major centre for business tourism and major cultural, sporting and other tourist activities;
 - iii) maintaining and enhancing the provision of a network of supporting facilities and activities across the wider Region (examples include the Regional cultural and tourism assets identified in policy PA10) maintaining Birmingham City Centre's role as the Regional shopping centre in line with policy PA11;
 - iv) maintaining the accessibility of the City within the Region and strengthening its international links by air and rail;
 - v) significantly improving major transport interchange facilities and overcoming capacity constraints at Birmingham New Street Station; and
 - vi) the provision of high-quality residential environments, with supporting high-quality health and education services, promoting the attractions and benefits of "city centre living".
- B. Policies and proposals in development plans across the Region should support this policy, whilst having regard to policies QE3 and QE4.

- 7.66 Within the context of creating the balanced network of centres set out in policy PA11, Birmingham City Council, with the support of authorities across the Region and other key partners, should continue to secure development and investment that will further enhance the City's status as a world city.
- 7.67 The City Council should work closely with immediate neighbours, particularly Solihull MBC in relation to the Birmingham International Airport and National Exhibition Centre. Wider Regional partnerships will be significant, for example in relation to the delivery of transport improvements, to ensure that the benefits are shared as widely as possible.

Out-of-Centre Retail Development

- 7.68 The network of town and city centres set out in PA11 is an important element of the Spatial Strategy. The role and regeneration of these centres should not be undermined by large-scale out-of-centre retail development.

POLICY PA13: Out-of-Centre Retail Development

It is not envisaged that any further large-scale (10,000m² gross) out-of-centre retail developments or extensions to existing developments will be required during the period covered by this RPG. Smaller-scale out-of-centre retail proposals should be considered in the light of policies and proposals in development plans and take full account of Government guidance including the requirement to demonstrate 'need' and the sequential test. No existing out-of-centre developments should be redefined as town centres.

- 7.69 The RPB should be consulted by the local planning authority on any large-scale out-of-centre retail proposals coming forward within the Region (7.63). The views of the RPB's centres working group should be sought and its view should be an important consideration.

The Rural Economy

- 7.70 In rural areas, particularly those not within reach of jobs in or close to urban areas, the economic development priorities are to broaden the economic base, reduce over-reliance on traditional employment and provide a wider range of local job opportunities. The emphasis should be on jobs suitable for local people rather than on attracting workers from other parts of the Region or further afield.

POLICY PA14: Economic Development and the Rural Economy

- A. Development plans and other strategies should support the sustainable diversification and development of the rural economy through the growth of existing businesses and the creation of new enterprise. This should be undertaken in ways that meet local employment needs, maintain viable and sustainable local communities, conserve and enhance environmental assets and respect local character and distinctiveness.
- B. Development plans should ensure that, subject to policy PA15, most economic development is concentrated in towns and other large settlements accessible to their rural hinterlands. Development should be consistent with the character and environment of the settlement.
- C. Priority should be given to: economic activity with strong links to the rural area, including for example food and drink processing, tourism and leisure, the environmental economy and businesses ancillary to farming and forestry; and to sustainable new activity which will strengthen the Region's rural economy.
- D. Encouragement will be given to the provision of affordable broadband services in rural areas to aid the development of businesses using ICT, including increased opportunities for home working.

- 7.71 The land-use planning system has only limited influence on the nature of new economic development. It is important that local planning authorities work with those responsible for rural development, for example AWM and local economic partnerships, through the England Rural Development Programme, and through the use of European Structural Funds to give priority to the types of economic activity identified in the policy.

- 7.72 ICT will be particularly important to rural economic development. It can often help existing businesses to develop and diversify and allow the introduction of new enterprises. Local authorities should take account of AWM's Regional ICT strategy which includes the extension of broadband services to the Region's rural areas and encourages the use of ICT to develop the skills base in those areas.

