

Rural Proofing of RSS Phase Three Policy Statements and Recommendations January 2010

Introduction

Rural proofing is not unlike an equality impact assessment, where the potentially adverse impacts of policies on different identity groups are addressed. One could say that rural proofing is a rural equality impact assessment – where equality impact assessments check the possible differential impacts on women and men, people from different ethnic backgrounds and so on, rural proofing checks the possible differential impacts on rural businesses, rural areas and rural communities.

Rural proofing can take place at any time in the lifecycle of strategies, policies or project activities: at the time of strategic priority-setting, conceptualisation of policies, design of project activities, implementation of activities and at the evaluation or review of priorities or projects. This has certainly been the case for the RSS Phase Three Revision with input into the project planning, developing the policy options and consultation processes to date.

Assessing the Impact

Rural proofing is not a one-off audit exercise but a long-term approach to ensuring that the Regional Assembly, as the statutory planning body, has considered rural needs. A key requirement for rural proofing is that it must still be possible to make adjustments. This means that, if rural proofing is undertaken after decisions have been made, a mechanism must be in place to re-open the debate and if necessary adjust these decisions. Therefore, monitoring, good quality data, information collection and evaluation are also essential ingredients of successful rural proofing.

Rural proofing assesses the possible differential impact of policies on rural businesses, rural areas and rural communities. In assessing the draft policy statements and policy recommendations the three key questions for rural proofing have been explored:

1. How does the draft policy statement/recommendation impact upon rural needs?
2. Does the draft policy statement/recommendation need further development to enable rural areas and communities to benefit fully?
3. In what ways might the draft policy statement/recommendation lead to any (unintended) adverse impacts on rural communities and what can be done to avoid, minimise or negate this impact?

Outcome

Acknowledging the various stages of development, the differential impacts on rural communities, businesses and areas have been highlighted. Please note, further rural proofing will be required as the draft policy statements, recommendations and supporting text are further refined.

Rural Proofing Audit Trail – RSS3 Policy Statements and Recommendations

The following table sets out the recommendations arising from Rural Proofing work carried out on the RSS3 Policy Statements and Recommendations issued for the appraisal in December and January 2009. Policy Leads are invited to respond to those recommendations so that an audit trail of recommendations, responses and policy amendments can be developed.

Recommended change	Comment	Response	Date
Critical Rural Services			
None required.	It is likely that the policy approach will have a positive impact.		
Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople			
Where new pitches are allocated there will be additional strain placed on existing rural service provision.	Need for assessment of allocations in terms of links to services and, where necessary, give encouragement for provision of additional funding allocation to maintain service standards		
Culture and Sport			
It is recommended that the policy approach include principles to ensure that any development of the region's sporting/cultural sector, and any increase in access/participation, considers in particular the difficulties of transport/accessibility for rural communities. By encouragement of projects in suitable areas well served by public transport means that most rural areas will be denied equitable access.	To have a positive impact on rural people and places it is necessary to improve transport/accessibility to compensate and encourage alternative access/transport solutions.		
Tourism			
The policy recommendation acknowledges the contribution that tourism and the visitor economy makes to rural places and rural people	It is likely that the policy approach will have a positive impact		

Recommended change	Comment	Response	Date
Environment			
Policy QE1: Integrated Approach to the Management of Environmental Resources			
The policy recommendation aims to protect, restore and particularly enhance environmental assets.	The supporting text mentions rural renaissance and the priority that should be given but fails to illustrate how this might be achieved, majoring on urban renaissance instead.		
Policy QE2: Restoring degraded areas and managing and creating high quality new environments			
The policy recommendation refers to brownfield and derelict land	The supporting text mentions rural renaissance and the priority that should be given but fails to illustrate how this might be achieved, particularly for brownfield and derelict land in rural locations		
Policy QE4: Green Infrastructure			
The policy recommendation directly aims to protect and enhance the region's green infrastructure – being planned delivered and managed in a co-ordinated and consistent manner	It is likely that the policy approach will have a positive impact.		
Policy QE5: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment			
The policy recommendation recognises and promotes the role of the historic environment.....although the links to economic regeneration and vitality should be more clearly explained and promoted, for example in encouraging the environmental economy by supporting the demand for heritage skills.	It is likely that the policy approach will have a positive impact provided that it adopts an integrated approach afforded by spatial planning to deliver to sustainable rural communities		
Policy QE6: The conservation, enhancement and restoration of the Region's Landscape			
Management of the region's landscapes may have direct benefits for the sustainability of rural communities	It is likely that the policy approach will have a positive impact provided that it looks beyond the simplistic, narrow land use planning and looks to satisfying the economic and social needs of rural communities too		

Recommended change	Comment	Response	Date
Policy QE7: Protecting, managing and enhancing the Region's Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources			
The protection, management and enhancement of biodiversity faces considerable challenges	It is likely that the policy approach will have a positive impact on rural communities		
Policy QE8: Forestry and Woodlands			
Considerable multi benefits achievable For rural people and places	A positive impact on rural communities		
Protection of Agricultural Land (no existing policy)			
The text could refer to some of the other sustainability benefits of agriculture, in particular its importance in underpinning the rural economy.	It is likely that the policy approach will have a positive impact		
Air Quality (no existing policy)			
The text recognises the link between air quality and accessibility, congestion and public transport provision, and therefore may help to promote action to reduce the need to travel and increase public transport provision in order to improve air quality.	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas		
Energy			
Rural communities are well placed to lead the transition to a low carbon economy, particularly in terms of locally generated renewable electricity, heat and fuel supply and generation; growth in biomass and bio fuel.	There is a pressing need for more accessible business support and investment in skills in rural areas to help tap the potential of the many micro rural businesses and social enterprises		
Promoting energy efficiency within existing development is not just the prerogative of urban regeneration	Supporting text needs to recognise that there are opportunities for rural regeneration too		

Recommended change	Comment	Response	Date
In consideration of development criteria “protecting” designated areas from inappropriate development has negative connotations with the potential to stifle rural renaissance and countering potential for sustainability	Supporting text needs to be more positive and dynamic – satisfying the objectives of the designation in economic and low-carbon terms		
In determining regional targets, renewable energy development is guided by resources and technologies available.	The supporting text at present lacks specificity to the West Midlands, i.e. it should discount renewables that are impossible/difficult and major on the opportunities that exist. Particular emphasis on woody biomass and great opportunities for rural/off-grid is advocated		
Minerals			
Minerals Safeguarding			
Safeguarding mineral sites and development options for indigenous mineral extraction and future supply together with the infrastructure sites/facilities required is recognised and will impact predominantly on rural and per-urban communities	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing and maintaining supplies of indigenous mineral resources in the West Midlands		

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATION ON RURAL RENAISSANCE POLICY: RR4 – CRITICAL RURAL SERVICES

1.1 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the Policy Recommendation on Rural Renaissance Policy – Critical Rural Services and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Recommendation for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the policy recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.2 Rural Renaissance – Critical Rural Services

The Phase Three Revision seeks to identify the role of service provision in enhancing the sustainability of rural communities, whether particular services are critical to this process and whether the process itself, and consequently the policies to address it, varies in different types of rural area.

The policy approach must:

- Not be prescriptive about why services are “critical” or key;
- Provide a framework for locally based analysis centred on “community of place”;
- Recognise that “sustainability” is multi-layered and that low carbon solutions may apply equally to some rural based services;

- Tie in RR policies with CF policies showing clear links;
- Require Local Planning Authorities in their plan making and Development Management process to take into account legitimate local service needs of rural communities and what contribution can be made towards delivering more sustainable places based on local intelligence;
- Require Local Planning and Transport Authorities to demonstrate how their LDFs and LTPs have used tested and innovative approaches to commissioning locally led reviews to assess rural service provision at a scale appropriate to the locality and to demonstrate how this delivers the RSS and local spatial strategies addressing rural settlements;
- Be clear about the approach to be adopted as to how local development may usefully contribute to local regeneration and needs, i.e. locally identified (bottom-up, community-led) service, facility and infrastructure needs including affordable housing;
- Be able to demonstrate through their Local Implementation Plans or Single Conversation Investment Plan how this evidence is used to guide delivery matched to that need;
- Be clear about how local community plans such as Parish Plans have been taken into consideration in establishing a coherent strategy for rural renaissance;
- Be able to demonstrate how the resilience of cross-border communities has been supported.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy recommendation, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table below highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Positive Impact. Policy approach is offering the maximum flexibility and policy/decision making at local levels dependent on identified community needs. Likely to be a more dispersed distribution of services meaning that there might be less reliance/need for the centralisation of services and the needs of the rural communities can be better catered for in situ giving a boost to the rural economy providing some of them.
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Positive Impact. People in the smaller more remote settlements potentially disadvantaged unless adequate public transport network could be provided alongside mobile, ICT and outreach services to avoid the need to travel. Locality working and participatory budgeting could help.

RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector? Will there be similar opportunities for choice and competition? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver?	Positive impact. Highly likely that there will be a strong private/voluntary/community sector involvement but it may be necessary to encourage commercial providers with incentives – particularly if they are delivering tangible quality of life benefits - and through offsetting the higher rural costs to ensure fair and equitable access for all.
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Positive impact. Longer travel times or distances add to the cost of service provision. Additionally economies of scale are lost when services operate out of small outlets. Allowing for higher unit delivery costs in funding formulae would help as would encouragement of joint/shared provision where possible and desirable. The encouragement of economies and efficiencies through supporting local supply chains/just-in-time deliveries would be welcomed in rural areas – supporting local employment too.
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Positive Impact. Specific support may be required in terms of capacity building and encouragement for private and voluntary sector input. Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs, informed by Parish Plans and Community Strategies.
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	Positive Impact. Likely to reduce the need to travel by using mobile services, outreach or local delivery or telephone/internet.

