

## Regional Policy Partnerships

Much of the Region's strategic work is guided by regional Policy Partnerships (RPPs), comprising a wide range of interests from across the Region. Some of these partnerships are led by the Assembly, in its regional co-ordinating role, some by other partners. Several people have requested contact details for these Partnerships, so current West Midlands RPPs are listed opposite, together with an officer contact for each.

**Culture** - Jenny Boylan (j.boylan@wmra.gov.uk)  
**Energy** - Adrian Smith (a.smith@wmra.gov.uk)  
**Environment** - Chris Blakeley (c.blakeley@wmra.gov.uk)  
**European & International** - Esther Knight (e.knight@wmra.gov.uk)  
**Health** - Zena Lynch (z.lynch@wmra.gov.uk)  
**Housing** - Steve Forrest (s.forrest@wmra.gov.uk)  
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**Planning** - David Thew (d.thew@wmra.gov.uk)  
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**Strategic Review Group (scrutiny)** - Dagmar Waller (d.waller@wmra.gov.uk)  
**Sustainable Development** - Fran Austins (f.austins@wmra.gov.uk)  
**Transport** - Danny Lamb (d.lamb@wmra.gov.uk)

# Speaking Out



Issue 11. Spring 2006

## How the Assembly is structured

The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.

The following is the current list of West Midlands Regional Assembly Members at the time of printing:

### LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS

#### Birmingham Sub-Region:

Cllr A Bore (Birmingham)  
 Cllr M Whitby (Birmingham)  
 Cllr P Tilsley (Birmingham)

#### Black Country Sub-Region:

Cllr L Jones (Dudley)  
 Cllr D Sparks (Dudley)  
 Cllr D Tyler (Dudley)  
 Cllr S Eling (Sandwell)  
 Cllr K E Bissell (Sandwell)  
 Cllr S L Smith (Sandwell)  
 Cllr Ansell (Walsall)  
 Cllr Oliver (Walsall)  
 Cllr I Shires (Walsall)  
 Cllr Bilson (Wolverhampton)  
 Cllr P Bradley (Wolverhampton)

#### Worcester & Hereford Sub-Region:

Cllr T M James (Herefordshire)  
 Cllr R J Phillips (Herefordshire)  
 Cllr J B Williams (Herefordshire)  
 Cllr Dr G Lord (Worcestershire)  
 Cllr J W Buckley (Worcestershire)  
 Cllr T A L Wells (Worcestershire)  
 Cllr D C Norton (Bromsgrove)  
 Cllr C T Smith (Malvern Hills)  
 Cllr P Hill (Redditch)  
 Cllr S Inman (Worcester City)  
 Cllr M A Jennings (Wychavon)  
 Cllr S J M Clee (Wyre Forest)

#### Shropshire & Telford Sub-Region:

Cllr M G Pate (Shropshire)  
 Cllr N J Hartin (Shropshire)  
 Cllr A N Mosley (Shropshire)  
 Cllr D A Beechey (Bridgnorth)  
 Cllr B M Bate (North Shropshire)  
 Cllr A Walpole (Oswestry)  
 Cllr P A Nutting (Shrewsbury & Atcham)  
 Cllr H M Kidd (South Shropshire)  
 Cllr K Austin (Telford & Wrekin)  
 Cllr J Seymour (Telford & Wrekin)

#### Staffordshire & Stoke Sub-Region:

Cllr T A Dix (Staffordshire)  
 Cllr R Roberts (Staffordshire)  
 Cllr R Ibbs (Stoke-on-Trent)  
 Cllr C Miller (Stoke-on-Trent)  
 Cllr M Salih (Stoke-on-Trent)  
 Cllr N Stanley (Cannock Chase)  
 Cllr A J H Fox (East Staffordshire)  
 Cllr D S Smith (Lichfield) - Chairman  
 Cllr D A Leech (Newcastle-under-Lyme)  
 Cllr B R Edwards (South Staffordshire)  
 Cllr J S Highfield (Stafford)  
 Cllr R G Locker (Staffordshire Moorlands)  
 Cllr J Oates (Tamworth)

#### Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Sub-Region:

Cllr K Taylor (Coventry)  
 Cllr J Mutton (Coventry)  
 Cllr N Davies (Solihull)  
 Cllr H Hendry (Solihull)  
 Cllr T Richards (Solihull)  
 Cllr M Heatley (Warwickshire)  
 Cllr R Hyde (Warwickshire)  
 Cllr M Jones (Warwickshire)  
 Cllr C Hayfield (North Warwickshire)  
 Cllr J Glass (Nuneaton & Bedworth)  
 Cllr C Humphrey (Rugby)  
 Cllr C Saint (Stratford-on-Avon)  
 Cllr M Begg (Warwick)

### BUSINESS SECTOR MEMBERS

#### with nominating body

Mike Cherry	Federation of Small Businesses
Prof. Michael Clarke	West Midlands Higher Education Association
John Hart	West Midlands Business Council Chairman
Arthur Hill	National Farmers Union
Mike Hill	Confederation of West Midlands Chambers of Commerce
John James	Institute of Directors
Geoff Minshull	Chartered Institute of Building
Richard Moxon	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Chris Newis	West Midlands Co-operative & Mutual Council Ltd
Ben Reid	Business in the Community
Fraser Mitchell	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales
Sarinder Singh Sahota - Vice Chair	Asian Business Forum
Roger Stone	Country Land and Business Association
Brian Summers	Heart of England Tourism
Roger Trotman	Engineering Employers Federation
Jane Yardley	Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators

### OTHER SECTOR MEMBERS

#### with nominating body

Jay Patel	EMBRACE	Black and Minority Ethnic Communities
vacancy	Disability West Midlands	Disability
Gerald Kells	West Midlands Sustainability Network	Environment
Valerie Broom - Vice Chair	West Midlands Trades Union Council	Trades Unions
Revd John Hall	West Midlands Faiths Forum	Faiths
Cavelle Lynch	Agender for Women	Gender
David Littlemore	West Midlands Health Federation	Health
Howard Farrand	West Midlands Federation of Housing Associations	Housing
Brian Woods-Scawen	Culture West Midlands	Culture
Cllr Mrs Elizabeth Newman	West Midlands Association of Parish Councils	Parish Councils
Lee Thompson	Regional Action West Midlands [through UK Youth Parliament]	Voluntary & Community Sector (Young)
Richard Quallington	Regional Action West Midlands	Voluntary & Community Sector (Rural)
Richard Bubb	Regional Action West Midlands	Voluntary & Community Sector (Urban)
Peter Shirley	OSG	Additional Place
Professor David Ashton	OSG	Additional Place
Roger McKenzie	OSG	Additional Place



# Planning the West Midlands

time to get involved

Visit our website [www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)

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All requests will be dealt with on an individual basis.

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# From the Chairman



David S Smith

If you look up partnership in the thesaurus it offers words such as 'collaboration', 'co-operation', 'sharing', 'participation', 'companionship', 'fellowship' and 'alliance'. All words which describe the way in which we work here at the Regional Partnership Centre. From the beginning the Centre has hosted a number of regional organisations and we are delighted to welcome several new partner organisations and individuals. They include the West Midlands Centre of Excellence, the Director of the Metropolitan City Region, Playwork West Midlands and the charity KIDS.

We will also be joined shortly by the Region's 2012 co-ordinator who we will work with to ensure that the West Midlands makes the most of opportunities arising from the London Olympics.

The way in which we work together with all our partners is something that I'm very proud of and something which visitors to the Partnership Centre always comment on, for example, Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart, Chairman of the Local Government Association who visited us earlier this year.

Finally I would like to thank Trudi Elliott for her sterling work in driving forward the Region's partnerships during her time as the Assembly Chief Executive and look forward to building on our relationship with Government Office now that Trudi has taken up her new role there as Regional Director.