Agriculture and Farm Diversification

- 7.73 Agriculture remains one of the most important activities in the Region's rural areas and has strong inter-dependency with many other sectors.

POLICY PA15: Agriculture and Farm Diversification

Development plans and other strategies should recognise the continuing importance of the agricultural sector in the Region. Development plans should include positive policies to promote agriculture and farm diversification through the development of innovative business schemes including sustainable tourism, environmentally sustainable farming, forestry (QE8) and land management, new and innovative crops, on-farm processing adding value to existing production and the promotion of local marketing and supply chains. Any development should be appropriate in scale and nature to the environment and character of the locality.

- 7.74 Farm diversification, both agricultural and non-agricultural, covers a wide range of potential activity which can add value to agriculture and supplement farm incomes. Of particular significance to the Region will be the continued development of Regional and local food products, organic produce, local supply chains and marketing and links to the Region's strong and growing environmental economy and tourist industry. Guidance on the reuse of buildings in the countryside is given in PPG7.
- 7.75 Forestry and woodland planting and management (QE8) can make an important contribution to the economy, environment and community life of the rural West Midlands.
- 7.76 Other policy documents relevant to agriculture and farm diversification include 'A new Direction for Agriculture', the Action Plan for Farming, the England Rural Development Plan and the Rural White Paper.
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PROSPERITY FOR ALL – MONITORING:

Policy	Target	Indicator	Source of information
OUTPUT INDICATORS			
		1. Hectares of employment land developed (B1a, rest of B1, B2 and B8 all separately): (This is based on proposed National Indicators, see Chapter 10)	Annual Employment Land Monitoring Systems
PA6 – Portfolio of Employment Land	(a) To meet the needs of the regional employment land portfolio as set out in policy PA6 (b) Target to be determined	(a) total. (b) Greenfield	
UR1 – Implementing Urban Renaissance – The MUAs	(c) Target to be determined (d) Increase the amount of development within Major Urban Areas	(c) previously developed land. (d) in Major Urban Areas	
PA2 – Urban Regeneration Zones RR2 – The Rural Regeneration Zone	(e) Increase the amount of development within Regeneration Zones	(e) in Regeneration Zones	
PA3 – High-Technology Corridors (HTC)	(f) Increase the amount of development within High Technology Corridors.	(f) in High Technology Corridors	
PA7 – Regional Investment Sites PA8 – Major Investment Sites PA9 – Regional Logistics Sites		(g) The amount developed for Regional Investment Sites, Major Investment Sites and Regional Logistics Sites.	

PROSPERITY FOR ALL – MONITORING: continued

Policy	Target	Indicator	Source of information
OUTPUT INDICATORS – continued			
		2. The amount and proportion of floorspace developed for industrial and commercial use (separately for B1a, rest of B1 and B2); and for B8 (indicators a-c only): (This is based on proposed National Indicators, see Chapter 10)	Annual Employment Land Survey
PA6 – Portfolio of Employment Land	(a) To meet the needs of the regional employment land portfolio as set out in policy PA6	(a) total.	
UR1 – Implementing Urban Renaissance – The Major Urban Areas MUAs	(b) Increase the amount of development within Major Urban Areas	(b) in Major Urban Areas	
PA2 – Urban Regeneration Zones RR2 – The Rural Regeneration Zone	(c) Increase the amount of development within Regeneration Zones	(c) in Regeneration Zones	
PA3 – High-Technology Corridors	(d) Increase the amount of development within High-Technology Corridors.	(d) in High-Technology Corridors	
PA6 – Portfolio of Employment Land	(i) Target to be determined (ii) Target to be determined	(e) For B1a only: (i) greenfield (ii) previously developed land.	
PA11 – The Development of Town and City Centres	(iii) Locations to be in line with policy PA11	(iii) within the strategic town centres, within other town centres, within edge of centre and outside town centres.	