<p>RP7: Infrastructure</p>	<p>Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?</p>	<p>Positive Impact.</p> <p>Consideration may be given to encourage or co-ordinate additional demand within local communities in order to make supply viable; or the use the public sector's collective demand to stimulate supply.</p> <p>Consider using regulation or licences to encourage the development of improved infrastructure.</p>
<p>RP8: Administrative Areas</p>	<p>Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.</p>	<p>Particular effort is needed to ensure that a policy does not disadvantage border communities.</p> <p>Encourage "postcode" blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense.</p> <p>Note: additional needs of rural communities and service provision either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact.</p>
<p>RP9: New buildings or development sites</p>	<p>Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?</p>	<p>Positive impact.</p> <p>Creates the flexibility for development to be located where it is most appropriate and needed.</p> <p>Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs being mapped and defined ensuring any development is of high quality and will contribute to local character and distinctiveness with minimum environmental impacts</p>
<p>Communications</p>		
<p>RP10: Communication</p>	<p>Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?</p>	<p>Positive impact.</p> <p>A clear two-way communications policy encouraging the support, engagement and buy-in from rural communities is essential.</p>

Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy	Positive Impact. Creating and safeguarding jobs and economic value is very welcome particularly in rural areas and amongst rural communities. There is a need to ensure that the needs of smaller businesses are specifically addressed. Mobile and outreach business support, advice and training is advocated whilst minimising regulatory or other burdens that disproportionately affect small firms
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? Will there be a knock-on effect on the environment Conversely, if the policy affects the environment, what are the implications for businesses based on natural resources such as tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production?	Positive Impact. Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic, social and environmental benefits – promoting local supply chains where possible and allowing/ encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises. Consider incentives for environmentally-friendly practices.
RP13: Impact upon those on low income	Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work (e.g. agriculture, tourism)?	A probable positive impact. Additional employment opportunities e.g. private/voluntary service provision could increase or extend the availability of seasonal employment opportunities. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).
Disadvantage		
RP14: Disadvantaged Groups	To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)?	Positive impact. 70% of disadvantaged people do not live in Deprived areas and so targeting of population groups rather than areas is advocated.

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY STATEMENT FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

1.3 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the Policy Statement on Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show People and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Statement for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the Policy Statement is likely to have a potential different impact in rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The Policy Statement and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.4 Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Phase Three seeks to review existing RSS policy for Gypsy & Traveller sites and the development of new RSS policy for the provision of travelling Showpeople.

- Policies for Pitch Requirements for Gypsies and Travellers
- Policies for Transit Pitches
- Policy for Plots for Travelling Showpeople

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy statement on Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the three options have been considered. The table overleaf highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the Policy Statement	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	<p>Where new pitches are allocated there will be additional strain placed on existing service provision.</p> <p>It may be possible to suggest that there be some assessment of allocations in terms of links to services and, where necessary, give encouragement for additional funding allocation to maintain service standards</p> <p>Improve transport/accessibility to compensate for the additional requirements of the gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople if required</p>
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	It may well be necessary to extend the scope and reach of mobile and outreach services to cater for their needs and careful assessment of the impacts on rural communities will be required.
RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver?	Within each district new sites/land supply may well be supplied by the private sector or public-private partnership
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	It may be necessary to allow for higher unit delivery/development costs in funding formulae, taking into account the sparsity factor.
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas?	<p>Defined and delivered at District level.</p> <p>It may be necessary to provide specific support for capacity building and it will be clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs</p>

Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	<p>Not perhaps directly relevant but additional pitches and therefore numbers of people may place additional strain on already stretched or sparse service provision in rural areas.</p> <p>Whilst many of these people place great emphasis on their independent way of life and self-sufficiency there may be the need to explore alternative transport solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reduce the need to travel by using mobile services, local delivery or telephone/internet; ○ ease travel by co-ordinating or improving transport links ○ alleviate the costs of travel by subsidising services or individuals
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	There may be a need here to consider and encourage the development of additional or improved infrastructure to support the pitch provision particularly in Districts where infrastructure is already weak or under stress.
RP8: Administrative Areas	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas?	<p>Encourage reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense.</p> <p>Local and regional administrative boundaries - Note: additional needs of and impacts upon rural communities either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact.</p>
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	<p>Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs mapped and defined ensuring any development will contribute to local character and distinctiveness.</p> <p>Pitches should be of the highest standards in terms of sustainable resource-efficient design and maintenance – ensuring prudent, efficient use of locally sourced materials where possible</p>

Communications		
RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have impact upon the stability and sustainability of rural communities. Equally it will be important to ensure equitable access to information in rural areas for those seeking pitches. Use of existing networks, specialist advisers, post offices and village halls linking up with other providers is advocated.
Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction?	Provided that the communications policy is effective, there should be a positive effect on rural businesses – many being able to offer temporary/seasonal employment opportunities
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? Will there be a knock-on effect on the environment (given that 70% of the land is farmed)? Conversely, if the policy affects the environment, what are the implications for businesses based on natural resources such as tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production?	Likely to have a positive impact. However, the assessment of effects will be limited if options are only defined at District level. Identify 'win-win' solutions which deliver economic and environmental benefits. Where there are opportunities for employment allow for and encourage a diverse range of rural enterprises
RP13: Impact upon those on low income	Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment.	Likely to be relevant, particularly if the number of gypsies and travellers are (or perceived to be displacing the local workforce. Do encourage investment in raising rural communities' skills, improved local childcare and improved transport to work opportunities.
Disadvantage		
RP14: Disadvantaged Groups	To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)?	Very relevant. Ensure easy and equitable access to services, facilities and opportunities, including jobs and learning.

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATION ON POLICIES FOR CULTURE AND SPORT

1.5 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from the rural proofing the policy recommendation for policies on Culture and Sport and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Recommendation for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the policy recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.6 Culture and Sport

The Phase Three Revision is intended to strengthen WMRSS policy to meet the cultural needs of the Region and compliment urban and rural renaissance. It is therefore seeking to improve the provision of, access to, quality cultural and sports assets and provide opportunities to increase the rate of participation/attendance in cultural activities.

The following policy principles should be developed in order to increase participation and engagement:

Places:

- improve quality of, and access to, existing cultural and sports infrastructure to improve the quality of experience and provide a sustainable network of cultural assets. This will involve:
 - conserving and enhancing heritage assets
 - transformative interventions where participation is the lowest,
 - seizing opportunities through investment initiatives and partnership working such as growth points, BSF and co-location
- encourage the provision of new culture and sports assets where regional, sub-regional and local assessments indicate shortfalls in supply

People:

- to make a long term cultural shift to attitudes, aspirations and behaviours, targeting low participating/engaged groups through research (market segmentation), advocacy, outreach, investment and marketing etc. (ethnic minorities, socio-economic, etc., post 16 drop-off) to raise aspirations and address other barriers to participation and engagement so as to widen access to cultural activities and opportunities.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy recommendation on Culture, Tourism and Sport, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table below highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation	Comments
Availability and Provision		
RP1: Service provision and availability	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Consider in particular the difficulties of transport/accessibility for rural communities. By encouragement of projects in suitable areas well served by public transport means that most rural areas will be denied equitable access. Improve transport/accessibility to compensate and encourage alternative access/transport solutions and encourage alternative funding streams
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access culture, tourism and sport in areas where assets and facilities are few and far between?	It is good that the use of mobile and outreach opportunities or the use of ICT to link up individuals/communities with the opportunities available are being considered. Multi-use centres – sharing premises with other providers in order to maintain or create sufficient critical mass thus ensuring the viability of provision.

RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector? Will there be similar opportunities for choice and competition? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver?	Rural areas have some of the most superb natural assets and local distinctiveness on offer – much in private sector ownership. However, to unlock this potential it may be necessary to encourage commercial providers with incentives and offset higher rural costs where necessary.
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Many agencies and local authorities will be hard pushed in terms of implementation particularly to remote rural communities. Further encouragement to allow for higher unit delivery costs in funding formulae (e.g. a 'sparsity' factor) or when specifying cost efficiency criteria; and encouragement towards joint provision to reduce costs is advocated.
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas, where private, public and voluntary sector organisations tend to be smaller and have less capacity to build partnerships?	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and provide specific support for capacity building where required. At regional level, policies need to be embedded within the Regional Landscape Framework and the implementation of the Regional Historic Environment Framework
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	To ensure rural people and places are not disadvantaged, rural solutions might include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reduce the need to travel by using mobile services, local delivery or telephone/internet; 2. touring strategy - ease travel by co-ordinating or improving transport links (e.g. additional services, demand responsive transport, community transport/community car schemes, taxi vouchers); 3. alleviate the costs of travel by subsidising services or individuals (remembering that there may be no public transport service or operating times between many locations).

