

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Three Revision

Quality of the Environment Background Paper June 2009



**West Midlands
Regional Assembly**

This Background Paper has been prepared on behalf of the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA), the Regional Planning Body, as advice to inform the Regional Spatial Strategy Revision process. It is one of a suite of papers to inform the development of Options for the Phase Three of the Revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS).

For revising the WMRSS, the WMRA adopts “decentralised” working arrangements where much of the technical and policy development work is done by a network of RSS Policy Leads, predominantly drawn from local authorities across the Region. This enables the WMRA to draw on the expertise held throughout the Region.

The Policy Lead for Quality of the Environment, Maurice Barlow (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council), has been assisted in the preparation of this Background Paper by a Quality of the Environment Technical Group. Each chapter of the Background Paper has been prepared by a Working Group member.

This Background Paper has not been formally endorsed by, and therefore does not necessarily reflect the views of, the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

Further information and details of the WMRSS and the Revision process can be found on the WMRA web site **www.wmra.gov.uk**

Every effort has been made to verify and check the contents of this paper including all figures and tables. However the West Midlands Regional Assembly can not accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies.

Introduction

The WMRSS was approved and published in June 2004 by the Secretary of State. Since 2004 the WMRSS has been part of the statutory development plan for each local authority in the West Midlands Region.

The WMRSS covers a wide range of topics, including housing, employment, transport and the environment. You can find a copy of the WMRSS on the WMRA website at [http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy/Regional_Spatial_Strategy/Regional_Spatial_Strategy_\(RSS\).aspx#Jan2008](http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy/Regional_Spatial_Strategy/Regional_Spatial_Strategy_(RSS).aspx#Jan2008)

The purpose of the WMRSS is to guide the preparation of local authority development plans and local transport plans, so together they can provide a coherent framework for the development of the Region. The WMRSS also provides a planning framework for other regional, sub-regional and local strategies, programmes and plans such as the West Midlands Economic Strategy and Regional Housing Strategy.

Following the publication of the WMRSS in June 2004, the Secretary of State recommended that some issues should be developed further. It was decided that this task be carried out in a phased way.

- **Phase One** concentrated on the Black Country Study, where the aim was to identify and 'fast-track' urban renaissance proposals through to implementation.
- **Phase Two** considered housing, employment, transport and waste.
- This phase of the WMRSS Revision, **Phase Three**, examines critical rural services, provision for gypsies and travellers, culture, sport and tourism provision, quality of the environment and minerals.

Because there are likely to be a number of choices as to the nature and content of new or revised policies, an **Options** consultation document is being issued for consultation to help identify those choices and the consequences of adopting them. At this stage, policies are not fixed and everybody has a chance to say what they think about the Options before a Preferred Option is developed.

This Background Paper has been prepared to help improve understanding of the **Quality of the Environment** issues examined in the RSS Phase Three Options consultation document.

The RSS Revision objective is to update the existing Quality of the Environment policies in the RSS to ensure consistency with national guidance and other regional plans, strategies and initiatives. In particular, the Phase Three Revision seeks to update and / or develop the following policies:

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Revise Policy QE1 - an Integrated Approach to the Management of Environmental Resources	49 – 51
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Update RSS Policy QE2

**Restoring Degraded Areas and Managing and Creating High
Quality New Environments**

1. RSS Revision Objective

To update and align the existing Quality of the Environment policies so as to ensure consistency with current national guidance and regional plans, strategies and initiatives, including making appropriate links with other Phase 3 Revision topics, such as Culture, Sport and Tourism

2. Changes To National Planning Policy

- Securing the Future UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005 – 5 principles, including living within environmental limits
- WM Sustainable Development Framework 2008 – encourage land use and development that optimises the use of previously developed land
- PPS1 2005 – prudent use of natural resources, such as development on previously developed land, rather than greenfield land, promote urban and rural regeneration, seek actively to bring vacant and underused previously developed land and buildings back into beneficial use
- PPS3 2006 – make efficient and effective use of land by re-using previously developed land, national annual target of at least 60% of new housing on previously developed land
- Sustainable Communities Plan
- National Brownfield Land Strategy
- WMES Connecting to Success 2007 – challenge of forecast growth in brownfield and derelict land which could detract from future ambitions
- WMRSS Phase 2 Revision Draft Preferred Option 2007 – priority to development of brownfield land and re-use of existing buildings, regional minimum target for development on previously developed land of 70% 2006-16
- AWM Brownfield Land Policy Framework 2006
- WM Brownfield Land Statement of Intent 2008

3. What To Think About

- Levels of brownfield land and derelict land in the region and progress in reclamation
- Long term brownfield and derelict land
- Barriers to re-use and how these can be overcome
- Importance of land and buildings for biodiversity, greenspace and the historic environment
- Importance of re-use to wider regional strategies for urban renaissance

4. Suggested Policy Revision

The possible content of a revised policy and text for QE2 should;

- Recognise the key role of brownfield land in the transformation/regeneration of the region, especially its major urban areas
- Recognise the role that brownfield land can play in contributing to green infrastructure and biodiversity
- Ensure that the wider social and environmental benefits of brownfield land are recognised and nurtured
- Recognise the benefits of the reuse and repair of existing buildings, particularly those of historic interest, and the potential for surviving archaeological interest
- Recognise role of WM Brownfield Land working group in enabling brownfield land to be brought forward for development in line with housing and business policies
- Encourage the preparation of Brownfield Land Action Plans/previously developed land strategies in areas with significant stock of brownfield land
- Develop the regional centre of excellence for the reclamation of brownfield land as a source of information and expertise.

Alternative choices for implementation might include:

- Relying on targets for housing/business development on previously developed land and phasing policies to deliver re-use
- Requiring Brownfield Land Action Plans to be prepared in all areas, in the major urban areas, in regeneration zones
- Recognise barriers to redevelopment by market and concentrate resources on improving quality of land by providing greenspace and enhancing biodiversity, to make more attractive to developers.

5. Reference

RSS Annual Monitoring Reports

- NLUD data
- LUCS data

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June 2009

Update RSS Policy QE4

Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Spaces

Introduction

This paper was prepared to set out the issues for the review of this policy; it was created following discussion with a wider group of colleagues at a topic group meeting on 7 July 2008. It followed a format provided by the West Midlands Regional Assembly and was then revised following consultation in August 2008. It was then presented to the Environment Task Group on 10 September and revised following a further topic group meeting on 26 September 2008. It was used to inform the development of the Options; and updated in June 2009.

It has five parts:

- The Objective as written in RSS Phase 3 Project Plan.
- Changes to National Planning Policy since current RSS 2004.
- Issues/what to think about.
- Suggested policy revision – principles at this stage; including the logic behind the Options.
- Evidence.

1. RSS Revision Objective

To update policies QE2-9 of the existing WMRSS to reflect changes in national planning policy guidance and regional plans, strategies and initiatives.

2. Changes To National Planning Policy

Since the publication of the current RSS in June 2004. Plus other significant changes in circumstance – including any major regional issues/policy.

- PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, 2005
- PPS1 Supplement – Planning and Climate Change, 2007
- PPS 9 – Biodiversity & Geological Conservation, 2005
- PPS 12 - Creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning, 2008
- PPS25 – Development & Flood Risk, 2006
- UK Sustainable Development Strategy, 2005
- West Midlands Sustainable Development Framework, refreshed 2007
<http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/rsdf>
- West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework, 2004 and Annual Delivery Plan
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/wm-rff>
- Biodiversity – West Midlands Landscapes for Living, 2008
http://www.wmbp.org/landscapes_for_living
- New Growth Points Programme, 2006
- New Growth Points Programme extension 2008 and Ecotowns Programme/Draft PPS, 2008
- West Midlands Regional Green Infrastructure Prospectus, 2006
http://www.growingourfuture.org/wmwff/taskgroups/gip/plan_pros.htm
- The Essential Role of Green Infrastructure: Ecotowns Green Infrastructure Worksheet – TCPA/Communities and Local Government/Natural England, 2008
- West Midlands Health & Well- Being Strategy, 2008

http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Health/Regional_Health_Partnership_-_Reports_and_Publications.aspx

- West Midlands Regional Biodiversity Strategy, 2005
http://www.wmbp.org/strategy_and_targets

3. Issues / What To Think About

a. Green Infrastructure:

- There was consensus over the use of the term Green Infrastructure. It was preferred over Environmental Infrastructure. Perceptions of both terms are varied so the policy should set out a clear definition of the term Green Infrastructure.
- It was agreed the new emphasis of this policy should be Green Infrastructure.
- It was agreed that the West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus definition should be used as a foundation.
- There was a strong reluctance to have references to Environmental Capacity in this policy. There was also a reluctance to see it be used as a methodology for an overarching environmental policy.
- Ecosystem services should sit in a revised QE1 – Overarching policy not in QE4. QE1 should include a definition and make strong references to QE4 policy.
- Importance needs to be given to cross boundary issues relating to Green Infrastructure.

b. Recreation/culture:

- Include wording regarding importance of recreational resources and accessible green space – agreed that very important to have firm wording that also links to health and wellbeing where this provides a pleasant and inspiring environment in which to live and work.

c. Maps:

- Revision of Assets Map – It was felt that Green Infrastructure maps should be avoided as they are so complicated. However, a suggestion was made that the top tier ANGST standard could be mapped (One accessible 500 hectare site within 10km of home) possibly as a separate map. Note: This would be an example of Green Infrastructure only not a policy option. A caveat would be required: ANGST maps accessible natural green space which is only part of green infrastructure.

d. Indicators:

- There was general support for the use of the national standards - Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGST). (Indicator for Accessible Greenspace not of Green Infrastructure).
- Number of local authorities with a Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- Quality measure – No. of Green Flag Awards – this was not felt to be a good indicator.

4. Suggested Policy Revision

The possible content of a revised policy and text for QE4 should include:

- A total rewording is required to put the emphasis on Green Infrastructure.
- Use of the West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus definition as a foundation with supporting text including historic environment/character/local distinctiveness.
- Text emphasising the benefits that Green Infrastructure can deliver should include improving the image of an area (and thus helping in efforts to regenerate an area), an often overlooked benefit.
- Specific text or policy referring to recreational resources including access
- Requirement for local authorities to produce Green Infrastructure Strategies – link to LDFs.

The possible content of a revised QE4 should not include:

- Reference to environmental capacity.
- Use of the old terminology Greenery, Greenspace and Public Spaces.

Suggested policy options to incorporate the main elements above were then developed. It was felt that this policy area was not suitable for an approach that set out direct choices because of the need to reflect a range of complementary issues in the final policy. Therefore, the Options invite more detailed comment on the range of issues to be included.

5. Reference and Web links

- The West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus was launched early in 2007. It sets out a 20 year vision for a greener, healthier West Midlands that recognises the importance of our environment and the many benefits it provides. **Regional stakeholders and partners are encouraged to adopt green infrastructure planning approach as part of their core activities and influence. Source: West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus 2007**
http://www.growingourfuture.org/wmwff/taskgroups/gip/plan_pros.htm
- Urban Local Authorities' Green Space – Quality and Satisfaction Data (2005-06)
<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc0506/hc09/0935/0935.pdf>
- Easy to use Footpaths and Rights of Way - Audit Commission Local Government Compendium
- The State of the Natural Environment - Natural England, 2008
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/sone/default.aspx>
- State of the Natural Environment in the West Midlands – Natural England, 2009

Nick Young
Natural England
June 2009

Update RSS Policy QE5

Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to outline a set of issues to help inform the review of Policy QE5. The paper follows a structure recommended by WMRA and adopted by other leads on for example landscape, biodiversity, and green infrastructure. This revised paper incorporates comments and feedback from a heritage topic group on two previous drafts (17 July and 19 September). It also draws on information from the local authority Section 4(4) responses.

The revised timetable for the overall Phase 3 Review and the public consultation of the Options consultation in Summer 2009 requires the development of a draft suite of policy options for all topic areas. Possible approaches to the development of options for Policy QE5 are set out in the Options Consultation.

For the purposes of the Discussion Paper and policy review a broad definition of the historic environment is applied covering both designated and undesignated assets and extending to historic buildings and other structures, historic areas and landscapes, archaeological remains and the historic character of the wider landscape and townscape of which they form part.

Historic Environment. All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible or buried, and deliberately planted or managed flora [Conservation Principles, 2008].

2. RSS Revision Objective

As per the Draft Project Plan for the Phase 3 Review :

- To update policies QE2-9 of the existing WMRSS to reflect changes in national planning policy guidance and regional plans strategies and initiatives.

3. Changes To National and Regional Policy / Guidance Framework

The following lists the major changes to national policy and guidance since 2004 together with relevant changes to the regional policy framework, which have a bearing on the historic environment.

- White Paper Heritage Protection for the 21st Century (2007)
- Heritage Protection Bill (2008)
- PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
- PPS3 Housing (2006)
- PPS4 (Consultation Draft) Planning for Prosperous Economies (2009)
- PPS6 Planning for Town Centres (2005)
- PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)
- MPS1 Planning and Minerals – [Annex 3 Natural Building and Roofing Stone] (2006)
- Draft Planning Circular Protection of World Heritage Sites (2008)
- European Landscape Convention
- UK Sustainable Development Strategy, Securing the Future (2005)
- Rural Development Plan for England 2007-13
- West Midlands Sustainable Development Framework (2007)

- West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework and Delivery Plan
- West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus (2007)
- West Midlands RSS Phase 2 Revision SR1 (vi) and SR2 (C,E)
- West Midlands Historic Environment Strategy (in prep. Due Summer 2009)
- Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, 2008)
- Living buildings in a living landscape; finding a future for traditional farm buildings (English Heritage, Countryside Agency, 2006)
- Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places (English Heritage, 2008)

Also the existent PPG 15 and PPG16. Consultation on a Draft PPS on the Historic Environment, the accompanying Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide, and a Government Statement on the Historic Environment are anticipated in summer 2009.

4. Issues / What To Think About

- a) Heritage Protection Bill
 - Seek to reflect the broad principles and proposals (e.g. local lists) underpinning the White Paper, the Bill and the draft PPS.
 - Terminology to retain consistency with current terms, but to keep under review.
- b) Relationship to the Cultural Asset Mapping Work
 - Policy QE5 to remain the main focus for policy guidance on the historic environment.
 - Relevant cross-references, however, to be made in QE5 and the revisions to PA10 Tourism and Culture, as for example in terms of the historic environment forming part of the wider cultural and tourism offer of the Region, its role in promoting the image and profile of the Region, and in encouraging wider participation and engagement in cultural activities across all communities.
- c) Relationship to the Regional Historic Environment Strategy and Action Plan
 - The priorities of the Historic Environment Strategy should be taken into account in the policy revision; the Action Plan representing an implementation mechanism for certain identified priorities.
- d) Relationship to other Quality of the Environment Policies
 - Relevant links needed to design, sustainable development, green infrastructure, minerals, water environment, forestry, energy, brownfield land.
 - Historic landscape characterisation and other urban characterisation approaches (e.g. extensive urban surveys, extensive and intensive surveys) need referencing under QE5 and the landscape policy QE6 to reflect the European Landscape Convention definition of landscape.
- e) Development of a regionally distinctive policy
 - Need to strengthen the policy requirement for the application of tools to aid the understanding of historic environment and the sustainable management of change, but drawing on West Midlands' circumstances and wider RSS policy context (e.g. nearing full county coverage of Historic Landscape Characterisation, examples of urban characterisation, historic environment assessments).
 - Review inclusion in policy and the scope of any listing of features/areas that are regionally distinctive aspects of the West Midlands (section B), but avoiding an overly prescriptive list.

- Thematic list of regeneration opportunities (section D) needs to be reviewed taking account of the available evidence base, for example, the Regional Historic Environment Strategy, environmental stewardship targeting, heritage at risk, historic farmstead evidence base, joint character areas, and other regional priorities and pressures e.g. urban-rural fringe.
- f) Rural Development and the Historic Environment
- Need to address issue of accommodating development in rural areas, including the adaptive reuse of historic farm buildings, market towns and dispersed settlement patterns.
- g) Maps
- Widen range of historic environment data on the Quality of Environment Assets Map [to date only the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site is included, at minimum extend to Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields]. Suggested use of former heritage counts maps for designated asset distribution.
 - Explore how to make clearer links to Quality of Environment Enhancement map.
- h) Indicators
- Supporting indicators for QE5 to expand to Heritage at Risk. Also suggested – ‘number of assets removed from the Risk Register through management plans’.
 - Develop an ‘enhancement’ based indicator e.g. plans informed by historic characterisation studies; up-to-date conservation area appraisals and published management plans; Local List completion; number of assets covered by section 17 management agreements / Heritage Protection Agreements.
- f) Implementation
- Seek inclusion of measures such as historic environment assessments and other characterisation initiatives.

5. Suggestion Policy Revision and Policy Linkages

Suggested themes for the revised policy and supporting text include the following:

- (a) Strengthen the reference to the historic environment as a finite and non-renewable resource.
- (b) Underline the importance of the undesignated resource and the need for engagement with communities to understand what is valued and why.
- (c) Retain emphasis on the importance of considering historic landscapes and townscapes as a whole rather than individual asset and their settings.
- (d) Review the lists of regionally distinctive aspects of the Region’s historic environment and opportunities and priorities for enhancement and regeneration.
- (e) Emphasise the intrinsic value of historic environment, but also recognise the benefits of the historic environment to local distinctiveness and sense of place, to tourism, leisure, educational and cultural activities, to the economy (e.g. heritage-led regeneration, contribution to quality of place and attracting and retaining investment,

tourism), to social cohesion and capacity building, health and well-being and to sustainability (e.g. building reuse).

(f) Reflect the principles of the Heritage White Paper, Heritage Protection Bill and Draft PPS for the Historic Environment.

(g) Retain emphasis on managing change in a way that sustains heritage values and respects local character and distinctiveness, this including retaining an emphasis on the benefits of reusing and repairing historic buildings.

(h) Provide guidance on the protection and enhancement of the historic environment in areas of the region likely to experience greatest change, such as the Major Urban Areas and Settlements of significant development.

(i) Strengthen the requirement to use historic landscape characterisation and other historic characterisation tools and data sets (e.g. Historic Environment Records) to understand the historic character of rural and urban places, their significance and their sensitivity to and capacity for change.

(j) Strengthen encouragement for the enhancement of the historic environment. This including reference to Heritage at Risk and its use to aid in the focusing of, for example, regeneration investment, management activities, s106 and community infrastructure levy. Also the use of other planning and management tools which should be applied and resourced e.g. up to date conservation area appraisals and management plans, local lists, management plans/heritage partnership agreements.

Relevant policy links also needed in other policies e.g. design sustainable development, green infrastructure, minerals, water environment, forestry, energy, brownfield land.

