



## Environmental report on the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands

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This Environmental Report is a consultation document on the likely significant environmental effects of revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (the regional strategy in force for the West Midlands of England).

Responses on any aspect of the report are invited by Friday 20 January 2012.

A summary of responses to this consultation paper will be published on the DCLG website. Unless you specifically state that your response, or any part of it, is confidential, we shall assume that you have no objection to it being made available to the public and identified on the DCLG website. Confidential responses will be included in any numerical summary or analysis of responses.

Responses and comments about this consultation may be sent by email to [SEAConsultation@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SEAConsultation@communities.gsi.gov.uk) or by post to:

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# Environmental Report on revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands

## Non-technical summary

This is a summary of the Environmental Report on the proposed revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (“the Strategy”), published in 2008.

## Content and objectives and relationship to other plans and programmes

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands was first issued as Regional Planning Guidance in June 2004. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, it became the Regional Spatial Strategy in September 2004.

At that time, the then Secretary of State supported the principles of the strategy, but proposed several policy issues that needed to be addressed to fully develop the spatial nature of the document. These issues were divided into three phases, with the intention being that each would form a partial revision to the strategy. These revisions were to be as follows:

- **Phase One** - the development of a long term strategy for the Black Country. Phase One was completed in January 2008.
- **Phase Two** - housing development; employment land; urban capacity; transport; waste; together with overarching policies relating to climate change and sustainable development. During the plan preparation process, water policies were also included in the revision.
- **Phase Three** - rural services; gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people; culture, sport and tourism; environment and minerals.

Work on Phase One was incorporated into a consolidated document, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands, which was published in January 2008. This is the Regional Strategy now in force and is referred to in this document as “the Strategy”. Work on Phases Two and Three was undertaken, but revisions were never finalised.

The Strategy is intended to provide a broad development strategy for the West Midlands region for 15 to 20 years. It includes policies to address housing, environmental protection, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals, energy and waste, as well as some sub-regional policies.

The Strategy's revocation is proposed using powers provided by the Localism Bill, currently before Parliament, in order to give authorities at local level more freedom in their decisions, both through development plans and decisions on planning applications, in the light of local needs and preferences.

Revocation of the Strategy should be seen in the wider context of Government policies and legislation to protect and enhance the natural and historic environment, tackle climate change and secure the sustainable use of natural resources.

## Environmental conditions, trends and problems and areas likely to be affected

The Environmental Report, including the regional commentary, is largely based on the data and evidence provided in the Strategy and in associated assessments. Where possible the data has been updated and from the data available it is considered unlikely that the overall state of the environment in the West Midlands has changed significantly since publication of the Strategy.

The West Midlands covers the counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire as well as the metropolitan boroughs. The West Midlands Metropolitan Area (Birmingham, Black Country, Coventry and Solihull) is the second largest urban area in England and occupies a central position within the West Midlands. At the other end of the scale, parts of Herefordshire and Shropshire are amongst the most remote and sparsely populated places in England.

At the time of preparation of the Strategy, the West Midlands was characterised as follows:

- The population of the West Midlands was rising. The greatest growth was taking place in urban areas outside the conurbations, with slower growth in rural areas.
- Key health indicators fell just below the national average. There were wider regional variations in terms of deprivation, with significant clusters within metropolitan areas but also smaller clusters in other districts and some rural areas. Housing affordability was a key problem.
- The West Midlands was identified as having a rich and varied natural and historic environment, ranging from the Peak District National Park and five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, to areas with no formal designation such as waterways, gardens, green corridors, and street trees. However, the majority of these were assessed as being neglected or diverging from their existing character, with natural habitats having become increasingly fragmented. There was also a high proportion of listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments at risk. The West Midlands was below the national target for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status.

- Air quality was poorer in urban areas, with several Air Quality Management Areas identified. Car usage was identified as being high, with congestion affecting its transport network.
- Flooding events were identified as likely to increase as a result of climate change.
- Water quality was improving, but still below the national average. Some parts of the West Midlands were in deficit with low water flows. Municipal waste arisings had stabilised, whilst recycling was still challenging. There had also been a modest increase in renewable energy generating capacity within the West Midlands.
- The West Midlands lagged behind other English regions in terms of economic performance including levels of productivity, investment and industrial structure. Disparities within the West Midlands were also increasing, with areas outside the larger industrial centres and rural parts falling behind. The West Midlands had the highest unemployment rate of any English region.

## Environmental protection objectives

Environmental objectives reflected in the Strategy include obligations under international commitments such as on climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, European Directives including those aimed at protecting the natural environment and from domestic policy.

## Likely significant effects on the environment

The revocation of the Strategy would decentralise planning powers to local authorities, freeing them to work with their local communities to deliver sustainable development. To support them in both delivering for their local communities and addressing strategic cross-border issues, the Government is proposing a duty on public bodies to co-operate on planning concerns that cross administrative boundaries. Local authorities will be expected to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in individual local plans. They will be expected to demonstrate that this is the case when their local plans are examined in public.

The environmental effects of revoking the Strategy would reflect future decisions by local authorities, taken individually and collectively. Whilst the environmental effects cannot therefore be predicted in detail at this point, it is clear that the revocation of regional strategies and their top-down targets will provide opportunities for securing environmental benefits because their revocation would remove certain current policies which present a threat to local environments. For example, revocation would remove the top-down pressure on local authorities to review the extent of their Green Belt. Across England this would have been likely to effect more than 30 areas. Protecting

the Green Belt brings many environmental benefits including safeguarding the countryside and preventing urban sprawl.

In overall terms, it is reasonable to anticipate that decisions taken locally will look to maximise positive environmental outcomes for the local area. However, even if there were circumstances where this was not the case, strong protections for the environment set out in national planning policy and, in many cases, provided for by national and European legislation means it is highly unlikely that there would be any significant adverse environmental effects resulting from the revocation.

## Methods used and difficulties encountered in assessment

This assessment has been carried out in line with the process laid down in the Regulations which transpose the European “Strategic Environmental Assessment” Directive into domestic law.

The assessment has taken as a starting point the assessments carried out when the Strategy and its proposed revisions were being prepared. A broad assessment has then been made of the Strategy’s objectives, its policies and its predicted environmental effects, and how these effects might be changed if the Strategy was revoked. The assessment examines those aspects of the Strategy which might be expected to lead to significant environmental effects.

## Monitoring

Local authorities will continue to be responsible for monitoring the effects of implementing their own plans, in partnership with agencies which monitor specific impacts or conditions.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

- 1.1 The Government announced in the Coalition Agreement its intention to “rapidly abolish regional spatial strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils”. Its objective is to make local spatial plans, drawn up in conformity with national policy, the basis for local planning decisions. The Government proposes that regional targets will be replaced with a more localist planning system together with incentives to encourage local authorities and communities to increase their aspirations for housing and economic growth. Local communities will be freed to deliver sustainable development in a way that allows them to control the way in which their villages, towns and cities change. The Localism Bill therefore contains provisions to repeal Part 5 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, thereby removing the legal framework for the review of regional strategies, and to revoke the existing regional strategies by order following Royal Assent.

## Policy context

- 1.2 The revocation of regional strategies should be seen in the context of other relevant Government policies and associated legislation aimed at protecting the natural and built environment. In particular, the Government has recently published for consultation a new National Planning Policy Framework. The Government has made it clear that the Framework will maintain existing environmental protections, but will streamline and simplify existing national planning policy so as to make it accessible to all users.
- 1.3 The Framework retains protection and improvement of the natural environment as core objectives for local planning and development management. It maintains protection of the Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other environmental designations which protect landscape character, stop unsustainable urban sprawl and preserve wildlife.
- 1.4 The Framework also contains a new Local Green Space designation to protect locally significant green areas, and including playing fields and open space, reflecting the importance of these areas to the health and happiness of local communities. The protection of heritage and the built environment is also a stated objective of the Framework which also emphasises the importance of design of the built environment.