<p>RP7: Infrastructure</p>	<p>Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?</p>	<p>It may be necessary to consider using regulation or licences to encourage the development of improved infrastructure; encouraging or co-ordinating demand to make supply viable; using the public sector's collective demand to stimulate supply; or providing alternative means of accessing the cultural and sporting offer.</p>
<p>RP8: Administrative Areas</p>	<p>Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access sport, culture or tourism facilities.</p>	<p>Encourage "postcode" blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense.</p> <p>Note: additional needs of rural communities/tourists accessing assets and facilities either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact.</p>
<p>RP9: New buildings or development sites</p>	<p>Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?</p>	<p>Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and sites/areas defined ensuring any development will contribute to local character and distinctiveness. Ensure high quality sustainable development that will contribute to local character and distinctiveness</p>
<p>Communications</p>		
<p>RP10: Communication</p>	<p>Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?</p>	<p>A clear communications policy for rural communities is advocated.</p>

Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction?	A positive impact Where possible the policies should avoid imposing additional regulatory or other burdens that will disproportionately affect small firms and micro-businesses
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas?	A positive impact on the rural economy if the cultural and sporting offer is located in rural areas.
RP13: Impact upon those on low income	Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce are engaged in part-time or seasonal employment.	For those locations where the cultural or sporting offer is to be created or enhanced this will have a positive impact with the likelihood of greater employment opportunities. Consider measures to improve the choice of work through increasing skills and transport links.
Disadvantage		
RP14: Disadvantaged Groups	To be targeted at disadvantaged people or places? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods?	Consider targeting population groups rather than deprived areas – aimed at increasing participation and improving the quality of life. Specific distribution/locational criteria would maximise investment and regeneration opportunities, addressing social drivers

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATION ON POLICY FOR TOURISM & THE VISITOR ECONOMY

1.7 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from the rural proofing the policy recommendation for policy on Tourism and the Visitor Economy and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Recommendation for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the policy recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.8 Tourism and the Visitor Economy

The Phase Three Revision is intended to strengthen WMRSS policy to meet the needs of the Region and compliment urban and rural renaissance. It is therefore seeking to set the framework which facilitates and encourages sustainable economic growth, contribute to creating a sense of place making the region more attractive to businesses, residents, visitors and investors.

The following policy principles should be developed in order to increase participation and engagement:

1. Emerging regional policy for the visitor economy should continue to retain a clear focus on delivering sustainable economic growth in the visitor economy and contribute to building prosperous communities, through attracting additional and higher value tourism activity in line with market demand. The sector is a source of employment opportunities and wealth generation. In addition to be a source of economic growth, tourism and culture make leading contributions to regional image and perceptions

The visitor economy touches on most parts of the region, however, in addition to setting a framework for policy development at sub-regional and local levels, policy at regional level should concentrate on key assets and destinations.

2. A clear understanding of the key characteristics of the sector, the spatial distribution of key strategic assets and visitor demand/activity patterns is required as the basis for regional policy. Policy content at regional level should identify strategic opportunities and constraints for the sector, and set a policy direction which clearly recognises the need to facilitate sustainable economic growth, and key existing strategic assets in the form of;
 - Key business and conference tourism hubs and venues. The region should continue to seek to capitalise on our world-class business tourism infrastructure and fully exploit our locational advantage and established high profile as a business destination
 - Major visitor attractions
 - Leading cultural venues and museum
 - Visitor destinations which are hubs of activity, including; South Warwickshire, Birmingham, the NEC complex
 - Leading sporting venues and events
 - The countryside, canal network, and market towns/cathedral cities as hubs of activity
 - Leading heritage assets and environments, including Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage site
3. There are significant synergies with the region's cultural and sporting infrastructure (ref. Cultural and tourism) – in particular, the major (regional, national and internationally recognised) assets which have a distinct appeal. Contemporary culture and the cultural heritage of the West Midlands is at the heart of the visitor experience, and is a key element in driving visitors to the region and growing short break opportunities.
4. An increase in visitor activity should seek to minimise negative impacts. Ideally, tourism activity and development should be market-led, however, development is often product-led by necessity - landscapes, countryside, heritage assets etc forming key elements of the unique character of destinations. Policy should reflect the practical necessity that the tourism industry generates travel, but that development should utilise sustainable transport (x ref. transport policies), sustainable construction and high quality design (x ref. policy) and take place in an environmentally sustainable manner (x ref. Quality of the Environment and climate change policies).
5. High standards of accessibility and links with transport (x ref. transport policies), are of great importance to the visitor economy, including;
 - Infrastructure including tourism and directional signage to key visitor assets and destinations
 - The importance for long term competitiveness for the sector of strategic transport developments such as Birmingham New St, high speed rail development, continued quality-led development of Birmingham International Airport as a key gateway to the region
 - Market intelligence suggests that the majority of visitor travel in most destinations is car-borne. At present, tourism public transport usage is often limited by mismatches between the visitor economy and a public transport system which is largely orientated towards travel to work and resident usage i.e. peak leisure and visitor demand often is at weekends and evenings when frequency of public transport services is reduced.

6. In addition to encouraging appropriate new development, emphasis should be placed on developing and protecting existing visitor assets, reflecting their importance to regional and local economies and encouraging. Complementary new facilities should be encouraged in line with market demand. At this time, a specific major new regional tourism development opportunity has not been identified, however, in line with other regional policies, tourism policy should enable appropriate major new opportunities to be embraced.
7. Reinforcing tourism and culture's role in supporting the development of Birmingham as a global city. Developing Birmingham as a premier European city break destination utilising contemporary culture will further enhance its role as an international leader in the conference and exhibitions sector.
8. The importance of the visitor economy to many rural areas, where activity by its character is more dispersed than urban areas, but is proportionately more important in terms of business base and employment, should be recognised. Tourism and the visitor economy is a key source of diversification and regeneration for many rural communities
9. A reflection of the importance of the concept of destination experience - while key individual assets are key attractors, the principal of planning within the context of an overall destination is critical to success in the visitor economy. This necessitates recognition of links with other elements of strategic policy i.e. transport, public realm, heritage etc (x ref. Transport, Quality of the Environment, climate change, rural, Prosperity for All policies). Key destinations include Stratford-upon-Avon and Ironbridge
10. The sector's role in place building and contributing to environments which are attractive for businesses, investors and residents, and creating a sense of place.
11. Recognition that the visitor economy and visitor demand can create demand for additional cultural, sports and leisure facilities that help improve the quality of life for people living in the region. It can support the care and management of historic and natural environments. At a local level, tourism can be used as a focus for regeneration and can help sustain the viability and vitality of local services such as shops, cafes, pubs and post offices. This is particularly important for rural areas.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy recommendation on Culture, Tourism and Sport, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table overleaf highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation	Comments
Availability and Provision		
RP1: Service provision and availability	Affect the availability of public and private services?	<p>Likely positive impact. The difficulties of transport/accessibility for rural communities are acknowledged. By encouragement of tourism and the visitor economy in areas well served by public transport means that most rural areas will be denied equitable access.</p> <p>We endorse the need to improve transport/accessibility to compensate and encourage alternative access/transport solutions and encourage alternative funding streams</p>
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents/visitors can access areas where assets and facilities are few and far between?	<p>Likely positive impact. At a local level, tourism can be used as a focus for regeneration, helping to sustain the viability and vibrancy of local services.</p> <p>Multi-use centres – sharing premises with other providers in order to maintain or create sufficient critical mass thus ensuring the viability of provision.</p>
RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector? Will there be similar opportunities for choice and competition? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver?	<p>Rural areas have some of the most superb natural assets and local distinctiveness on offer – much in private sector ownership.</p> <p>However, to unlock this potential it may be necessary to encourage commercial providers with incentives and offset higher rural costs where necessary.</p>
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	<p>Many agencies and local authorities will be hard pushed in terms of implementation particularly to remote rural areas and communities.</p> <p>Further encouragement to allow for higher unit delivery costs in funding formulae (e.g. a 'sparsity' factor) or when specifying cost efficiency criteria; and encouragement towards joint provision to reduce costs is advocated.</p>

RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas, where private, public and voluntary sector organisations tend to be smaller and have less capacity to build partnerships?	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and provide specific support for capacity building where required.
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	To ensure rural people and places are not disadvantaged, rural solutions might include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. reduce the need to travel by using mobile services, local delivery or telephone/internet; 5. touring strategy - ease travel by co-ordinating or improving transport links (e.g. additional services, demand responsive transport, community transport/community car schemes, taxi vouchers); 6. alleviate the costs of travel by subsidising services or individuals(remembering that there may be no public transport service or operating times between many locations).
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	It may be necessary to consider using regulation or licences to encourage the development of improved infrastructure; encouraging or co-ordinating demand to make supply viable; using the public sector's collective demand to stimulate supply; or providing alternative means of accessing the tourism/visitor offer.
RP8: Administrative Areas	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access sport, culture or tourism facilities.	Encourage "postcode" blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense. Note: additional needs of rural communities/tourists accessing assets and facilities either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact and add value through integrated packages.
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and sites/areas defined ensuring any development will contribute to local character and distinctiveness. It is good to see that high quality sustainable development that will contribute to local character and distinctiveness is advocated.
Communications		

RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy for rural communities and individuals who wish to take advantage of the tourism/visitor offer is advocated.
Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction?	A positive impact Where possible the policies should avoid imposing additional regulatory or other burdens that will disproportionately affect small firms and micro-businesses
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas?	A positive impact on the rural economy
RP13: Impact upon those on low income	Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce are engaged in part-time or seasonal employment.	For those locations where the tourism/visitor offer is to be created or enhanced this will have a positive impact with the likelihood of greater employment opportunities. Consider measures to improve the choice of work through increasing skills and transport links.
Disadvantage		
RP14: Disadvantaged Groups	To be targeted at disadvantaged people or places? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods?	Consider targeting population groups rather than deprived areas – aimed at increasing participation and improving the quality of life. Specific distribution/locational criteria would maximise investment and regeneration opportunities, addressing social drivers

