

Introduction

The following table sets out the Regional Housing Partnership's response detailing how they are contributing to sustainable development in the region.

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
Developing thriving sustainable communities:		
Ensuring easy and equitable access to services and opportunities, including jobs and learning, regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, background or location	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) explicitly states that it is committed to providing 'pathways of housing choice' for all. This includes tackling problems of both non-decent homes and also providing affordable housing for those unable to afford to buy or rent on the open market.</p> <p>The RHS fully supports the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) objectives of urban and rural renaissance objectives to ensure the right range of services and opportunities exist within urban and rural areas to support balanced sustainable communities.</p> <p>The RHS also raised the issue of ensuring equality of access to homes from all communities, particularly those with specific housing needs.</p>

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
Enabling communities to participate in the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and quality of life	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS was submitted to DCLG (then ODPM) in June 2005 and was the subject of a lengthy and inclusive consultation period, including a regional event specifically for tenants and residents representatives across the Region. The Regional Housing Strategy and its implementation via the four Sub Regional Housing Market Area Partnerships also ensure the needs of communities are addressed and that they are able to be involved in the decisions made regarding achieving mixed and balanced communities at the local level as well as regionally.
Addressing poverty and disadvantage, taking into account the particular difficulties of those facing multiple disadvantage	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS in particular highlights the specific needs of particular groups within the Region and commissioned a great deal of research on thematic themes, such as; BME housing needs, Gypsies and Travellers, Asylum Seekers and Refugees, Supporting People, homelessness and people with disabilities. The two top priorities of the RHS in meeting the Decent Homes Standard and meeting affordable housing needs are key to addressing disadvantage.
Improving health and reducing health inequalities by encouraging and enabling healthy lifestyles as well as protecting health and providing health services	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS helps to improve health and health inequalities through the Decent Homes Standard and other key initiatives such as Private Sector Housing Renewal, Pathfinders, etc. Health and Housing has been identified as a key area of research for the RHS and work is underway in developing a Health Impact Assessment tool for housing and planning related developments.

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
Providing decent and affordable housing for all, of the right quantity, type, tenure and affordability for local needs, in clean, safe and pleasant local environments	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The two key priorities of the RHS are achieving the Decent Homes Standard and addressing affordable housing needs, along with enabling mixed and balanced communities. Housing is also a core theme in the RSS and will be vital to the achievement of the Urban and Rural Renaissance Principles. The Regional Housing Strategy has been informed by the RSS and the RPP supports the work of the Regional Housing Board in taking this forward. A revised assessment of Affordable housing needs will be addressed as part of the Phase Two Revision of the RSS. The achievement of a high quality environment, also a core theme of the RSS, underpins the development of sustainable communities.
Reducing crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS assists in reducing crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour through aims of enabling mixed and balanced communities, improving the condition of housing stock, addressing issues of abandonment and low demand and also through the high build standards required by the Housing Corporation on new build developments. The RHS supports the 'Secured by Design' initiative and encourages Local Planning Authorities to adopt 'planning out crime standards'. The RHS also proposes the use of Design Statements to address these issues.

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
Improving opportunities to participate in the diverse cultural and recreational activities the West Midlands can offer	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS through enabling mixed and balanced communities and the sustainable location of homes will improve the opportunities to participate in diverse cultural and recreational activities. The RHS supporting the key aim of the RSS in delivering urban and rural renaissance will also improve such opportunities. The RHS recognises the importance of informal open spaces and children's play areas and advocates the incorporation of such spaces in both new developments and areas of re-development. The development of area based approaches is also a means for strengthening connections between neighbourhoods, their local environments and cultural heritage The proposed Planning Gain Supplement should also help to achieve this.
Encouraging physical development with a better balance of jobs, housing and services within each part of the Region in order to meet local needs locally and encourage stable and sustainable integrated communities	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS aims to enable the development of mixed and balanced communities which are key to meeting this objective. A sustainability appraisal of the RHS was undertaken prior to its submission to DCLG in order to address these issues.

