



Concord *n.* 1. agreement or harmony
2. peaceful relations between nations

Concordat *n.* a signed written agreement between two or more parties to perform some action



West Midlands Regional **Concordat**

THIRD EDITION JULY 2006

Speaking up for the Region **at the Heart of it all**

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Draycote Water Country Park - Rugby



Introduction

This Concordat provides a framework for partnership working between regional organisations and for the integration of regional strategies. It is an agreement that reflects the respective roles and shared responsibilities of the Partners, including the co-ordination and alignment of regional strategies. It can be found on Partners' websites.

As Concordat Partners, we believe that through communicating effectively and working more closely together, we can more efficiently meet our common aims to the benefit of the people of the West Midlands Region.

Purpose

The Concordat demonstrates to Government and to adjoining regions that the West Midlands can speak with one voice and is committed to delivering a national agenda in the Region.

The Concordat must continue to be relevant to the context within which the Partners are working, which is why we have updated it to produce this third version. This version of the Concordat will be kept under review and shall be formally reviewed in July 2008.

We believe our individual strategies articulate the issues we need to address in the West Midlands and provide an integrated and complementary set of policies to tackle the challenges. We have adopted this Concordat because:

- It is a clear and strong statement locally, sub-regionally, regionally, nationally and internationally that the Partners are committed to working together on matters of regional strategic importance
- It reflects the real world of constant change and challenge and gives the Partners the flexibility to respond swiftly
- It provides clarity about the high level aspirations and strategic priorities of the West Midlands
- It commits Partners to being open, co-ordinated, consultative and pro-active in our approach to securing our collective aspirations and strategic priorities
- It identifies the Partners and partnerships that are responsible and accountable for regional strategies, policy development and delivery

Concordat Partners

The West Midlands Regional Concordat is published and promoted jointly by the following regional organisations:

West Midlands Regional Assembly
Advantage West Midlands
Government Office for the West Midlands
West Midlands Local Government Association
Regional Action West Midlands
West Midlands Business Council
Culture West Midlands
West Midlands Higher Education Association
West Midlands Learning and Skills Council
Sustainability West Midlands
West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum
West Midlands Regional Observatory
West Midlands in Europe
RegenWM
Strategic Health Authority
Midlands TUC

Our Collective Commitment to the West Midlands and the UK

We share an overarching commitment to sustainable development and reducing inequalities in the Region. This means creating a better quality of life for all, now and in the future, and tackling environmental, economic, health and social issues in an integrated way to find co-ordinated solutions.

By working together we aspire to create 'an economically successful, outward looking, healthy and adaptable Region, 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.'

The West Midlands Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF) underpins this collective commitment. The RSDF expresses regional sustainable development objectives intended to maximise quality of life and wellbeing for all in the Region by developing thriving sustainable communities, enhancing and protecting the environment, ensuring prudent and efficient use of natural resources, and developing a flourishing and diverse regional economy. The Framework outlines a process for the integration of these objectives into all regional policies and strategies.

Living within environmental limits

Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society

Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all.

Achieving a sustainable economy

Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.

Promoting good governance

Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people's creativity, energy, and diversity.

Using sound science responsibly

Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the precautionary principle) as well as public attitudes and values.

The diagram to the left is taken from the UK Sustainable Development Strategy and provides the context for our regional work and the Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF).

All of our regional strategies underline our commitment to our sustainable development objectives set out in the RSDF. We also undertake that as each strategy is reviewed, we will look to strengthen that commitment.

Climate change is one of the most severe problems we are facing today. No one person, organisation or community of interest can shape and deliver commitments to climate change alone. The Region will accommodate potential impacts of climate change in our long-term planning and review of strategies to help address and adapt to its consequences as part of our plans for a more sustainable future.