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY – QE1 Integrated Approach to the Management of Environmental Resources

1.9 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the draft Policy Recommendation on the Quality of the Environment – Integrated Approach to the Management of Environmental Resources and is a key component for influencing the authors of the Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Recommendation for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the Policy Recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The Policy Recommendation and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.2 Integrated Approach to the Management of Environmental Resources

The Phase Three Revision aims to develop a strategy for the protection, conservation, enhancement and management of the region's environmental assets and resources, for their intrinsic value and wider social and economic benefits

It is proposed that the new overarching environmental policy (QE1) should articulate:

- a) A vision or reference to a vision for the region's environment for positive enhancement and environmental gain, drawing on the ecosystems approach, quality of place and other initiatives, developing the environmental elements from the Sustainable Region policies and setting the context for more specific environmental policies, where relevant

- b) A regional dimension to key global/international goals/themes, such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and the integrity of European sites, enhancement of degraded or damaged areas and environmental justice, emphasising the intrinsic importance of environmental assets and the services that the environment provides, such as flood prevention/alleviation and local climate regulation
- c) The contribution that the environment can make towards the creation of sustainable communities, including opportunities to enhance place making, health and well-being, and local distinctiveness, in the context of the growth and regeneration agenda
- d) The importance of protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment for urban and rural renaissance, for the image and attractiveness of the region as a place to live, work and invest, and to deliver a low carbon economy
- e) Key integrating themes which will be promoted to ensure multi-functional benefits, and within which more detailed environmental policy can be provided;
 - To conserve and enhance the historic environment and deliver quality in the built environment;
 - To protect and enhance green infrastructure and establish and promote a landscape scale approach; and
 - To conserve and enhance natural resources and minimise the consumption of resources
- f) The key delivery mechanisms for environmental enhancement.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to this Policy Recommendation, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table below highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	A positive impact. Improvement in the environment meeting social and economic needs mean that there might be less reliance/need for the centralisation of services and the needs of the rural communities can be better catered for in situ giving a boost to the rural economy providing some of them.
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Not directly relevant but may indirectly enhance the existing service provision, particularly in rural areas.

RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector? Will there be similar opportunities for choice and competition? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver?	A positive impact. Highly likely that there will be a strong private sector involvement – particularly from land owners and managers as well as construction companies offering employment and support for local services
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	AWM, RDPE, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, English Heritage, local authorities and others' Implementation Plans for managing the region's environmental assets should allow for higher unit costs in funding formulae if applicable.
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Public, private and voluntary sector delivery likely and it will be important that all are able to compete fairly and equitably in terms of funds for delivery. Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive.	There will be the continuing need to carefully examine transport/access issues; minimising the impact on the rural road infrastructure and on road safety considerations
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	Consider using regulation or licences to encourage the development of improved infrastructure needed Not relevant

RP8: Administrative Areas	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.	Encourage “postcode” blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense. Note: additional needs of rural communities either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact.
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs being mapped and defined ensuring any development is of high quality and will contribute to local character and distinctiveness with minimum environmental impacts
Communications		
RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas
Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction?	Positive Impact. The local economy and, with it, employment opportunities – creating jobs and economic value is very welcome particularly in rural areas and amongst rural communities

<p>RP12: Impact on land-based industries</p>	<p>Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? Will there be a knock-on effect on the environment (given that 70% of the land is farmed)?</p>	<p>Positive Impact. Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic and environmental benefits – promoting local supply chains where possible and allowing/ encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises.</p>
<p>RP13: Impact upon those on low income</p>	<p>Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment?</p>	<p>A probable positive impact. Additional employment opportunities e.g. traditional/journeyman skills could increase or extend the availability of seasonal employment opportunities. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).</p>
<p>Disadvantage</p>		
<p>RP14: Disadvantaged Groups</p>	<p>To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)?</p>	<p>Not directly relevant but increased access to local greenspace may improve health & wellbeing – particularly for low income disadvantaged groups or families are likely to be welcomed.</p>

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY – QE2: Restoring Degraded Areas and Managing and Creating High Quality New Environments

1.10 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the Policy Recommendation for policies on the Quality of the Environment – Restoring Degraded Areas and Managing and Creating High Quality New Environments and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Recommendation for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the Policy Recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The Policy Recommendation and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

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

The Phase Three Revision seeks to recognise the role of brownfield land and the reuse and repair of existing buildings in regeneration and the wider social and environmental benefits.

It is proposed that a revised policy and text for Policy QE2 could:

- (a) Recognise the key role that brownfield land can play in the transformation/regeneration of the region, especially its major urban areas
- (b) Ensure that the wider social and environmental benefits of brownfield land, such as brownfield land habitats, and the multiple benefits of green infrastructure, including recreation, flood risk management, biodiversity and geodiversity, and the promotion of good health, are recognised and nurtured, and delivered as an integral part of any new development

- (c) Recognise the particular circumstances of large brownfield sites in rural locations and the potential to contribute to wider sustainability objectives
- (d) Recognise the benefits of the reuse and repair of existing buildings, particularly those of historic interest, and the potential for surviving archaeological interest
- (e) Encourage the preparation of Brownfield Land Action Plans/previously developed land strategies in areas with significant problems of brownfield land.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to these policy recommendations, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table below highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation.....	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Likely – positive impact. Improvement in the attractiveness of disadvantaged areas meeting social and economic needs mean that there might be less reliance/need for the centralisation of services and the needs of the rural communities can be better catered for in situ giving a boost to the rural economy providing some of them.
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Not really relevant - may indirectly enhance the existing service provision, particularly in rural areas.
RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector? Will there be similar opportunities for choice and competition? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver?	Positive impact. Highly likely that there will be a strong private sector involvement – particularly from land owners and managers as well as construction companies offering employment and support for local services
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Transport logistics, accessing materials and transport/accommodation for people doing the work may impact. Low scale, low carbon technologies and solutions and the encouragement of economies and efficiencies through supporting local supply chains/just-in-time deliveries would be welcomed

RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Specific support may be required in terms of capacity building and encouragement for private and voluntary sector input Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	There will be the continuing need to carefully examine transport/access issues; minimising the impact on the rural road infrastructure and on road safety considerations
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	Consider using regulation or licences to encourage the development of improved infrastructure needed
RP8: Administrative Areas	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.	Encourage "postcode" blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense. Note: additional needs of rural communities either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact.
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs being mapped and defined ensuring any development is of high quality and will contribute to local character and distinctiveness with minimum environmental impacts
Communications		
RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas

Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy (including women running part-time businesses)?	Positive Impact. The local economy and, with it, employment opportunities – creating jobs and economic value is very welcome particularly in rural areas and amongst rural communities
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas?	Positive Impact. Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic and environmental benefits – promoting local supply chains where possible and allowing/encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises.
RP13: Impact upon those on low income	Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work (e.g. agriculture, tourism)?	A probable positive impact. Additional employment opportunities e.g. traditional/journeyman skills could increase or extend the availability of seasonal employment opportunities. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).
Disadvantage		
RP14: Disadvantaged Groups	To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)?	Not directly relevant but increased access to local greenspace may improve health & wellbeing – particularly for low income disadvantaged groups or families are likely to be welcomed.

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY – QE4: Green Infrastructure (Formerly known as Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Services)

1.11 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the Policy Recommendations on the Quality of the Environment – Green Infrastructure and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Options for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the Policy Recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text has been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.2 Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Services

The Phase Three Revision seeks to promote greater emphasis on Green Infrastructure and the wider sustainability that it can deliver. Reference is made to the recreational resources including access and the requirement for Local Authorities to produce Green Infrastructure Strategies in growth areas and regeneration areas

It is proposed that a revised policy and text for Policy QE4 should be re-titled “Green Infrastructure”, and could include:

- (a) Placing a greater emphasis on Green Infrastructure, advocating an integrated, multi-functional and consistent approach across the region as defined by green infrastructure planning.
- (b) Using the West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus definition as a foundation with supporting text including historic environment/character/local distinctiveness.

- (c) Placing emphasis on the wider sustainability benefits that Green Infrastructure can deliver, especially within new developments, in areas of deprivation, including improving the image and attractiveness of an area, potential contribution to renewable energy/biomass, woodlands, recreation/play, health and well-being, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, minimising flood risk, enhancing the supporting functions of the land around European sites and the conservation of biodiversity.
- (d) Referring to recreational resources including access and emphasising the importance of PPG17 assessments being seen as part of wider Green Infrastructure Strategies rather than stand-alone documents.
- (e) Encouraging/requiring local authorities to produce Green Infrastructure Strategies, especially in growth areas and regeneration areas.
- (f) Ensuring a strong link to the Overarching Environment Management Policy recognising the importance of Green Infrastructure as part of Ecosystems Services delivery.
- (g) Recognising the need to map the existing green infrastructure resource in a holistic and integrated way to make sure all aspects of GI uses, functions and opportunities are taken into account, and identifying priorities for green infrastructure provision taking into account related work on regional natural environment priorities and other initiatives.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy recommendations on Greenery, Greenspace and Public services, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table below highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Likely – positive impact. Wider sustainability benefits mean that there might be less reliance/need for the centralisation of services and the needs of the rural communities can be better catered for in situ giving a boost to the rural economy providing some of them.

RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Relevant. This policy may enhance the existing service provision, particularly in rural areas and, in particular, throughout the Rural Regeneration Zone Possibility of delivering more effective public and community transport solutions – green corridors, “slow” travel, cycle routes, etc.
RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector? Will there be similar opportunities for choice and competition? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver?	Positive impact. Highly likely that there will be a strong private sector involvement – particularly from land owners and managers in terms of implementing the Green Infrastructure Strategies
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Allow for higher costs of implementation. The encouragement of economies and efficiencies through supporting local supply chains/just-in-time deliveries would be welcomed in rural areas
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Specific support may be required in terms of capacity building and encouragement for private and voluntary sector input Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	There will be the continuing need to carefully examine transport/access issues; minimising the impact on the rural road infrastructure and on road safety considerations

RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	Consider using regulation or licences to encourage development of improved green infrastructure
RP8: Administrative Areas	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.	Encourage "postcode" blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense. Note: additional needs of rural communities either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact.
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs being mapped and defined ensuring any green infrastructure is appropriate, of high quality and will contribute to local character and distinctiveness with minimum environmental impacts
Communications		
RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas
Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy (including women running part-time businesses)?	Positive Impact. The green economy and, with it, green employment opportunities – creating jobs and economic value is very welcome particularly in rural areas and amongst rural communities

<p>RP12: Impact on land-based industries</p>	<p>Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? What are the implications for businesses based on natural resources such as tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production?</p>	<p>Positive Impact. Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic and environmental benefits – promoting local supply chains where possible and allowing/ encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises.</p>
<p>RP13: Impact upon those on low income</p>	<p>Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work (e.g. agriculture, tourism)?</p>	<p>A probable positive impact. Additional employment opportunities could increase or extend the availability of employment opportunities. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).</p>
<p>Disadvantage</p>		
<p>RP14: Disadvantaged Groups</p>	<p>To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)?</p>	<p>Not directly relevant but increased access to local greenspace may improve health & wellbeing – particularly for low income disadvantaged groups or families are likely to be welcomed.</p>

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY – QE5: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

1.12 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the Policy Recommendations on the Quality of the Environment – Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the Policy Recommendations for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the Policy Recommendations are likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.2 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

The Phase Three Revision seeks to promote greater emphasis on the protection and enhancement of the historic environment mindful that it is a finite and non-renewable resource. It is important to recognise the benefits in terms local distinctiveness and sense of place to tourism, leisure, educational and cultural activities as well as to the economy and to sustainability. Managing change and the provision of necessary tools and guidance is advocated.

It is proposed that a revised policy and text for Policy QE5 should:

- (a) Reflect and take forward the principles of the Heritage White Paper, Heritage Protection Bill and the draft PPS15, such as the finite and irreplaceable nature of the historic environment, the importance of the undesignated resource and of consulting communities to determine what they value and why, and managing change in ways which are informed by an understanding of the significance of the historic environment and local character and distinctiveness.

- (b) Take forward the Regional Historic Environment Strategy by recognising and promoting the positive social, economic and environmental benefits of the historic environment to the region's character, local distinctiveness and sense of place, to leisure, educational and cultural activities, to the economy (e.g. heritage-led regeneration, heritage skills, quality of place and attracting inward investment, building repair and reuse, tourism) and to sustainability (e.g. reuse of buildings/resource efficiency).
- (c) Review the lists of regionally distinctive aspects of the Region's historic environment, and the opportunities and priorities for enhancement and regeneration, including heritage at risk, in the context of the region's urban and rural renaissance.
- (d) Provide guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment in areas of the region likely to experience the greatest change, such as the Major Urban Areas, Settlements of Significant Development, and other areas where growth and regeneration are likely to be concentrated.
- (e) Retain an emphasis on the consideration of historic landscapes and townscapes as a whole, and encourage local authorities to build on the region's expanding coverage and resource of historic landscape and urban characterisation initiatives, and other data, through their use in understanding the historic character of places, their significance and their sensitivity to and capacity for change.
- (f) Include suitable guidance on the protection, sustainable use, including enhancement where appropriate, of the region's two World Heritage Sites which takes account of specific regional and local circumstances.
- (g) Establish a strong link to the integrated environment management policy with the historic environment recognised as an environmental asset integral to the region's sustainability, quality of place and economic prosperity.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy recommendations on the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table below highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Rural communities are particularly vulnerable to service cuts as they are already reliant on a limited number and have reduced access to alternatives in terms of the historic environment, education, leisure and tourism. Consider in particular the difficulties of transport/accessibility for rural communities to ensure equitable access.

RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Consider the use of mobile and outreach opportunities or the use of ICT to link up individuals/communities with the opportunities and experiences available.
RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector?	Positive impact. Highly likely that there will be a strong private sector involvement – particularly from land owners and managers in terms of protecting and enhancing the historic environment in rural locations
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Allow for higher costs of implementation The encouragement of economies and efficiencies through supporting local supply chains/just-in-time deliveries would be welcomed in rural areas – supporting local employment too
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Specific support may be required in terms of capacity building and encouragement for private and voluntary sector input Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	There is a need for greater inter-connectivity between urban and rural areas and between market towns and surrounding smaller rural settlements.
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	It may be necessary to consider using regulation or licences to encourage the development of improved infrastructure; encouraging or co-ordinating demand to make supply viable; using the public sector's collective demand to stimulate supply; or providing alternative means of accessing the historic environment

RP8: Administrative Areas	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.	Encourage “postcode” blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense. Note: additional needs of rural communities either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact.
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and sites/areas defined ensuring any development will contribute to local character and distinctiveness. Ensure high quality sustainable development that will contribute to local character and distinctiveness
Communications		
RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas
Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy (including women running part-time businesses)?	A positive effect – but where possible the policies should avoid imposing additional regulatory or other burdens that will disproportionately affect small firms and micro-businesses

<p>RP12: Impact on land-based industries</p>	<p>Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? Will there be a knock-on effect on the environment (given that 70% of the land is farmed)? Conversely, if the policy affects the environment, what are the implications for businesses based on natural resources such as tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production?</p>	<p>Positive Impact. Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic and environmental benefits – promoting local supply chains where possible and allowing/ encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises.</p>
<p>RP13: Impact upon those on low income</p>	<p>Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work (e.g. agriculture, tourism)?</p>	<p>A probable positive impact. Additional employment opportunities particularly utilising traditional skills could increase or extend the availability of jobs. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).</p>
<p>Disadvantage</p>		
<p>RP14: Disadvantaged Groups</p>	<p>To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)?</p>	<p>Not directly relevant but increased access to the historic environment may improve health & wellbeing – particularly for low income disadvantaged groups or families are likely to be welcomed. Consider targeting population groups rather than deprived areas – aimed at increasing participation and improving the quality of life</p>

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY – QE6: The Conservation, Enhancement and Restoration of the Region’s Landscape

1.13 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the Policy Recommendation for revised policy on the Quality of the Environment – The Conservation, Enhancement and Restoration of the Region’s Landscape and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the Policy Recommendations for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the policy recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.2 The Conservation, Enhancement and Restoration of the Region’s Landscape

The Phase Three Revision seeks to promote greater emphasis on the positive management of all landscapes, particularly noting the pressures on the landscape in growth areas and the urban fringe. Whilst identifying priorities for landscape restoration and enhancement there is also a call to strengthen references to tranquillity, noise and light pollution, to geodiversity and to townscapes and maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness.

It is proposed that a revised policy and text for QE6 should be based upon:

- (a) Recognising the European Landscape Convention as the National and European context for protecting, managing and planning the region’s landscapes; and encouraging local authorities to prepare action plans for the implementation of the Convention.
- (b) Emphasising the importance of managing all landscapes positively – explaining the shift to ‘All Landscapes Matter’.

- (c) Including the protected landscapes element of QE1 and encouraging local planning authorities and other relevant authorities to have regard to AONB Management Plans and use them as exemplars for an integrated approach to landscape management.
- (d) Retaining the use of Landscape Character Assessment including Historic Landscape Characterisation and integrated assessments.
- (e) Updating Figure 4: Natural and Character Areas in the West Midlands with a new map identifying the National Character Areas and their condition using CQC/CQuEL as a monitoring mechanism.
- (f) Ensuring a strong link to the overarching Environmental Management Policy and including references to geodiversity (sits mainly within biodiversity policy QE7), townscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness, tranquillity, noise and light pollution
- (g) Identifying priorities for landscape restoration and enhancement, based on National Character Area Objectives, the monitoring results from CQC/CQuEL, AONB Management Plan Objectives, and taking into account related work on identifying regional natural environment priorities and other initiatives.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy recommendation on the conservation, enhancement and restoration of the Region's landscape, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table below highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the option/proposal.....	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	<p>Likely positive impact. Endorsing the emphasis on managing landscapes positively thereby maintaining/increasing the number of services available and maintaining service standards.</p> <p>Improve transport/accessibility to compensate and encourage alternative access/transport solutions and encourage alternative funding streams</p>

RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Likely positive impact. The number of service outlets is declining in peri-urban and rural areas. Again, positive landscape management and enhancing local distinctiveness of market towns and villages and isolated settlements is commended.
RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector?	Likely positive impact. Highly likely that there will be a strong private sector involvement – particularly from land owners and managers. Likelihood of extending the employment prospects in many rural areas – private and third sector involvement.
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Preparation of implementation/action plans by local authorities and others for managing the region's landscapes should allow for higher unit costs in funding formulae if applicable.
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Public, private and voluntary sector delivery likely and it will be important that all are able to compete fairly and equitably in terms of funds for delivery. Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	Not directly relevant, but improving the travel options/modes will improve access

<p>RP7: Infrastructure</p>	<p>Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?</p>	<p>Not directly relevant. The local distinctiveness of the region's landscapes is important. Where existing infrastructure is weak e.g. narrow rural roads, bridges with weight restrictions, etc. then additional thought must be given to getting materials, structures for landscape improvement on to site.</p>
<p>RP8: Administrative Areas</p>	<p>Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.</p>	<p>Unspecified. Landscape character areas generally disregard administrative boundaries but further work is needed in terms of identifying inter-regional or international (Wales) relationships/synergies/policy delivery. Where possible, encourage "postcode" blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense.</p>
<p>RP9: New buildings or development sites</p>	<p>Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?</p>	<p>Positive landscape management should ensure high quality sustainable development.</p> <p>Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and sites/areas defined ensuring any development will contribute to local character and distinctiveness.</p>
<p>Communications</p>		
<p>RP10: Communication</p>	<p>Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?</p>	<p>A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas</p>

Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy	Positive effect – particularly on smaller businesses and those that typically employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas. Where possible the policies should avoid imposing additional regulatory or other burdens that will disproportionately affect small firms and micro-businesses
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? Will there be a knock-on effect on the environment (given that 70% of the land is farmed)? Conversely, if the policy affects the environment, what are the implications for businesses based on natural resources such as tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production?	Positive Impact – particularly for businesses which rely on a high quality environment in rural areas, e.g. farming, forestry, tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production. Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic and environmental benefits. Maximise the use of incentives for environmentally friendly practices allowing for and encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises
RP13: Impact upon those on low income	Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work (e.g. agriculture, tourism)?	Likely positive impact. Additional employment opportunities particularly utilising traditional skills could increase or extend the availability of jobs. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).
Disadvantage		
RP14: Disadvantaged Groups	To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)	Not directly relevant but improved landscapes and employment opportunities may lead to a better quality of life for disadvantaged individuals and rural communities.

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY – QE7: Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the Region’s Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources

1.14 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the Policy Recommendation on Policies for the Quality of the Environment – Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the Region’s Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Recommendations for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the policy recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text has been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.15 Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the Region’s Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources

The Phase Three Revision seeks to support resilient, natural systems across the region promoting delivery at a landscape scale and linking fragmented habitats

It is proposed that a revised Policy QE7 could:

- (a) Refer to the need to support resilient natural systems across the region, through for example promoting delivery at a landscape scale and linking fragmented habitats
- (b) Recognise the need to ensure that biodiversity assets can adapt to expected future climate change
- (c) Deliver an agreed set of regional habitat targets linked to the Regional Opportunities map

- (d) Require that local opportunity maps are developed as part of the Local Development Framework process
- (e) Emphasise the social and economic benefits of biodiversity across the region
- (f) Ensure that benefits for biodiversity are captured from the housing and other growth proposals for the region
- (g) Raise awareness of the statutory duty on local authorities to ensure beneficial management of Local Sites for biodiversity and geodiversity
- (h) Recognise the potential for biodiversity enhancement associated with mineral extraction
- (i) Incorporate Geodiversity

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy recommendation on protecting, managing and enhancing the Region's biodiversity and nature conservation resources, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the overleaf highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Unclear but possible positive impact. Endorsing the emphasis on the need for resilient natural resources and beneficial management for enhanced social and economic benefits
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Not directly relevant. The number of service outlets is declining in urban and rural areas but more keenly felt in rural areas

RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector?	Likely positive impact. The work engendered by the policy is likely to be delivered by a large proportion of public/private & voluntary sector partnerships. There is also the likelihood of extending the employment prospects in many rural areas – increased private and third sector involvement.
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Mapping and truthing by local authorities and others for managing the region's biodiversity and geodiversity should allow for higher unit costs in funding formulae if applicable.
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Likely positive impact but specific support for capacity building may be required Public, private and voluntary sector delivery likely and it will be important that all are able to compete fairly and equitably in terms of funds for delivery. Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	Not directly relevant.
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker, some infrastructure doesn't exist and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	Not directly relevant.

RP8: Administrative Areas	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.	Unspecified. Biodiversity and Geodiversity disregards administrative boundaries but further work is needed in terms of identifying inter-regional or international (Wales) relationships/synergies/policy delivery. Where possible, encourage “postcode” blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense.
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	Policy must ensure that the benefits of biodiversity are captured in the housing and other growth proposals in rural areas. Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and sites/areas defined ensuring any development will contribute to local character and distinctiveness.
Communications		
RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas
Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy	Positive effect – particularly on smaller businesses and those that typically employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas. Where possible the policies should avoid imposing additional regulatory or other burdens that will disproportionately affect small firms and micro-businesses Work generated through surveys, habitat creation, maintenance and management particularly in rural areas is welcomed

<p>RP12: Impact on land-based industries</p>	<p>Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? Will there be a knock-on effect on the environment (given that 70% of the land is farmed)? Conversely, if the policy affects the environment, what are the implications for businesses based on natural resources such as tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production?</p>	<p>Positive Impact – particularly for businesses which rely on a high quality environment in rural areas, e.g. farming, forestry, tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production.</p> <p>Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic and environmental benefits. Maximise the use of incentives for environmentally friendly practices allowing for and encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises</p>
<p>RP13: Impact upon those on low income</p>	<p>Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work (e.g. agriculture, tourism)?</p>	<p>Likely positive impact.</p> <p>Additional employment opportunities particularly utilising traditional skills could increase or extend the availability of jobs. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).</p>
<p>Disadvantage</p>		
<p>RP14: Disadvantaged Groups</p>	<p>To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)</p>	<p>Not directly relevant but improved, enhanced biodiversity brings employment opportunities and leads to a better quality of life for disadvantaged individuals and rural communities.</p>

RURAL PROOFING OF THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY – QE8: Trees, Woods and Forestry (Formerly Forestry and Woodlands)

1.16 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the policy recommendation on the Quality of the Environment – Trees, Woods and Forestry and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Options for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the policy recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.2 Trees, Woods and Forestry

The Phase Three Revision seeks to promote the continued enhancement of woodland creation and management in the region with complementary but different priorities for trees and woodland in rural areas and in urban areas. There is stronger emphasis on the woodland and forestry policy which contributes to climate change adaptation and mitigation; to woodfuel in terms of energy production; to the industry sector in terms of contributing to the rural economy; and to delivering a range of social, health and wellbeing benefits for all.

It is proposed that a revised Policy QE8 could:

- (a) Ensure that the place and importance of the Regional Forestry Framework is recognised and both links with and adds value to other strategies and policy areas.

- (b) Recognise the significant contribution that the region's trees and woodlands can make to mitigate and adapt to climate change, helping to meet the Government's low carbon agenda and contributing to water quality and flood management issues.
- (c) In line with the above, encourage delivery of the multiple benefits to be gained from a significant increase in woodland cover through woodland creation, carefully targeted utilising opportunity mapping guidance.
- (d) Reflect the major contribution that trees and woodlands make to green infrastructure, seeking to achieve a greater emphasis on this in line with the recommendations for Policy QE4.
- (e) Seek to take forward the major contributions trees and woodlands can provide for delivery of PSA 28 priorities, including ecosystem services delivery at a landscape scale.
- (f) Protect and restore the region's veteran trees and ancient woodlands in line with Keepers in Time policy and UKBAP habitat targets.
- (g) Strengthen the priority given to street trees and woodland in the West Midlands conurbation and urban areas, also seeking to ensure that new development and regeneration fully encompasses the range of benefits they can provide, including for health and well-being.
- (h) Further develop the evidence base and encourage recognition of the benefits to the regional economy from trees and woodland, including the sustainable harvesting and utilisation of wood and timber for a range of markets.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy recommendation on forestry and woodlands i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table below highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the option/proposal.....	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Likely positive impact. The trees, woodland and forestry industry contributes to the rural economy and, in turn, the sustainability of rural services
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Likely positive impact. The number of service outlets is declining in peri-urban and rural areas. Again, through partnership funding and support for local wood products and supply chain development, the policy can improve availability and support local service outlets.

RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector?	Likely positive impact. Highly likely that there will be a strong private sector involvement – particularly from land owners and managers. Likelihood of extending the employment prospects in many rural areas – private and third sector involvement.
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Preparation of action plans by Forestry Commission, Natural England, local authorities and others for managing the region's trees, woods and forests should allow for higher unit costs in funding formulae if applicable.
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Public, private and voluntary sector delivery likely and it will be important that all are able to compete fairly and equitably in terms of funds for delivery.
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	Travel options/modes are of necessity very limited, e.g. Work vehicles, purpose-built machines and timber wagons with the ability to access remote/isolated rural parts of the region rather than general purpose transport. No public transport alternative. There is a need to alleviate these additional travel costs through subsidy or in-building into work contracts.
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	Some impact. Where existing infrastructure is weak e.g. narrow rural roads, forest roads, bridges with weight restrictions, culverts, etc. then additional thought must be given to getting machines, materials, structures for woodland management on to site and the removal of timber/timber transport.