- 1.5 The Framework proposes new stronger controls on peat extraction, preventing the extension of existing peat extraction and the creation of new sites. Policies to support the development of renewable and low carbon energy – critical to the reduction of carbon emissions, also form a key part of the draft Framework. In addition the Framework maintains policy to ensure we can adapt to an already changing climate by ensuring that strong protections remain in place to prevent the building of inappropriate development in flood risk areas or areas subject to coastal change.
- 1.6 The new National Planning Policy Framework sits within a broader set of national policy and legislation. For instance the Natural Environment white paper, published in June 2011, sets out the Government's vision for the future of the natural environment in England, and how natural value will be protected through the planning system.
- 1.7 In addition the Government is fully committed to meeting the targets for reducing carbon emissions in the Climate Change Act 2008, and to meeting its binding renewable energy target of 15 per cent of all energy to come from renewable sources by 2020. The Annual Energy Statement, published in July 2010, and more recently the Carbon Plan, published in March 2011, set out the steps being taken to cut carbon emissions and deliver affordable, secure and low-carbon energy.
- 1.8 The Climate Change Act 2008 also created a framework for building the UK's ability to adapt to climate change. The Government is due to publish in January 2012 a UK wide climate change risk assessment, which will allow the Government to understand the level of risk posed by climate change. A national adaptation plan, setting out Government priorities for adaptation and policies and proposals for achieving those objectives, is due to be published in Spring 2013.
- 1.9 Lastly there are numerous international obligations that contribute to the protection of our built and natural environment including international conventions as well as European Directives.

## Background to regional strategies

- 1.10 The background to regional strategies is as follows:
  - The Town and Country Planning Act 1947 required local planning authorities to draft local plans setting out policies for the development and use of land. Prior to the Town and Country Planning Act 1968 which introduced county structure plans to co-ordinate and guide local plans the focus of strategic planning was mainly at the regional level. A number of regional plans were prepared from the 1940s onwards and there were initiatives to link land use planning and regional economic development.

- In 1988 regional planning guidance was introduced to provide a strategic framework for county structure plans. Regional planning guidance was not statutory and therefore structure plans and local plans were not required to be in conformity with it.
- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a two tier statutory spatial development plan system consisting of regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks. The counties retained statutory planning powers for minerals and waste plans, but county structure plans were abolished.
- Regional planning guidance was given the legal status of regional spatial strategies, and these were then reviewed, leading in most cases to publication of updated strategies, though only parts of the West Midlands strategy were reviewed, and the review of the South West plan was never completed.
- The Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 combined the existing regional spatial strategy and regional economic strategy to create a regional strategy. These came into existence on 1 April 2010 for the eight English regions outside London. The intent was for the responsible regional authority in each region to take forward a further revision of their existing regional spatial strategy and regional economic strategy combining these plans to create a single integrated regional strategy. In the interim period prior to the responsible regional authority completing the revision of the regional spatial strategy and regional economic strategy and the publication of revised regional strategy, sections 78(5) and 79 of the 2009 Act provide for the existing regional spatial strategy, renamed the regional strategy, to remain part of the formal development plan for local authorities in the region.

1.11 Regional strategies are plans for the purpose of the European Directive 2001/42/EC (the “strategic environmental assessment” Directive<sup>1</sup>) because they are land use plans, are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions and set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II of the European Directive on environmental impact assessment<sup>2</sup>. They are also subject to an appraisal of sustainability under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Both requirements were met in a single process called sustainability appraisal, as set out in guidance issued by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”, transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004 no 1633) – the “Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations”.

<sup>2</sup> Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, amended by Directives 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC

<sup>3</sup> “Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents”, ODPM, 2005.

- 1.12 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive applies to plans and programmes whose preparation began on or after 21 July 2004, and to those whose formal preparation began before this date but which had not been adopted (in the case of regional strategies, published by the Secretary of State), by 21 July 2006. Sustainability appraisals incorporating strategic environmental assessment were carried out in all regions during the preparation of their regional strategies, but in the South West and West Midlands, where the process was partial or not completed, they could only be applied to the work which was actually done.

## The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

- 1.13 The objective of the Directive is stated in Article 1: “to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of certain plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development”.
- 1.14 Article 5 of the Directive therefore requires that:
- “An environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account its objectives and geographical scope, are identified, described and evaluated. It shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan, its stage in the decision making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment”.
- 1.15 The Directive refers only to plans or programmes, or modifications of them, which are being prepared or adopted, and not to the revocation of a plan or programme. Therefore Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required for the revocation of regional strategies. The Government has nonetheless decided to undertake voluntary assessments of the likely significant environmental effects of revocation of the eight strategies. These assessments are being conducted in line with the procedure set out in the Directive.

## The strategic environmental assessment process

- 1.16 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Regulations require authorities which prepare and/or adopt a plan or programme which is subject to the Directive to:
- prepare a report on its likely significant environmental effects;
  - consult designated environmental authorities<sup>4</sup> and the public;
  - take into account the report and the results of the consultation during the preparation process and before the plan or programme is adopted; and
  - make information available on the plan or programme as adopted and how environmental considerations were taken into account.
- 1.17 An environmental report should identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan, and those of reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan. It should include the information that may reasonably be required, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan, its stage in the decision making process, and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment.
- 1.18 Annex I of the Directive sets out the information to be provided. Paragraph (f) states that issues to be considered should include biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape – a wide-ranging coverage encompassing social and cultural matters.

## Methodology for assessment of revocations

- 1.19 The method adopted to assess the likely significant environmental effects of revoking the regional strategies has been to take as a starting point the environmental assessment components of the sustainability appraisals carried out when the strategies were being prepared. For those regions which had not completed an up-to-date strategy, use has been made of the more recent appraisals of the emerging strategy.
- 1.20 The assessments follow the format set out in Annex I of the Directive, taking into account that local plans<sup>5</sup> would set the framework for

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<sup>4</sup> Designated as “consultation bodies” in the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations.

<sup>5</sup> Local plans in this report are the local level component of the development plan ie development plan documents and in some instances, saved plan policies.

decisions on planning applications following the proposed revocation of the regional strategies and saved structure plan policies.

- 1.21 The approaches taken in the appraisals during preparation of the strategies differed to some extent between regions, and the assessments inevitably reflect this. However, as far as possible, a broad assessment has been made of the component policies in the regional strategy, identifying their objectives and any particular issues from the sustainability appraisals, so as to identify the key environmental issues arising in assessing the likely effects of revocation. The assessment focuses on those aspects of the Plan which might be expected to lead to significant environmental effects.
- 1.22 The designated consultation bodies for strategic environmental assessment in England (the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England) were consulted on the scope and level of detail to be included in the environmental reports. The corresponding bodies for Scotland and Wales were also consulted on the reports for regions on their boundaries. Their comments on individual regions have been taken into account in the reports, while more general issues are discussed below in the context of the limitations of the assessments.