David S Smith  
Chairman

# In brief

## Warming up for the Olympics

Work in the Region around the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games is continuing a pace. Partners are preparing for a visit by the Rt. Hon. Tessa Jowell MP, Secretary of State at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport on 9 May 2006 in Wolverhampton to address West Midlands businesses on how they can benefit from the Games.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is organising a UK roadshow in July, with several stops in the Region, to highlight the 2012 Games and its potential impact.

The regional Youth Parliament is currently consulting with young people on what they would like to see happen in the West Midlands as a result of the Games.

For more information contact Jenny Boylan at [j.boylan@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:j.boylan@wmra.gov.uk)



## Regional Sustainability Update

Following on from the Assembly's renewed commitment to sustainable development at its October meeting, Regional Partnerships are now preparing their reports for the Assembly AGM on their contribution to regional sustainability objectives. Sustainability West Midlands (SWM) has agreed to provide support and guidance to the Partnerships on this, and will be presenting an analysis of the reports along with recommendations to the Assembly at the AGM in July, helping the Assembly to identify priorities for its future sustainability working.

Alongside this, the revised Regional Sustainable Development Framework will also be launched in July. The draft Framework has been used to inform the ongoing Sustainability Appraisal of Phase Two of the Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review, which will evaluate the options developed during the Review against sustainability criteria. More information about the Partial Review and the Sustainability Appraisal is available in the Planning section of the Assembly website.

Finally, look out for the re-arranged "Sustainability Challenge" conference, arranged by Lichfield District Council and supported by the Assembly and West Midlands Local Government Association, which was postponed from March and will now take place in Autumn 2006.

For more information contact Fran Austins [f.austins@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:f.austins@wmra.gov.uk)

## Help Shape Your Future

'Help Shape Your Future' is a new consultation on the Review of the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES), which has been launched by Advantage West Midlands and the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

The findings of the consultation exercise will be used to revise the West Midlands Economic Strategy which, from autumn 2007, will be the West Midlands' plan of action for improving its economic performance up to the year 2020.

The Review has begun with the compilation of a robust evidence base to inform the context, content and direction of the new West Midlands Economic Strategy. The overall phasing and timing of the work required to review and update the WMES is as follows:

March to July 2006	Build evidence base
May to September 2006	Develop policy options
October 2006 to March 2007	Consult on policy options
May to July 2007	Consult on draft Strategy
April and September 2007	Publication

To register to participate in the various stages of consultation or to find out more information about the Review of the WMES please go to [www.advantagewm.co.uk/wmesreview.html](http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/wmesreview.html).

## Revolution at the pumps

Plans to encourage more drivers in the West Midlands to fill-up with biodiesel, the renewable fuel made from oil seed rape or waste vegetable oil, have been boosted by the launch of a biodiesel network in Shropshire. Seven independent garages are part of the B5 Biodiesel pilot scheme, the first phase of an initiative which will be extended to other parts of the Region.



B5 Biodiesel is produced from 'energy crops' and consists of a 5 per cent blend of oil rape seed or reprocessed sunflower oil, which is added to 95 per cent conventional diesel. The fuel is suitable for all diesel engines without the need for conversion and significantly reduces harmful CO2 emissions, helping to mitigate against the threat of climate change.

The Shropshire B5 Biodiesel initiative is being coordinated by the regional energy office, Energy West Midlands along with the Marches Energy Agency and Garage Watch, a leading trade association for independent petrol retailers.

Adrian Smith, director of Energy West Midlands commented: "The next phase of the biodiesel project will be to identify network opportunities in Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and parts of the Black Country to ensure that more drivers across the Region have an opportunity to drive B5".