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
Enhancing and protecting the environment:		
Valuing, enhancing and protecting the Region's environmental assets, including the natural and built environment and the historic environment	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The improvement in the quality of the residential environment is crucial to the development of housing neighbourhoods that improve wellbeing and make successful places, as well as being sensitive to history, culture and landscape. Within the RHS early consideration of sustainable resource use, especially water, waste disposal, aggregate demand and energy is promoted, all of which link to RSS policies.</p> <p>A sustainability appraisal of the RHS was undertaken prior to its submission to DCLG in order to address these issues. The Housing Corporations Eco homes Standards also supports this work.</p>
Valuing, enhancing and protecting regional biodiversity	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The improvement in the quality of the residential environment is crucial to the development of housing neighbourhoods that improve wellbeing and make successful places, as well as being sensitive to history, culture and landscape. Within the RHS early consideration of sustainable resource use, especially water, waste disposal, aggregate demand and energy, all link to RSS policies. The development of area based approaches which include the provision of green infrastructure, including safe, accessible open spaces for informal/formal recreation and rich in biodiversity, thus supporting semi-natural habitats and ecosystems are promoted in the RHS. The Housing Corporations Eco homes Standards also supports this work.</p>

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
<p>Land use and development that optimises the use of previously developed land and buildings and creates high quality built environments that incorporate green space, encourage biodiversity, promote local distinctiveness and sense of place, and are well-designed</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The RSS and the RHS promotes the Regional target of at least 76% of future housing provision being on previously developed land between 2001 – 2011 (via Policy CF4).</p> <p>It is important to highlight here the key strategic aim of Phase one of the RSS Partial Review, the Black Country Study (BCS). The Black Country Study soon to be submitted to the Secretary of State, is a long term (until 2031) vision of Urban Renaissance, aimed at enabling regional sustainability. Land required to fulfil the strategies aims for +44,000 homes by 2021 and +71,000 by 2031, relies very heavily upon recycling brownfield resources, in accordance with existing RSS policies. The resource will very largely be land in existing or previous industrial use (possibly 75%)</p> <p>As mentioned previously the RHS aims to secure mixed and balanced communities, whilst also encouraging the use of design statements and the Housing Corporation's Eco Home Standards. The RHS through providing 'pathways of choice' enables people to live near their work and other activities in pleasant affordable homes within sustainable communities with pleasant and healthy local environments, and minimum resource consumption. The development of area based approaches which include the provision of green infrastructure, including safe, accessible open spaces for informal/formal recreation and rich in biodiversity, thus supporting semi-natural habitats and eco-systems are promoted in the RHS.</p>

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
Local stewardship of local environments	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not directly, this is dealt with through Local Development Plans.
Minimising air, water and soil pollution levels	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Within the RHS early consideration of sustainable resource use, especially water, waste disposal, aggregate demand and energy, is promoted, all of which link to RSS policies. These require an overall approach which reduces high energy use and contributes to emission reduction. The Housing Corporations Eco homes Standards also supports this work.
Minimising the Region's contribution to the causes of climate change whilst implementing a managed response to its unavoidable impacts	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The Regional Energy Strategy look to the RHS and Local Housing Strategies to ensure that housing polices reduce emission of greenhouse gases, prioritise energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and district heating. The Housing Corporations Eco homes Standards also supports this work.
Using natural resources prudently and efficiently:		
Reducing overall energy use through increasing energy efficiency, and increasing the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The Regional Energy Strategy look to the RHS and Local Housing Strategies to ensure that housing polices reduce emission of greenhouse gases, prioritise energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and district heating. The Housing Corporations Eco homes Standards also supports this work.