## Limitations of the assessments

- 1.23 Strategic Environmental Assessment is intended to be applied to the preparation and modification of relevant plans and programmes. This informs those preparing the plan and others consulted on it of the potential environmental effects of the proposals, and compares the effects of reasonable alternatives. There are now relatively well established processes available to make such assessments. In contrast, the assessment of the environmental effects of revoking a plan does not fit well with the process required by the Directive and there is no established practice.
- 1.24 The revocation of regional strategies is part of the Government's policy for a more localist planning system. This is supported by the proposed duty for public bodies to cooperate. Local authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having successfully cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their local plans are submitted for examination. Alongside the Community Infrastructure Levy, the New Homes Bonus and the local retention of business rates are intended to encourage a more positive attitude to growth and allow communities to share the benefits and mitigate the negative effects of growth.
- 1.25 The environmental effects of revoking the Plan will reflect future decisions by local authorities, individually and collectively. While the environmental effects cannot be predicted for certain because they depend on these local decisions, the revocation of regional strategies

and their top-down targets will provide opportunities for securing environmental benefits because their revocation would remove threats to local environments. For example, revocation would remove the top-down pressure on local authorities to review the extent of their Green Belt. Across England this would have been likely to effect more than thirty areas. Protecting the Green Belt brings many environmental benefits including safeguarding the countryside and preventing urban sprawl.

- 1.26 The revocation of regional strategies should be seen in the context of other relevant Government policies and associated legislation aimed at protecting the natural and built environment and this is described in the section on the policy context above. This includes the National Planning Policy Framework mentioned above, published in July for consultation, which sets out the purpose of the planning system which is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It safeguards valued, national protections such as Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, re-affirms protections for wildlife, bio-diversity and cultural heritage and sets out clear expectations on tackling and adapting to climate change. Additionally, the protections for the environment set out in national planning policy and, in many cases, provided for by national and European legislation means it is highly unlikely that there would be any significant adverse environmental effects resulting from the revocation.

## Assessment of reasonable alternatives

- 1.27 The revocation of the regional strategies is the policy of the Government as set out in the Coalition's programme for Government<sup>6</sup>. The Government has introduced a clause in the Localism Bill to revoke by order individual regional strategies in whole or in part and saved structure plan policies.
- 1.28 The revocation of the eight existing regional strategies has been assessed against the reasonable alternative of not revoking them. This provides the clearest and fullest baseline scenario against which to assess the effect of revocation. Although the revocation of individual policies within each regional strategy have not been presented as separate additional reasonable alternatives, the assessment of the revocation of the West Midlands Plan has included the consideration of its component policies.
- 1.29 Saved structure plan policies are also included within the Environmental Report, and where any of these policies have been identified as still relevant, the environmental implications of their

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[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/coalition\\_programme\\_for\\_government.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/coalition_programme_for_government.pdf)

revocation has been included in the overall assessment of the revocation of the West Midlands Plan.

## Habitats Directive

- 1.30 The provisional view is that the revocation of the regional strategies will have no effects requiring assessment under the Habitats Directive<sup>7</sup>. This Directive prohibits the adoption of plans or projects which have an adverse effect on the integrity of European sites unless there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must be adopted for imperative reasons of overriding public importance. The revocation of regional strategies does not affect the legal requirement set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 that a competent authority, such as a local planning authority, in exercising any of their functions must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive (Regulation 9). Part 6 of the Regulations also contains provisions which require the assessment of implications for European sites of any plan or project, which is likely to have a significant effect on it, before it proceeds in accordance with the Habitats Directive. The views of Natural England, as the statutory nature conservation body, are being sought

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<sup>7</sup> Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

## Chapter 2

# The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands

- 2.1 The regional strategy under consideration for revocation is the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (“the Strategy”), published by the then Secretary of State in 2008. It can be viewed at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100505213210/http://www.gos.gov.uk/497745/docs/260727/285505/638737/WestMidsRSSRevisionJan08>

## Chronology of preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands

- 2.2 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands was first issued as Regional Planning Guidance in June 2004. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, it became the Regional Spatial Strategy in September 2004.
- 2.3 At that time, the West Midlands Regional Assembly, in its role as regional planning body, was tasked by the then Secretary of State to undertake further work on a number of issues. These issues were divided into three blocks of work, with the intention being that each would form a partial revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy. These revisions were to be as follows:
- **Phase One** – the development of a long term strategy for the Black Country;
  - **Phase Two** – housing development, employment land, urban capacity, transport and waste, together with overarching policies relating to climate change and sustainable development. During the plan preparation process, water policies were also included in this revision.
  - **Phase Three** – rural services; gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people; culture, sport and tourism; environment; and minerals.
- 2.4 Work on **Phase One** to develop a long term strategy for the Black Country was completed. New policies relating to the Black Country were incorporated into a consolidated document, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands, which was published in January 2008. This is the Regional Strategy now in force, and is referred to hereafter as “the Strategy”.

- 2.5 Work on **Phase Two**<sup>8</sup> and **Phase Three**<sup>9</sup> was undertaken, but the revisions were not finalised and incorporated into the Strategy. Therefore, this Environmental Report does not include a specific review of the proposals developed under the Phase Two and Three revisions. It does, however, draw on the data, sustainability issues and recommendations identified through the appraisal process.
- 2.6 The 2004 Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands was not subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment, as it was published before the introduction of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Sustainability appraisal became a statutory requirement for regional spatial strategies and local development documents under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2.7 The revisions to the 2004 Strategy were subject to the sustainability appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment process, as well as appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations. But these were partial assessments focusing on specific elements of the Strategy and not, necessarily, the plan as a whole. The original principles and objectives of the Strategy were not reviewed and, therefore, were never appraised.

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<sup>8</sup> Phase Two started in November 2005 and spatial options were launched for consultation in January 2007. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy revision was formally submitted to the then Secretary of State in December 2007 and an Examination in Public took place in spring 2009. The Panel's report was published in September 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Phase Three started in October 2008 and spatial options were launched for consultation in June 2009. Development of draft policy statements and recommendations began in November 2009. Final draft policy statements and recommendations were never issued for public consultation.

## Chapter 3

# Environmental Report

- 3.1 This chapter presents the information which is required to be included, wherever relevant, in the Environmental Report in accordance with Annex I of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The Environmental Report, including the regional commentary, is largely based on the data and evidence provided in the Strategy and associated assessments. Where possible the data has been updated, and from the data available it is considered unlikely that the overall state of the environment in the West Midlands has changed significantly since publication of the Strategy.

## The West Midlands

- 3.2 The West Midlands covers an area of 12,998 km<sup>2</sup>, over 80 per cent of which is rural. It covers the counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire as well as the metropolitan boroughs. The West Midlands Metropolitan Area (Birmingham, Black Country, Coventry and Solihull) is the second largest urban area in England and occupies a central position within the West Midlands. At the other end of the scale, parts of Herefordshire and Shropshire are amongst the most remote and sparsely populated places in England.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive Annex I (a)

### **Outline of the contents and main objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes**

- 3.3 The purpose of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands is to guide the preparation of local authority development plans and local transport plans, so together they can provide a coherent framework for the development of the West Midlands. The Strategy also provides a planning framework for other regional, sub-regional and local strategies, programmes and plans such as the West Midlands' regional economic strategy and the regional housing strategy. In accordance with the then Government's policy set out in national planning policy, it sets out:
- the scale and distribution of provision for new housing;

- priorities for the environment, such as countryside and biodiversity protection; and
- policies for transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals extraction, waste treatment and disposal.

3.4 The Strategy's vision for the region is:

*“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.”*

3.5 The Strategy highlights the trend in the West Midlands for people and investment to move away from the region's major urban areas, with the secondary effects of:

- putting more pressure on the environment, transport and social facilities in surrounding areas;
- leaving some parts of the cities suffering from depopulation and under-investment; and
- contributing to long-distance commuting and rising house prices in rural areas, making it hard for local people to afford to live there.