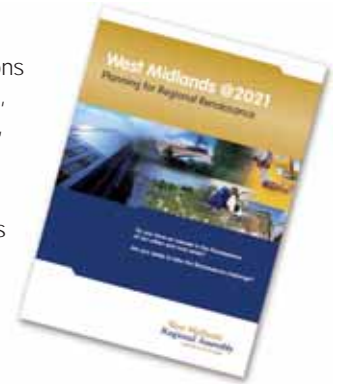
The formation of Energy West Midlands was one of the first priorities of the Regional Energy Strategy. It is backed by funding from the DTI and is supported by Advantage West Midlands, the Government Office for the West Midlands as well as the Assembly. From July, Energy West Midlands will be leaving the Regional Partnership Centre and moving to Advantage West Midlands' offices in order to gain greater access to funding and closer links to the private sector.

## Regional Renaissance

Do you have an interest in the Renaissance of our urban and rural areas? Are you ready to take the Renaissance challenge? If so, the 'Planning for Regional Renaissance' document recently published by the West Midlands Regional Assembly will be of interest to you.

It outlines the changing faces of the Region, with cities, towns, villages and countryside all undergoing a renaissance driven by the Regional Spatial Strategy. The Spatial Strategy integrates actions and decisions on transport, the environment, housing, the economy, health, education, social inclusion, service delivery and culture.

This new publication concludes that only by concentrating on the renaissance of both urban and rural areas can the West Midlands fulfil its promise and potential.



For more information contact Kate Docherty at [k.docherty@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:k.docherty@wmra.gov.uk)

To download the publication visit [www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)

## Speed Debating Regeneration

How to re-energise the regeneration of the West Midlands? That was the challenge laid down to senior representatives from the public and private sector at a Chatham House event co-sponsored by the Assembly and PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

Local authority leaders and chief executives, delivery agencies, investors and government officials met to discuss the big physical, social and economic issues that are holding back the Region and what should be done to address them and speed up the regeneration process.

Debate was stimulated by a number of thought-provoking speakers including: Sheila Healey, Regional Director Government Office, Architect Glen Howells, Richard Moxon of Pennycook Chartered Surveyors, Duncan Sutherland of InPartnership and Margaret Allen from the Housing Corporation.



## European policy gets a boost

This is a busy period for the European policy and funding agenda within the Region. The EU budget settlement in December 2005 allocated major resources for continued structural funding to the UK and other member states of the EU 15.

The Assembly's European and International Affairs Partnership in February produced an agreed set of principles for the Region to work towards in setting the new programme, 'By the Region for the Region' - to counter government's wish to centralise the programme delivery. The government is currently consulting across all English regions on its approach.

The Assembly is also preparing a Regional response to the review of the Assisted Areas - the EU framework which sets out which geographical areas can offer financial support to companies wanting to set up or expand.

The government is also consulting on the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development on which the Assembly is also contributing.

For more information contact Esther Knight at [e.knight@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:e.knight@wmra.gov.uk)

# Time to get involved

## with planning the West Midlands

When the Spatial Strategy was published in 2004, the Secretary of State supported the principles of the Strategy but recognised that in some instances, more work was required to develop the Strategy. Given the range of issues it was agreed that the Revision should be looked at in three phases.

### Phase One

Phase One of the Revision focuses on developing and testing a plan for long term change and development of the whole of the Black Country. The draft Phase 1 Revision (The Black Country), which details policies and proposals, will be submitted to the Government at the end of May. The final formal consultation period on the Plan will begin on 31st May 2006 and close

on 22nd August 2006. With an Examination in Public scheduled to commence on 9th January 2007.

The Black Country Study is made up of a series of individual strategic studies focussed on different issues which, when combined, will provide a comprehensive plan for the regeneration of the Black Country. The key themes for the Black Country Study are:

- Centres
- Economy & Skills
- Culture
- Environment
- Transport
- Housing
- Diversity

For more information visit [www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk](http://www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk) or call 0121 569 2396



### Phase Two

Phase Two was launched last November and is looking at a number of issues across the entire West Midlands, including:

**Housing:** re-examining regional and sub-regional housing needs and exploring how additional new affordable housing provision can be made for the period up to 2026.