6. Reference and Web links

- Heritage at Risk 2008 & 2009 (due June 2009) [listed buildings; scheduled monuments; Registered Parks and Gardens; Registered Battlefields, conservation areas]
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.19074>
- Heritage Counts 2008
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/hc/>
- Joint Character Area Descriptions
- Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statement West Midlands Region
<http://www.helm.org.uk/server.php?show=nav.19598>
- Farm building conversion and structural failure data
- The Farmsteads and Landscape Project: West Midlands (in progress) (including county based Historic Farmsteads Mapping and Characterisation projects)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (county and metropolitan authority based)
- Historic Environment Records (county and metropolitan authority based)

Amanda Smith
English Heritage
June 2009

Update RSS Policy QE6

**Conservation, Enhancement and Restoration of the Region's
Landscape**

Introduction

This paper was prepared to set out the issues for the review of this policy; it was created following discussion with a wider group of colleagues at a topic group meeting on 7 July 2008. It followed a format provided by WMRA and was then revised following a consultation in August 2008. It was then presented to the Environment Task Group on 10 September and revised following a further topic group meeting on 26 September 2008. It was used to inform the development of the Options; and updated in June 2009.

It has five parts:

- The Objective as written in RSS Phase 3 Project Plan.
- Changes to National Planning Policy since current RSS 2004.
- Issues/what to think about.
- Suggested policy revision – principles at this stage; including the logic behind the Options.
- Evidence.

1. RSS Revision Objective

- To update policies QE2-9 of the existing WMRSS to reflect changes in national planning policy guidance and regional plans, strategies and initiatives.

2. Changes To National Planning Policy Since June 2004 and Other Significant Changes in Circumstance

Since the publication of the current RSS in June 2004. Plus other significant changes in circumstance – including any major regional issues/policy.

- PPS 9 – Biodiversity & Geological Conservation, 2005
- PPS 12 – Creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning, 2008
- PPS25 – Development & Flood Risk, 2006
- European Landscape Convention became binding on the UK from 1 March 2007 - Framework for Implementation in England, 2007; Natural England Action Plan for Implementation, 2008; English Heritage Action Plan for Implementation, 2009
- The Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013
- UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005

- West Midlands Sustainable Development Framework, refreshed 2007
<http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/rsdf>
- West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework, 2004 and Annual Delivery Plan
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/wm-rff>
- Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests, 2007
- Biodiversity – West Midlands Landscapes for Living, 2008
http://www.wmbp.org/landscapes_for_living
- West Midlands Regional Biodiversity Strategy, 2005
http://www.wmbp.org/strategy_and_targets
- CPRE Tranquillity Maps, 2007

3. Issues / What To Think About

- a. European Landscape Convention (ELC):
- Delivery of ELC through advocating landscape protection, landscape management and landscape planning and enhancement.
- b. Protected Landscapes/All Landscapes matter:
- Bring protected landscapes element into this policy from QE1 – Conserving and enhancing the environment.
 - ‘All landscapes matter’ needs to be woven into text using Protected Landscapes as exemplars.
- c. Tranquillity:
- Tranquillity requires more prominence. Descriptive text can be strengthened to reflect other RSSs and to reflect on tranquillity as a component of character. Tranquillity, night sky and sense of place should also be highlighted in text.
- d. Landscape Character:
- Link to forestry issues through Woodlands Opportunities Map.
 - Link to biodiversity issues through Landscapes for Living approach.
 - Need to include link to Historic Landscape Characterisation as not as widely recognised as LCA. (will be in QE5 but need strong link in QE6).
 - All Counties have produced local (county) level Landscape Character Assessment and this needs to appear prominently in the policy text and could be linked to the ELC.
- e. Landscape functions:
- Need to strengthen references to landscape benefits and services, link to Eco systems services approach but this should sit mainly in QE1.
 - Link to QE4 – Urban fringe, Growth Points, Green Infrastructure
 - Tourism/image benefits - link to Regional Economic Strategy/Regional Strategy.
- f. Geodiversity:
- References required in QE6 (landscape character and local distinctiveness, landscape functions, protected landscapes, restoration and enhancement of degraded landscapes including mineral workings and landfill sites) but general agreement that main policy content should sit in QE7 with Biodiversity.
- g. Maps:
- Omit Natural Areas map; now incorporated into Joint Character Areas.
 - Revision of Assets Map + Enhancement Map.
- h. Indicators:
- Use of Countryside Quality Counts methodology or subsequent national indicator developed by Natural England.
 - No other suggestions put forward.

4. Suggested Policy Revision

The possible content of Policy QE6 and its supporting text could include (in this order):

- Setting out the messages of the European Landscape Convention as the National and European context for managing the region’s landscapes

- A general statement that emphasises the importance of managing all landscapes positively – explaining the shift to ‘All Landscapes Matter’
- Bringing Protected Landscapes element of QE1 into QE6
- Retaining the use of Landscape Character Assessment as a tool including Historic Landscape Characterisation and integrated Assessments (A tool not just for Local Authorities but for all to use as a consistent approach/way to manage the region’s landscapes in a consistent and well planned way
- Strengthening references to tranquillity, noise and light pollution
- References to Geodiversity

The following content of QE6 could be included in other policies:

- References to Community Forest and other National Forest Programme (could sit in QE8)
- Urban Fringe references – could move to QE4
- Degraded Landscapes references – QE1?

Suggested policy options to incorporate the main elements above were then developed. It was felt that this policy area was not suitable for an approach that set out direct choices because of the need to reflect a range of complementary issues in the final policy. Therefore, the Options invite more detailed comment on the range of issues to be included.

5. Reference and Web Links

- The State of the Natural Environment - Natural England, 2008
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/sone/default.aspx>
- State of the Natural Environment in the West Midlands – Natural England, 2009.
- Condition of Landscapes in the West Midlands by Joint Character Area – Countryside Quality Counts
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/cqc/default.aspx>

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June 2009

Update RSS Policy QE7

**Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the Region's Biodiversity
and Nature Conservation Resources**

Introduction

This paper sets out some of the issues for the review of this policy; it has been created following discussion with a wider group of colleagues at a topic group meeting between June and October 2008.

It has five parts:

- Sets out objective as written in RSS Phase 3 Project Plan
- Outlines the changes to National Planning Policy since the current RSS in 2004.
- Sets out some of the main issues/what to think about.
- Provides in principle suggestions that the policy revision need to consider.
- Sets out the main evidence base to be used to justify the revision

There is also an annex attached that give some background context for the purposes of consultation and two regional maps relating to the proposed policy revision.

1. **RSS Revision Objective**

To update policies QE 7 of the existing WMRSS to reflect changes in national planning policy guidance and regional plans, strategies and initiatives.

2. **Changes To National Planning Policy**

Since the publication of the current RSS in June 2004. Plus other significant changes in circumstance – possibly include any major regional issues/policy.

- PPS 9 – Biodiversity & Geological Conservation (2005)
- Circular 06/05 Biodiversity And Geological Conservation – Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system (2005)
- Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – A Good Practice Guidance (2006)
- Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, Oct. 2006 regarding the Biodiversity Duty under Section 40 and the 'List of habitats and species of Principal Importance' under Section 41 (2006).
- PPS 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' Supplement 'Planning & Climate Change
- PPS 6 Planning for Town centre 2005
- PPS 12 - Creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning 2008
- PPS 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation 2002
- UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005
- Working with the grain of nature – taking it forward: Volume I - Full report on progress under the England Biodiversity Strategy 2002 – 2006
- Biodiversity Targets by Government Region Natural England Natural England 2008
- New Delivery Framework for England Biodiversity Strategy Natural England 2008
- Defra's Ecosystem Approach - 'Securing a Healthy Natural Environment: An Action Plan for Embedding an Ecosystem Approach' (Defra 2007)
- New PSAs 2008-2011 - PSA 28 '*Secure a healthy natural environment for today and the future*'.

- Defra's Local Sites Guidance 2006
- Natural Foundations: geodiversity for people, places and nature. Stace, H., & Larwood, J.G. 2006 English Nature

3. Regional Strategies

- Regional Biodiversity Strategy, 2005
- West Midlands Sustainable Development Framework refreshed, 2007
- West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework and Delivery Plan, 2008-2011
- New Growth Points programme, 2006
- West Midlands Regional Green Infrastructure Prospectus, 2007
- West Midlands Health & Well- Being Strategy, January 2008
- Landscapes for Living prospectus, 2008
- Enhancing Biodiversity across the West Midlands – Natural England/West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership 2008

4. Issues / What To Think About

4.1 Biodiversity Enhancement Areas

- Delivering enhancements within the BEAs has progressed steadily over the past 14 years through a combination of delivery mechanisms. The condition of SSSIs has improved and a range of agri-environment schemes has been used to improve the condition of habitats within these areas. In addition a number of specific projects have been established to develop improvements across large parts of the landscape within the BEAs e.g. 'Back to Purple' project in the Shropshire Hills BEA and the Weaver Hills project in the Staffordshire Moorlands BEA. English Nature also selected two of the BEAs as pilot projects, Woolhope Dome BEA in Herefordshire and the Cannock Chase to Sutton Park BEA, where they funded developmental work to take forward the objectives of the RSS policy.
- In 2006 the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership (WMBP) undertook a detailed review of the 14 BEAs through a process of stakeholder engagement and this helped to define boundaries and feature of importance. The general consensus of stakeholders on the 14 BEAs was that they failed to capture the total extent of important habitats and failed to identify all the areas of opportunity for biodiversity enhancement across the region. There was a perception that the regional activity would focus on these 14 areas potentially at the expense of the remainder of the region.
- The BEAs do not reflect the current priorities for delivery of on the ground landscape improvements. English Nature (now Natural England) established 2 pilot projects (Cannock Chase to Sutton Park and Woolhope Dome) and a number of other partner organisations have developed delivery projects within some of the BEAs. However there are other equally important delivery projects that lie outside the BEAs.

4.2 Strategic River Corridors (SRCs)

- The review of the BEAs also concluded that these primarily selected terrestrial habitats at the expense of the region's wetland habitats. The WMBP consider

that SRC ought to be considered as being of regional significance for biodiversity protection and enhancement.

- Current policy relating to SRCs seeks to ensure consistency across sub-regions and interregional. This policy does not reflect the growing realisation of the importance of our rivers and floodplains as a biodiversity resource. Recent work by the Environment Agency on SRCs taken this thinking forward and the review needs to reflect this. River valleys are often rich in terraces and other geomorphological features and many canal and river cuttings are important geological outcrops
- The EA consider that SRCs have a wide range of functions in addition to biodiversity and for this reason they could be considered within the water policy QE9. However the specific biodiversity functions of the rivers and floodplains should be addressed in QE7 alongside other landscape scale issues.

4.3 Climate Change resilient landscapes

- Whilst the current policy includes specific reference to the need to ensure biodiversity is enhanced this is restricted to the specific areas (BEAs) and does not mention adaptation measures for coping with the changing climate. There is a need to develop resilient landscapes and strengthen ecological networks and links across the region to help species survive in situ or migrate.
- A set of 'Adaptation Principles' has been developed nationally and regionally. Of these the most relevant to the RSS policy are;

1. Developing ecologically resilient landscapes by

- **Conserving and enhancing variation within the landscape.** This means retaining habitat variety on a landscape scale, including variation in vegetation structure, slope/aspect, altitude, water regime.
- **Making space for the natural development of rivers.** The principle is to work with natural processes; for example, managed realignment of flood defences along rivers allows space for such processes to occur.
- **Establish ecological networks.** There is a need to think in terms of habitat networks and linking corridors, rather than considering individual sites in isolation. The landscape-scale approach involves taking larger areas into conservation management and linking habitats via corridors and stepping-stones.

2. Conserve existing wildlife habitats and species

- **Conserve protected areas.** Protected sites will inevitably see changes. Nevertheless, the existing protected sites are likely to continue to be of highest wildlife importance, so need to be maintained. They will act as core areas for populations as well as components of ecological networks.
- **Conserve range and ecological variability of habitats and species.** There is a need to retain the full range of ecological situations within which species and habitats occur, including unusual ecological occurrences, within a system of protected areas.

4.4 Ecosystem Approach

It is proposed that the ecosystem approach is dealt with in more detail under Policy QE1, however there are important links with Biodiversity & Geodiversity and the following information has therefore been included within this paper;

- Defra launched the 'ecosystem approach' through an action plan in December 2007. The action plan is aimed at delivering the new (2008-2011) natural environment PSA (28) to '*secure a healthy natural environment for today and the future*'. PSA 28 includes all aspects of the natural environment (air, soil, water, people, biodiversity, seas and landscape) and is therefore reliant on shared partner & stakeholder delivery. Sustainability of the natural environment is crucial and at the heart of PSA 28 and in order to achieve PSA 28, Defra aim to embed an 'ecosystem approach' into policy making and delivery.
- The 'ecosystem approach' provides a framework for looking at whole ecosystems (a natural unit of living things and their physical environment) in decision making linking together cross-cutting environmental challenges.
- The 'ecosystem approach' looks at valuing the services ecosystems provide for people (e.g air; water, food, medicines, fuel, source of recreation, feelings of well-being, climate regulation, flood regulation, air & water purification, pollination, pest control & disease, primary production, soil formation) so that policies can be designed which enable us to live within environmental limits and to cope with pressures on the natural environment such as climate change.
- There are a number of actions which require a wide range of government and non-government to embed the 'ecosystem approach' into key regional policies and strategies including the RSS and the proposed 'Single Integrated Regional Strategy'. Key delivery partners at the regional level are seen to be the Government Offices, Regional Assemblies and Regional Development Agencies as well as organisations such as Natural England, Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency. Defra will monitor and evaluate this delivery plan for an ecosystem approach by the end of 2009.

4.5 'Local Sites – Local Area Agreement indicator '197'

- Recent legislation placed a requirement on local government and local authorities to improve the condition of the nationally designated SSSIs e.g. as a PSA target for government agencies and local authorities. SSSIs are selected as a representative sample of the best areas of wildlife and geology,
- The remaining areas of important habitat lie within locally designated sites. Their importance for biodiversity and geoconservation is recognised within national planning policy and guidance e.g. PPS 9. Recently the condition of these sites has also been recognised as being of importance with the introduction of the monitoring indicator for Local Area Agreements i.e. NI197.
- The term "Local Sites' is a generic term for all locally designated wildlife and geological sites as their local name varies across the region e.g. Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). Across the West Midlands region there are over 4000 locally

designated sites which together support approximately half the region's total extent of priority BAP habitat.

- Depending on the local criteria for designation these local sites can also include recognition of their geological importance with many recognising the national RIGs system.
- In 2008, the biodiversity value of these sites was also recognised in the monitoring indicator set for Local Area Agreements (NI 197). This indicator relates to the management of these sites. The indicator requires local authorities to ensure that 'local sites' are being positively managed. The first reporting on this indicator will happen in the Spring of 2009 with all local authorities in the region needing to comply. In the West Midlands there are currently 4 local authorities who have included this indicator as one of their priority '35' indicators which means that specific 'stretching' targets for Achievement has been set.

4.6 Landscapes for Living – Regional Opportunities Map

- The WMBP Landscapes for Living (LfL) project was initiated in 2006. It is an ambitious project which takes a landscape scale approach to restoring and enhancing biodiversity throughout the region. It is envisaged that by taking a more holistic approach to managing and protecting ecosystems and the species and habitats they contain, a high quality environment, rich in wildlife, can be maintained and restored. This project was designed to address the issues set out above regarding resilience to climate change and embodies the principles ecosystems approach
- The LfL project also seeks to address stakeholders concerns as expressed within the consultation exercise for the BEAs (see paragraph 3.1 above). A landscape wide approach also enables us to improve connections between different areas and integrate biodiversity objectives more closely with social and economic factors, to counteract the effects of climate change and ensure that the environment can provide us with clean air, water and flood protection.
- The LfL prospectus - published in early 2008 - sets out the following fifty year vision for biodiversity in the West Midlands.

“Imagine... a vibrant, diverse and natural West Midlands, where we are connected to our wildlife and landscape; healthy, sustainable communities and local livelihoods, working with nature and securing the future...”

- Since the publication of the Prospectus work has been progressed on the development of a Regional Biodiversity Opportunity Map to identify where the best prospects for the creation and maintenance of good quality semi-natural habitat exist over the lifetime of the 50 year vision. As a follow-up to this, Local Biodiversity Partnerships are being encouraged to develop county/sub-regional opportunity maps.

4.7 Biodiversity Maps

- The RSS Phase 3 Biodiversity Topic Group recommends that a separate biodiversity map should be included within the revised RSS. At present the RSS contains a map of the BEAs as part of the Environmental Enhancements Map. As stated above the Landscapes for Living project has developed a new approach to considering regional priorities. A new **Biodiversity Map** and **Regional Opportunity Map** have been prepared. In addition the Landscapes for Living project has initiated the development of Local Opportunity Maps which will use and further refine the regional opportunity map.
- A document prepared by Natural England on behalf of the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership entitled '**Enhancing Biodiversity Across the West Midlands**' was published in 2008. This regional guidance sets out to demonstrate, to local planning authorities, how **Local Opportunity Mapping** for biodiversity will make a major contribution to achieving national and regional policy objectives and statutory requirements for enhancing biodiversity. Local opportunity mapping is considered the most effective way to represent spatially biodiversity priorities.

4.8 Geodiversity

- PPS 9 includes geological conservation in particular it states that regional spatial strategies should: "address regional, sub-regional and cross-boundary issues in relation to habitats, species and geomorphological processes through criteria-based policies"
- Working with the grain of nature: a biodiversity strategy for England sets out the Government's vision for conserving and enhancing biological diversity in England and spells out the Government's objectives for planning to include elements relating to geodiversity:
 - to promote sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development, so that policies and decisions about the development and use of land integrate biodiversity and geological diversity with other considerations.
 - to conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology by sustaining, and where possible improving, the quality and extent of natural habitat and geological and geomorphological sites; the natural physical processes on which they depend; and the populations of naturally occurring species which they support.
 - Following discussion at both the Biodiversity and Landscape Policy scoping meetings, the consensus view is that Geodiversity should be covered principally in revised policy QE7, with suitable reference elsewhere particularly QE6 and the Minerals section.
- The Regional Geodiversity Partnership has considered what they believe are the key requirements for geodiversity within the RSS and a paper presented to the Biodiversity Topic Group is provided in Annex 2. This includes reference to the West Midlands Geodiversity Assets map which is also appended.

4.9 Regional Habitat Targets

- The current RSS Appendix B contains a list of regional habitat targets which requires a complete revision as the targets are now out of date. There has been a national review of the priority BAP habitats and species and the number of new priority BAP habitats and species has increased. The region is national stronghold for some of these new habitats e.g. traditional orchards and 'open mosaic habitats on previously developed land'.
- New terminology has been introduced to help guide target setting and there is also a growing emphasis on the delivery of better functioning ecosystems and the development of more resilient landscapes as an adaptation for climate change, i.e. the targets need to be climate change proofed.
- The Regional Assembly has engaged consultants, Treweek Environmental Consultants to undertake a review of the regional targets for all priority BAP habitats for inclusion within the revision to the RSS. The project aims to:
 - use best available data including as much local data as possible which is being collated through funding from WMBP,
 - calculate the extent of new habitat required to develop resilient landscapes to assist with climate change adaptation to 2050 and calculate the revised targets for the RSS to 2026.
- The project will:
 - identify habitat networks within and outside the regional opportunity areas (as defined in the Landscapes for Living Regional Opportunities Map) i.e. areas of existing priority habitat,
 - investigate potential areas for habitat restoration/creation within and outside the regional opportunity areas,
 - calculate the extent of new habitat required for each priority BAP habitat e.g. by expanding existing habitat within and adjoining networks.
- Whilst the focus for landscape scale restoration will focus in the Regional Opportunity areas identified by the Landscapes for Living project the consultants will also take account of dispersed habitats that can not be protected/ enhanced within these areas.
- An analysis of the extent of BAP habitat has been undertaken as part of the targets review work and these have been divided into four different groups for the purpose of identifying networks. The network analysis helps to identify the best locations for developing better ecological connectivity and better ecological functioning landscapes. The guiding principle for this being to buffer, link and expand habitats within and adjoining networks as a priority.
- The approach taken within this contract will be following the the advice contained within the revised England Biodiversity Strategy Biodiversity Action Plan Delivery framework

5. Suggested Policy Revision

The RSS Biodiversity Topic group has discussed the development of various options and these are outlined in the options paper..