3.6 In this context, the Strategy identifies four main challenges for the region:

- *Urban renaissance*: developing the major urban areas in such a way that they can increasingly meet their own economic and social needs to counter the unsustainable outward movement of people and jobs facilitated by previous strategies;
- *Rural renaissance*: addressing more effectively the major changes which challenge the traditional roles of rural areas and the countryside;
- *Diversifying and modernising the region's economy*: ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and that they help reduce social exclusion; and
- *Modernising the transport infrastructure of the West Midlands*: supporting the sustainable development of the region.

3.7 These challenges are addressed through the strategic objectives of the Strategy, which are:

- to make the major urban areas of the West Midlands increasingly attractive places where people want to live, work and invest;
- to secure the regeneration of rural areas of the region;

- to create a joined up multi-centred regional structure where all areas/centres have distinct roles to play;
- to retain the Green Belt, but allow an adjustment of boundaries where this is necessary to support urban regeneration;
- to support cities and towns to meet their local and sub-regional development needs;
- to support the diversification and modernisation of the region's economy while ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and reducing social exclusion;
- to ensure the quality of the environment is conserved and enhanced across all parts of the region;
- to improve significantly the region's transport systems;
- to promote the development of a network of strategic centres across the West Midlands;
- to promote Birmingham as a world city.

3.8 In addition to these region wide objectives, Black Country specific objectives are:

- to reverse out-migration;
- to raise income levels;
- to create an inclusive and cohesive society within the Black Country;
- to transform the Black Country environment.

3.9 The Strategy sets out the then Government's policies on development at the time of its publication and relates them to the regional context. The Strategy incorporates the policies in the regional transport strategy produced by the West Midlands Regional Assembly, and takes account of the local and regional housing and economic strategies, as well as other various strategies and programmes produced by government departments, agencies and partnerships; utility companies and transport providers; other private businesses and voluntary organisations.

3.10 The following table illustrates the range of documents considered during the production of the Strategy:

**Table 1: List of documents relevant to the preparation of the Strategy**

<p>Relevant European policy and directives, covering a range of environmental issues</p> <p><i>Sustainable Communities: building for the future</i> (2003)</p> <p>Planning policy statements and mineral policy statements</p> <p>Waste Strategy 2000: England and Wales</p> <p>National transport strategies (Transport 2010 – The 10 year plan; The Future of Air Transport)</p> <p><i>Our Towns and Cities: the future – delivering an urban renaissance</i> (the white paper) (2000)</p> <p><i>Our Countryside: The future. A fair deal for rural England</i> (the rural white paper) (2000)</p> <p>The England Rural Development Programme (2000)</p> <p><i>An Action Plan for Farming</i> (2000)</p> <p><i>A better quality of life: a strategy for sustainable development for the UK</i> (1999)</p> <p>The West Midlands Economic Strategy (1999) and Agenda for Action (2001)</p> <p>Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action</p> <p>Regional Housing Strategy, and ‘Analysis of Regional Housing Land and Urban Capacity Survey’ (2001)</p> <p>Regional Cultural Strategy (2001)</p> <p>Regional Sustainable Development Framework and sustainable strategy for the West Midlands (1999)</p> <p>The West Midlands Regional Biodiversity Audit (2001) and Strategy</p> <p>The Regional Transport Strategy</p> <p>The programmes of the major spending agencies within the Region, including health and education</p>
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- 3.11 With regard to revisions proposed for Phase Two, the starting point for work was the 2004 version of the Strategy, rather than the 2008 one. The Phase Two revisions were intended to relate to those parts of the Strategy covering housing development, employment land, town centres, transport and waste, and identified the towns and cities where development should be focused. It also proposed considerable revisions to the Strategy’s spatial policies by including extensive new sub-regional text. At the examination in public it was agreed that policies on water would be included in the Phase Two revision. The final Panel report recommended a review of the existing water management policy, and a new policy on development and flood risk.

It also agreed revised text to policy SR4 to expand its original scope (focusing on air quality) to ensure the highest level of protection to sites of international nature conservation importance.

- 3.12 Plans and strategies produced by the following neighbouring regions of relevance to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands include:
- the regional spatial strategies for the North West, the East Midlands, the South East and the South West (which are also under consideration for revocation);
  - the Wales Spatial Plan;
  - the West Cheshire and North East Wales sub-regional spatial strategy (2004).

### **STRUCTURE PLANS**

- 3.13 In 2007 the Government wrote to local authorities under the transitional provisions of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to advise them which policies from their existing structure plans would be saved after 27 September 2007. Policies were saved in the expectation that they would be replaced promptly by policies in the regional spatial strategy, or development plan documents for the relevant local authorities. Clause 97 of the Localism Bill provides for the revocation of saved structure plan policies. Where the appraisal at Annex B identified saved structure plan policies as still relevant, the environmental implications of their revocation has been included in the overall assessment of the revocation of the regional strategy.
- 3.14 A number of structure plan policies were saved in the West Midlands. Details are set out in Annex B.

### **LOCAL PLANS**

- 3.15 Regional strategies form part of the statutory development plan, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, until such time as they are revoked. Until then, development plan documents prepared by local authorities are legally required to be in general conformity with the regional strategy.
- 3.16 On revocation of the regional strategy (and any saved structure plan policies), the statutory development plan would comprise any saved local plan policies and adopted development plan documents. The statutory development plan may in future include any neighbourhood plans that are prepared under the powers being brought forward by the Localism Bill. Revocation does not affect the statutory duty on local authorities to keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area or the planning of its development.

- 3.17 A list of local plans in the West Midlands and their current composition is included at Annex C.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive Annex I (b)

### **Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment of the West Midlands and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the Plan**

- 3.18 This section outlines the baseline economic, social and environmental conditions of the West Midlands at the time of publication of the Strategy in 2008. The information is mostly generic to the West Midlands region rather than specific to a particular sub-region or local area.
- 3.19 The review of key sustainability issues is based primarily on a review of data and evidence provided in the published Strategy and subsequent sustainability appraisals and appropriate assessments produced to support the revision process<sup>10</sup>.
- 3.20 Additional, more up to date, data has been identified where possible. For example, new evidence has been drawn from the report produced by Natural England in 2008 setting out the state of the natural environment in the West Midlands region; English Heritage web site statistics and trends on heritage risks; and from material provided by the designated Consultation Bodies for Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 3.21 The key points of the baseline assessment are summarised in Table 2 below. This section does not include a separate description of the likely evolution of the environment without the Strategy as the likely significant effects on the environment of the proposed revocation is considered in the Report as a whole (bearing in mind that strategic environmental assessment normally applies to plan preparation and the requirement to look at the likely evolution of the environment is to provide a frame of reference to help shape the plan's content). It is also important to acknowledge the limitations of the baseline data as this could have changed over time. But it is considered unlikely that the *overall* state of the environment in the West Midlands has changed *significantly* since publication of the Strategy.

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<sup>10</sup> Baseline data extracted from: (1) the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021, Government Office West Midlands, January 2008, (2) data contained in the Government Office West Midlands', which was developed by the Office of National Statistics Nomis and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (as of March 2011), (3) the report 'State of the West Midlands', West Midlands Regional Observatory November 2010, and (4) the Final Sustainability Appraisal on Phase 2 revision, 2009.