**Employment:** re-examining regional and sub-regional employment land needs and requirements. It will also identify investment priorities within the network of strategic centres.

**Quality of the Environment:** ensuring there are sufficient opportunities to meet the Region's waste management needs.

**Transport & Accessibility:** examining a range of issues from identifying broad locations for Strategic Park & Ride sites to establishing the implications of the Airports White Paper for the Region.

As part of the RSS Revision a Sustainability Appraisal will be carried out looking at the general, social, economic and environmental effects of any revised policies.

The next consultation period will commence in September with the 'Options' stage, when organisations, business and individuals will be invited to feed in their views to help frame the development of the Preferred Option next Winter (2006).

To find out more or get a copy of the project plan visit [www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk) or email [rss@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:rss@wmra.gov.uk).

### Phase Three

The Third Phase, which is being launched this winter (2006), will focus on areas/issues not covered in Phase Two. These are likely to include critical rural services, environmental issues, a framework for Gypsies and Travellers sites and regional recreational provision.



### The Strategy

The Regional Spatial Strategy aims to provide a clear sense of direction for the long term development of the Region. Amongst other things, it identifies how many houses should be built and where, what sort of jobs should be planned for and how the environment can be improved.

### The Vision

"The overall vision for the West Midlands is one of an economically successful, outward looking and adaptable region, which is rich in culture and environment, where all people, working together, are able to meet their aspirations and needs without prejudicing the quality of life of future generations."

# Scrutiny and Strategic Review

Two major pieces of work have recently been completed by review panels.

## Equalities and Diversity in the West Midlands

The demographic makeup of the West Midlands and projected changes make it essential that equality and diversity issues are considered at a regional level to ensure that the needs and aspirations of all are fully considered in regional strategies.

The Review process identified four key challenges for the Region around; a lack of understanding, need for commitment at all levels, sustainable resourcing and recognising the differences between and within communities.

The Panel, chaired by Rev John Hall, West Midlands Faiths Forum, made 15 recommendations for the Assembly and Concordat Partners. One of the outcomes of the Review has been the secondment from the Home Office of Carmel Kerr as Regional Director of Equalities and Diversity (see My Region – page opposite) who will lead the implementation of the recommendations.

The full report is available at [www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)



## Advantage West Midlands' Support for Rural Renaissance

The rural economy is critical to the success of the West Midlands economy as a whole. Advantage West Midlands has adopted an approach that seeks to integrate rural issues within their general delivery arrangements. The Review looked at how successful it has been in supporting and encouraging rural renaissance and how it is addressing its new rural responsibilities.

The Panel, chaired by Councillor Claude Bodenham, WMLGA Rural Portfolio holder, made nine strategic and eight improvement recommendations. These addressed concerns around communication and partnership working, the current rural delivery mechanisms and funding arrangements.

The full report is available at [www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)



## Regeneration Zones "Revisited"

Current activity includes an examination of how Advantage West Midlands has implemented the recommendations from the 2004 Review of Regeneration Zones. It is expected that this will be presented to the Assembly in July.

For further information contact Dagmar Waller, Strategic Review Officer, 0121 678 1054 or [d.waller@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:d.waller@wmra.gov.uk)

# My Region



**Carmel Kerr,**  
Equality and  
Diversity Director

In January I began a three year secondment from the Home Office to work for the Assembly, a move that has led to me relocating to the Region. This is the first time I have lived and worked in the West Midlands having grown up in Belfast and more recently lived in Sutton, Surrey.

I wasn't sure what to expect before making my move to the West Midlands, having only briefly visited the Region before. I am discovering a wonderfully varied and interesting place and in particular have enjoyed visiting the historic castles of Kenilworth and Warwick. It's not been long but I'm already feeling at home here.

It's an extremely diverse area with a combination of atmospheric cities, tranquil rural villages and scenic vistas. I have been lucky to find people extremely friendly and very willing to help, something which wasn't always the case elsewhere. The general atmosphere seems more relaxed than I found in central London where most people seem to be rushing to and from meetings - or maybe that was just me!