If geodiversity is to be included within the revised biodiversity policy QE7 then it is recommended that this should be re-titled “**Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the region’s Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources**”.

To take account of the changing policy drivers the policy needs to;

- refer to the need to develop resilient landscapes across the region,
- ensure that biodiversity assets can adapt to future climate change,
- promote the need for biodiversity enhancements,
- emphasis the ecosystem approach,
- require that local opportunity maps are developed as part of the LDF process,
- consider the social and economic benefits of biodiversity across the region,
- ensure that benefits for biodiversity are captured from housing and other growth proposals,
- promote delivery at a landscape scale.
- Raise awareness of the statutory duty on LA’s to ensure biodiversity and geodiversity management on Local Sites.
- Recognise the potential for biodiversity associated with mineral extraction,
- Incorporate Geodiversity.

6. Reference

The following areas of technical work will form the evidence base for the RSS review.

- A review of habitats targets contained within Annex B of the RSS is currently underway.
- Landscapes for Living Prospectus 2008 sets out the regional 50 year biodiversity vision and sets out the benefits of the natural environment for social and economic wellbeing. A regional biodiversity map, delivery principles and case studies are also contained within the prospectus.
- Landscapes for Living Technical Report 2008 sets out the background work and consultation exercise undertaken to develop the Landscapes for Living vision. It also outlines the methodology and data used to develop the Biodiversity Map.
- Landscapes for Living Opportunity Map 2008 established through wide stakeholder engagement displays the landscape areas that are considered to be a priority for biodiversity enhancement across the region.
- State of Natural Environment 2008 report contains information about the natural environment across the whole of England and contains useful comparisons and references to the West Midlands region.
- BEA consultation document provides information on the biodiversity importance of the 14 BEAs and the views of regional stakeholders on establishes boundaries for each area.

- Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Phase Two Revision for the West Midlands - Final Sustainability Appraisal Report Non-Technical Summary - October 2007
- Habitats Regulations Assessment Final Screening Note WMRSS Phase Two - September 2007
Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Phase 2 Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands - October 2007
Habitats Regulations Assessment Appendices - October 2007
- Securing a healthy natural environment: an action plan for embedding an ecosystems approach Defra December 2007
- Conserving biodiversity in a changing climate: guidance on building capacity to adapt – Defra May 2007
- Regional Geodiversity Assets Map (Helen Stace and Antony Ratcliffe)

Jeff Edwards
Regional Biodiversity Partnership
June 2009

QE7 - Annex 1

In 2006, NE commissioned David Tyldesley Associates (DTA) to produce a paper that examined various aspects of the Quality of Environment Chapter. This included an assessment of each of the policies QE1 – QE9. We have reviewed this part of that original paper and the relevant extract is included below. This represents an initial NE view only, and is included to aid discussion.

DTA recommendations	Natural England comments
The policy should safeguard, conserve and restore regionally important geological and/or geomorphologic sites (RIGS) and promote their good management.	Support. We need a stronger emphasis on geodiversity. In this policy or in QE6?
Appropriate management and further expansion of wildlife corridors that are important for the migration and dispersal of wildlife should be promoted by the policy.	Also link to green infrastructure and climate change.
The policy should establish networks of semi-natural green spaces (multi-functional green infrastructure) in built up areas as part of the process of developing more sustainable, safer, secure and attractive urban and built forms.	Links to green infrastructure policy.
The policy needs to ensure that new development minimises damage to biodiversity and the earth heritage resource on all development sites by achieving net environmental gains through enhancement measures and new habitat creation.	Agreed
Reference to River Networks should be strengthened to take a holistic approach (see water environment).	Need to ensure link but not replication to QE9 – The Water Environment
There is a need to see consideration of the need for a whole region opportunity map which can link to the Landscapes for Living project and also to the Woodland Opportunities map.	Agreed

QE7 - Annex 2 – Geodiversity Advice

1. All the plans and programmes of Local Authorities and other relevant agencies should:

1.1 encourage the monitoring, maintenance and enhancement of the region's geodiversity resources, giving priority to:-

- (a) the protection and enhancement of specific landscape areas and designated sites of international, national and regional importance as identified in the West Midlands Geodiversity Assets map (appended) and Local Geodiversity Action Plans
- (b) those areas and sites that receive statutory protection including NNR, LNR and SSSIs
- (c) designated non-statutory sites which contribute to the regional and local geodiversity resource.
- (d) other sites or landscape which are important in defining and contributing to neighbourhood character, local distinctiveness and social and community heritage.
- (e) supporting and implementing Local Geodiversity Action Plans and contribute to the delivery of national, regional and local geodiversity objectives and targets.
- (f) supporting proposals for geodiversity within Sustainable Community Strategies.

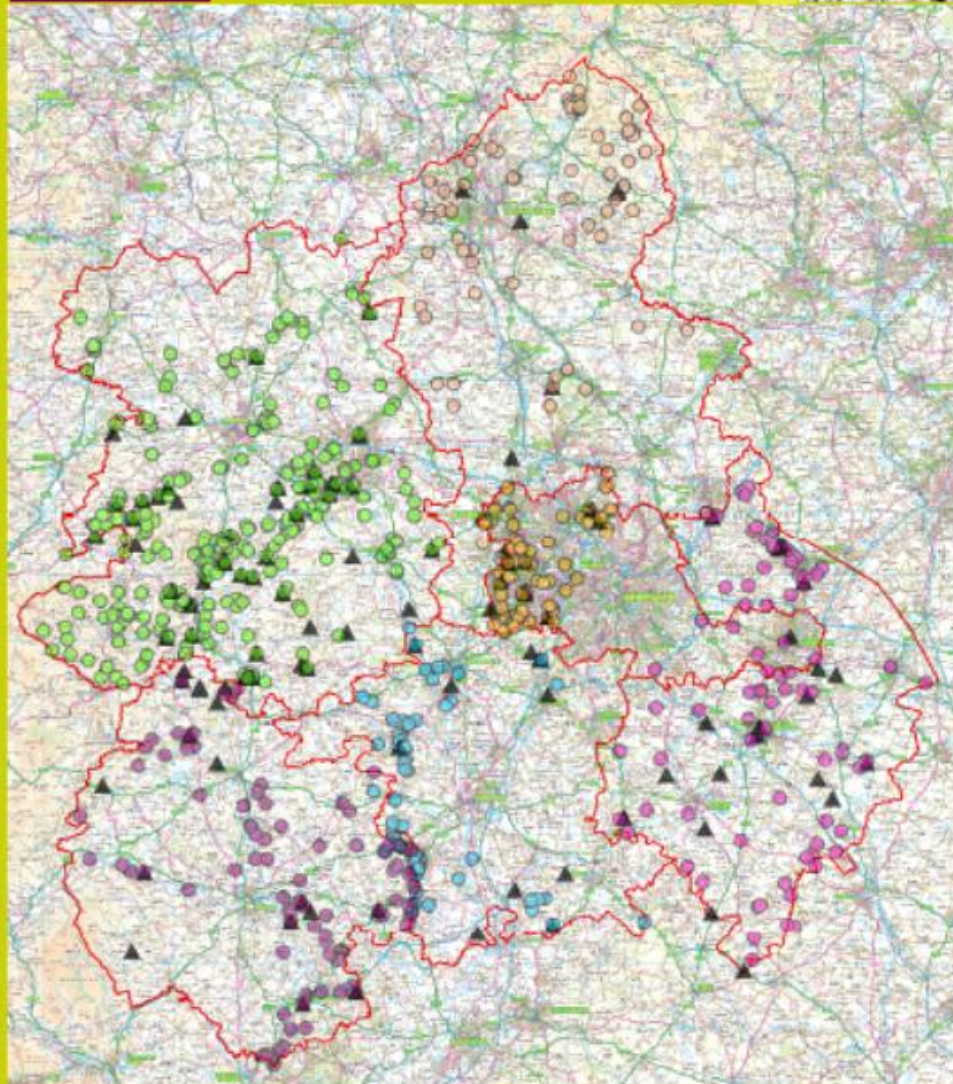
1.2 encourage the development of sustainable environmental tourism opportunities (geo-tourism) and promoting healthy lifestyles and education.

1.3 encourage the expansion of geodiversity assets in Growth Points, regeneration zones, regeneration corridors and other areas where geodiversity features are under-represented

2. With strategic partners, Local authorities should produce sub-regional geodiversity opportunity maps, identifying geological consideration zones which will feature in Local Development Frameworks (LDFs).

3. Local Authorities and other agencies should take a common, holistic, approach to biodiversity, geodiversity and general nature conservation issues which cross local planning authority and regional boundaries.

Alan Cutter
Regional Geodiversity Partnership
June 2009



- Herefordshire
- Birmingham and Black Country
- Shropshire
- Staffordshire
- Warwickshire
- ▲ Geological SSSI

Scale 1:750,000

Map Produced by Claire Edwards
Natural England
Of Unit Wolverhampton
8th December 2008

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West Midlands 50 Year Biodiversity Vision & Opportunity



Legend:
Regional Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

Landscape Areas	Urban Areas
Strategic River Corridors	Growth Points

Scale 1:500,000
 Map Produced by Sarah Haines and
 Natural England
 © Local Authorities
 18th January 2018



West Midlands 50 Year Biodiversity Vision & Opportunity Legend

Regional Biodiversity Opportunity Areas:

Strategic River Corridors

These include all the major named rivers, their tributaries & floodplains. These contain important wetland habitats, connect rural and urban landscapes and are important for supporting biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Landscape Areas

Areas considered to have the best opportunity to enhance biodiversity at a landscape scale over the next 50 years.

Urban Areas

Cities and towns include valuable biodiversity habitats and features and play a vital role in providing greenspace for urban dwellers.

★ Growth Points

The growth points provide an opportunity to enhance biodiversity through the provision of Green Infrastructure.

Strategic River Corridors:

- A Severn
- B Avon
- C Teme
- D Lugg & Aronwy
- E Wye
- F Trent
- G Tame & Blythe

Landscape Areas:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Shropshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Shropshire Hills North 2 Wye - Wenlock Edge 3 Dee Hills 4 Oswestry Uplands 5 Meres & Mosses 6 Clun <p>Staffordshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 Needwood 8 Moorlands 9 Carnock Chase & Suttor Park 10 Sandstone Woods & Heaths 11 South Staffordshire <p>Birmingham & Black Country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 Sandwell Valley 13 Black Country Core 14 Smarow Valley 15 Plantbrook Catchment | <p>Warwickshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 Arden 17 Princethorpe Woodlands 18 Tame Valley 19 Cotswolds <p>Herefordshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 Woohope/Malvern Link 21 Mortimer Forest 22 Golden Valley/Black Mountains 23 Upper Lugg 24 Hay to Hereford 25 Teme Valley 26 Lower Lugg 27 Wye Valley <p>Worcestershire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 Malvern Hills to Wyre Forest 29 Worcestershire Sandlands 30 Forest of Fockenhams |
|---|---|

Growth Points:

- H Shrewsbury & Atcham
- I Tetford
- J East Staffordshire
- K Birmingham & Solihull
- L Coventry
- M Walsley
- N Herefordshire
- O Black Country/Sandwell
- P Stafford

Basemap

- Zone 1 - Large inter-connected landscapes, rich in biodiversity and providing life-supporting ecological networks.
- Zone 2 - Extensive areas of habitat linking and buffering other areas and supporting multiple needs.
- Zone 3 - Generally smaller, more isolated areas of habitat, often in highly modified landscapes, supporting mixed uses and providing ecosystem services.

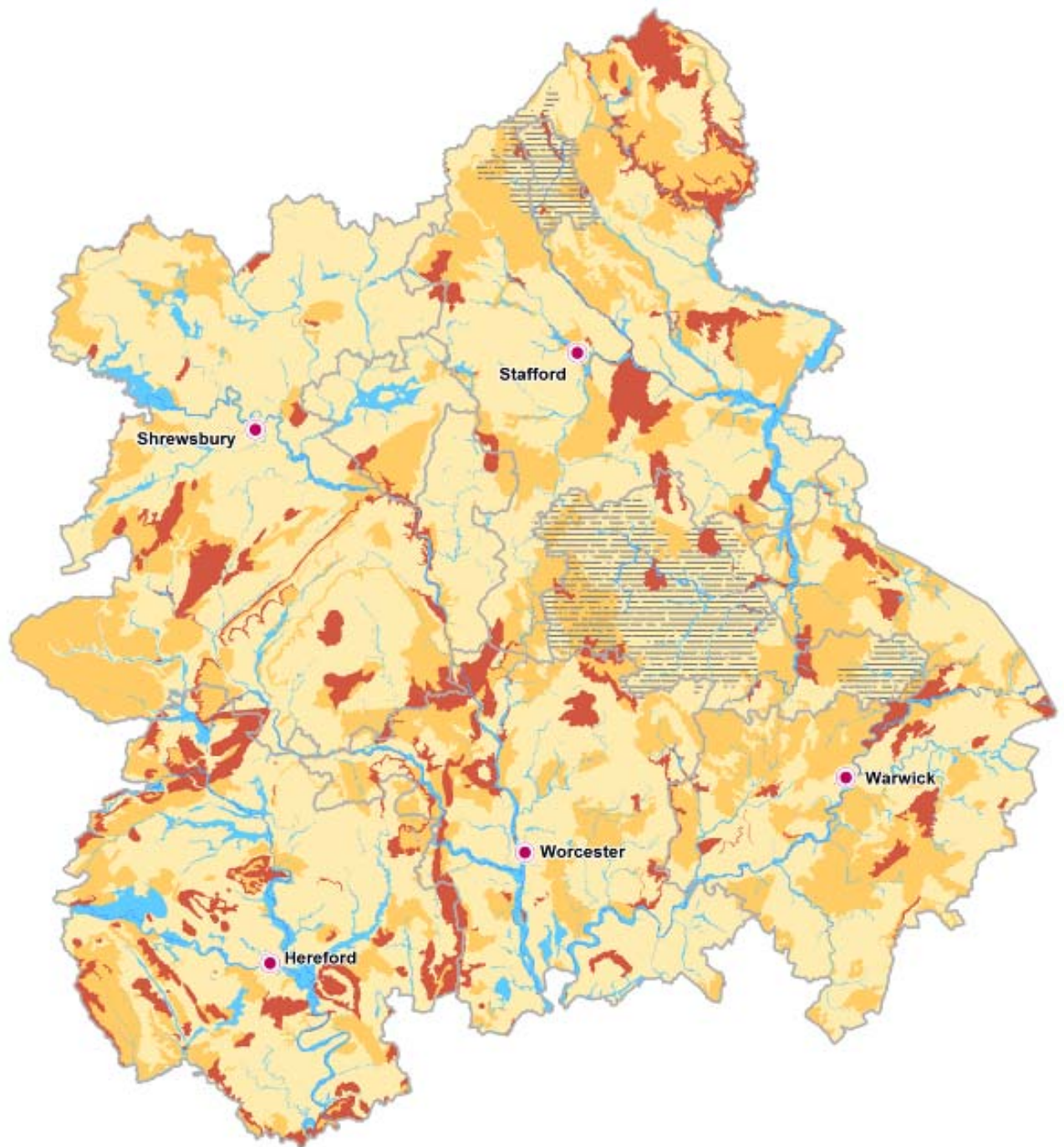
The zones on the map give an indication of the distribution of habitat-rich landscapes across the region.

The zones on the map are derived from the Landscapes for Living Biodiversity Map 2007. Local Biodiversity Maps will exist within various LBAP areas providing more detail.

LBAP (Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership Boundaries)



Regional Biodiversity Map



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Update RSS Policy QE8

Forestry and Woodlands

Introduction

This paper sets out the issues for the review of this policy. It follows discussion with a task group of partners brought together to look at this policy area.

There are five parts to the paper:

- Objective
- Policy Background
- Background to Key Issues and Priorities
- Summary of Key Issues suggested for coverage by the Policy Revision
- Evidence

1. RSS Revision Objective

To suggest revision of Policy QE8 of the existing RSS to reflect changes in national planning policy guidance and relevant national and regional strategies and plans.

2. Policy Background

Relevant changes nationally and regionally since the publication of current RSS in June 2004 are listed:

- 1) Focused directly on trees, woodlands and forestry:
 - Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests 2007 and Delivery Plan 2008
 - Growing our Future - Regional Forestry Framework 2004 and annual Delivery Plan (refresh underway during 2009)
 - Keepers of Time – a statement of policy for ancient and native woodland in England 2005
 - Woodfuel Strategy for England 2006 (Implementation Plan due in 2009)
 - Regional Woodfuel Strategy 2005 and review 2006
 - Regional Woodland Opportunities Map version 2
- 2) Also relevant are:
 - PPS 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
 - PPS 12 – Creating strong, safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning
 - UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005
 - West Midlands Sustainable Development Framework refreshed 2007
 - Regional Biodiversity Strategy 2005
 - West Midlands Landscapes for Living 2008
 - West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus 2007 and Technical Document
 - West Midlands Economic Strategy 2007 and Delivery Plan 2008
 - West Midlands Health and Well-Being Strategy 2008
 - West Midlands Regional Climate Change Action Plan 2007

3. Background to Key Issues and Priorities for Trees, Woodland and Forestry in the West Midlands

Trees and woodlands and in particular ancient and native woodlands and veteran trees, are a fundamental component of the Region's countryside and greenspaces,

making significant contributions to quality of life and well being both in rural and urban areas and providing multiple social, environmental and economic benefits.

The Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests (ETWF) and the West Midlands Forestry Framework, together with associated guidance, provide the regional and national policy context and guidance for developing the region's tree cover and maximising public benefits.

Ancient semi-natural woodlands are an irreplaceable natural resource providing links to the original wildwood, which once covered much of England. These woodlands are rich in history and bio-diversity but often suffer from isolation and fragmentation making them vulnerable and in need of protection. Other ancient woodlands have lost all or some of their semi-natural condition through replanting with non-native species and progressive programmes of restoration are needed where feasible and appropriate. Similarly the region's veteran trees, of importance nationally and Europe-wide, need to be conserved. The protection and enhancement of ancient woodlands and veteran trees, together with other native woodlands, form important aspects of national policy set out in both ETWF and Keepers of Time (a statement of policy for England's ancient and native woodland, also linking to PPS9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation) and are of corresponding importance to the region.

Where ancient and native woodlands are small and fragmented priority should be given to expanding and linking them by planting appropriate native species in line with UK BAP targets.

Improving linkages between woodlands and other habitats is an important part of planning for climate change as it facilitates species migration in response to a changing environment.