PROSPERITY FOR ALL – MONITORING: continued

Policy	Target	Indicator	Source of information
OUTPUT INDICATORS – continued			
PA11 – The Development of Town and City Centres	(a) Locations in line with policy PA11	(a) total	3. Square metres of retail development completed: (This is based on proposed National Indicators, see Chapter 10)
PA12 – Birmingham's role as a World City	(b) Locations in line with policy PA11. No further large scale out of centre retail developments	(b) within the strategic town centres, within other town centres, within edge of centre and outside town centres	
UR3 – Enhancing the role of City, Town, and Local Centres			4. Square metres of leisure development completed: (This is based on proposed National Indicators, see Chapter 10)
PA13 – Out-of-centre retail development			
PA10 – Tourism and Culture	(a) Targets to be determined	(a) total	4. Square metres of leisure development completed: (This is based on proposed National Indicators, see Chapter 10)
PA12 – Birmingham's role as a World City	(b) Locations in line with policy PA11	(b) within the strategic town centres, within other town centres, within edge of centre and outside town centres.	

PROSPERITY FOR ALL – MONITORING: continued

Policy	Target	Indicator	Source of information
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OUTPUT INDICATORS – continued

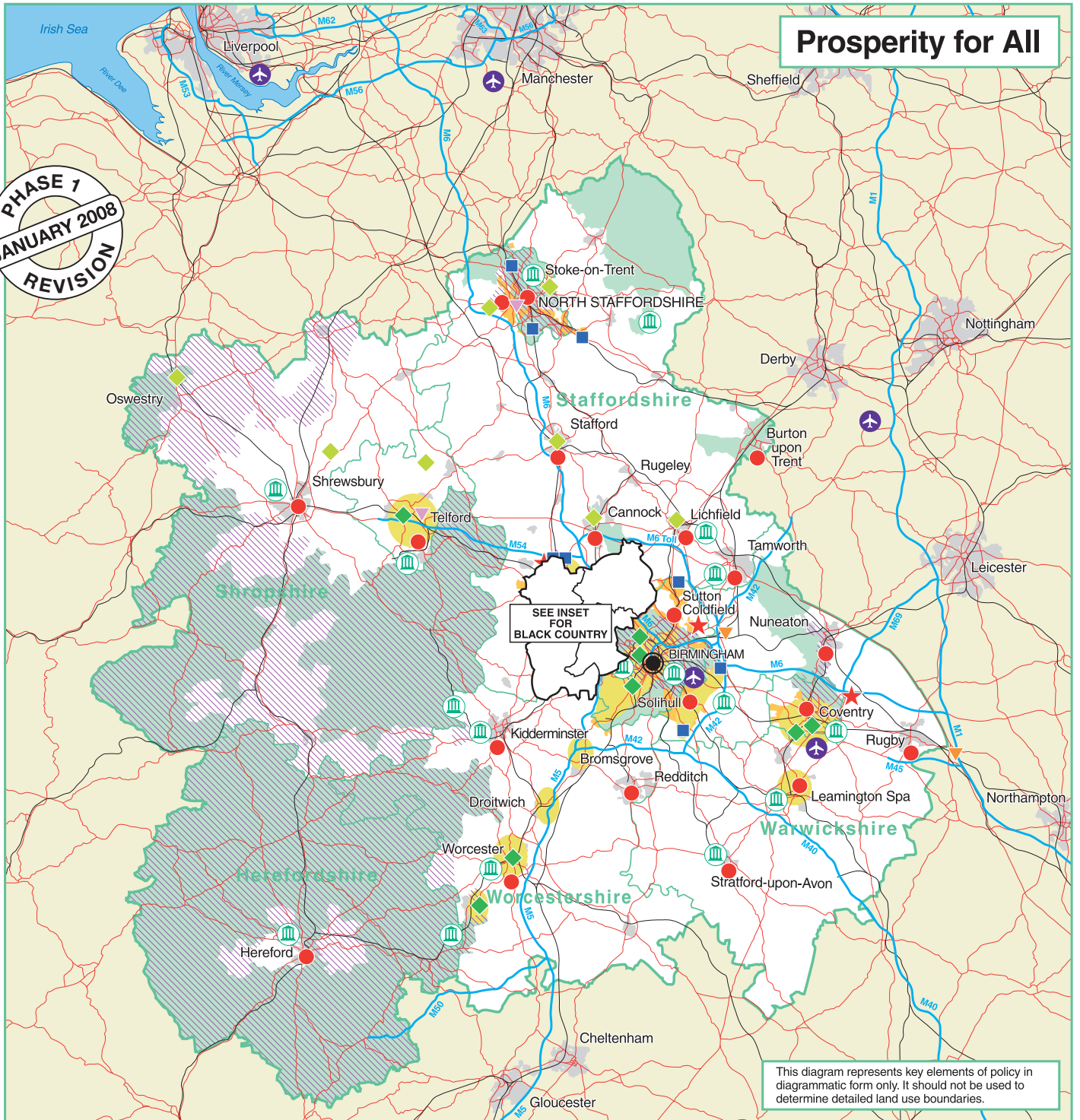
PA7 – Regional Investment Sites	(a) At least one RIS within or linked by public transport to each Regeneration Zone, and at least one within each High Technology Corridor.	(a) Regional Investment Sites (RIS) in relation to each Regeneration Zone and High Technology Corridor.	Development Plans
PA8 – Major Investment Sites	(b) Two MIS available in the Region at any time.	(b) Major Investment Sites (MIS)	
PA9 – Regional Logistics Sites	(c) A choice of RLS in the Region.	(c) Regional Logistics Sites (RLS).	
PA4 – Development related to Higher/Further Education and Research Establishments and incubator units	Amount of High-Technology Incubator Space developed	6. Increase the amount of High-Technology Incubator Space developed across the Region.	