**Table 2: Summary of baseline conditions in the West Midlands  
(compiled from various sources noted in paragraphs 3.19 – 3.20)**

<b>Sustainability Issues</b>	<b>Summary of baseline conditions</b>
<b>Economy</b>	<p>The West Midlands economy was assessed as performing reasonably well over the period 2006 - 2010, although its relative economic position within the UK and Europe remained static. The data and evidence revealed there was a growing 'productivity gap' in the economy of the West Midlands compared to other parts of the UK (in particular with the South and East), and a gap growing between Birmingham/Solihull/ Warwickshire and the rest of the West Midlands, in particular, the larger industrial centres. The rural parts were also identified as less economically productive and in recent times having fallen further behind, particularly Herefordshire.</p> <p>The gap in gross value added per head between the Midlands/North of England and the South/East of the country was growing.</p> <p>The data revealed that in the last few years, levels of employment had fallen, and the gap between the employment rate in the West Midlands and the England average had grown (from 1.6% in January 2008 to 2.8% in July 2009). It also identified the West Midlands as having the highest unemployment rate of any English region, with over 30% of the West Midlands' working age population not in work, although with considerable variation across areas.</p> <p>The evidence indicated that the West Midlands had more unqualified young people (aged 16-25) than elsewhere in England, at 13%, although that situation was improving. The proportion of people employed in managerial, professional and technical jobs, which typically require higher level qualifications, was lower in the West Midlands than nationally, with just over 40% of jobs at this level, compared to 45% across England (and as much as 57% in London).</p>
<b>Transport</b>	<p>The evidence identified the West Midlands as being at the heart of the national road and rail network - motorways linking the North with the South East and South West meet in the West Midlands metropolitan area; the main west coast railway line between London and the North West of England and Scotland passes through Birmingham and Coventry. This gives</p>

	<p>rise to competing demands between local, regional, national and international movements often using the same elements of the network. This affects the ability of the West Midlands to cater for the range of demands placed upon its network, leading to increasing congestion in the major urban areas and on the strategic transport corridors. Widespread congestion has a major impact on business.</p> <p>The evidence identified that traffic levels on roads in the West Midlands had risen by about 10% over the previous decade, only slightly above national growth rates. Over a similar time period, bus use has fallen by just over 10% whilst the number of rail users has risen by over 50%. Despite this, 70% of trips were by car, accounting for nearly 85% of the distance travelled, amongst the highest regional figures. Similarly, three quarters of people travelled to work by car which was higher than the national average. This dependence on the car was further reflected in the fact that in 2008, the West Midlands saw more new cars registered per head of population than any other English region and only the South East and South West had more cars per person.</p> <p>Normally, traffic attempting to avoid motorway congestion diverts to unsuitable local roads, resulting in a deterioration of conditions across a wide area. The Panel's report into the Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (2002) identified transport as the single greatest challenge for the West Midlands.</p> <p>The West Midlands also has a light rail system, Midland Metro, which links the centre of Birmingham to Wolverhampton. Birmingham International Airport, the UK's fifth largest, is situated 14 miles to the south east of Birmingham.</p> <p>The 2009 sustainability appraisal report indicated the need for the West Midlands to reduce the need to travel, expand travel choice, tackle congestion, improve safety and protect the environment. A key issue for the West Midlands was to ensure that accessibility is improved while potential environmental impacts are reduced.</p>
<p><b>Biodiversity, fauna, flora</b></p>	<p>The West Midlands has a rich and varied natural environment, ranging from the Peak District National Park and five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, to areas with no formal designation such as waterways, gardens, green corridors, and street</p>

	<p>trees. This diversity is reflected in the different landscape character areas wholly or partly within the West Midlands. However, the majority of these were assessed as being neglected or diverging from their existing character.</p> <p>Bird species provide a good indication of the state of wildlife in the countryside, and the evidence found that on this measure the West Midlands was generally doing better than England as a whole. The total population of all bird species has been relatively stable since 1994, both in the West Midlands and across England.</p> <p>The West Midlands was assessed as being below the national target for Sites of Special Scientific Interest status. As a landlocked area with limited upland areas and a high coverage of agricultural land, the West Midlands has a very low cover of semi-natural habitats, which account for just 6% of the West Midlands land area. The most valuable sites are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. These have seen the largest single year improvement in the quality of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) from 76% in 2008 to 84% in 2009 by area in favourable or recovering condition.</p> <p>Outside designated sites, many habitats and species were assessed as being in decline. Climate change poses new threats with rising temperatures and changing weather patterns. It was identified that key to improving biodiversity in the West Midlands would be improving connectivity across the landscape by expanding and linking areas of good quality habitat to allow species to adapt to the effects of climate change.</p>
<p><b>Population</b></p>	<p>The evidence revealed that the total population in the West Midlands had been growing steadily since 2001. The greatest growth had taken place in urban areas outside the conurbations, with slower growth in rural areas. Over the previous 20 years there had also been a strong outward movement of people and jobs from the major urban areas of Birmingham, Solihull, the Black Country, Coventry and North Staffordshire, and an increase in population in the rural and 'other urban' parts of the West Midlands.</p> <p>The evidence also revealed the West Midlands was still dealing with the economic, social and structural consequences of its past dependence on traditional industries. As a result, there were wide regional</p>

	<p>variations in terms of deprivation. Significant clusters of deprivation existed within the West Midlands metropolitan areas but there were also some smaller pockets of deprivation identified in other districts, including some rural areas.</p> <p>The evidence identified that there were very low household incomes in parts of Birmingham, Sandwell, Stoke on Trent and Coventry, as well as in the remote rural parts of Herefordshire and Shropshire. Provision of key services to rural communities in the West Midlands was the worst in relative terms in England.</p> <p>In terms of housing, housing affordability was identified as a key problem. The 2009 sustainability appraisal report indicated that the housing affordability index in the West Midlands had risen from 3.4 in 1997 to 6.5 in 2007. The appraisal noted that although the Regional Spatial Strategy estimated that over 6,000-6,500 affordable dwellings must be constructed each year from 2001 to 2011, only 4,047 were constructed in 2007-08 decreasing to 3,368 in 2010, a level of provision unlikely to meet demand.</p> <p>The West Midlands was identified as being roughly average in relation to the other English regions in meeting 'decent homes' standards. Net completions since the beginning of the Regional Spatial Strategy had been above the proposed regional targets, but had fallen slightly in the past few years.</p>
<p><b>Human health</b></p>	<p>Human health in the West Midlands was assessed as falling in the mid-range of the English regions for most key health indicators, albeit more often than not being a little worse than average:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average life expectancy was only slightly below the UK average, but there were significant intra-regional variations particularly for local authority areas with higher levels of deprivation.</li> <li>• Infant mortality rate was worse in the West Midlands than anywhere else in England, while the national rate was itself high compared to many other European Union states.</li> <li>• There were relatively high rates of long-term limiting illness within the West Midlands as a whole, and some extremely high rates in specific deprived communities.</li> <li>• For some lifestyle measures, such as alcohol consumption, smoking and injuries from road traffic</li> </ul>

	<p>accidents, the West Midlands was better than average. However, the West Midlands had a higher share of obese people than nationally, for both children and adults.</p>
<b>Soil</b>	<p>Figures from the 2010 annual monitoring report suggest that, during 2007-08, 84% of housing completions were on previously developed land (exceeding the regional target of 76%), with the proportion of future committed land supply of previously developed land at 79%. This was amongst the highest shares in the country outside London.</p> <p>There had been a 25% fall in the amount of derelict land in the West Midlands since 2001.</p> <p>Housing densities in the West Midlands are relatively low among all the English regions, although there was a strong increase from 24/ha in 2000 to 32.4/ha in 2007-08.</p>
<b>Water</b>	<p>There were improvements in water quality since 1990. Low water quality tended to be located in urban areas, particularly the watercourses in Birmingham, Solihull, Stoke on Trent, Coventry, and the Black Country.</p> <p>A significant number of rivers in the West Midlands had failed the Water Framework Directive standards. This Directive aims to ensure that water quality does not deteriorate and that rivers and other water bodies move towards good status or potential. The second round of River Basin Management Plans were being developed which include actions for local authorities and others to help improve water quality.</p> <p>Water Company Water Resource plans for 2009/2010 set out how water would be made available over the plan period without damaging the environment. These plans were based at least in part on the housing figures in the West Midlands' Strategy. The plan covering South Staffordshire factors in water efficiency savings that were part of the regional Strategy.</p> <p>The Environment Agency Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies showed that some parts of the West Midlands were in deficit at low flows and this could have an impact on local and agricultural abstraction. Abstraction of potable water was already included in the Water Resource plans for the plan period.</p> <p>44% of the freshwater habitat was identified as being</p>