The social and economic benefits of woodlands and trees are also enhanced by improving linkages and integrating woodlands into a well-planned green infrastructure. This can be particularly important in and around major population centres. Urban trees and woodlands have particularly important roles in providing shade, cooling, wildlife habitats, enhancing air quality, potentially increasing property values and generally improving health, well-being and sense of community for urban populations.

Tree planting, woodland management and associated ancillary processing operations make significant contributions to the region's rural economy in particular. Of growing importance and potential are the development of regional and sub-regional woodfuel supply chains, contributing to renewable heat and energy production in the region. This provides the prospect of increased employment opportunities especially in rural areas, together with significant contributions to combating climate change and for bringing more woodland into sustainable management.

Management and creation of woodlands in line with UK BAP targets should be undertaken sympathetically, taking account of the needs of other priority habitats. A landscape scale approach will help ancient and native woodlands become more robust in the face of habitat fragmentation and the effects of climate change. This is exemplified as part of the Landscapes for Living initiative. Trees and woodlands can also play a significant role in developing the Ecosystems Services agenda.

Trees and woodlands are important components in the landscape and are a significant determinant of landscape character. Woodland creation and management must take account of landscape character as well as priority habitats. The region's Woodland Opportunities Map (www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-6n4gz) gives broad guidance on appropriate places for woodland creation in the West Midlands.

Where deforestation is agreed this will need to meet open habitats policy (under development and consultation during 2009) and opportunities sought to maintain and increase woodland cover in other appropriate places.

The National Forest and the Forest of Mercia Community Forest are key initiatives in the region where woodland creation in appropriate locations is of particular importance.

Woodland creation and appropriate tree planting have further benefits in terms of mitigating and adapting to climate change, including flood plain and water quality management and potential for long term carbon sequestration.

4. Summary Of Key Issues For The Policy Revision

In the light of the above it is suggested that a revised policy and text for Policy QE8 could address the following:

- (a) Continue enhanced woodland management and creation in the region, but develop the balance between them, including resource targeting.
- (b) Woodlands in rural areas, where most of the woodland resource is, must be considered alongside urban woodlands, where most of the region's population resides, with complementary but different priorities for each.
- (c) Change in targeting woodland creation to include areas influenced by Opportunities Mapping as well as existing priorities such as the National Forest and Community Forest.
- (d) The need to focus on ancient woodland protection/ enhancement and active programmes of restoration of Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), with priorities influenced by national guidance, Opportunities Mapping and Biodiversity Action Plan targets for woodland.
- (e) The need to afford effective protection to veteran trees/wood pasture as well as woodland.
- (f) The potential for forestry and woodland industries to contribute to and benefit from woodland management and creation and the rural economy.
- (g) The increasing importance of woodland and forestry policies embracing climate change adaptation and mitigation, including for example flood mitigation/floodplain management and linking with wood fuel for heat and energy.
- (h) A wide range of woody biomass is potentially available as fuel for renewable heat and energy production, although wood arising from woodland management operations could be prioritised.
- (i) The importance of developing awareness and delivery of the range of social, health and well-being benefits from trees and woodlands.

5. Reference and Web links

The key evidence for the revision of the Trees Woodland and Forestry Policy lies with the following documents:

- Growing our Future – The Regional Forestry Framework and Delivery Plan - <http://www.growingourfuture.org>
- Strategy for England's Trees Woods and Forests and Delivery Plan - <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/rddteam/pdf/0706forestry-strategy.pdf>
- Keepers of Time – A Statement of Policy for Ancient and Native Woodland and Delivery Plan - [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/anw-policy.pdf/\\$FILE/anw-policy.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/anw-policy.pdf/$FILE/anw-policy.pdf)

Bill Heslegrave
Forestry Commission
June 2009

Update RSS Policy QE9

Water Environment

Introduction

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 3 Revision is being used to update and align the existing Quality of the Environment Policies so as to ensure consistency with current national and regional policies, guidance, strategies and initiatives.

1. Objective

To update policy QE9: The Water Environment of the existing WMRSS to reflect changes in national planning policy guidance and regional plans, strategies and initiatives.

2 Changes to National Planning Policy

- **Future Water** “The Governments water strategy for England”
- **Improving Surface Water Drainage** (Consultation linked to *Future Water*)
- **Water Framework Directive**
- **The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003**
- **Social and Environmental Guidance to Ofwat.**
- **Statement of Obligations** - water and sewerage undertaker.
- **Lessons Learnt from the 2007 Floods – Final Report, Pitt Review (June 2008)**
- **River Basin Management Plans** (function of the Water Resource (Water Framework Directive) Regulations
- **Water Resource Management Plans** (water companies)
- **Water Resources Strategy – Environment Agency**
- **Catchment Flood Management Plans**
- **PPS1 Planning and Climate Change**
- **PPS3 Housing**
- **PPS 9 – Biodiversity & Geological Conservation**
- **PPS10 – Waste Management**
- **PPS12 Local Development Frameworks** “Creating strong safe and “prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning
- **PPS23 - Planning and Pollution Control**
- **PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk**

3. Issues/what to think about

With a growing population and the drive to increase the supply of new housing the pressures on the UKs water environment are escalating. When the effects of climate change are taken into account alongside the project water resource demand the Water Environment as a whole is coming under mounting pressure. In response to this the Government has produced a new water strategy for the UK which aims to make all new development take full account of Water Quality, Water Resource Management and Flood Risk Management Water Policy in England is now concerned with protecting both public health and the environment by maintaining and improving the quality of all water in the environment.

Although flood risk management is a key component of the water environment it has been determined that the RSS Phase 3 review is an ideal opportunity to address this issue separately.

The Government has produced its new water strategy for England 'Future Water' in February 2008 alongside a consultation paper "Improving Surface Water Drainage". This consultation paper incorporated several recommendations which were made in the Pitt which contained several reformations from the Pitt Review "Learning Lessons from the 2007 Floods, June 2008". These recommendations specifically relate to the production of Surface Water Management Plans by Local Authorities and the need for the government to address the issues for long term ownership and management of Sustainable Development Systems created to protect developments from surface water flooding.

Future Water "The Governments water strategy for England"

Future Water (Feb 2008) sets out the Governments vision of how it wants the water sector to look by 2030 and identifies the steps required to achieve this.

The government aim through water policy and management is that by 2030 it has

- improved the quality of the water environment and the ecology it supports and to maintain the quality of the supply of drinking water;
- sustainable managed risks from flooding and coastal erosion and effectively manage surface water
- ensured a sustainable use of water resources, and implemented fair and cost effective reflective water charges
- cut greenhouse gas emissions
- embedded continuous adaptation to climate change and other pressures across the water industry and water users.

Future Water outlines a strategic and integrated approach to the sustainable management of the water resources of England and Wales.

Pitt Review "Lessons Learnt from the 2007 Floods Final Report" and Consultation on Improving Surface Water Drainage (accompanying Future Water)

To support the Governments water strategy, Future Water, sets out the vision for more effective drainage of surface water to deal with the dual pressures of climate change and housing development. In line with the Pitt Report (2007 – Learning lessons from the 2007 floods: interim report) the consultation document puts forward three recommendations:

1. Using Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) as a tool to improve co-ordination between stakeholders involved in drainage and local management of flood risk
2. Promoting sustainable drainage systems by clarifying responsibilities for ownership and adoption
3. Reviewing the ability for premises to connect to surface water drainage automatically into the public sewer system (section 106 of Water Industry Act)

Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs)

The Environment Agency has a supervisory responsibility for coastal and river flooding but has no statutory role, duty or responsibility in relation to surface water flooding. Water companies, Local Authorities, the Highways Agency and Internal Drainage Boards all have designated responsibilities for surface drainage. In order to promote a coordinated approach to surface water drainage a Surface Water Management Plan would:

- Map and quantify surface flows and drainage with sufficient detail to enable local as well as strategic flooding problems to be tackled.
- Produce a delivery plan that clarifies responsibilities and then directs resources at tackling surface water, prioritising areas at greatest risk
- Influence local planning policy
- Be periodically reviewed and updated.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

It is also recognised that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) can offer developments protection from surface flooding and help manage flood risk in the wider catchment area. SuDs can also provide benefits for water quality, water resources (groundwater recharge) and also provide opportunities for the creation of green infrastructure such as habitat creation and public space.

The Environment Agency, sewerage undertakers and many local authorities are committed to the promotion SUDs for new and existing developments. The Pitt report (2007) identified that a lack of integrated planning can prohibit the use and effectiveness of SUDs schemes as there can be long term issues concerning the long term management and maintenance of such schemes.

European Legislation

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) is the most important European water legislation for over 20 years. This Directive encourages a new holistic approach to water resource management by establishing a strategic and coherent framework for the sustainable use of water across all Member States. It is the major driver for achieving sustainable water management by taking account of environmental, economic and social considerations.

Its principal aim is to ensure all surface and groundwater bodies reach at least "good status" by 2015. It will do this by establishing a new, integrated approach to the protection, improvement and sustainable use of Europe's rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater. To ensure the following environmental objectives must be achieved –

- Reduction in Pollution to the water environment
- The effective management of floods and droughts
- The Promotion of sustainable water
- No deterioration of the current environmental status of any water body

The Water Framework Directive has been transposed into England and Welsh law as the "Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003.

River Basin Management Plan

The Water Framework Directive requires all EC Member States to put in place River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). RBMPs have been drawn up around the water catchment areas of the main rivers in England and Wales, named river basin districts. The West Midlands falls into the river catchments of the Severn and Trent with a small area in Warwickshire draining into the Thames.

The RBMPs are the mechanisms for delivering the requirements of the WFD and will determine how all water bodies will be protected and improved to achieve the required 'good status'. RBMPs will set environmental objectives for all ground and surface waters (including estuaries and coastal waters) within the river basin district and contain programmes of measures to meet those objectives.

Water Cycle Strategies

A Water Cycle Strategy provides a plan and programme of Water Services Infrastructure implementation. It assesses the existing environmental and infrastructure capacity for

- Water Supply
- Sewage Disposal
- Flood Risk Management
- Surface Water Drainage.

It also considers the impact of efficient measures and provides an overall estimate of cost for the required actions and required infrastructure improvements.

A Water Cycle Strategy therefore provides a plan and programme of Water Services Infrastructure and is already a requirement for any Authority achieving Growth Point designation. The need for a Water Cycle Strategy has also been included in the Draft PPS on Eco Towns.

Water Resources Strategy

The Environment Agency's existing Water Resources Strategy "Water Resources for the Future: A Strategy for England and Wales" was published in 2001. A new Strategy will be produced in 2009 and will take into account of climate change predictions and additional growth in housing and population numbers. These significant changes, new information and additional pressures on water resources will be taken into consideration for the new Water Resources Strategy due for publication in 2009.

The new strategy will set out high level direction for water resources and will set out the Environment Agency's principles for the management of water resources in England.

Water Resource Management Plans

The Water Companies in England are required to prepare resource management plans in which they demonstrate how they intend to provide sufficient water while protecting the environment.

The draft plans for all the Water Companies covering the period 2010 to 2035 have now been prepared and undergone public consultation. These plans will have to show how the companies have taken into consideration such things as climate change, population changes and environmental protection against over abstraction or sewage discharge. The final plans will be published in April 2009.

4. Suggested policy revision

The requirements of the Water Framework Directive should be the main objective for the RSS. Therefore, the RSS should require all Local Planning Authorities to adhere to the policies and long term objectives of all relevant River Basin Management Plans. It is also recognised now that all new developments should contain SUDs schemes unless their inclusion in any scheme is demonstrated to be unfeasible.

It is suggested that the text and policy for a revised Policy QE9 could include:

- (a) Embedding the requirements of the European Water Framework Directive, which applies to all surface and ground water bodies in the UK, and has significant implications for both spatial and development control planning
- (b) A requirement for all Local Planning Authorities to adhere to the actions and long term objectives of the Severn and Humber River Basin Management Plans, which include specific environmental objectives for each water body and how the objectives will be achieved
- (c) The implications of major growth in the region for water supply and treatment systems and the need for significant investment in new water infrastructure
- (d) The need to address the increasing problem of diffuse pollution (pollution arising from urban and rural land use activities that are dispersed across a river catchment or sub-catchment area) in the region
- (e) The need for better ground and surface water management through sustainable drainage techniques to help mitigate diffuse pollution, reduce flood risk and contribute to biodiversity and amenity
- (f) A requirement for all Local Authorities to prepare Water Cycle Studies in accordance with the published guidance from the Environment Agency to identify necessary infrastructure to support growth
- (g) A requirement to direct all new development to areas that have adequate existing infrastructure or any additional infrastructure can be accommodated with limited costs and environmental mitigation impacts
- (h) A commitment to the achievement of biodiversity action plan targets and the benefits of green infrastructure, including provision of guidance on the protection, management and enhancement of the region's Strategic River Corridors
- (i) A requirement for local authorities to include water efficiency policies in local development frameworks for new and refurbished residential, institutional and commercial developments

5. Evidence

Water Framework Directive

Future Water

Improving Surface Water Drainage Consultation and Recommendations
Pitt Review Lessons Learn't from the 2007 Floods"

River Basin Management Plan – Severn Humber

Flood Catchment Management Plans - River Trent
 River Severn
 (River Thames)

Water Resource Management Plans – Water Companies
 Severn Trent Water
 South Staffordshire Water

Water Resource Strategy for England and Wales - Environment Agency

Jim Davies
Environment Agency
June 2009

Proposed New Policy

**An Integrated Approach to the Management of Environmental
Resources**

1. **RSS Revision Objective**

To develop a strategy for the protection, conservation, enhancement and management of regional environmental assets and resources for their intrinsic value and wider social and economic benefits

2. **Changes To National Planning Policy**

- Securing the Future UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005 – 5 principles, including living within environmental limits
- Millennium Ecosystems Approach/Defra Action Plan
- WM Sustainable Development Framework 2007
- PPS1 Supplement 2007 – delivering the UK Climate Change programme, resilience and adaptability, biodiversity
- PPS9 2005 – promoting opportunities for enhancement/creation in new development
- PPS25 2006 – green infrastructure
- WM Biodiversity Strategy 2005
- WM Forestry Framework and Delivery Plan
- WM Green Infrastructure Prospectus
- Landscapes for Living

3. **What To Think About**

- Importance of the quality of the Region's environment, especially its major urban areas to the RSS urban and rural renaissance priorities
- Evidence of the state of the environment
- Environmental limits or thresholds where known e.g. water resources
- Climate change
- Growth agenda
- Potential methodologies - environmental capacity insufficiently developed, environmental capital, ecosystems approach reservations about approaches
- Promoting positive enhancement and net environmental gain

4. **Policy Options**

The possible content of a revised policy and text for QE1 should;

- Provide overarching policy to set context for more specific environmental policies

- Develop/ link back to Phase 2 SR policies to provide bridge between Phase 2 and green infrastructure etc
- Establish key environmental principles such as minimising environmental damage, positive enhancement/ net environmental gain to reverse decline
- Emphasise social and economic benefits of high quality environment, including image, health and well-being, and environmental justice
- Promote landscape scale approach utilising characterisation techniques, green infrastructure
- Guide approach to targeting of resources, e.g. protecting and enhancing best quality areas or areas of poor/ degraded environmental quality such as major urban areas, Settlements of Significant Development, urban fringe
- Recognise challenge presented by environmental decline, cumulative impact of loss, growth agenda, climate change
- Develop sub-regional approach established by Phase 1
- Highlight importance of delivery mechanisms.

5. References

- RSS Annual Monitoring Reports
- Infrastructure Implications of the Housing Options 2006
- Environmental Capacity and Environmental Assets – David Tyldesley & Associates 2006
- Securing a Healthy Natural Environment: An Action Plan for Embedding an Ecosystem Approach – Defra 2007
- Phase 2 Revision Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment 2007
- GOWM Housing Options Study Sustainability Appraisal 2008

Maurice Barlow
 Solihull MBC
 June 2009

Proposed New Policy

Flood Risk

Introduction

This paper sets out some of the issues for the inclusion of a new policy on flood risk in the RSS. ;

It has five parts:

- Sets out objective as written in RSS Phase 3 Project Plan
- Changes to National Planning Policy since current RSS 2004
- Issues/what to think about
- Suggested policy revision – principles at this stage
- Evidence

There is also an annex attached that gives some background context for the purposes of consultation.

1. Objective

- To consider the regional flood risk from all sources and set out a strategy for managing the risk.

2. Changes To National Planning Policy Since June 2004 – Plus other significant changes in circumstance – possibly include any major regional issues/policy.

- PPS 25 – Development and Flood Risk (Dec 2006)
- PPS 25 – Development and Flood Risk Practice Guide (June 2008)
- PPS – Planning and Climate Change (Supplement to PPS 1) (Dec 2007)
- DCLG Circular 04/2006 – The Town and Country Planning (Flooding) (England) Direction 2007
- GPDO Amendment SI 2006 2375 (Oct 2006)
- GPDO Amendment SI 2008 2362 (Oct 2008)
- West Midlands Regional Flood Risk Appraisal (Oct 2007 and Jan 2008)
- Making Space for Water: The Government's Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in England (Defra 2005)
- Future Water: The Government's Strategy for England (Defra 2008)
- Code for Sustainable Homes (Dec 2006)
- The Foresight Future Flooding Study (2004)
- The Pitt Review: Lessons learned from the 2007 floods (June 2008)
- Catchment Flood Management Plans (EA 2008)

3. Issues / What To Think About

a. Recent Flood Events –

- The Summer 2007 and September 2008 floods demonstrated the vulnerability of parts of the Region to severe flooding from both rivers and surface water runoff.

b. Catchment-wide Approach -

- The need to adopt a whole catchment approach that is consistent with and contributes to the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

- The need to take account of the Catchment Flood Management Plans produced by the Environment Agency for the River Severn, River Trent and River Wye.

c. Making Space for Water -

- The need to seek opportunities to make space for water and ensure that new development is appropriate and sustainable. Eg. opening up culverts, restoring natural floodplains and recreating river corridors to help store and attenuate flood water.
- Large scale redevelopment and regeneration could provide significant opportunities to provide multifunctional benefits.

d. Climate Change –

- The number of people and properties at risk of flooding from all sources will increase as a result of climate change. There is a need to consider how the Region will adapt to this in relation to flood risk.

e. Surface Water Flooding & Urban Flood Management –

- The extensive urbanised areas across the Region place large number of people and property at risk from surface water flooding. There is a need to promote the integrated management of urban drainage and greater use of separate drainage systems for surface and waste water.
- Integrated Urban Drainage pilot projects in Birmingham and Telford have identified some key benefits which could be rolled out on a wider scale.
- The potential for higher densities of housing to conflict with the requirement for SUDs.

f. Emergency Planning/Services and Critical Infrastructure -

- The severe floods in Summer 2007 demonstrated the vulnerability of a wide range of public infrastructure to flooding. There is a need to ensure greater resilience in future.

4. Suggested Policy Revision:

The possible content of a **new** policy and supporting text should include:

- Text emphasising the national framework with regard to flood risk management and development in flood risk areas.
- A requirement for local authorities to have regard to the Catchment Flood Management Plans produced by the Environment Agency when preparing LDDs.
- The need to decrease the reliance on engineered flood defences and focus on catchment-wide flood risk management.
- A requirement for local authorities to adopt a strategic and integrated approach to managing surface water.
- Requirements for local authorities to produce and update SFRAs and SWMPs.
- A requirement for all infrastructure supporting new development to avoid areas at risk of flooding and to be capable of remaining operational during flood events by incorporating resistance and resilience measures if required.
- A requirement for all new development to incorporate SUDs unless it would be impractical to do so.