In Birmingham I like the way you can travel short distances and see such a wide variety of cultures and environments, something which gives the city a dynamic and intriguing quality and brings my work

here to life as it is about encouraging people to value diversity.

There is a great range of services and facilities across the Region which is a real plus point, but it is important to ensure that everyone gets equal access to the services they need and are entitled to. In this way we can encourage people to make the most of what is on offer as well as their own talents and this will in-turn benefit the community as a whole.

## Choosing Health for the West Midlands

A report focusing on the health status of the population of the West Midlands has been published by the Regional Director of Public Health for the West Midlands, Dr Rashmi Shukla.

It will support the development of a five year strategic plan which will help enable health priorities for the Region to be aligned with the revision of regional strategic policies such as the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Spatial Strategy and the Regional Housing Strategy.

### Some of the Regional key facts emerging from the report include:

**1%** reduction in smokers would yield a net saving of £64.6 million per year for the Regional economy.

**26%** of women smoke, which is the equal second highest across English regions.

West Midlands has the highest levels of obesity for women and the fourth highest level for men.

Only **39%** of adults do the recommended level of thirty minutes of physical activity five days a week.

Alcohol related deaths are increasing and are significantly higher than the national average.

West Midlands has the lowest rate of illegal drug use of any region.

About **1.3%** of workers believe themselves to be suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety.

Chlamydia rates are rising in both men and women, especially in those aged 16-24

Seven out of a thousand babies die before their first birthday. The West Midlands has the highest infant mortality rate and prenatal mortality rate of any English region.

Each year there are over 3000 deaths of older people which could be avoided.

Copies of the report can be ordered by emailing [WMPG\\_Enquiries@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:WMPG_Enquiries@dh.gsi.gov.uk) or the report can be downloaded from the West Midlands Public Health Groups website [www.go-wm.gov.uk/gowm/PublicHealth](http://www.go-wm.gov.uk/gowm/PublicHealth).



## Implementing the Regional Housing Strategy 2005

The implementation of the Regional Housing Strategy is now being taken forward with the Regional Assembly Housing Team working with the Housing Corporation and GOWM to support the four Housing Market Area Partnerships. These are to establish clear delivery plans for priorities and schemes within each housing market area.

The Assembly Secretariat is also continuing work on the implementation of Recommendation No.6 of the Barker Review of Housing Supply. This will see the merger of the Regional Housing Board function (currently Chaired by GOWM) with the Assembly alongside the Regional Planning Body function. The new structures will be operational from September 2006.

A programme of research will also be commissioned to assist with the implementation of the Regional Housing Strategy. Sandwell MBC on behalf of the Regional Housing Board, have recently tendered a three-year contract for a panel of research consultants to undertake future research commissions on a number of housing and housing-related topics, as set out in the Regional Housing Strategy 2005. Detailed below are some of the research topics which will be commissioned:

**Most recent occupier survey of newly built homes**

**Updated analysis of the house price data**

**Needs of Asylum Seekers and Refugees**

**Housing needs of BME communities to offer pathways of choice**

**The delivery of affordable housing best practice**

**Health and Housing**  
**The Housing contribution to Urban Renaissance**

The research maintains and builds upon what has previously been undertaken to underpin the development of the Regional Housing Strategy 2005. The completed research and the Regional Housing Strategy can be accessed at [www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)

As part of the development of the Regional Housing Strategy, Affordable Housing has long been a key priority issue for the Region. The Regional Planning Partnership is producing a Guide to the Delivery of Affordable Housing in the Region. It is looking for examples of best practice



and case studies from within the Region and outside in both urban and rural contexts. If you would like to submit examples please see the contact details below.

For more information on any of the above contact **Emma Kiteley** [e.kiteley@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:e.kiteley@wmra.gov.uk) tel: 0121 678 1037 or **Jo Hill** [j.hill@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:j.hill@wmra.gov.uk) tel: 0121 678 1033