In Appendix 3 we have listed our regional strategies. From these strategies we have distilled the following strategic priorities, which provide the context to this Concordat:

- Urban Renaissance – developing the Major Urban Areas in such a way that they can increasingly meet their own economic and social needs in order to counter the unsustainable outward movement of people and jobs facilitated by previous strategies
- Rural Renaissance – addressing more effectively the major changes which are challenging the traditional roles of rural areas and the countryside
- Modernising and diversifying the economy and creating a dynamic business base – ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and that they help reduce social exclusion
- Upskilling the Region's workforce – developing a highly qualified and appropriately skilled workforce driven by informed employer demand, responsive training providers and eager learners
- Promoting the Region's competitiveness and assets in a global setting – communicating the Region's strengths, opportunities and needs with confidence and coherence
- Securing and developing the Region's environment and culture – as assets supporting our quality of life, economic and social aspirations and acting as key components in regeneration



Concordat 2006 – Enhanced Partnership Working in the West Midlands Region

The Concordat partner organisations have identified a shared set of values:

- Working together to enhance and add value to the work of regional organisations
- Promoting and supporting diversity in regional working
- Working inclusively with a wide range of economic, social, health and environmental Partners locally and sub-regionally
- Working in a way that is open and transparent both to Partners and to the public
- Speaking up for the West Midlands at every level
- Ensuring both political and civic leadership at a regional level
- Promoting good governance within regional partnership working
- Seeking to influence European and National policy frameworks within which we work
- Promoting a reduction in inequalities within the Region

Working together to enhance and add value to the work of regional organisations

Our New Commitment to Improving Partnership Working

- The Importance of Co-operation
- Delivering Agreed Strategies and Plans
- Dynamic Partnerships for Delivery
- Working with National, European, Sub-Regional, and Local Decision Makers
- Strategic Leadership
- Addressing Inequalities
- Better Intelligence – Better Decision Making
- Planning for a Diverse Region
- A Forward Looking Region in Europe
- Respecting Partners' Capacity and Accountabilities

• The Importance of Co-operation

We share a desire to improve the lives of people in the West Midlands and recognise the importance of working together on equal terms to achieve this goal. Regional working is characterised by organisations with different accountabilities either as national agencies accountable to government, local government accountable to local electorates or regional organisations accountable to members or Boards. Nevertheless all Partners are committed to working co-operatively towards our strategic priorities.

• Delivering Agreed Strategies and Plans

As Concordat Partners we are committed to working together to develop and deliver strategies and plans. This commitment also includes working with sub-regional and local partnerships to ensure synergy between a top-down and bottom-up approach to strategy development and delivery. The Concordat Partners support the key role of local and sub-regional partnerships – whether based around geography or specific themes – to deliver the regional strategic priorities. Through statutory process or regional determination we have created a series of strategies and action plans to drive forward regional work. We will continue to work hard to ensure that our strategies are aligned, coherent and mutually supportive to the benefit of the Region.

• Dynamic Partnerships for Delivery

The Partners are committed to creating and supporting governance arrangements which are effective and transparent and can demonstrate the prudent use of public funds against the outcomes we seek to achieve. In 2006, the Region provided advice to Government on our funding priorities for economic development, housing and transport. Our advice demonstrates to Government that we are serious about breaking out of existing 'silo' funding arrangements and thinking. Our strategic priorities and our commitment to strong partnership arrangements underline and are critical to securing a more sophisticated and transparent approach to planning and sequencing of public, private and voluntary and community sector investment in the West Midlands. We will keep our regional working arrangements under review, including the need to explore the option to establish a Forward Planning Executive to develop the ambitions set out in the West Midlands Advice on Regional Funding Allocations (submitted in January 2006, www.wmra.gov.uk/regionalworking).

• Working with National, European, Sub-Regional, and Local Decision Makers

By working together at the regional level we expect to make more impact and be more successful in meeting the Region's needs. The regional Partners recognise the importance of the role of European, national, sub-regional, and local governance in the life of the Region and are committed to being a good Partner at all these levels. We intend to make use of the strengths and role at each level but we will be strong in advocating the needs of the Region. We will also highlight those issues, policies and programmes that we think are working well for the West Midlands as well as those that are not.



- Strategic Leadership

As part of the Concordat process, Partners will undertake further work to find ways to better support leadership roles. Successful regions have effective leadership. In a Region with diverse accountabilities we recognise that leadership is shared and who or which organisation steps up to the mark will reflect the time, place, issue and audience. This is not an easy concept to facilitate, but the Partners are committed to bringing greater clarity, both in terms of where leadership comes from and ensuring that leaders and ambassadors are supported in their roles. The high level of trust that now exists amongst Regional Partners bodes well for the future.