- Encouragement for local authorities to promote the retrofitting of existing properties with SUDs and flood resistance and resilience measures.
- Encouragement of positive flood risk management by promoting land management practices which provide multifunctional benefits.
- A requirement for local authorities to consider emergency planning and services in relation to flood risk at a strategic level.
- Encouraging new development to seek opportunities to make space for water by providing guidance on layout and design issues, and highlighting the benefits for green infrastructure planning and biodiversity.
- The need for local authorities to take account of the increasing flood risk associated with climate change by ensuring that new development does not increase, and wherever possible reduces the adverse consequences of all forms of flooding.

5. Evidence:

- Regional Flood Risk Appraisals 2007 and Revision due 2009
- Catchment Flood Management Plans produced by the Environment Agency.
- Environment Agency Flood Zone Maps

Demi Korontzi
Environment Agency
June 2009

Annex: Sustainable Flood Risk Management

Background

Flooding from rivers is a natural process that plays an important role in shaping the natural environment. However, flooding threatens life and causes substantial damage to property. The effects of weather events can be increased in severity both as a consequence of decisions about the location, design and nature of development and land use, and as a potential consequence of future climate change. Although flooding cannot be wholly prevented, its impacts can be avoided and reduced through good planning and management.

Our rivers are a precious natural resource and they need space to function and evolve. Floodplains are an environmental infrastructure that allows excess water to be stored safely in times of heavy rains, storms and floods. They also provide space and corridors for wildlife and people.

The Government wish to see more consideration given in future planning processes to the retention or creation of appropriate pathways for flood water so that its adverse impacts are avoided and potential environmental benefits gained.

Flood risk management can also contribute significant social and biodiversity gains by linking flood management with economic growth, environmental performance, social well being and land use changes.

The West Midlands needs to take a strategic approach to flood risk management which recognises the importance of current and future risks. This would be addressed by a new flood risk management policy in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Flood Risk in the West Midlands

The Region should manage flood risk sustainably by reducing the causes of flooding to existing and future development and avoiding development in high flood risk areas. The flood risk management policy should compliment other relevant planning policies such as PPS 25, PPS 3 and PPS 1 Climate Change Supplement as well as the Government's strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management "Making Space for Water". Account should be taken of flood risk and the increasing risk from climate change by ensuring that new development reduces, and certainly does not increase, the adverse consequences of all forms of flooding.

Flood risk is a significant factor in the West Midlands because of the major river systems (Severn, Avon, Trent and Wye) and their tributaries which pass through the Region and because of the extensive urbanised areas in the large conurbations, which can rapidly generate large volumes of surface water runoff. In the West Midlands, approximately 14% of the land is fluvial floodplain, much of which is not protected by flood defences. More than 94,000 properties are located in flood risk areas and approximately 180,000 people live in areas at risk of flooding from rivers¹.

The extensive flooding which occurred during the summer of 2007, and the potential impact of climate change, have reinforced the importance of flood risk management as a fundamental spatial planning issue. In June and July 2007, over 8,000 households and 1,400 businesses flooded as a result of flooding from both rivers and surface water. The Government's Foresight project estimated that increased rainfall runoff in

¹ National Flood Risk Assessment 2006 produced to assess the likelihood of flooding across England & Wales, taking account of the presence, effect and condition of flood defences.

flood prone areas could increase flood risk by up to three times and rainfall intensity is likely to increase both in winter and summer. Nationally, flood damages could increase in real terms by between 2 and 20 times by the 2080s.

Parts of the West Midlands currently rely on raised flood defences to protect existing settlements to varying standards. However, there are many communities without any flood defences. There is a need to decrease the reliance on engineered flood defences (which still have a very important role) and focus on catchment-wide flood risk management which seeks to exploit, rather than compromise, the natural ability of floodplains to accommodate flood water. The Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) being produced by the Environment Agency will outline sustainable policies for future flood management. It cannot be guaranteed that the Environment Agency will continue to maintain all existing defences if it is uneconomical to do so. It is therefore possible that some parts of the Region currently benefiting from flood defences will not be adequately defended in future.

The large scale redevelopment and regeneration of parts of the West Midlands will provide significant opportunities to make space for water and ensure that new development in flood risk areas is appropriate and sustainable. Designing development to manage and reduce flood risk can also provide opportunities to improve the local environment and peoples' enjoyment of it. Green spaces needed to slow down and store flood water within and around development can be designed to offer access and recreational opportunities for people and provide valuable habitats for wildlife. This will make areas more attractive places to live and work, increasing property values and attracting economic investment that can more than offset the loss of land for built development.

PPS 25 (and the accompanying Practice Guide) sets out national policy on development and flood risk and should be applied in the Region. Flood risk and the increasing risk from climate change must be considered at all stages of the planning and development process to avoid potential damage to property and loss of life.

Update RSS Policy EN1

Energy Generation

Revision relates to renewable energy and low carbon technologies only and does not include a review of issues relating to fossil fuels in the Region

1. RSS Revision Objective

“The Revision will seek to promote the development of renewable energy and low carbon technology resources, subject to appropriate environmental and social safeguards”.

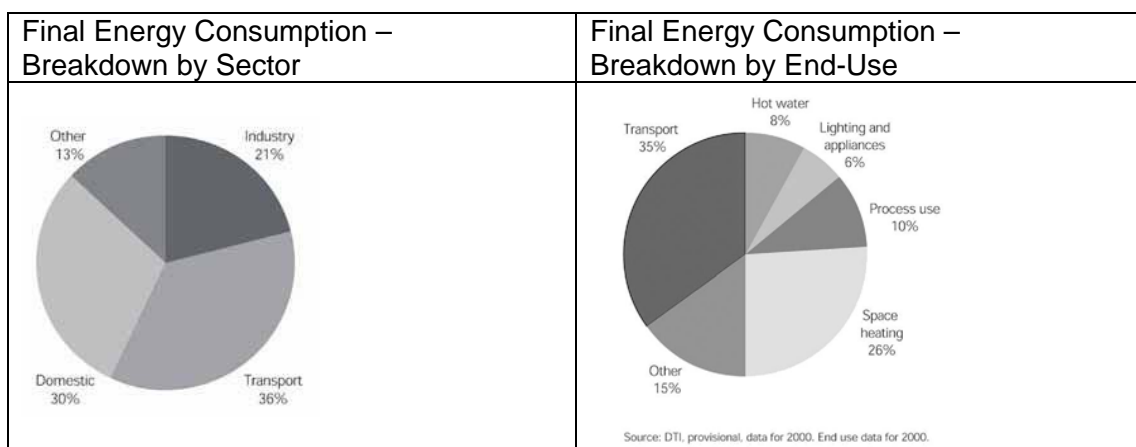
2. Background

The availability of energy is central to maintaining and enhancing the West Midlands way of life. However, during the period covered by the RSS two major challenges will affect the way in which energy is perceived and planned for. The first challenge is climate change which has a global reach but requires locally and regionally based action to put into effect national and international commitments. The second challenge concerns the UK’s shift from being virtually energy self-sufficient to becoming ever more dependant upon external supplies of oil, coal and gas.

Both of these challenges are recognised by the Government. The 2007 Energy White Paper “Meeting The Energy Challenge” sets out a strategy to minimise energy use and pollution and move towards an increasing proportion of energy generated from indigenous renewable sources. The White Paper’s four goals are to: cut the UK’s CO₂ emissions by 60% by 2050, with real progress by 2020; maintain the reliability of energy supplies; promote competitive markets in the UK and beyond, helping to raise the rate of sustainable economic growth and improve our productivity; and ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated.

The Climate Change Act 2008 sets legally binding greenhouse gas emission reductions targets. The target is reduced CO₂ emissions of at least 80% by 2050, and 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

Energy essentially comes in two forms – electricity and heat. Because of the qualitative difference between these two types of energy, they are produced using different types of technology and are used to meet different end uses. The graphs below (taken from the Energy White Paper) show a typical split for final energy consumption in the UK by sector and by end use. These splits would be similar for the West Midlands. Of the end uses shown in the figure, after excluding transport, the majority of energy required is in the form of heat, for providing hot water, and space heating for buildings.



3. Energy Consumption and Generation in the West Midlands

Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) figures for 2007 show that energy **consumption** in the West Midlands to be 56,198 GWh for gas and 26,965 GWh for electricity².

The **West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy**³ (November 2004) estimated that the West Midlands energy **generating capacity** and output in 2002 was only 10,107 GWh. This was generated by:

- Large Power Stations (at Rugeley and Ironbridge) – 8,959 GWh
- Renewable Energy – 211 GWh
- Combined Heat and Power – 453 GWh
- Waste Incinerators 484 GWh

Both of the large power stations in the West Midlands are coal-fired (970 MW at Ironbridge, 1,006 MW at Rugeley).

The region's renewables capacity, which was less than 1% of its electricity demand, was mainly landfill gas (36MW) and sewage gas (11MW) with minor contributions from hydropower and biomass.

There were 95 CHP schemes⁴ in the West Midlands. This capacity was dominated by a small number of large schemes, with the 10 largest schemes accounting for 51MW of the total capacity.

The West Midlands has five operating municipal waste incinerators, at Coventry, Tyseley (Birmingham), Stoke, Dudley, and Wolverhampton. Regional waste issues were considered as part of the RSS Phase Two Revisions and will not be considered in the Phase Three Revisions.

Additionally, the Regional Energy Strategy estimated that the West Midlands consumed the equivalent of 42,154 GWh for transport. Transport is dealt with in the transport section of the RSS and not the Quality of the Environment policies under consideration in the RSS Phase Three Revisions.

4. Planning and Renewable Energy

Planning Policy Statements (PPS's) set out the Government's national policies for different aspects of land-use planning in England. PPS22 (Renewable Energy)⁵ sets out the Government's policies for renewable energy which need to be taken into account by Regional Planning Bodies in the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies and by local authorities in the preparation of local development documents.

Planning has a key role to play in facilitating the development of renewable energy and the achievement of the energy targets. PPS22 states that planning policies at regional and local level should promote and encourage rather than restrict the development of renewable energy resources.

² Energy Trends: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/energy/statistics/publications/trends/articles-subject/page44070.html>

³ West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy (November 2004) - <http://www.wmro.org/standardTemplate.aspx/Home/WestMidlandsStrategies>

⁴ Ofgem CHP database

⁵ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps22>

For the purposes of the PPS, renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass⁶. Policies in PPS22 therefore cover technologies such as onshore wind generation, hydro, photovoltaics, passive solar, biomass and energy crops, energy from waste (but not energy from mass incineration of domestic waste), and landfill and sewage gas. The principles for making decisions on waste management are set out in PPG10 (Planning and Waste Management) and Waste Strategy 2000.

PPS22 does not cover combined heat and power (CHP) developments, but given that some CHP projects are fuelled by a renewable resource it may be relevant to the RSS Revision. There is a key role for local planning authorities within the region in ensuring a synergy between sites for major new developments and the location of renewable CHP generators to ensure that the heat from the latter can be effectively used, for example as part of community heating systems.

The Planning and Energy Act 2008 allows local councils in England and Wales to set reasonable requirements in their development plan documents for:

- a proportion of energy used in development in their area to be energy from renewable sources in the locality of the development;
- a proportion of energy used in development in their area to be low-carbon energy from sources in the locality of the development;
- development in their area to comply with energy-efficiency standards that exceed the energy requirements of building regulations.

The Act legitimises policies based on those initially adopted by Merton London Borough Council which typically require 10% of any new building's energy needs to be met from renewable resources, although the Act says that there is a need to allow flexibility for renewable energy and low-carbon requirements to be supplied from the locality, rather than just the immediate development site. The Act also allows policies which require energy-efficiency standards above those set by Building Regulation requirements.

5. Regional Targets for Renewable Energy

RSS Phase 3 Objective: To review regional targets for renewable energy, as set by the Regional Energy Strategy.

PPS22 states that “the Regional Spatial Strategy should include the target for renewable energy capacity in the region, derived from assessments of the region’s renewable energy resource potential, and taking into account the regional environmental, economic and social impacts (either positive or negative) that may result from exploitation of that resource potential”.

National Targets

As part of the government target for reducing CO₂ emissions by 60% below 1990 levels by 2050, with an interim target of 20% by 2010, the government has set a target for

⁶ Biomass is the biodegradable fraction of products, waste and residues from agriculture (including plant and animal substances), forestry and related industries, as well as the biodegradable fraction of industrial and municipal waste.

generating electricity from renewables. This target is set for 10% of the electricity supply to be from renewable sources by 2010, with a further target of 15.5% by 2015.

In 2004, 3.1% of the electricity supply was generated from renewable sources.

These targets fit into the EU Renewables Directive framework, which has an EU target of 12% of energy (22.1% of electricity) from renewables by 2010.

Regional Targets

The current RSS states that “the Region should aim to contribute as far as possible towards the achievement of the national energy target – 10% of **electricity produced** from renewable energy by 2010, with an aspiration to double renewables’ share of electricity between 2010 and 2020.”

The West Midlands current renewable energy target is set out in the West Midlands Energy Strategy⁷, and is for 5% renewable **electricity consumption** by 2010 (1,250 GWh), rising to 10% by 2020 (1,700 GWh).

The regional target for heat from renewables sources is for 0.3% of consumption by 2010 (250 GWh), rising to 1% by 2020 (650 GWh).

The Regional Energy Strategy provided an indicative mix of renewable energy technology to meet the Strategy target for 2010. The mix was for presentation purposes only and were not targets. The exact mix of renewables to achieve the targets would depend on a wide range of factors. As an illustration, the target for 2010 is equivalent to: up to 75 MW of landfill gas fuelled generators, 100 1.5 MW wind turbines (in rural and urban areas) and 27 1MW biomass/biogas powered generators.

The regional target for biofuels is for the production of at least 460 GWh of liquid biofuels for transport use in the region by 2010. This equates to approximately 44 million litres.

The current position is that the West Midlands currently meets less than 1% of the region’s electricity demand by indigenous renewable energy.

6. Spatial Distribution of Renewable Energy Development

RSS Phase 3 Objective: To review the spatial implications of introducing decentralised energy and renewable energy technologies into the region.

PPS22 states that “where appropriate, targets in regional spatial strategies may be disaggregated into sub-regional targets. It may also be appropriate to give a broad indication of how different technologies could contribute towards regional targets. But fixed targets for specific technologies should not be set given that rapid technological change may mean that new sources of renewable energy may be developed in the longer term”.

The Regional Energy Strategy does not include an indicative spatial distribution.

⁷ West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy (November 2004) - <http://www.wmro.org/standardTemplate.aspx/Home/WestMidlandsStrategies>

To be realistic and achievable sub-regional targets would need to take account of the resource opportunities and constraints in those areas. An assessment of the resource opportunities was undertaken as part of the development of renewable energy targets for the Regional Energy Strategy. Technical work on updating the renewable energy resource assessments is currently being undertaken by Advantage West Midlands.

The Regional Energy Strategy concluded that “because of its geography the West Midlands has (relative to other regions) few economic onshore wind resources. Since wind energy is currently the main and most cost-effective source of renewable energy, in the short to medium term, renewables are only expected to make a relatively small contribution towards achieving significant carbon dioxide reductions in the region. Biomass has an important part to play in the renewable energy mix of the region in the medium to long term. There are significant opportunities for rural communities and businesses to develop biomass as an energy resource, from wood and forestry residues in the forestry sector and from non-food energy crops (miscanthus, short rotation coppice). Landscape character and biodiversity considerations should be taken into account for all of these prospects”.

Whilst some areas of the region have greater renewable energy resources than others, it seems possible that development could take place in a distributed manner across the West Midlands.

In urban areas opportunities for renewable energy development may exist on existing industrial estates or other brownfield sites from medium-sized wind turbines through to the installation of building integrated systems. New developments also offer significant opportunities for identifying and utilising large heat loads to support biomass-based community heating schemes and also provide extensive opportunities for the integration of renewable energy technologies into buildings.

There is also potential for retrofitting renewable energy systems to existing buildings. There are instances where this would fall within the planning system, for example, as part of major refurbishments taking place as part of urban regeneration.

Opportunities for implementing renewable heat technologies such as biomass boilers, solar water heating or ground source heat pumps particularly exist in those parts of the region that do not have access to the gas network and which therefore currently have to rely on higher cost fuels such as oil and liquefied petroleum gas to supply space heating and hot water.

Whilst it is not expected that there will be the opportunity for the development of large scale renewable energy schemes within designated areas, there may be opportunities for the development of smaller scale renewables in these areas.

It is within the non-designated rural areas of the region that the pressure for larger scale development of renewable energy is most likely to occur, subject to site specific constraints. The highest wind energy resource exists within Staffordshire, Shropshire and Herefordshire although there are increasing opportunities in the rest of the region, as economically viable wind speeds reduce over time. There are opportunities for biomass plant development in most parts of the region, although plants should be located as close as possible to fuel sources to minimise carbon emissions from transport.

7. Development Criteria for Renewable Energy

RSS Phase 3 Objective: To develop a criteria-based policy for considering the provision of renewable energy resources.

PPS22 states that renewable energy proposals should be positively encouraged by planning authorities and assessed using the criteria set out in the RSS. Local Planning Authorities may prepare Local Development Document criteria policies, which focus on key local issues, within the framework provided by national guidelines and RSS.

Policy EN1 (Energy Generation) in the current RSS states that local authorities in their development plans should:

- i) encourage proposals for the use of renewable energy resources, including biomass, onshore wind power, active solar systems, small scale hydro-electricity schemes and energy from waste combustion and landfill gas, subject to an assessment of their impact using the criteria in iii) below. Specific policies should be included for technologies most appropriate to the particular area;*
- ii) provide locational guidance through supplementary guidance as necessary on the most appropriate locations for each renewable energy technology, having regard to resource potential, the desirability of locating generation sites close to or within areas of demand, and landscape character assessment where appropriate;*
- iii) identify the environmental and other criteria that will be applied to determining the acceptability of such proposals including:
 - a) impact on the landscape, visual amenity and areas of ecological or historic importance;*
 - b) impact on surrounding residents and other occupiers;*
 - c) traffic implications, and proximity to transport infrastructure;*
 - d) the environmental impact of any additional transmission requirements;*
 - e) the extent to which the proposal helps to achieve wider environmental benefits such as reducing harmful emissions to the atmosphere;*
 - f) the way in which the proposal assists in achieving national targets of new electricity generating capacity from renewable energy sources;*
 - g) the extent to which there has been community involvement in developing the proposal; and*
 - h) the extent to which the proposal supports other policies in the development plan; and**
- iv) facilitate, where proposals come forward, the construction and upgrading of fossil fuel power stations that incorporate clean coal technology, the dual use of fossil and renewable resources, good quality combined heat and power or significant emissions abatement technologies in line with national policies for abatement at source.*

Whilst it is important that renewable energy is encouraged, it is also important that it is appropriately located and designed. The integration of large-scale renewable energy proposals, such as wind and biomass production, into the region's varied landscapes will require careful consideration. Designated areas in particular need to be protected from inappropriate development. The purposes of designation will vary considerably between sites and may not be in conflict with particular forms or scales of renewable energy development. The key test in assessing proposals should be the extent to which they might affect the integrity of the designation.