RP8: Administrative Areas	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.	Unspecified. Trees, woods and forests generally span administrative boundaries but further work is needed in terms of identifying inter-regional or international (Wales) relationships/synergies/policy delivery. Where possible, encourage “postcode” blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision (timber markets, preferred routing, secondary processing, etc) across administrative borders where this makes sense.
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	Positive landscape, woodland creation and management should ensure high quality sustainable development. Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and sites/areas defined ensuring any development will contribute to local character and distinctiveness.
Communications		
RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning or felling/planting proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas
Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy	Positive effect – particularly on smaller businesses and those that typically employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas. Where possible the policies should avoid imposing additional regulatory or other burdens that will disproportionately affect small firms and micro-businesses

<p>RP12: Impact on land-based industries</p>	<p>Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? Will there be a knock-on effect on the environment (given that 70% of the land is farmed)? Conversely, if the policy affects the environment, what are the implications for businesses based on natural resources such as tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production?</p>	<p>Positive Impact – particularly for businesses which rely on a high quality environment in rural areas, e.g. farm woodland, forestry, tourism, leisure, renewable energy and other non-wood products.</p> <p>Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic and environmental benefits. Maximise the use of incentives for environmentally friendly practices allowing for and encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises</p>
<p>RP13: Impact upon those on low income</p>	<p>Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work (e.g. agriculture, tourism)?</p>	<p>Likely positive impact.</p> <p>Additional employment opportunities particularly utilising high technology and traditional skills could increase or extend the availability of jobs. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).</p>
<p>Disadvantage</p>		
<p>RP14: Disadvantaged Groups</p>	<p>To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)</p>	<p>Likely positive impact. Improved wooded landscapes, employment opportunities, enhanced access opportunities and the multi-benefits of trees and woodlands will likely contribute to a better quality of life for disadvantaged individuals and rural communities in particular.</p>

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND – No Existing Policy

1.17 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the policy recommendation for updating policy on the Quality of the Environment – Protection of Agricultural Land (Paragraphs 8.38 and 8.39) and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Recommendation for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the policy recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text has been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process. Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.2 Protection of Agricultural Land

The policy recommendation proposes that revised text for Agricultural Land in paragraphs 8.38 and 8.39 of the existing WMRSS could address the following issues:

- (a) The importance of the quality of agricultural land and soils, and food production and security regionally
- (b) The need to protect the best quality agricultural land, particularly in areas of significant growth or of valued landscapes
- (c) The wider sustainability benefits to which agricultural land can contribute, including underpinning of the rural economy, tourism and leisure, access to open space, maintaining landscapes and adaptation to the impacts of climate change
- (d) The potential for diversification of agricultural land to contribute to flood risk management
- (e) The potential to encourage local sourcing of food and energy crops
- (f) The potential for encouraging the management of agricultural land for biodiversity
- (g) Any variations in the agricultural importance across the region.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy suggestions on the water environment, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table below highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Likely positive impact. The agricultural industry contributes to the rural economy and, in turn, the sustainability of rural services
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Likely positive impact. The number of service outlets is declining in peri-urban and rural areas. Again, through partnership funding and support for local food products and supply chain development, the policy can improve availability and support local service outlets.
RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector?	Likely positive impact. Highly likely that there will be a strong private sector involvement – particularly from land owners and managers. Likelihood of extending the employment prospects in many rural areas – private and third sector involvement.
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Preparation of action plans by Natural England, local authorities and others for the protection of agricultural land should allow for higher unit costs in funding formulae if applicable.

RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Public and private sector delivery likely and it will be important that all are able to compete fairly and equitably in terms of funds for delivery. Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	Not directly relevant.
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	Very reliant on infrastructure. Where existing rural infrastructure is weak e.g. narrow rural roads, bridges with weight restrictions, etc. then additional thought must be given to getting materials, structures on to site and minimising any environmental impacts.
RP8: Administrative Areas	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.	Unspecified. Agricultural land spans administrative boundaries but further work is needed in terms of identifying inter-regional or international (Wales) relationships/synergies/policy delivery. Where possible, encourage "postcode" blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision (timber markets, preferred routing, secondary processing, etc) across administrative borders where this makes sense.
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	Create flexibility for development to be located in rural areas where it is most appropriate and most needed. Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and sites/areas defined ensuring any development will contribute to local character and distinctiveness.

Communications		
RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas
Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy	Positive effect – particularly on smaller businesses and those that typically employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas. Where possible the policies should avoid imposing additional regulatory or other burdens that will disproportionately affect small firms and micro-businesses
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? Will there be a knock-on effect on the environment (given that 70% of the land is farmed)? Conversely, if the policy affects the environment, what are the implications for businesses based on natural resources such as tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production?	Positive Impact – particularly for businesses which rely on a high quality environment in rural areas, e.g. farming, forestry, tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production. Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic, biodiversity, green infrastructure and environmental benefits. Maximise the use of incentives for environmentally friendly practices allowing for and encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises
RP13: Impact upon those on low income	Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work (e.g. agriculture, tourism)?	Likely positive impact. Additional employment opportunities arising from installing/replacing infrastructure could increase or extend the availability of jobs. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).
Disadvantage		
RP14: Disadvantaged Groups	To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods?	Not directly relevant but high quality agricultural land and employment opportunities may lead to a better quality of life for disadvantaged individuals and rural communities.

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIR QUALITY – No Existing Policy

1.18 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the policy recommendation for updating policy on Air Quality (Paragraphs 8.45 and 8.46) and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Recommendation for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the policy recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text has been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process. Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.2 Update of Air Quality

The policy recommendation proposes that the text for Air Quality in paragraphs 8.45 and 8.46 of the existing WMRSS could be updated to reflect the following issues:

- (a) The wider benefits which good air quality can provide for human health, biodiversity
- (b) The links to accessibility, congestion and public transport provision
- (c) The potential effects of the planned growth in the Phase 2 Revision
- (d) The findings from the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the RSS Revision Phases 2, which highlighted the impacts of Phase 2 Revision development proposals on the European nature conservation sites within and beyond the region
- (e) Any variations in air quality across the region

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy suggestions on the water environment, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table overleaf highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Likely impact particularly if it means that accessibility to/from rural areas is sacrificed without suitable alternatives being provided
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Not relevant.
RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector?	Likely positive impact. Highly likely that there will be a strong private sector involvement – through contract management. Likelihood of extending the employment prospects in many rural areas – private and third sector involvement.
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Preparation of air quality studies and action plans by the Environment Agency, local authorities and others for managing the region's requirements should allow for higher unit costs in funding formulae if applicable.
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Public and private sector delivery likely and it will be important that all are able to compete fairly and equitably in terms of funds for delivery. Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs

Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	Not directly relevant. Accessibility, congestion and public transport provision linkages noted
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	Not directly relevant
RP8: Administrative Areas	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.	Must be embedded within the regional and local planning documents. Further work is needed in terms of identifying inter-regional or international (Wales) relationships/synergies/policy delivery. Where possible, encourage "postcode" blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense.
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	Not relevant
Communications		
RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas

Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy	Positive effect – particularly on smaller businesses and those that typically employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas. Where possible the policies should avoid imposing additional regulatory or other burdens that will disproportionately affect small firms and micro-businesses
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? Will there be a knock-on effect on the environment (given that 70% of the land is farmed)? What are the implications for businesses based on natural resources such as tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production?	Positive Impact – particularly for businesses which rely on a high quality environment in rural areas, e.g. farming, forestry, tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production. Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic, biodiversity, green infrastructure and environmental benefits. Maximise the use of incentives for environmentally friendly practices allowing for and encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises
RP13: Impact upon those on low income	Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work (e.g. agriculture, tourism)?	Likely positive impact. Additional employment opportunities arising from installing/replacing infrastructure could increase or extend the availability of jobs. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).
Disadvantage		
RP14: Disadvantaged Groups	To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)	Not directly relevant but improved air quality and employment opportunities may lead to a better quality of life for disadvantaged individuals and rural communities.

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY RECOMMENDATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES - ENERGY

1.19 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the Policy Recommendation on policies on the Quality of the Environment - Energy and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the Policy Recommendation for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the policy recommendation is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The policy recommendation and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.20 Energy

The Phase Three Revision seeks to promote the development of renewable energy and low carbon technology resources, subject to appropriate environmental and social safeguards

The policy recommendation proposes the following policy direction:

Energy Efficiency:

- Where opportunities arise, proposals for major developments should be accompanied by an energy use assessment which sets the baseline for the calculation of the proportion of on site generation and describes the measures that are being taken to put the “Energy Hierarchy” into effect.

Energy – Criteria for ensuring appropriate locations:

- Nationally significant renewable energy infrastructure – energy from biomass and/or waste and onshore wind (>50 megawatts (MW) – should have regard to (Draft) National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3).
- For renewable energy projects less than 50 MW, local planning authorities should consider the following regional criteria alongside local criteria contained within Local Development Documents:
 - a) Within the region’s nationally and internationally recognised designations, schemes should be of an appropriate scale and not compromise the objectives of the designation;
 - b) An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be required for renewable energy projects where the development falls into a category within Schedule 2(3) to the 1999 Environmental Impact Assessments Regulation and the Planning Authority adopts a “screening opinion” that EIA is required. Schemes should minimise and deal satisfactorily with any significant adverse impacts identified in visual and landscape, noise, ecological, ornithological, archaeological and historic, geological or hydrological assessments. Schemes should also minimise and deal with any significant adverse traffic management, air quality, odour, disposal of waste impacts or significant effects on tourist or recreational facilities;
 - c) The wider environmental, community and economic benefits of proposals, whatever their scale, should be given significant weight in determining planning applications.
 - d) Renewable energy schemes should not have a significant adverse cumulative impact in conjunction with other similar developments;
- As most renewable energy resources can only be developed where the resource exists and where economically feasible, there should not be a sequential approach in the consideration of renewable energy projects (for example, by giving priority to the re-use of previously developed land for renewable technology developments).
- Where appropriate, proposals should be facilitated which involve:
 - (i) Construction and upgrading of fossil fuel power stations that incorporate clean coal technology.
 - (ii) Dual use of fossil and renewable resources.
 - (iii) Good quality combined heat and power.