- Addressing Inequalities

All Partners recognise that addressing inequality and social exclusion at all levels of society will provide clear economic, health and social benefits to individuals, private, public and voluntary and community sectors. We will build upon the experience of organisations within the Region by fostering networks which already play a critical role in raising awareness, promoting compliance and good practice on equality and human rights. To give greater prominence to this issue we will support the Equalities and Diversity Partnership under the umbrella of the Assembly.

- Better Intelligence – Better Decision Making

Partners are committed to supporting and funding the development of better intelligence as the focal point for regional intelligence gathering, monitoring and analysis. The development of regional structures has prompted the need for better regional intelligence to inform decision making and monitor progress against agreed strategies and plans. The West Midlands Regional Observatory has a key role to play. It will work in partnership with organisations who have their own monitoring systems in place, such as the Assembly and the WM Public Health Observatory, to assess the impact of the regional strategies. We must strive for an intelligence base which enables us to improve our decision making and ensures the Region is making its case on the basis of the best information and analysis we can achieve.

- Planning for a Diverse Region

As we plan for the future, the Partners commit to embracing the increasing diversity of the West Midlands in the development, review and monitoring of strategies and delivery plans. The West Midlands is the second most culturally diverse region in the UK and diversity represents both an opportunity and a challenge to this Region. The diversity and size of our black and minority ethnic communities is increasing. As a Region our population is ageing, but in our Major Urban Areas we have a growing population of under 25s. Through studies commissioned by Advantage West Midlands and the Assembly's Equalities and Diversity Review it is clear that all organisations in the Region will need to improve their planning, monitoring and delivery if we are to engage and support our increasingly diverse communities.

- A Forward Looking Region in Europe

The Partners are committed to working together on the EU and international agenda through the framework of the European Strategic Framework and International Strategy. The progress of regional working on European and international activity during the last two years has been impressive. Taking its lead from the EU's overarching 'Lisbon' agenda for increasing competitiveness, jobs and growth within member states, the Partners are concentrating on a small number of key policy fields and strategic projects. Partners are committed to a structured approach to working with other EU regions and to maximise the Region's access to EU funding, in particular research and development funding, innovation and lifelong learning, in addition to more traditional 'structural' funding.

- Respecting Partners' Capacity and Accountabilities

Each Partner respects the role, agenda and constraints of each other. The strength of the Concordat lies in the ability of the Partners to value the contribution that each can make to the Region. Each Partner commits to providing both Concordat Partners and others with the opportunity to be involved in the development and delivery of the strategies that they lead on. Therefore consultation processes and release of documentation will be issued in a timely fashion to enable co-operative working between stakeholder Partners. The Concordat Partners are committed to making regional work as effective as possible and will seek to meet standards in the way we work as Partners that at least equal those we are required to meet as individual organisations. The capacity and role of Concordat Partners does not fully represent the range of Government policy or strategic issues which impact on the West Midlands. But the Concordat offers a style of working and the opportunity to focus on such policy and issues and to draw in other Partners.

Clear economic, health and social benefits to individuals, private, public and voluntary and community sectors

Measuring Progress with the New Concordat

This Concordat sets out a framework for partnership working which we believe will facilitate the delivery of our regional strategic priorities. As part of the formal review process for the Concordat, Partners will be asked to identify the steps they have taken to secure effective partnership working. To assist us in measuring progress against the strategic priorities and demonstrate the added value that the Concordat gives the West Midlands, we have commissioned the West Midlands Regional Observatory to develop a contextual monitoring system designed to furnish a baseline and ultimately provide a consistently based commentary on future regional progress towards Urban and Rural Renaissance. The Observatory's monitoring frameworks for the Economic Strategy, Skills Strategy and State of the Region Report will provide useful sources of information. The Annual Monitoring Report on the Regional Spatial Strategy will also assist, as will the Health of the Region Report from the West Midlands Public Health Observatory.

Putting the Concordat into Practice

This Concordat makes a series of strong statements about our collective commitments and shared values for partnership working. To put these into practice, each Concordat Partner will ensure that when reviewing or updating their strategies or plans they provide the opportunity for other Concordat Partners to participate in a facilitated discussion – the purpose being to secure an integrated input unconstrained by policy silos. We will also provide a web link to the Concordat on all our websites. In addition, each Partner will provide an annual report to the Assembly setting out the contribution they have made to sustainable development in the Region.