Minimising any impacts caused by noise, odour, traffic, discharges to the air and watercourses will be important particularly in relation to nearby residential areas and

individual dwellings. Visual impact on the landscape is also a relevant issue when determining the acceptability of proposals for large-scale renewable energy.

PPS22 makes it clear that the wider benefits of renewable energy projects must also be given significant weight as material considerations regardless of scale. These benefits could include: CO₂ reduction, the diversification of local rural economies, the creation of new jobs, and support for the regeneration of urban areas, including industrial and brownfield sites.

8. Promoting Sustainable Energy Use within New Development

RSS Phase 3 Objective: To consider the potential for a requirement that a percentage of the energy needs of new development be provided by on-site or local generation of renewable energy resources / energy efficiency measures.

PPS22 emphasises the importance of developing positively expressed policies on the integration of renewable energy into building design.

It makes sense, however, that policies to encourage the on-site generation of renewable energy should be placed within the context of an “energy hierarchy” whereby energy demand is reduced through energy efficiency and low energy design before meeting the residual energy demand from first renewable energy and then fossil fuels or grid electricity. This “energy hierarchy” approach where energy efficiency opportunities are maximised before renewable energy is considered within proposals for new developments has been incorporated into Draft Policy SR3 in the RSS Phase 2 Revision.

Draft Policy SR3 of the RSS Phase 2 Preferred Option states that “*Local Planning Authorities in their LDDs and in determining planning applications should ensure all new buildings are designed and constructed to the highest possible environmental standards, and should work towards the achievement of carbon neutral developments, by:*

...

C. Ensuring that all new homes meet at least level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and considering the potential for securing higher standards of energy efficiency for new homes at level 4 before 2013 and zero carbon level 6 before 2016. Offices and other non-domestic buildings should aim for 10% below the target emission rate of the current Building Regulations by 2016

D. Ensuring all new medium and large scale development (greater than 10 residential units or 1,000 square meters) incorporate renewable or low carbon energy equipment to meet at least 10% of the development’s residual energy demand. Local authorities may use lower thresholds for the size of developments and set higher percentages for on-site generation where considered appropriate

E. Maximising the potential for decentralized energy systems such as combined heat and power and community heating systems based on renewable and low-carbon energy

While the majority of actions required to achieve greater energy efficiency and the clean use of fuels fall outside the scope of the planning system, it is possible to

influence the overall use of energy by the way in which development is located and served by sustainable transport, and by careful design. There may also be some opportunities to encourage the retrofitting of energy efficiency measures to existing buildings through the planning system as part of major refurbishments taking place as part of urban regeneration. For example, it may be possible to introduce a requirement that major refurbishments (of a defined scale) should submit an Energy Use Assessment alongside a planning application which could then help to identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency.

There are a number of initiatives at both national and regional level that help support energy efficiency in new and existing buildings. These include the EU Energy Performance in Buildings Directive (EPBD) which require all buildings, domestic and non-domestic, both new and existing to have energy performance ratings; Building Regulations which requires all new domestic dwellings to have a "SAP" rating, which is a measure of energy performance and CO2 emissions; and the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes which is a voluntary scheme to promote more sustainable building practices.

9. Reference and Web Links

Energy White Paper "Meeting The Energy Challenge" (2007)

Climate Change Act (2008)

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/legislation/index.htm>

PPS22: Planning and Renewable Energy

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps22>

Planning and Energy Act (2008)

West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy (2004)

WMRSS Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2 Revision – Draft (December 2007) – Policy SR3

David Clarke
West Midlands Regional Assembly
June 2009

Proposed New Policy

Green Belt Uses

Introduction

The RSS Phase Three Project Plan sets out the aim to consider the potential for a regionally specific policy for the Green Belts in the region. This would define their regional and sub regional roles and the specific uses that should be encouraged within it, in the context of national green belt policy PPG 2.

A Green Belt Baseline Study has provided information on the green belt designated area as a whole and its relationship to the surrounding areas. A further study to consider and examine the more positive uses of the Green Belt has been completed.

The purpose of this paper is to outline a set of issues to help inform the development of policy options on green belt.

1. National and Regional Policy Context

Guidance on the development of this policy area is contained in PPG 2, Section 4(4) advice and the Baseline Study and Green Belt Phase 2 Study when available. The latter Study will engage consultants will input into the development of policy options.

There is a wider academic and professional debate on the role and purpose of green belt policy. There is debate over the role and purpose of the rural –urban fringe as part of a functional city region of Birmingham which extends far beyond its boundaries and place for renewable waste facilities proposed in PPS 22 and PPS 23 and other land uses.

Green belt policy is one aspect of the planning system that the wider public is aware of but often with poor understanding of its intended function. In part, this is because of the notion of retaining an idyllic green and pleasant land free of development. Green belt have been argued to cause property prices to be inflated and restrict land supply and encourage development to leap frog the area to towns further from the conurbation, thus increasing, often car based travel.

There are two rings of green belt in the region. The larger surrounds the conurbation, including major incursions into the built up areas this includes the green belt around Coventry. A second rings surrounds the Stoke/Newcastle urban area.

The draft RSS Phase Two Preferred Option proposed changes to the green belt objective to retain the green belt, but allow an adjustment of boundaries where this is necessary to support urban regeneration” Proposed growth will increase the potential pressure on green belt fro development but also for functions of different areas and a place for recreation. Further pressure could result from additional growth indicated within a Government Study (NLP).

2. Key Issues

There is a one view that Green Belt policy is of its time. Green belt objectives should be achieved through the integration of policy emerging at the regional spatial level, in the context of the region, taking greater account of the necessary growth pressures and the development of sustainable communities and climate change. This approach puts more emphasis on the location of growth in sustainable locations based on regional strategic considerations, such as the capacity or desirability of the MUAs to receive growth.

A second and opposite view is that the green belt is a well understood part of town and country planning policy. The nature of the policy is its measure of certainty and the policy still has worthy and widely politically supported objectives. PPG 2 makes the case that the green belt policy has a much broader positive purpose and it is a potent policy against the potential urban sprawl of major urban areas into its surrounding hinterland.

A third view argues that green belt policy needs to be enhanced and modernised as part of a sub regional approach. The green belt includes large part of the urban fringe it is not only a place of greater growth pressure and many competing land use demands, it is also an opportunity for improved access, recreational activity locations for close in suitable uses to address climate change. This approach argues for a stronger strategic approach to the whole of the area that includes an assessment of the positive social, economic and environmental benefits that green belt land delivers.

3. Advice from Strategic Planning Authorities

The advice from the strategic planning authorities generally reflects the breadth of this wider debate. Both professionally, politically and with sections of the stakeholders and the community this policy is a contested area with strong arguments on all sides. There is much use of evidence to demonstrate different approaches.

Some Section 4(4) advice supports the national policy approach and do not see the requirement for any regional green belt policy. This retains the status quo and places the onus on each development proposal to demonstrate exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis at public inquiry based on the guidance in PPG 2. However, the national policy also requires the major planned incursions to green belt to be proposed and examined to allow the achievement of the plans objectives up to 2026. The current preferred option already proposes a change in strategic objective to allow this to happen.

Other Section 4(4) advice supports the development of a specific regional green belt policy which would give recognition of the positive uses of the urban fringe and green belt. Some support refinement to reflect particularly sensitive areas of Green Belt. Most Section 4(4) advice do not support a review of green belt boundaries or want green belt matters from RSS Phase Two reopened. One authority wants a review of geographical areas as part of spatial distribution of growth and development of sub regional policy.

Feedback on the draft options has questioned the need for specific options on green belt other than to facilitate the scale and spatial pattern of growth that arises from the RSS Phase Two proposals, which are effectively not to be considered as part of the Phase Three review. Any development of a specific regional green belt policy should demonstrate that its develops and existing national purposes sufficiently beyond the currently defined categories. In the latter case this is not so much a green belt policy, but an urban fringe enhancement policy. There is a question as to what extent this could be more readily dealt with through the revised policies on landscape and possible policy on green infrastructure that would apply to all land including areas designated as green belt.

4. Suggested Policy Revision

The Positive Uses of the West Midlands Green Belts Study has been completed. This examined the opportunities which exist for the delivery of improved public benefits and considered if there is any value in identifying specific roles and functions to spatially distinct areas across the Green Belts in the region.

Until relatively recently designation as Green Belt did not have significant implications for positive land use management and as a consequence of this and the proximity of Green Belts to large population centres, has often been found to be of poor environmental and amenity value, yet has inherently high potential to deliver such benefits.

Revisions to Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 Green Belts (1995-revised 2001) suggest that planning should secure more positive uses from Green Belts whilst maintaining their primary purpose set out in the PPG. More recent principles of green infrastructure planning, delivery of ecosystem services, landscape character assessment and planning incorporating climate change and low carbon lifestyles have emerged and are considered in this Phase Three Revision more generally.

The study developed an approach related to three Green Belt Areas Types around Urban Spaces, Rural Fringe and Outer Green Belt. The Study also recognises that benefits could also be secured through greater recognition of the Green Belts potential for delivering public benefits within the other environment and amenity focuses policy within RSS and being proposed as part of the Phase Three Revision , such a green infrastructure, Landscape and Biodiversity.

5. Evidence Base

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 Green Belts (1995-revised 2001)
Green Belt Baseline Study 2008
Positive Uses of the West Midlands Green Belts Study 2009

Chris Blakeley
West Midlands Regional Assembly
June 2009

Proposed Habitats Targets

Regional Habitats Targets Review

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper explains the process by which new Regional Biodiversity Targets were derived, for inclusion as Annex B to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 3 Revision.

The targets are presented in Table 1 and relate to restoration and expansion for Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats. Restoration is defined as 'improving the condition of relict habitat so that it qualifies as BAP habitat' and expansion as 'increasing the extent of the resource' on land where it is not present and where no significant relicts of the BAP habitat currently exist (UK BAP 2006). It was not possible to derive targets for restoration or expansion without first understanding what would be required to maintain the current extent of BAP habitat in the region, so these figures are also included.

Table 1 Draft Revised Annex B - BAP Habitat Targets 2026

Habitat	Maintain Extent	Restoration	Expansion
Arable Field Margins	n/a	0	2000 km
Blanket Bog	1504	30	0
Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh	11094	3147	525
Eutrophic Standing Waters	3952	0	5 sites
Fens	556	120	50
Hedgerows	n/a	0	500 km
Inland Rock Outcrop and Scree Habitats	n/a	0	0
Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland	446	124	118
Lowland Calcareous Grassland	943	57	458
Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	956	92	69
Lowland Heathland	1430	0	660
Lowland Meadows	3492	2160	1080
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	30500	8504	10052
Lowland Raised Bog	653	110	0
Mesotrophic Lakes	153	1	0
Oligotrophic and Dystrophic Lakes	10	0	0
Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed	455	0	50
Ponds	n/a	500 sites	500 sites
Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures	357	50	50
Reedbeds	154	0	200
Rivers	n/a	(note 1)	(note 1)
Traditional Orchards	2904	232	1000
Upland Calcareous Grassland	5	0	0
Upland Heathland	5146	130	0
Upland Mixed Ashwoods	527	147	139
Upland Oakwood	3352	935	887
Wet Woodland	9359	2610	495
Wood-Pasture & Parkland	20595	1561	468
<i>n/a - data not currently available</i>	<i>Targets in hectares unless stated otherwise</i>		
<i>Note 1 - awaiting Environment Agency analysis</i>			

The overall approach taken for each habitat was to:

1. Define current distribution and extent based on best available data.
2. Map areas with potential to support each habitat ('habitat potential areas').
3. Derive targets for restoration or expansion.

Availability and reliability of data varied considerably between habitats. This meant that approaches to definition of current extent and habitat potential and the derivation of targets for restoration and expansion had to be tailored to each habitat individually. Appendix A summarises the approach taken for each one.

Section 2 outlines the main sources of information used to define the current distribution of BAP habitats or to derive the regional targets. These are also listed in Appendix B.

Section 3 explains the approach used to define current extent and to identify areas with potential to support each habitat in the region.

Section 4 explains how the regional targets were derived.

2. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Existing sources of information were used to define the current distribution of BAP habitats in the region and to derive targets for restoration and expansion. A key source of data was the Regional Habitat Database produced by the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership (Butcher, 2008) which collated habitat data held by Local Records Centres as well as some national sources. Reference was also made to the UK BAP national targets, the provisional regional allocation of national targets (England Biodiversity Group, 2008), the Regional Habitat Opportunity Map, relevant LBAP targets and the results of several landscape-level projects carried out in the region. Results of any habitat-specific mapping exercises were used where appropriate, for example the results of the England Wetland Vision (RSPB, 2008). Information was obtained on historic extent of habitats where possible, to inform development of targets that reflect the relative importance of different habitats in the region.

In addition to the numeric targets included in Table 1, available spatial mapping tools were used where possible to give some indication of spatial priority (where best to restore or expand habitat in the region) to support the local habitat opportunity mapping process. These included tools being developed by Natural England to support development of Pan-UK ecological networks (Catchpole, 2006) as a means of enhancing the resilience of BAP habitats to climate change.

The main sources of information used are listed in Appendix B and are described in the following sections.

UK BAP Targets

Revised habitat targets for 2015 and 2020 for the UK and England were published in 2007. Many of the restoration and expansion targets are spatially specific, in that they refer to the types of land on which restoration and expansion should take place. For

example, restoration of native woodland habitats must be within non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWs), as defined by the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Definitions of suitable land for restoration/expansion and on distributions of such land in the region were used where available. Where such information is not available, best available local data will need to be collated and used through local habitat opportunity mapping.

A provisional allocation of national targets to English regions was made in 2008 (England Biodiversity Group, 2008). These targets were intended as a minimum, so the targets for the region meet or exceed them.

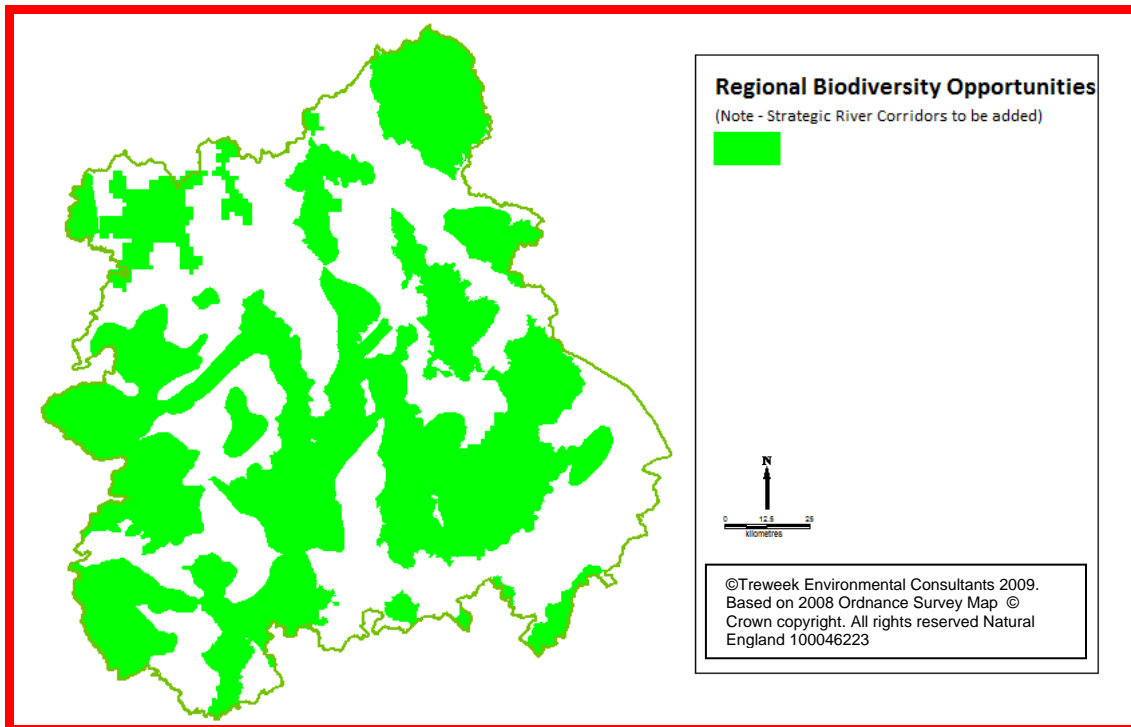
Regional Habitat Opportunity Map

The West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership has developed a regional opportunity map (Figure 1) in accordance with PPS9, which expects regional planning bodies to identify broad areas for habitat restoration and re-creation. The map provides a spatial representation of the 50 year Landscapes for Living vision (Tydesley, 2008) for rebuilding biodiversity in the West Midlands through a landscape-level approach. Key principles behind this approach are:

- To improve the quality of life for people within towns and cities and across the region through increasing the provision of more accessible, wildlife rich open space, providing greater opportunity for people to enjoy wildlife in their daily lives.
- To maintain the existing bio-diverse habitats across the region to provide the building blocks for landscape scale conservation.
- To restore habitat quality, expand habitat area and reconnect habitats to increase the extent, function and resilience of ecological networks and counter the effects of climate change.
- To re-create natural systems to support biodiversity and other land management objectives such as the delivery of sustainable farming and the restoration of river features and floodplain systems to alleviate flooding.

The regional targets set out in this paper reflect the current distributions of BAP habitat in the region and the potential to restore them. The Regional Habitat Opportunity Map takes the regional targets forward by identifying areas where it is possible to restore or enhance habitat and where opportunities to do so are likely to be most effective.

Figure 1 Regional Habitat Opportunity (West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership)



Regional Priority Habitats

A sub-set of habitats has been identified by the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership as priorities for the region. In deriving regional targets, non-priority habitats have generally been assigned minimum targets as determined from other sources.

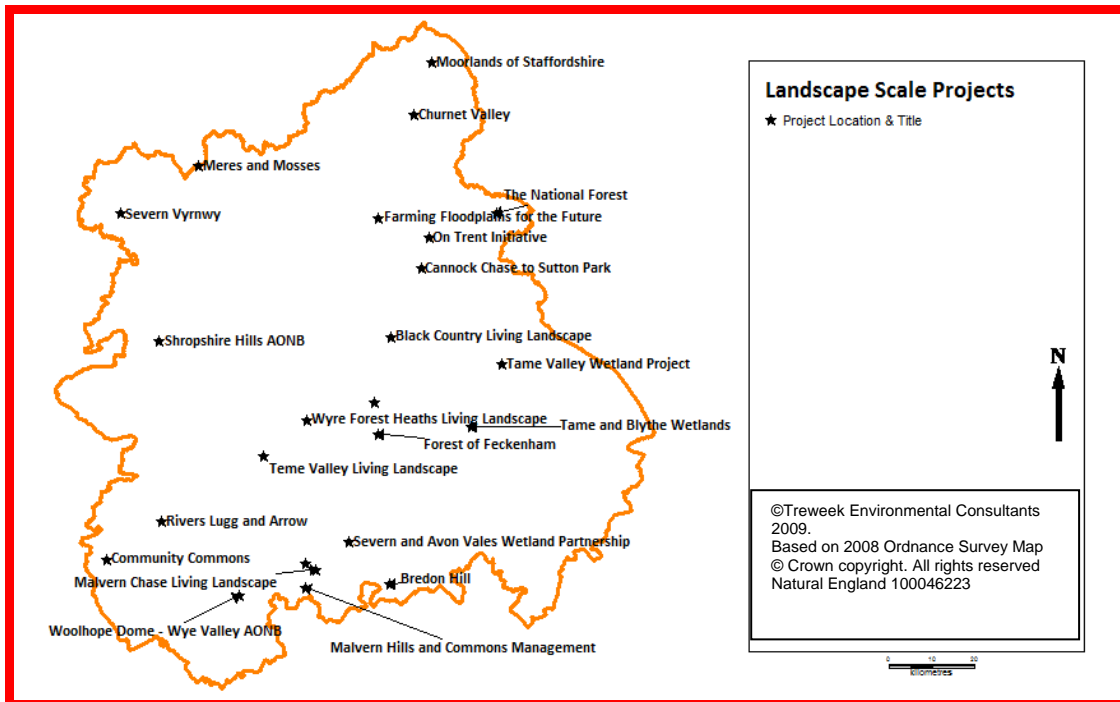
Local BAP Targets

Six local BAP partnerships cover the West Midlands region and Local Biodiversity Action Plans include some habitat targets. These targets are for shorter time frames than the Regional Spatial Strategy and are available on the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) website. In deriving regional targets, any relevant local targets were considered to represent a minimum level.