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
Using natural resources such as water and minerals efficiently	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Within the RHS early consideration of sustainable resource use, especially water, waste disposal, aggregate demand and energy, is promoted, all of which link to RSS policies. The Housing Corporation's Eco Homes Standards also promote this.
Promoting and ensuring high standards of sustainable resource-efficient design, construction and maintenance of buildings	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Design, excellence sustainable construction and sustainable improvements to existing homes, as set out in the (as was ODPM) Five Year Plan; Sustainable Communities; Homes for All, will be promoted by the Regional Housing Board through the RHS. Design standards and the Housing Corporation's Eco Homes Standards also promote this. The DCLG Code for Sustainable Building (CSB) will also assist this objective, as it encourages the building industry to adopt more sustainable practices.
Ensuring the location of development makes efficient use of existing physical infrastructure and helps reduce need to travel, especially by private car	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS through enabling the sustainable location of homes will aid this objective. The RHS through the provision of 'pathways of choice' enable people to live near their work and other activities, thus reducing the need to travel. The RSS Urban Renaissance policies which the RHS endorses fully encourage location where access to sustainable and alternative transport mechanisms such as public transport, walking and cycling are maximised.

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
Increasing use of public transport, cycling and walking and reducing road traffic congestion and pollution	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS through enabling the sustainable location of homes will aid this objective. The RHS through the provision of 'pathways of choice' enable people to live near their work and other activities, thus reducing the need to travel. The RSS Urban Renaissance policies which the RHS endorses fully encourage location where access to sustainable and alternative transport mechanisms such as public transport, walking and cycling are maximised.
Encouraging and enabling waste minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery to divert resources away from the waste stream	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS promotes early consideration of sustainable resource use, especially water, waste disposal, aggregate demand and energy. These require an overall approach which reduces high energy land use, contributes to emission reduction, minimises the use of primary aggregates, increases the use of alternative sources to meet regional guidelines, and contributes to reduction in landfill and reuse of construction and demolition waste.
Encouraging local sourcing of goods and materials	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS promotes the local sourcing of goods and materials within the construction industry and also promotes the work AWM's Building Technologies Cluster, such as "Constructing Excellence", off-site manufactured building solutions and the West Midlands Centre for Constructing Excellence and innovation in modern methods of construction.
Rewarding efficient resource use and encouraging development of alternative and renewable resources where resources are likely to become depleted	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHP is not in a position to 'reward' efficient resource use however in the spirit of sustainability we would support activities which do within the context of the RSS. The Housing Corporation (HC) does reward efficient resource use through its minimum Eco Homes Standard as a criteria for receiving HC funding.
Developing a flourishing, diverse and stable regional economy:		

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
Achieving sustainable economic growth and prosperity for the benefit of all the Region's inhabitants	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The RHS supports the aspirations of the RES and promotes this objective through enabling mixed and balanced communities, Pathways of housing choice, Decent Homes and affordable homes in sustainable locations. Achievement of diverse and stable economic growth as part of an integrated approach to sustainable development is one of the underpinning principles of the RSS and the RHS support this.
Creating high quality employment opportunities suited to the changing needs of the local workforce, whilst recognising the value and contribution of unpaid work	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Achievement of diverse and stable economic growth is one of the underpinning principles of the RSS and the RHS supports this through locating homes in sustainable locations.
Promoting investment in future prosperity	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Achievement of diverse and stable economic growth is one of the underpinning principles of the RSS and the RHS supports this through locating homes in sustainable locations.
Encouraging ongoing investment and engagement in learning and skills development	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Achievement of diverse and stable economic growth is one of the underpinning principles of the RSS and the RHS supports this through locating homes in sustainable locations.

Objective	Has the Partnership's work contributed?	Comments: how/why not?
Encouraging a culture of enterprise and innovation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Achievement of diverse and stable economic growth is one of the underpinning principles of the RSS and the RHS supports this through locating homes in sustainable locations.
Promoting and supporting the development of new technologies, especially those with high value and low impact	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Achievement of diverse and stable economic growth is one of the underpinning principles of the RSS and the RHS supports this.
Encouraging corporate social and environmental responsibility, with regional organisations and agencies leading by example	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The Regional Housing Board will come under the auspices of the Regional Assembly from September 2006 onwards and membership of the new structures will be made up of local authorities, business and other stakeholders. As stewards of RHS all are expected to encourage responsibility for sustainable development at a regional level.