The purpose being to secure an integrated input unconstrained by policy silos



West Midlands Regional Observatory

The West Midlands Regional Observatory has been established to promote joined-up thinking by maximising the value of regional intelligence. The Observatory's mission is to offer public agencies, private firms and voluntary and community organisations in the West Midlands improved access to well-organised information, thereby enhancing and sharing understanding in the Region and its sub-regions and improving the quality of strategy formulation, policy making and service provision. After a period of formulation under a steering group consisting of representatives from key regional partners, the Observatory is now an operational reality with a three-tier structure, consisting of the Regional Data and Intelligence Network (composed of policy makers, technical experts and data and intelligence users), an Executive Unit, and Partnership Board (consisting of influential decision-makers representing the whole Region and user base).

Website: www.wmro.org

West Midlands in Europe

West Midlands in Europe is a partnership representing the interests of the West Midlands Region in Europe. West Midlands in Europe brings together all sectors in the Region and a wealth of experience and expertise on all aspects of European activity. Partner members include Advantage West Midlands, all the Region's local authorities through the West Midlands Local Government Association, all universities in the Region, further education, the business sector, the voluntary and community sector, culture and the arts.

Website: www.westmidlandsineurope.org

RegenWM

RegenWM is the West Midlands Centre of Excellence for Regeneration. RegenWM's brief is to ensure that those involved in developing and delivering the multi-million pound regeneration activity in the Region have the right skills, knowledge and access to information to enable effective and sustainable regeneration across the West Midlands. RegenWM acts as a catalyst within the regeneration community to ensure dissemination and implementation of best practice. Its work encompasses both urban and rural regeneration, links closely with the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal "Skills and Knowledge" agenda and is closely aligned with the Academy for Sustainable Communities, the body established by the ODPM to promote sustainable communities skills nationally.

Website: www.regenwm.org

Strategic Health Authority

The Strategic Health Authority is responsible for maintaining a strategic overview of the NHS and its needs in the area. In particular it has responsibilities to the Department of Health for ensuring that measures are in place to improve and protect the health of the population and reduce health inequalities, by having a robust public health delivery system. The Strategic Health Authority also holds PCTs to account for the effectiveness of their commissioning processes, organisations and systems. The Strategic Health Authority provides leadership for engagement of health interests in the development of strategic partnerships across the public sector (working with Government Offices of the Regions, Regional Assemblies, Skills Councils and Regional Development Agencies) to secure delivery of government policy.

Website: www.nhs.uk

Midlands TUC

There are 66 national trades unions affiliated to the TUC. The Midlands TUC is their voice in the Region. In total these unions represent around half a million members covering all sectors of work and from all backgrounds in the West Midlands. The Midlands TUC also covers the East Midlands region.

A regional council governs the work of the Midlands TUC. Each year an executive committee representing trades unions and trades union councils is elected. The Regional Secretary directs the work of the TUC in the Region and is the organisation's main spokesperson in the Midlands.

Equality is a key priority for the TUC. Places are reserved on our executive committee for black, female, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered, disabled and young members.

The Midlands TUC engages in a wide range of partnership bodies in the Region. The work undertaken with the Regional Assembly (and its various panels), Learning and Skills Council, West Midlands Employment Relations Forum, and the Bank of England are examples of the work that the TUC does to engage with other stakeholders in the Region. The TUC also engages in more informal partnership networks such as through our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Network, Black Workers Forum, International Forum and our soon to be established Disability Network.

Website: www.tuc.org.uk

Government Office for the West Midlands – Regional Board

The Regional Board consists of representatives of the government departments and non-departmental public bodies operating in the West Midlands Region¹. The group provides a channel for communication between these agencies and the Region and for ensuring strategic coherence in regional working. The terms of reference of the Regional Board are to contribute to the development of a transparent, integrated and sustainable approach to regional policy and to ensure a consistent approach across the membership organisations; working with the Assembly, Advantage West Midlands, and other major regional stakeholders to identify the key strategic regional policy objectives that are likely to be the focus of co-operative action; to identify ways in which regional footprint organisations can contribute towards the development and achievement of key strategic objectives; to identify and resolve any inconsistencies and duplication in regional strategies; and to develop effective ways of communicating key strategic objectives with footprint organisations, the Assembly and the wider regional community.