Landscape Scale Projects

Over twenty landscape scale biodiversity projects are in progress or at the planning stage in the West Midlands region. An overview of these was collated for this project using information from local partnerships. The locations are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Landscape Scale Biodiversity Projects in the West Midlands



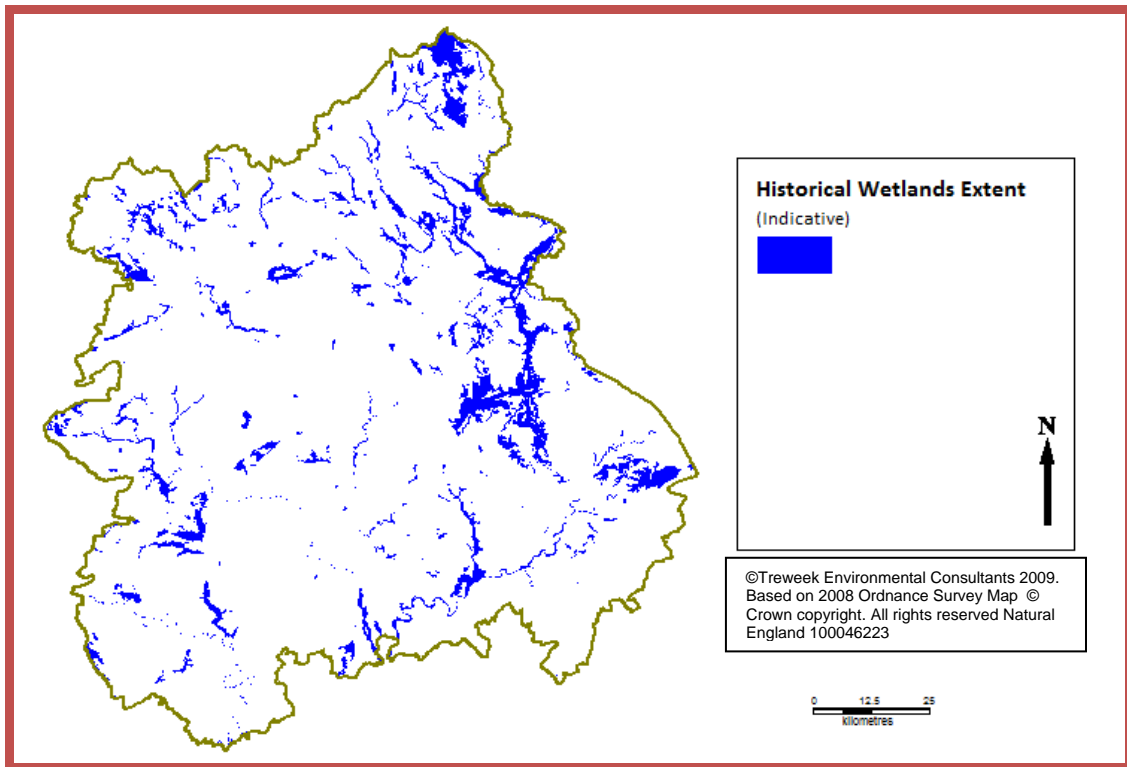
Landscape scale projects have been primarily used in the derivation of targets as a check on achievability. Existing and future landscape scale projects will also be critical elements in the spatial focus of implementing targets.

Historic Extent

As a general rule, habitats which were rare in the region historically will still have ecological constraints in the region at the present time such that they are likely to remain relatively rare. Habitats which were historically quite widespread in the region but have shown a high level of background decline should be the main focus of restoration and expansion, but good information on the historical extent of habitats is rarely available.

Figure 3 gives an example where there is reasonably good information (RSPB, 2008), taken from the Wetlands Vision Project.

Figure 3 Extent of Wetlands Historically (Wetlands Vision Project)



Habitat Networks

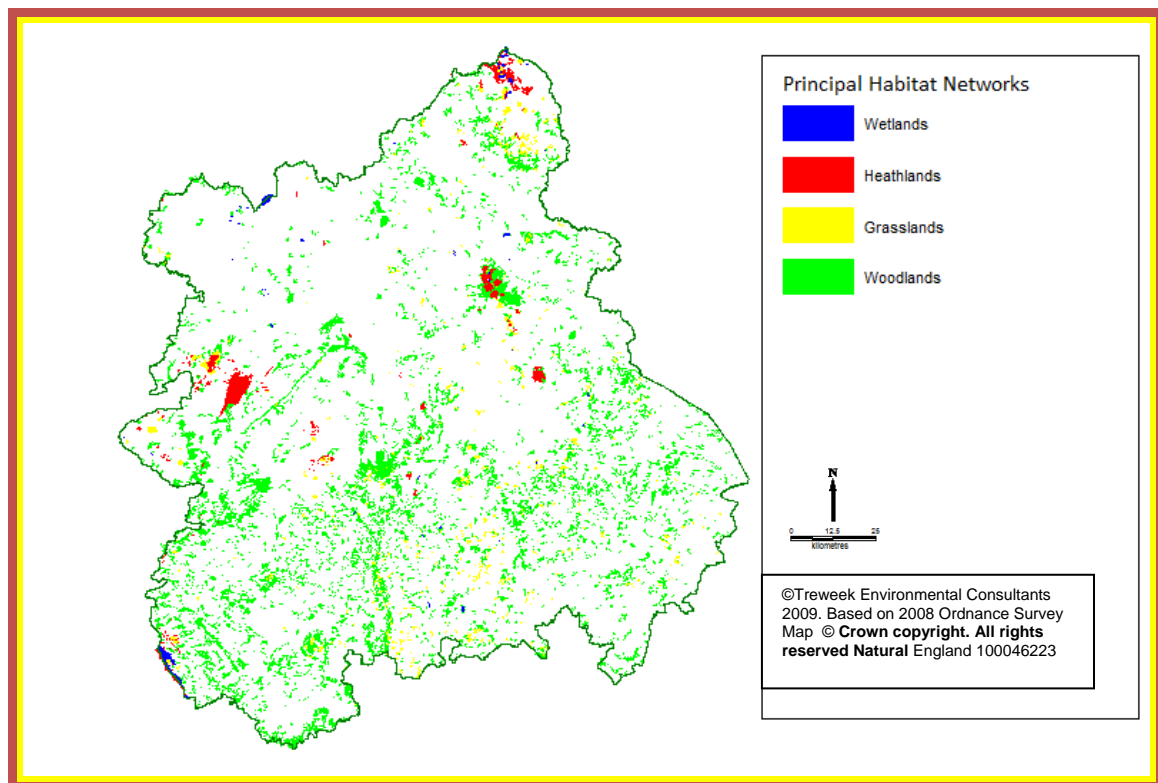
Targets for restoration and expansion need to take account of the ability of habitats to accommodate or respond to the possible impacts of climate change. There is widespread agreement among policy stakeholders on the importance of developing ecological networks (and enhancing connectivity) as one of a suite of measures to help biodiversity adapt to climate change.

Connectivity analyses have been applied by Natural England to four broad habitat types – deciduous woodland, heathland, grassland and mires –as part of an initiative to develop a Pan-UK ecological network in order to improve the “ecological coherence of protected areas and provide a focus for climate change adaptation” (Catchpole, 2006). The main aim of this work was to identify areas of extensively managed land in between existing statutory and non-statutory sites that should be maintained through the targeting of land management subsidies and the development of appropriate spatial planning policies. It was not intended to provide any indication of habitat potential as it only estimates the current patterns of connectivity that may be present in a landscape. In spite of this, it can be used in combination with other information sources to identify priorities for enhancing the potential of sites to adapt to climate change through the systematic consideration of small gaps between key networks as well as any pinch points or barriers that may be present within those networks.

Natural England recommend a sequence of action to improve the resilience of existing habitat where the creation of new networks or stepping stones between networks only occurs after other suitable actions have been taken to strengthen the conservation of existing sites and to buffer them against threats (Catchpole & Buchanan, 2008).

A refined version of the England Habitat Network was derived for the West Midlands to include the 15 priority BAP habitats that are attributable to the four broad habitat categories identified by Natural England. This was derived through a combination of expert judgement and empirical research on key focal species associated with each habitat type and is shown in Figure 4. Remotely sensed land cover information then used to determine the relative permeability of areas in between existing habitat.

Figure 4 Principal Habitat Networks in the West Midlands



3. DEFINING CURRENT EXTENT AND HABITAT POTENTIAL

Current Distribution and Extent

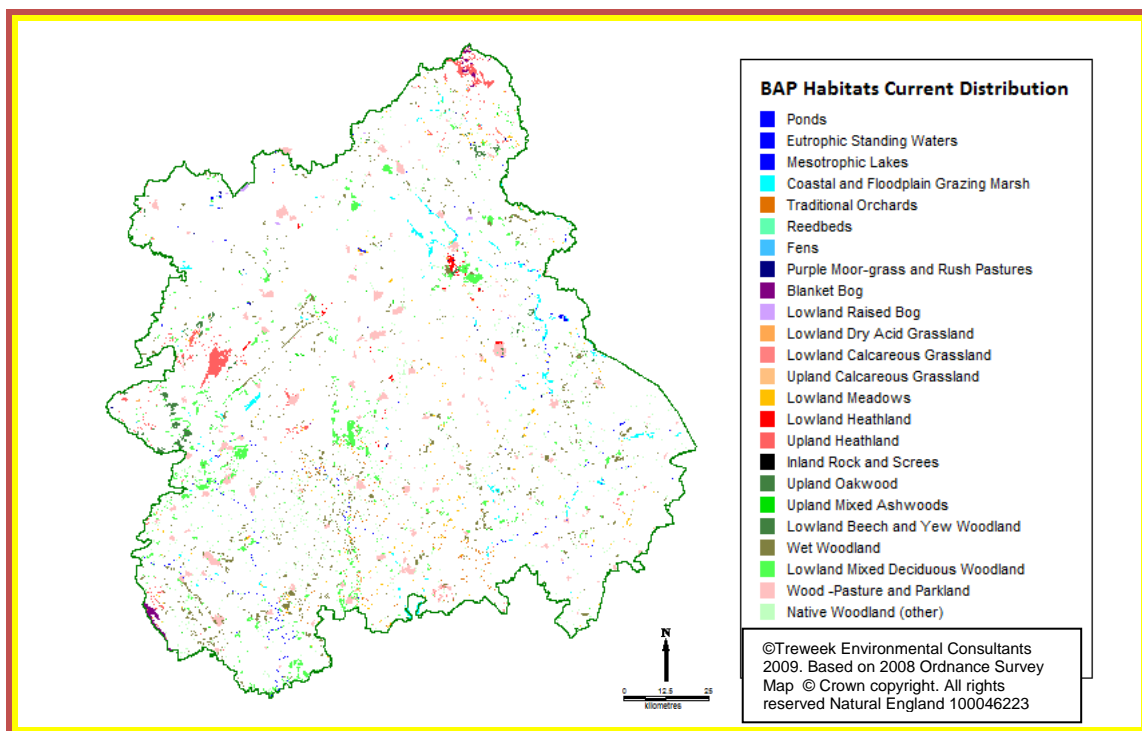
28 BAP habitats were identified from the literature as having been recorded in the region and are included in the revised Annex B. The current extent of these habitats was defined using best available data. The regional habitat database (Butcher, 2008) was used to define the current extent for 22 of the habitats, following adjustments to account for probable overlaps, errors of omission and commission. Typical errors included conflicting evidence from different data sources for the same area of land, or under-representation of habitats that had recently been designated as BAP priority through lack of survey.

For the following habitats, it was not possible to define current extent as reliable data were not available:

- Rivers.
- Hedgerows.
- Inland Rock Outcrop and Scree Habitats.
- Arable Field Margins.
- Ponds.

The extent of Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land was estimated with reference to the national database of Previously Developed Land (National Land Use Database, 2007). Figure 5 shows the resulting distribution for existing BAP habitat in the region.

Figure 5 Current BAP Habitat Distribution - Regional Habitat Data Project



Defining Habitat Potential

Habitat Potential maps were generated to show areas where it is theoretically possible to restore or expand each habitat within the region (they do **not** indicate areas where habitat should be restored or areas where habitat can be restored in practice). Potential areas were identified on the basis of criteria derived from published definitions for each habitat, for example associations with particular soil types. For habitats that include an upland or lowland threshold in the definition, the national database of limits of functional enclosure was used, on the advice of Natural England (Rural Payments Agency, 2007).

Analyses were also carried out to derive criteria from the known current distribution of each habitat. For example soil types where current habitats are found were considered 'suitable' even if this was not reflected in all published sources or descriptions of the habitat. The analysis excluded developed land (derived from a combination of Land Cover data and known locations of major roads) and also existing BAP habitat, (other than the BAP habitat being mapped) from each habitat potential map. Where possible, results of previous mapping exercises were used. For the following habitats, for example, previous work by the Wetlands Vision project (RSPB, 2008) was used as the starting point to generate habitat potential maps:

- Blanket bog
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Fens
- Purple moor-grass and rush pastures
- Reedbeds

To maintain consistency of approach with potential maps produced for the other habitats, developed land and BAP habitat were removed from each map.

Figure 6 and

Figure 7 are examples of potential maps for two habitats in the region: Reedbeds have relatively restricted potential while Lowland Meadows have much more widespread potential.

Figure 6 Reedbeds habitat potential – an example of a habitat with restricted potential

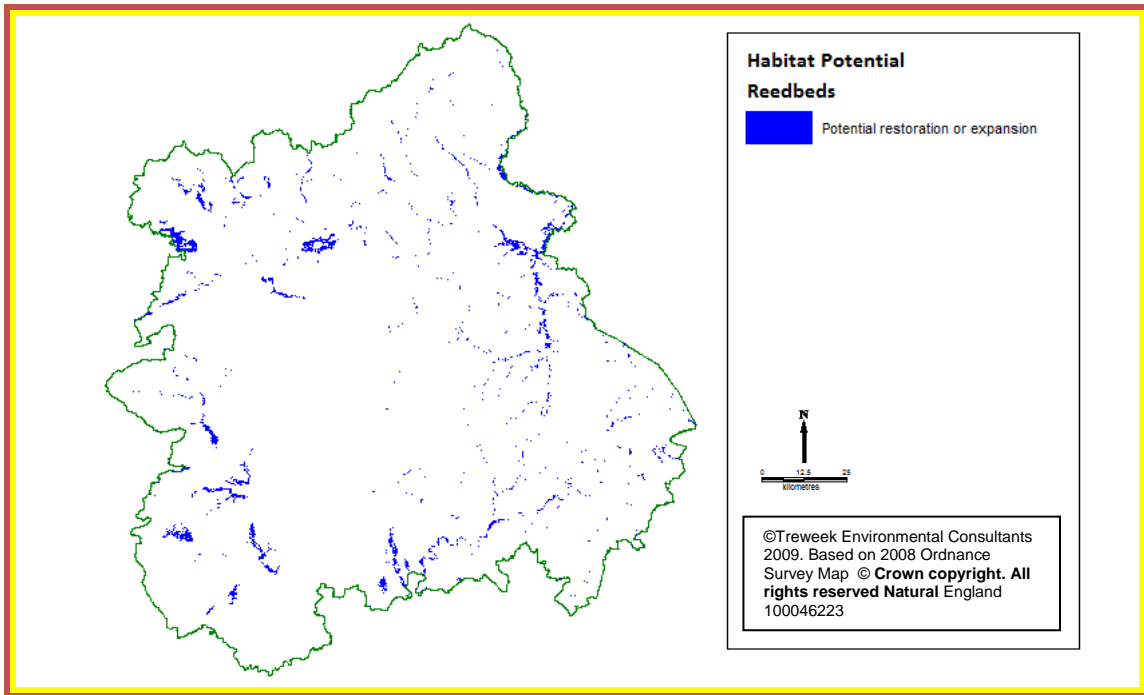
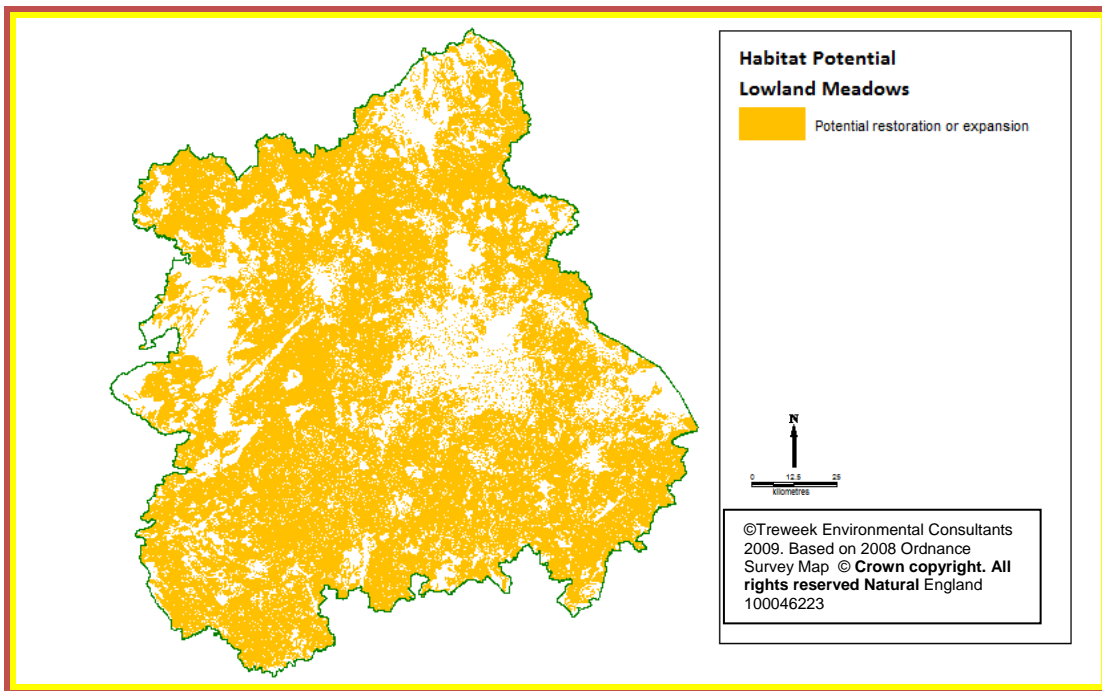


Figure 7 Lowland meadows habitat potential – an example of a habitat with widespread potential



4. DERIVIG TARGETS FOR RESTORATION OR EXPANSION

New targets were required for both restoration of habitat and expansion (UK BAP, 2006). Restoration targets are often more constrained than expansion targets, as restoration must be located where degraded habitat is present while expansion can take place anywhere that suitable conditions can be found.