Regional Targets for Renewable Energy:

- Local Development Frameworks should include policies and development proposals which contribute to the achievement of the following targets:
 - a) By 2015 a minimum regional target of xxx MWe installed generating capacity, from a range of renewable electricity technologies;
 - b) By 2020 a minimum regional target of xxx MWe installed generating capacity from a range of renewable electricity technologies. This target will help to provide at least 15% of the Region's electricity demand by 2020.
- The regional policy framework, complemented by Local Development Documents, should facilitate the achievement of the following minimum sub-regional targets¹ for electricity by 2020:

Renewable Electricity Targets by Sub-Region By 2020	Installed Electricity Generating Capacity (MWe)
Herefordshire	Xx
Shropshire & Telford	Xx
Staffordshire & Stoke	Xx
Warwickshire	Xx
West Midlands County	Xx
Worcestershire	Xx

- The minimum targets for the generation of heat from renewable sources outlined below should be achieved by the use of appropriate resources and technologies:

Regional Targets for Renewable Heat	Installed Thermal Capacity (MWth)
2015	Xx
2020	Xx

- A policy for on-site renewable energy generation in new build should be in place, as set out in policy SR3 of the RSS Phase Two Preferred Option. This will directly stimulate installation of new micro-renewable heat systems.

- The Planning Policy Statement supplement on climate change (PPS1) sets out what the Government expects from good planning, and underlines that tackling climate change sits at the centre of all planning considerations. PPS22 sets national planning policy on renewable energy. Local planning authorities should have regard to both these documents when preparing Local Development Frameworks and when taking planning decisions.
- The renewable electricity and heat capacity approved through the planning process will be monitored through the local planning authorities' annual monitoring review. Capacity installed will also be monitored through the regional Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy recommendations on energy, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table below highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the policy recommendation.....	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Likely – positive impact. Decentralised energy solutions using low carbon technology resources mean that there might be less reliance/need for the centralisation of services and the needs of the rural communities can be better catered for in situ giving a boost to the rural economy providing some of them.
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Not really relevant. This policy will help the development of local alternative energy solutions – enhancing the existing service provision, particularly in rural areas where there may be more options available

RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector? Will there be similar opportunities for choice and competition? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver?	Positive impact. Highly likely that there will be a strong private sector involvement – particularly from land owners and managers as well as energy supply companies. For those rural areas and communities off the mains gas, these policies offer alternative solutions – even more than those available to many of their urban counterparts
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Unlikely to have a great impact. Low scale, low carbon technologies and solutions can be provided for. The encouragement of economies and efficiencies through supporting local supply chains/just-in-time deliveries would be welcomed in rural areas – supporting local employment too
RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas.	Specific support may be required in terms of capacity building and encouragement for private and voluntary sector input Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	There will be the continuing need to carefully examine transport/access issues; minimising the impact on the rural road infrastructure and on road safety considerations

<p>RP7: Infrastructure</p>	<p>Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?</p>	<p>The majority of the production and/or processing for wind power, bio-fuel or biomass energy solutions will be carried out in rurally isolated locations and the development of improved infrastructure is advocated.</p> <p>Consideration may be given to encourage or co-ordinate additional demand within local communities in order to make supply viable; or the use the public sector's collective demand to stimulate supply</p>
<p>RP8: Administrative Areas</p>	<p>Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas? Many rural people find it easier to cross an administrative boundary to access facilities.</p>	<p>Encourage "postcode" blindness and reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense.</p> <p>Note: additional needs of rural communities and energy provision either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact.</p>
<p>RP9: New buildings or development sites</p>	<p>Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?</p>	<p>Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs being mapped and defined ensuring any development is of high quality and will contribute to local character and distinctiveness with minimum environmental impacts</p>
<p>Communications</p>		
<p>RP10: Communication</p>	<p>Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?</p>	<p>A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing buy-in for planning proposals and the opportunity of promoting community engagement in rural areas</p>

Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy (including women running part-time businesses)?	Positive Impact. The green economy and, with it, green employment opportunities – creating jobs and economic value is very welcome particularly in rural areas and amongst rural communities
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and the mining, extraction and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas? Will there be a knock-on effect on the environment? What are the implications for businesses based on natural resources such as tourism, leisure, renewable energy and food production?	Positive Impact. Lots of opportunities to identify “win-win” solutions which will deliver economic and environmental benefits – promoting local supply chains where possible and allowing/ encouraging a diverse range of rural enterprises.
RP13: Impact upon those on low income	Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your policy implementation affect wage levels or people’s access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work (e.g. agriculture, tourism)?	A probable positive impact. Additional employment opportunities e.g. harvesting of timber, bio-fuel cropping, etc. could increase or extend the availability of seasonal employment opportunities. Consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).
Disadvantage		
RP14: Disadvantaged Groups	To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)?	Not directly relevant but alternative energy solutions – particularly for low income disadvantaged groups or families are likely to be welcomed.

RURAL PROOFING OF POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFEGUARDING MINERAL RESOURCES AND FUTURE SUPPLIES OF CONSTRUCTION AGGREGATES & FUTURE BRICK CLAY PROVISION

1.21 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the Policy Statement on Minerals Policies and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft Regional Strategy for the West Midlands. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Options for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the Policy Statement is likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The Policy Statement and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.2 Safeguarding Mineral Resources, Future Supplies of Construction Aggregates & Future Brick Clay Provision

Minerals safeguarding

The policy statement proposes that brick clays and fireclays, aggregates, natural building and roofing stone and coal and other energy minerals are safeguarded. Mineral resources of national importance and minerals and minerals related infrastructure are safeguarded by:

- Identifying the location of nationally important minerals and including them on any proposals map.
- Identifying sites and facilities of regional importance for the transportation of minerals and minerals related products
- Protection from alternative uses of land which may constrain future use of existing planned and potential facilities/sites for the bulk transport of minerals and for the manufacture of mineral related products and for alternate sources of materials for construction purposes by designating buffer zones around important facilities.

- Requiring all major proposals for the extraction of minerals and manufacture of minerals related products to be accompanied by a Transport Impact Assessment which includes an examination of the potential to transport the materials to the market by other modes of transportation.

Future Supplies of Construction Aggregates

Policy statement yet to be provided.

Future Brick Clay Provision

The policy statement seeks to ensure a 25-year supply of brick clays to support brickworks/tileries in the region. It proposes the following methods which Minerals Planning Authorities could use to ensure the requirement is met:

- Possible contributions from imports from other regions.
- Appropriate provision being made in LDFs within and/or outside the region and subsequent planning permission being granted;
- Specific sites falling outside allocations being granted planning permission;
- Prior extraction of minerals from non-mineral development where this is economically and environmentally acceptable.
- Planning permission being granted for long term off site strategic stockpiles.
- Safeguarding minerals through the planning process i.e. Mineral Safeguarding Areas and Mineral Consultation Areas.

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy statement on Minerals, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, the table overleaf highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the Policy Statement	Comments
Availability & Provision		
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	Likely to help maintain and possible enhance the level of public and private services. The safeguarding of mineral resources will help sustain the rural economy through local employment – particularly for the more remote rural communities
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?	Not relevant
RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector? Will there be similar opportunities for choice and competition? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver?	The location of many indigenous mineral resources coincides with remoter rural areas and with environmental and nature conservation designations. There are considerable economic and environmental opportunities for private sector landowners, land managers and businesses
Delivery Costs		
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?	Not relevant

RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas?	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs
Accessibility & Infrastructure		
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	There will be the continuing need to carefully examine transport/access issues; minimising the impact on the rural road infrastructure and on road safety considerations
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	The majority of the extraction and processing will be carried out in rurally isolated locations and the development of improved infrastructure is advocated. Consideration may be given to encourage or co-ordinate additional demand within local communities in order to make supply viable; or the use the public sector's collective demand to stimulate supply
RP8: Administrative Boundaries	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas?	Encourage reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense. Local, sub-regional and regional administrative boundaries - Note: additional needs of and impacts upon rural communities either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact.
RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and MSAs mapped and defined ensuring any development will contribute to local character and distinctiveness
Communications		

RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing and maintaining supplies of indigenous mineral resources in the West Midlands
Economies		
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy (including women running part-time businesses)?	A positive effect
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas?	Identify 'win-win' solutions which deliver economic and environmental benefits. Where there are opportunities for restoration allow for and encourage a diverse range of rural enterprises
RP13: Impact upon those on low income	Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your proposal affect wage levels or people's access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work	Likely to have a positive impact.
Disadvantage		
RP14: Disadvantaged Groups	To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)?	Likely to have a positive impact: providing opportunities for employment and support for existing businesses/community infrastructure in the remote rural locations; leading increased sustainability and vibrancy of the rural areas