	<p>in unfavourable condition, with rivers forming the largest proportion. The reasons for this were wide ranging, but were largely due to water quality and quantity problems, the effects of invasive species, and land management issues.</p>
<b>Air<sup>11</sup></b>	<p>Air quality was assessed as generally being lower in urban areas and (for nitrogen dioxide) along transport corridors. Rural parts of the <b>West</b> Midlands enjoyed very good ambient air quality.</p> <p>Air quality management areas had been designated in a number of local authority areas in the West Midlands, including a number of urban areas, mainly for nitrogen dioxide.</p>
<b>Climate change</b>	<p>A study produced by Sustainability West Midlands into future climate change challenges<sup>12</sup> suggested that by 2050 the average annual temperatures will rise (e.g. by 2.5°C in Birmingham), winter precipitation might increase by 20% and summer precipitation might decrease by 30%, soil moisture could decrease (particularly in the south), by 35%, and the occurrence of extreme climate events would also increase. One of the likely consequences of climate change was an increased occurrence of flood events.</p> <p>The evidence identified the West Midlands region as one of the most susceptible to flooding, notably on the Severn and Avon. This risk is likely to increase with climate change.</p> <p>The evidence identified many large conurbations as being at particular risk of flooding caused by surface water. Development can increase flood risk both locally and up and downstream. According to the Regional Flood Risk Assessment report, four districts were identified as having a high 'inherent flood risk' (Birmingham, Sandwell, East Staffordshire and Tamworth), and ten districts having a medium inherent flood risk (Walsall, Wolverhampton, Solihull, Oswestry, Lichfield, Stafford, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Malvern Hills and Worcester).</p> <p>It was noted that flows in rivers may reduce in dry weather, thus reducing their dilution capacity and</p>

<sup>11</sup> Draft Regional Spatial Strategy Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West: Appropriate Assessment, Executive Summary, Dec 2007

<sup>12</sup> The Potential Impacts of Climate Change in the West Midlands, SWM, January 2004  
<http://www.gos.gov.uk/497745/docs/177226/394408/Climatechangeinthewm>

	ability to accept treated sewage effluent.
<b>Pollution</b>	<p>In terms of pollution, the evidence indicated that central and eastern parts of the West Midlands were becoming increasingly light saturated, although the remote rural western parts of the region were still within the darkest classification band for light saturation.</p> <p>Households in the West Midlands emitted 12.4m tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent in 2004, 2.34 tonnes per household, compared to 2.45 tonnes for England as a whole.</p> <p>The baseline review identified some positive trends around transport patterns, most importantly that an increasing proportion of houses were being constructed in existing urban areas and that distance travelled and commuting distances had remained relatively stable in recent years.</p> <p>However, it was noted that many other trends suggested that patterns are moving away from, rather than towards, the goal of sustainable transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car ownership and congestion was increasing, and use of public transport was declining. Carbon dioxide emissions from the transport sector were increasing with air quality being adversely affected.</li> <li>• Road transport accounted for around 30% of carbon emissions from the West Midlands, a higher proportion than in other regions outside the greater South East. The two other major sources of emissions were domestic sources and those from industry and commerce, with the latter being the largest category.</li> </ul> <p>Pollution also includes accidental discharges to rivers and indirectly from diffused sources, for example, diffuse agricultural pollution was noted as a cause of poor water quality.</p>
<b>Heritage and historic environment</b>	<p>The West Midlands was identified as having a rich historic environment. Historic sites are a crucial element in delivering communities with a distinctive sense of place and identity.</p> <p>Recent data (2011) reveals that the West Midlands is home to two World Heritage sites, 1,422 scheduled monuments, 604 Grade I listed buildings, 2,089</p>

	<p>Grade II* listed buildings, 150 registered parks and gardens and 770 conservation areas<sup>13</sup>.</p> <p>There is also a higher proportion of Grade I and II listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments at risk than elsewhere. In 2009<sup>14</sup> over 1 in 5 of the scheduled monuments in the West Midlands were identified as at high risk from imminent collapse or deterioration - a higher proportion than the national average. The same survey identified 166 highly graded buildings at risk, again a higher proportion than the national average.</p> <p>There are two geological National Nature Reserves and 122 geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the West Midlands. The interest features have been destroyed in two of these sites. Of the rest, 87% are in favourable condition and 13% are unfavourable. There are 648 Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites. The Black Country has recently applied for recognition as a European Geopark<sup>15</sup>.</p> <p>There are also extensive tracts of woodland, such as the Wyre Forest. It has notable ancient parks and wood pastures, such as Moccas.</p>
<b>Landscape</b>	<p>In 2004, 18% of the West Midlands was designated as because of landscape quality. This compares to a 7% average in England.</p> <p>The finest landscapes, some 9% of the West Midlands, are protected within parts of five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a National Park. 63% of the Landscape Character Areas were assessed as neglected or diverging from existing character. None of these areas had been assessed as enhancing. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have largely maintained their character.</p> <p>The West Midlands has a major concentration of agricultural landscapes that are neglected or showing diverging patterns of change, particularly in the eastern valleys and floodplains.</p> <p>Landscapes in the West Midlands face pressure from changes in farming systems, climate change and development.</p>

<sup>13</sup> English Heritage web outlook on the West Midlands, June 2011.

<sup>14</sup> English Heritage Heritage at Risk Register 2009 West Midlands.

<sup>15</sup> The European Geoparks Network has been established to acknowledge the internationally important status of key areas, and their contribution to the local culture and economy.

	Over 70% of the West Midlands is agricultural land. Changes in the distribution, rotation cycles and cropping methods can have dramatic, often unforeseen, effects.
<b>Waste</b>	Although there was only limited data for 2008/09, arisings from municipal waste in the West Midlands had stabilised, whilst industrial and commercial waste production had fallen. There had been a 41% reduction in waste deposited at landfill sites since 2001/02, reflecting the target to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill, and to manage waste further up the waste hierarchy. Planning permissions had been granted for substantial amounts of new waste management capacity across the West Midlands, in line with the identified gap in provision. Targets for increasing the recycling of waste remained challenging.
<b>Energy</b>	According to data <sup>16</sup> , there had been a modest increase in renewable energy generating capacity in the West Midlands from 165MW in 2003 to 182MW in 2008. Data on electricity consumption for 2008 suggests that 2.7% came from renewable sources.