The approach taken to derivation of targets varied between habitats, depending on the availability and reliability of information about their existing extent, the potential to restore them throughout the region and the availability of relevant national or local targets. In all cases, however, reference was made to relevant UK BAP targets, and the Habitat Potential maps described in the previous section. Ratios for allocations between restoration and expansion reflect the national or local apportionments as appropriate.

Establishing Upper and Lower Limits

The UK BAP is an essential reference point for PPS9 and the biodiversity duty on public authorities in the NERC Act, 2006. The provisional regional allocation (England Biodiversity Group, 2008) for each BAP habitat was taken to represent a minimum target, so each revised regional target in Annex B meets or exceeds this. In cases where the national targets specify types of land on which restoration or expansion must take place, these were taken into account in deriving targets. For example, woodland restoration must follow the requirements of the UK BAP native woodland restoration target, focusing on Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (“PAWS”), so the area of land meeting this requirement in the region is considered to represent an upper limit for the target.

In other cases, areas with potential to restore habitat in the region represent the upper limit for targets: clearly, habitats are not capable of restoration or expansion in places where physical and ecological conditions are unsuitable. The exclusion of both developed land and BAP habitats (other than the habitat under consideration) ensures that suitable space exists for restoration or expansion.

Reflecting ‘Achievability’

It is important for regional targets to be realistic and achievable. For several habitats it was possible to arrive at an estimate of the extent of land in the region that qualified for potential restoration. It was then necessary to apply a proportion representing an estimate of achievability in the period to 2026. This also varies by habitat as some land use and land management changes are easier to apply than others.

There is a limited evidence base to inform these numbers. The National Forest project (extending across the West and East Midlands borders in the Burton-on-Trent area) represents a relatively well financed and focused project dedicated to one primary form of land-use change – new woodland establishment. After more than ten years of operation this is achieving an increase in woodland area of around 7% p.a. (National Forest Strategy, 2005), approximately half of the original target. The Annex B targets presented in Table 1 represent a range from 0.1%p.a. (Blanket bog) to 8.1%p.a.

(Reedbeds) with an overall mean of 2.3%, of which 1.3% is restoration and 1.0% is expansion.

Timelines for Targets

Targets were required for a series of dates: 2015 (a short term target to check progress against the RSS), 2026 (the RSS endpoint) and 2056 (Landscapes for Living Vision). The approaches described in section 0 of this paper derived targets for 2026. The allocation of targets for other dates is described in the full technical report. However in summary the 2056 targets are:

- The same as the 2026 targets for those habitats where the potential area does not exceed the target to be achieved by 2026.
- A linear raising of the 2026 targets where the potential area exceeds the 2026 target, and where suitable sites are believed to exist for restoration.

2015 targets have been based on straight line assumptions of delivery between 2009 and 2026, except where the target is based on a national target for 2015 and the whole can be achieved by 2015.

Summary of Approaches Taken

The rationale for each habitat type is set out in more detail in the main report and is explained in Proposed Habitat Targets - Appendix A: Table 2 summarises the different approaches taken.

Table 2 Summary of approaches taken to derivation of restoration/expansion targets for different habitats

BAP habitat	Summary of potential in the region, regional significance and status of information on current extent	Approach taken to development of targets for restoration/expansion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blanket Bog • Fens • Lowland Raised Bog • Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures • Reedbeds • Upland Calcareous Grassland • Upland Heathland 	<p>Limited potential for restoration or expansion in the region, whether due to exacting ecological requirements or constraints imposed by presence of other BAP habitats on potential land.</p>	<p>Regional target based on sum of existing local targets or regional allocation of the national target, whichever is larger</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland • Lowland Beech and Yew 	<p>Lowland mixed deciduous woodland and wet woodland have extensive potential, the other native woodland types more restricted.</p>	<p>Extent of Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and achievability estimate (restoration). Relative priority for restoration and expansion based on UK BAP.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woodland Upland Mixed Ashwoods Upland Oakwoods Wet Woodland 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowland Heathland 	Good information on current extent, moderately restricted potential for restoration and expansion.	Potential for raising patch size to above a size threshold (UK BAP) and connectivity between key networks in the primary regional landscape scale project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arable Field Margins Hedgerows Ponds 	Extensive potential for restoration/expansion, but poor information on current extent.	Regional Target based on the sum of relevant local targets, extended to 2026.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Orchards Wood-Pasture & Parkland Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Lowland Meadows 	Extensive potential for restoration/ expansion and high regional significance.	Targets considerably higher than those suggested by present national and local targets are recommended for these habitats. Primarily determined by estimates of suitable land types and achievability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowland Calcareous Grassland Lowland Dry Acid Grassland 	Good information on current extent, moderately restricted potential	Targets guided by extent of potential within grassland networks; priority of lowland heathland over lowland dry acid grassland assumed.
Oligotrophic and Dystrophic Lakes	Target should focus on achieving condition.	Zero target for restoration/expansion
Inland Rock Outcrop and Scree habitats	Not feasible to restore/expand.	Zero target for restoration/expansion
Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land	No national target in place (new BAP habitat).	A nominal expansion target is included.
Rivers	No national target in place (current BAP definition already includes most types of river and stream).	Efforts primarily focused on achieving condition. Environment Agency advice is awaited on the extent of non-natural river stretches that could be targeted for restoration.

Habitats with Restricted Potential

Several habitats have limited restoration and expansion potential in the region, whether because they have exacting ecological requirements and require conditions which are rare in the West Midlands or because they are constrained by adjacent or surrounding BAP habitat of another type. These are:

- Blanket Bog
- Fens
- Lowland Raised Bog
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures

- Reedbeds
- Upland Calcareous Grassland
- Upland Heathland

For these habitats regional targets were based on the sum of relevant local targets, or to be in line with the draft regional allocation of national targets which represent a minimum cut-off (England Biodiversity Group, 2006).

For Blanket Bog and Upland Heathland, spatial opportunities for restoration/ expansion are severely constrained by the existence of other BAP habitat. In other words potential land is already occupied by another priority habitat. Inaccuracies in data on current extent may mean that in fact there are some small areas where restoration would be possible, and in some cases Local Biodiversity Action Plans have already identified targets, hence it would be inappropriate to promote a 'zero' target.

There may also be circumstances in which substitution of one BAP habitat for another is desirable on biodiversity grounds, for example in the case of reedbeds, where spatial opportunities for restoration/ expansion are severely constrained by Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh habitat. In this case a reedbed restoration/ expansion target based on the local target already identified has been included, as reedbeds can add local habitat diversity to the grazing marsh system as a whole.

Lowland Raised Bog, Fen and Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures targets are included in line with existing LBAP targets and regional allocation of national targets.

Habitats With Extensive Potential But Poor Current Data

Some habitats have extensive potential, but information about their current distribution is unreliable, making it difficult to derive a meaningful target for restoration or expansion at the regional level. This is the case for Arable field Margins, Hedgerows and Ponds. Regional targets for these habitats have been based on the sum of relevant local targets, extended to 2026, as these are likely to reflect realistic local assessments of what should and/or can be achieved.

Habitats With Extensive Potential And High Regional Importance

- Traditional Orchards
- Wood-Pasture & Parkland
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Lowland Meadows

These habitats generally have relatively large areas of land identified with potential and are also relatively straightforward to restore or expand. Each of these has been the subject of above average decline in the region historically. Wood-Pasture and Parkland and Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh may prove to be especially vulnerable to climate change and would benefit from special consideration in adaptation measures. Targets considerably higher than those suggested by present national and local targets are recommended for these habitats.

Habitats With Zero Or Minimal Restoration Or Expansion Targets

There are some habitats where zero habitat restoration/expansion targets have been derived for inclusion in Annex B. Reasons for this vary between habitats as summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 reasons for inclusion of zero or minimal targets for restoration or expansion

- Oligotrophic and Dystrophic Lakes: BAP target should focus on achieving condition.
- Inland Rock Outcrop and Scree Habitats: not feasible to restore/ expand.
- Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land: there is no national target yet for this new BAP habitat. A nominal expansion target is included.
- Rivers: current BAP definition already includes most types of river and stream, and therefore efforts will be primarily focused on achieving condition. There is no national target. Environment Agency advice is awaited on the extent of non-natural river stretches that could be targeted for restoration.

Spatial Focus

In addition to deciding how much habitat should be restored or enhanced within the region, it is also important to determine where efforts should be concentrated for best effect. Appendix B gives an indication of how available information sources can be used. In addition, wider considerations such as ecosystem services, landscape and co-benefits with social and economic agendas need to be taken into account to determine precisely where the targets should be implemented.

The Regional Opportunities Map, which has the benefit of a high degree of stakeholder consultation and support, is highly successful in identifying the principal concentrations of current habitat, in that it has over 75% of BAP habitat while covering just 55% of the region. This should be used as the principal source of spatial focus at the broad scale for implementing the regional targets.

At least 80% of the targets should be focused in the opportunity areas. This will be achieved through use of data on current distribution at the local scale, and identification of opportunities for restoration and expansion on suitable land as specified in the detailed BAP targets, adjacent to and linking current BAP habitat wherever possible. The series of habitat potential maps produced in this project can inform choices of habitats that it would be technically possible to restore or expand at particular locations. Research and modelling of habitat networks in the Netherlands (Alterra, 2007) has shown that larger networks are likely to be more sustainable for some key species populations than smaller ones, providing greater climate change resilience. At a regional level, prioritisation of larger suitable areas is likely to enhance resilience for a greater proportion of climate vulnerable species.

At least half of the targets should be implemented through landscape scale projects, where agencies and NGOs can focus efforts on working with landowners to achieve objectives tailored to local circumstances and potential. In addition to the current landscape scale projects (see 0) many more will be required through the period to 2026. The datasets generated in this project may be helpful in planning such projects. Functional connectivity is an important concept to guide the optimum locations of new habitat between networks. GIS analysis has been used to identify around 1000 locations within the region where woodland expansion could provide disproportionate

biodiversity benefits in terms of linking adjacent networks. Sampling of these locations using aerial photographs suggests that around 600 of these may be practicable, and in many cases the size of such planting needs to be as little as 5 hectares. The woodland expansion target has assumed that spatial targeting and financial incentives can be used to achieve 30% of these linkages in the period to 2026.

Woodland restoration, on the other hand, must focus within existing networks. Over 98% of PAWS (Plantations on ancient woodland sites) in the region are located within habitat networks, and therefore restoration contributes significantly to increasing woodland patch size, reducing edge effects and improving existing network sustainability.

Expansion targets for grasslands should also take opportunities to link networks wherever possible. There are fewer opportunities in the case of grasslands because the existing resource is highly dispersed. Restoration may not contribute greatly to networks as this must be on degraded habitat, which, on the limited information available, also appears to be highly dispersed.

Reference and Web Links

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UK BAP (2006b). Review of BAP Targets – Target Type Definitions, UK BAP 2006
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df](http://www.ukbap.org.uk/library/brig/TargetsReview06/Final/BAPTargeDefintionsGuidance.pdf)

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Proposed Habitat Targets - Appendix A: Rationale for Derivation of Restoration and Expansion Targets

Habitat Group	BAP Habitat	Restoration		Expansion	
		Target (ha)	Rationale	Target (ha)	Rationale
Woodlands	Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	8504	Plantations on ancient woodland sites (UK BAP target focus), 60% achievement; proportion of native woodland represented by this BAP type.	10052	Proportion of restoration target as in UK BAP. Including linkage between woodland networks, 30% achievement, National Forest implementation. 80% of wet woodland expansion re-allocated to this woodland type.
	Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland	124	As above.	118	Proportion of restoration target as in UK BAP. Including linkage between woodland networks, 30% achievement, National Forest implementation.
	Upland Mixed Ashwoods	147	As above.	139	Proportion of restoration target as in UK BAP. Including linkage between woodland networks, 30% achievement, National Forest implementation.
	Upland Oakwood	935	As above.	887	Proportion of restoration target as in UK BAP. Including linkage between woodland networks, 30% achievement, National Forest implementation.
	Wet Woodland	2610	As above.	495	Proportion of restoration target as in UK BAP. Including linkage between woodland networks, 30% achievement, National Forest implementation. 80% re-allocated to Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on assumption that this type will not be favoured.
Heathlands	Lowland Heathland	0	All UK BAP target restoration/ expansion is allocated to expansion.	660	50% of all opportunities to raise LH patches to >30ha.(UK BAP), where potential allows it PLUS 10% of potential linkage between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park networks (the major landscape scale project on lowland heathland in the region).

	Upland Heathland	130	LBAP aggregate.	0	Focus must be on achieving condition and restoration.
Grasslands	Lowland Calcareous Grassland	57	Potential within lowland calcareous grassland networks, 50% achievement, recognising that some restoration should take place on degraded sites outside of existing networks	458	Proportion of restoration figure - same proportion as UK BAP to reflect relative priorities
	Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	92	Potential within lowland dry acid grassland networks, 20% achievement (lower than other grasslands to allow for presumption in favour of lowland heathland), recognising that some restoration should take place on degraded sites outside of existing networks	69	Proportion of restoration figure - same proportion as UK BAP to reflect relative priorities
	Lowland Meadows	2160	Potential within lowland meadows networks, 50% achievement, recognising that some restoration should take place on degraded sites outside of existing networks	1080	Proportion of restoration figure - same proportion as UK BAP to reflect relative priorities
	Upland Calcareous Grassland	0	No restoration opportunity	0	No expansion opportunity
	Wetlands	Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh	3147	Proportion of potential area under grassland management (UK BAP target), 20% achievement	525
	Fens	120	Target based on national and LBAP targets.	50	Target based on national and LBAP targets.
	Blanket Bog	30	Target based on LBAP. Very little potential available for restoration.	0	Focus must be on achieving condition and restoration.

	Lowland Raised Bog	110	Minimal additional potential available. Target based on national and LBAP targets.	0	Exacting ecological requirements for this habitat indicate that expansion is not practicable.
	Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures	50	Target based on national and LBAP targets.	50	Target based on national and LBAP targets.
	Reedbeds	0	Restoration irrelevant to this habitat	200	Target based on LBAP.
	Rivers	(note 1)	n/a	(note 1)	n/a
	Eutrophic Standing Waters	0	Restoration irrelevant to this habitat	5 sites	Target based on national and LBAP targets.
	Ponds	500 sites	Little existing data and no national target to inform this target. Target based on LBAP.	500 sites	Little existing data and no national target to inform this target. Target based on LBAP.
Other habitats	Arable Field Margins	0	Restoration irrelevant to this habitat	2000 km	Target based on LBAP.
	Hedgerows	0	Target based on LBAP.	500 km	Target based on LBAP.
	Inland Rock Outcrop and Scree Habitats	0	Restoration irrelevant to this habitat	0	Expansion not relevant to this habitat
	Mesotrophic Lakes	1	Target based on LBAP.	0	Exacting ecological requirements for this habitat indicate that expansion is not practicable.
	Oligotrophic and Dystrophic Lakes	0	Focus must be on achieving condition.	0	Exacting ecological requirements for this habitat indicate that expansion is not practicable.
	Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land	0	Restoration irrelevant to this habitat	50	A nominal target included; little evidence available for this new BAP habitat.
	Traditional Orchards	232	Large potential, high historic decline, very high regional importance, mechanisms available to achieve restoration, stretch target included.	1000	Large potential, high historic decline, mechanisms available to achieve restoration, stretch target included.
	Wood-Pasture & Parkland	1561	30% achievement of estimated restorable sites	468	Proportion of restoration figure - same proportion as UK BAP to reflect relative priorities

n/a - data not currently available

Note 1 - awaiting Environment Agency analysis

Proposed Habitat Targets - Appendix B: Summary Of Information Sources Used To Support Development Of Targets And Which May Assist In Refining Spatial Strategy

Data/ Source of information	Application to derive numeric targets for restoration/expansion	Application with respect to spatial strategy (where restoration/expansion should take place)
Current extent and distribution	The current extent of each habitat gives an indication of the scale of restoration and expansion that is appropriate to the region.	Restoration and expansion should consolidate and build on the existing resource.
Historical extent	Habitats with a high level of decline should generally be the focus of restoration and expansion. Habitats which were rare historically will have ecological constraints in the region.	No (see potential). In the absence of data on historical distribution, the habitat potential maps (see below) give an indication of likely historical distribution in the region.
Habitat Potential	The Habitat Potential Maps developed in this project indicate the maximum extent of restoration and expansion, alongside current extent, that it is possible to achieve in the region.	The Habitat Potential Maps can be used as a decision support tool in local habitat opportunity mapping, alongside other information resources.
Wetland Vision	The Wetlands Vision Project was based on detailed examination of data and historical extent, and represents the habitat potential for some wetland habitats.	As Habitat Potential, above, for some wetland habitats.
Regional Habitats Opportunities Map	Habitats with low spatial focus in the opportunity areas have their restoration and expansion targets held at a minimum level as dictated by other criteria.	The Regional Habitats Opportunities Map has the benefit of extensive stakeholder consultation and use of data. Habitat restoration and expansion should be focused on the areas of regional opportunity identified in this map.
UK BAP Targets	The UK BAP restoration and expansion targets have been taken as an indication of the level of targets set.	Some restoration and expansion targets are spatially specific in terms of the types of land that should be targeted.
LBAP Targets	We have ensured that the regional targets meet or exceed the sum of the LBAP targets in the region.	No. Although the LBAP targets are specific to LBAP areas, we recommend that the improved data on current extent now available merits a new allocation of regional targets to LBAP areas.
Provisional Regional Allocation of UK BAP Targets	These were intended to be a minimum; we have ensured that our targets meet or exceed them.	No. There is no spatial element to this source.
Regional Priority Habitats	We have focused more expansive targets on the identified regional priorities.	No. There is no spatial element to this source.
Landscape Scale	No. The current Landscape Scale	The current projects represent a

Projects	Projects represent an important but inevitably partial view of the implementation that will be required through the RSS period.	starting point; others will need development, along with other measures, to meet the targets.
Habitat Networks	There is no agreed methodology for translating habitat network analyses into numerical targets. However, GIS analysis can contribute to methodology for some habitats.	The Habitat Network maps revised in this project can be used in the local habitat opportunity mapping process to identify potential gaps, pinch points and barriers between networks that could be prioritised for restoration and expansion, in addition to buffering of existing habitat patches.

This document forms part of a suite of material:

- 1 RSS Phase Three - Options Consultation Document
- 2 Rural Renaissance - Critical Rural Services Background Paper
- 3 Communities for the Future - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Background Paper
- 4 Culture, Sport and Tourism Background Paper
- 5 Quality of the Environment** Background Paper
- 6 Minerals Background Paper

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