¹ The Regional Board includes regional representatives of Government Office for the West Midlands, ACAS, Advantage West Midlands, Appeals Service, Arts Council West Midlands, Audit Commission, Big Lottery Fund, British Waterways, Child Support Agency, Commission for Social Care Inspection, The Countryside Agency, Defence Estates, Employment Tribunals, English Heritage, English Nature, Environment Agency West Midlands, Forestry Commission, Government News Network, Health and Safety Executive, Heritage Lottery Fund, Highways Agency, HM Prison Service, Housing Corporation, HM Revenue and Customs, Insolvency Service, Job Centre Plus, Learning and Skills Council, National Forest, National Offender Management Service, National Probation Service, National Treatment Agency, Sport England West Midlands, Strategic Health Authority, UK Trade and Investment, West Midlands Public Health Group. Plus Observers: West Midlands Regional Observatory and West Midlands Regional Assembly.

Sub-regional structures

A range of sub-regional partnerships and structures with varying responsibilities and remits exist within the Region, including local and sub-regional strategic partnerships and regeneration zone partnerships.



Appendix 2: Regional Partnerships



Appendix 3: Regional Strategies

The key policy areas in regional working are currently as shown below:

Policy Area	Regional Lead / Policy Partnership	Regional Strategies	Web link
Spatial Planning	West Midlands Regional Assembly – Regional Planning Partnership	The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) (WMRA)	http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=49
Sustainable Development	Sustainability West Midlands	The Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF)	http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/
Economic Development	Advantage West Midlands	Delivering Advantage – the Regional Economic Strategy (AWM) Regional Innovation Strategy (AWM) Regional ICT Strategy (AWM) Regional Social Enterprise Framework (AWM) Regional International Trade Strategy (AWM)	http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/west-midlands-economic-strategy.pdf http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/downloads/regional-innovation-strategy.pdf http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/downloads/ict-2.html http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/downloads/west-midlands-social-enterprise-framework.pdf http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/international-trade-strategy.html

Policy Area	Regional Lead / Policy Partnership	Regional Strategies	Web link
Learning and Skills	Regional Skills Partnership	Regional Skills Partnership Introduction and Priorities 2005 (Regional Skills Partnership) Regional Language Strategy (AWM)	http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/rsp-introduction-and-priorities-2005.pdf http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/downloads/language-strategy.pdf
Transport	Regional Transport Partnership (WMRA)	Regional Transport Strategy – part of RSS (WMRA) Regional Transport Delivery Plan (Regional Transport Partnership) Regional Freight Strategy (in development)	http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=47 http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=12
Housing	Regional Housing Executive/Regional Housing Partnership	Regional Housing Strategy (Regional Housing Board)	http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=131
Culture	Culture West Midlands	Regional Cultural Strategy (CWM) Regional Plan for Sport (Sport England West Midlands)	http://www.culturewm.org.uk/rcs.jsp http://www.sportengland.org/westmidlands_index
European and International Policy	Regional European and International Policy Partnership (WMRA)	West Midlands European Strategy (Regional European and International Policy Partnership)	http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=130

Policy Area	Regional Lead / Policy Partnership	Regional Strategies	Web link
Environment	Regional Environment Partnership (WMRA)	Regional Waste Strategy (in development, RTAB) Regional Biodiversity Strategy (Regional Biodiversity Partnership) Regional Forestry Framework (Regional Woodland and Forestry Forum) Regional Water Resources Strategy (Environment Agency) Regional Energy Strategy (WMRA/Energy West Midlands)	http://www.wmbp.org/strategy http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WestMidlandsRFF.pdf/\$FILE/WestMidlandsRFF.pdf http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/regions/midlands/567079/567098/112954/?version=1&lang=_e http://www.energywm.org.uk/page.asp?id=4
Health	Regional Health Partnership (WMRA/ Department of Health)		http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=34

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West Midlands Regional Assembly



Regional Action West Midlands



Leading learning and skills

West Midlands Learning and Skills Council



West Midlands in Europe



Advantage West Midlands



West Midlands Business Council



Sustainability West Midlands



RegenWM



Government Office for the West Midlands



Culture West Midlands



West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum



Midlands TUC



West Midlands Local Government Association



West Midlands Higher Education Association



West Midlands Regional Observatory



Strategic Health Authority



West Midlands Regional Assembly

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