PROSPERITY FOR ALL – MONITORING: continued

Policy	Target	Indicator	Source of information
PROCESS INDICATORS			
PA5 – Employment Areas in Need of Modernisation and Renewal	(a) 100% of development plans to consider and identify where appropriate		
PA7 – Regional Investment Sites	(b) At least one RIS within or linked by public transport to each Regeneration Zone, and at least one within each High Technology Corridor.		
PA8 – Major Investment Sites			
PA9 – Regional Logistics Sites			
PA6 – Portfolio of Employment Land	(c) Overall supply and portfolio of employment land to meet regional and sub-regional needs.		
	Any adjustments to Green Belt boundaries to follow the application of the Prosperity for All policies.		
		7. Development Plan conformity:	Conformity checks
		(a) Whether, if appropriate, they identify economic renewal areas	
		(b) Whether, if appropriate, they identify land for RIS; MIS; RLS.	
		(c) Whether the overall potential supply and portfolio of employment-related proposals is adequate in relation to regional and sub-regional needs	
		8. Monitor land released for development through the redefinition of Green Belt boundaries	Development plans

PHASE 1
JANUARY 2008
REVISION

Prosperity for All



This diagram represents key elements of policy in diagrammatic form only. It should not be used to determine detailed land use boundaries.

Regeneration

- Regeneration Zone included in Agenda for Action
- Objective 2 Area
- Major Investment Site (MIS)
- Regional Investment Site (RIS) (only existing/proposed former Premier Employment Sites are shown)
- Regional Logistic Site (existing)
- Regional Logistic Site - warehousing (proposed)
- Regional Economic Strategy - key nodes in High Technology Corridors
- Key Education / Research Facilities within High Technology Corridors
- Other Key Education / Research Facilities
- Tourism and Culture Site
- Regional Centre
- Strategic Centre
- Growth Corridors
- Employment Land Investment Corridors

Strategic Links

- Motorway
- A Road
- Railway
- Airport
- Strategic Authority Boundary
- Major Urban Area - Main focus for development and investment