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<sup>16</sup> 'West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Annual monitoring report 2009', published February 2010, West Midlands Regional Assembly Spatial Strategy

# Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive Annex I (c) and (d)

## **The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected**

**Existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan, including in particular those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE WEST MIDLANDS**

- 3.22 Drawing from the information provided in the Strategy and associated assessments, the environmental concerns of strategic significance and possible relevance to revocation of the plan are considered below.
- 3.23 The Strategy identifies that the dispersed pattern of development promoted by previous spatial strategies was unsustainable and has resulted in
- additional pressure on the environment, transport and social facilities in the surrounding areas;
  - some parts of the cities suffering from depopulation and under-investment due to their poor quality housing and community environment; and
  - long-distance commuting and rising house prices in rural areas, making it hard for local people to afford to live there.
- 3.24 Additional challenges affecting much of the West Midlands region identified include:
- pressure on land availability from competing land uses, mainly for housing, affecting supply of good quality employment land;
  - reducing the level of deprivation in some areas, mainly in relation to affordable/quality housing (particularly in major urban areas, as well as the South and West of the region), education and skills, and jobs;
  - reducing traffic growth and reliance on car travel, and the associated impact on climate change and air quality;
  - improving its biodiversity; and
  - general concerns about water abstraction and discharge and the capacity of water resources to meet future demands, with cumulative risks to the quality of designated sites and the environment more widely.
- 3.25 The Strategy aims to address these challenges by:

- making the housing and employment markets in the big cities and major urban areas of the West Midlands attractive. A key aim of the Strategy is to increase the number of high-quality homes in the major towns and cities and to match this with big improvements to the quality of the environment and access to high-quality public services and transport;
  - linking strongly with the West Midlands regional economic strategy, with the aim of modernising the existing traditional industries and increasing the range and quality of business opportunities available, particularly in the regeneration zones, high technology corridors and a network of strategic towns and city centres (which will provide a focus for social, cultural, economic, commercial and regeneration activities); and
  - in the shire and rural areas, focusing development on a few key towns. This is to create balanced communities and provide the commercial, retail, transport and leisure facilities to serve a wider area, thereby minimising the need to travel further afield. Elsewhere, the emphasis is on matching development to the needs of local communities.
- 3.26 In the work undertaken in preparation for the Phase Two revision, new housing provision and distribution figures were proposed, indicating a net increase of 365,600 dwellings for the West Midlands over the period 2006-2026. The scale and distribution of housing provision sought to meet the housing needs of the West Midlands in a way that reinforces the overall spatial strategy. It was proposed that this would be achieved by supporting the renaissance of urban areas, tackling affordability, helping safeguard environmental assets and providing opportunities for homes close to where continued job growth is likely.
- 3.27 The sustainability appraisal for the Phase Two revision in 2009 highlighted general concerns about the impact of additional housing on traffic growth, increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; increased pressure on water resources (exacerbating water supply-demand balance) and on biodiversity (with potential changes to the Green Belt). The final Panel Report on the proposed changes for the Phase Two revision identified potential changes to the Green Belt boundaries necessary to achieve the levels of housing increase sought. The 2009 Sustainability Appraisal also indicated likely impacts on the West Midlands region's environmental assets – both natural and historic – depending on where development is located and how it is developed.
- 3.28 The work undertaken for the Phase Two revision also proposed a series of policies aimed to mitigate some of these effects, i.e. policies on energy efficiency and the use of renewables; green infrastructure networks; and promoting more sustainable transport patterns (i.e. improvements to public transport services and infrastructure, walking and cycling and promoting alternatives to freight transport); reducing the need to travel through the location of development and services to support this.

- 3.29 The 2009 sustainability appraisal identified that the proposed changes to the level and distribution of new development policy (CF3) would have a number of implications for the West Midlands, with a mixed overall impact. The positive impacts identified were primarily in terms of housing need, as higher housing provisions will be more likely to meet the projected housing needs and may ensure that housing affordability does not worsen. Although it may result in less concentrated pattern of development, therefore, working against the Strategy's key focus on urban renaissance.
- 3.30 On the negative side, higher housing figures would increase pressure on environmental assets, with higher CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and increased pressure on water resources and biodiversity. In addition, Green Belt releases may be required. Districts most affected were Coventry, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Warwick, Worcester, Redditch, Bromsgrove, and Lichfield, Solihull and Newcastle under Lyme.

#### **AREAS LIKELY TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED BY THE STRATEGY**

- 3.31 The Strategy identifies a number of specific areas in the West Midlands to accommodate further development and growth. These are:
- the major urban areas of Birmingham/Solihull, the Black Country, Coventry and North Staffordshire to counter the unsustainable outward movement of people and jobs. These areas need housing market renewal in areas of low demand, social and economic regeneration, improved urban environments, strong retail, leisure and office provision, and effective and sustainable transport infrastructure;
  - outside the major urban areas, to focus development on the large settlements of Hereford, Rugby, Shrewsbury, Telford and Worcester. These are to meet primarily local housing demand and act as service centres for their hinterlands;
  - a network of towns and city centres that will act as the focus for major investment in retail, leisure and office development, i.e. Birmingham, Kidderminster, Shrewsbury, Walsall, Brierley Hill, Leamington Spa, Solihull, West Bromwich, Burton-upon-Trent, Lichfield, Stafford, Wolverhampton, Cannock, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stratford-upon-Avon, Worcester, Coventry, Nuneaton, Sutton Coldfield, Hanley (Stoke-on-Trent), Redditch, Tamworth, Hereford, Rugby, and Telford; and
  - some geographical areas as urban and rural regeneration zones (as designated by Advantage West Midlands). The rural regeneration zone covers the rural areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. The urban regeneration zone covers the areas of East Birmingham and North Solihull; North Black Country and South Staffordshire (Future Foundations); North Staffordshire; Coventry and Nuneaton; and South Black Country and West Birmingham (Arc

of Opportunity). The main objective in these zones is to reverse de-centralisation and to provide a focus for investment and development. Particular emphasis is on high quality employment sites and the regeneration of town centres.

- 3.32 The 2004 version of the Strategy was never subject to sustainability appraisal, strategic environmental assessment or an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations. Therefore, there is no evidence to assess the likelihood of significant effects of its policies. But the Phase Two appraisal undertaken for the revision process provides a useful basis for assessing the likely effects of implementing the Strategy (although it is based on a policy scenario of higher housing figures and not those in the Strategy).
- 3.33 The appraisal identified that the Strategy's focus on urban renaissance and a less dispersed pattern of development should help improve the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, and quality of life for people in the West Midlands. It may also assist in delivering the wider economic and social objectives for the West Midlands and reduce travel growth. It was identified that the higher level of development and growth promoted by the proposed Phase Two revisions would be likely to have some impacts on the environment such as water resource, waste management, landscape quality, congestion and air pollution. However, the Phase Two revisions also proposed a series of policies aimed at mitigating some of these impacts.
- 3.34 In addition to the impacts identified by the sustainability appraisal, a Habitats Regulation Assessments was undertaken on the proposed changes to the revised housing policy (CF3). This appraisal concluded that the proposed changes would "not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the majority of European Sites in the West Midlands provided that mitigation is implemented as recommended". But the report also indicated that the proposed revisions may influence the integrity of specific sites in terms of:
- water pollution (at Special Areas of Conservation in Cannock Chase, the River Wye, and Severn Estuary designated sites)
  - air pollution at (1) Special Areas of Conservation sites in Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains; Cannock Chase (affected by diffuse and local pollution); Downton Gorge; Fenn's; Whixall; Bettisfield; Wem & Cadney Mosses; South Pennine Moors; the Stiperstones and the Hollies; West Midlands Mosses; and the Wye Valley Woodlands); (2) Special Protection Areas at Peak District Dales; Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase I); and South Pennine Moors Phase II); and (3) at Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase I Ramsar, Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase II Ramsar;

- traffic (at Special Area of Conservation sites in Cannock Chase , South Pennine Moors, and the Peak District Dales; and the Peak District Moors Special Protection Area)
- Green Belt (including Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar, Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar, and Special Area of Conservation sites in River Mease (possibly Cannock Chase ), Ensor's Pool, and Lyppard Grange Ponds)

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive Annex I (e)

**Environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level which are relevant to the Strategy and the way they were taken into account during its preparation**

- 3.35 The environmental assessments informing the proposed revisions to the Strategy include references to a number of international obligations and commitments, including the following:

### **European Union directives**

- **Waste:** Framework Waste Directive; Directive on the Landfill of Waste (99/31/EC); Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (94/62/EC)
- **Air:** Air Quality Framework Directives (96/62/EC) and (1999/30/EC), (2002/3/EC)
- **Water:** Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), Bathing Water Quality Directive (Council Directive 76/160/EEC), Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)
- **Biodiversity:** Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC), Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC)
- **Landscape:** European Landscape Convention
- **Historic environment:** The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)'s World Heritage Convention, Management Plans for Worlds Heritage Sites, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty's Management Plans
- **Pollution:** Directive 2002/49/EC Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise

### **Other international measures and objectives**

- Kyoto Protocol and United Nations Framework – Convention on Climate Change

### **National measures**

- The Conservation (Natural Habitats and c.) Regulations 1994
- Sustainable Communities: building for the future' (2003)
- Waste Strategy 2000: England and Wales
- National transport strategies (Transport 2010 – The 10 year plan; The Future of Air Transport)
- *A better quality of life: a strategy for sustainable development for*

*the UK (1999)*

- The UK Biodiversity Action Plan

**Regional measures**

- Regional Sustainable Development Framework and sustainable strategy for the West Midlands (1999)
- The West Midlands Regional Biodiversity Audit (2001)

3.36 The environment is explicitly recognised in the Strategy's Strategic Objective (g), which seeks to ensure the quality of the environment is conserved and enhanced across all parts of the West Midlands.

3.37 The Strategy also includes certain policies and supporting text reflecting the requirements imposed by certain international and/or national obligations, for example:

- policy QE7, paragraph 8.28 and Annex B notes the requirement to protect international sites in line with the Habitats Directive and the importance of contributing towards national biodiversity targets. Under the Phase Two revision a new policy SR4 aimed at 'safeguarding the integrity of European sites';
- policy EQ9 to assist the delivery of the Water Framework Directive's objectives. Following the examination in public of the Phase Two revision it was suggested that the existing QE9 policy should be amended to require local plans to be supported by a Water Cycle Study where appropriate; local planning authorities to have regard to the actions and objectives of the Severn and Humber River Basin Management Plans; and for local plans to recognise the need for water efficiency and encourage schemes designed to reduce water consumption;
- policies QE5 on the historic environment and QE1 and supporting paragraph 8.6 calling for an integrated approach to the management of environmental assets including historic landscape features and built heritage, including also the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. There are also links with policy QE6 (landscape) and its promotion of an integrated approach to considering the character of landscapes and townscapes;
- paragraph 8.47-48 and policy EN1-2 to contribute towards delivering national targets and international commitments to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions. This includes energy generation and supply, buildings and transport;
- policies WD1-3 aimed at supporting the implementation the European Union Waste Framework Directive and Landfill Directive.

- 3.38 If the Strategy were to be revoked, responsibility for ensuring delivery of the relevant national and international environmental protection objectives would largely fall to local authorities, working in partnership (where relevant) with regional partners such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage. With regard to priority habitats targets, these would be carried forward through local biodiversity action plans. Paragraph 8.28 of the Strategy states:

*'Their implementation (of the local biodiversity action plans) requires cross-sectoral collaboration and must be reflected in all partnerships and strategies. Planning conditions and agreements, agri-environment schemes, management agreements, land acquisition for nature reserves and projects such as the Forest of Mercia or the Meres and Mosses project are valuable tools to assist in achieving the targets'.*

- 3.39 Revocation of the Strategy would not mean that relevant environmental objectives are disapplied or could be ignored. Following its revocation, responsibility for ensuring the Town and County Planning Act regime properly contribute to the delivery of national and international environmental protection objectives would largely fall to local planning authorities, working, where relevant, with the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage. New or revised development plan documents will be subject to sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment and, accordingly, planning authorities will need to be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of environmental objectives. They will also have to have regard to national planning policies, including objectives for sustainable development, and locally specific environmental considerations.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive Annex I (f) and (g)

### **The likely significant effects of the plan on the environment**

#### **Measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the Plan**

- 3.40 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires the assessment to consider the likely significant effects on the environment, including on a number of specific issues set out in Annex 1(f) of the Directive. In this case, the assessment considers whether there are likely to be significant environmental effects of revoking the Strategy, but in the context of the continuing existence of local plans and national planning policies, together with applicable national and European legislation.

- 3.41 The aim of revoking the Strategy is to promote 'localism' and free up local communities to shape the future of their areas through local and neighbourhood plans without top-down direction from a higher tier development plan. Revocation of the Strategy would leave in place saved local plan policies and adopted development plan documents.
- 3.42 Following the proposed revocation of the Strategy the expectation is that local authorities will continue to work together on cross boundary strategic issues. This will be supported by the new duty to co-operate proposed in the Localism Bill. The duty will ensure that local authorities and other public bodies are involved in a continual process of constructive and active engagement which will maximise effective working on development planning in relation to strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries.
- 3.43 Local authorities will continue to be required to prepare their local plans with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Plan preparation will be supported by a sustainability appraisal, which incorporates strategic environmental assessment.
- 3.44 National planning policy provides the framework for local planning and development management. The Government has recently published for consultation the new National Planning Policy Framework. Combined with existing legislation including on the need for strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal of development plans, as well as appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations, this will ensure that local plans promote sustainable development.
- 3.45 A summary of the environmental effects identified in the sustainability appraisal of the Strategy are set out in Table 3 below, with an assessment of any likely significant environmental effects of its proposed revocation. This draws from the more detailed assessment of policies set out at Annex A. The Table is set out by reference to the issues listed in Annex 1(f), with the exception of material assets. This has been considered where relevant as part of the assessment of the other Annex 1(f) issues rather than being dealt with separately.
- 3.46 The assessment's conclusion is that revocation of the Plan is unlikely to have any *significant* environmental effects. In reaching this conclusion the assessment has considered as appropriate the interrelationship between the Annex 1(f) issues and taken into account likely significant effects from secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, both positive and negative.

**Table 3: Summary assessment of the environmental implications of Strategy policies and likely significant effects of revocation of the Strategy**

<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment topic</b>	<b>Implications of Strategy policies</b>	<b>Likely significant environmental effects of revocation</b>
<p>Biodiversity, fauna and flora</p>	<p>Potential benefits from policies QE1 to QE8 aimed at conserving, enhancing and restoring the West Midlands natural, historic and built environment, as well as its biodiversity and nature conservation resources, including woodlands and landscapes. Additional benefits from policy QE4 calling on local authorities to establish a strategic approach for the creation, protection and management of networks of green infrastructure.</p> <p>Policies CF1/CF2 and UR1, UR1A and RR1 promote a more concentrated pattern of development. This could offer opportunities for transforming urban areas with improvements to the built environment, and is perhaps less likely to put pressure on existing greenfield areas.</p> <p>There could be negative effects resulting from the policy proposals on freight (T10) and airports (T11). Airport expansion might result on some adverse effect on air quality, regardless of policy T5’s positive approach to public transport.</p> <p>The proposed Phase Two revision of the Strategy</p>	<p><b>Revocation is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects on biodiversity, flora and fauna.</b></p> <p>Nationally and internationally designated sites will continue to be subject to statutory protection. Under the Habitats Regulation, where necessary, local authorities are required to undertake habitats regulation assessment of their local plans. Other than in exceptional circumstances, they must not grant planning permission for a proposed development unless they have certainty that it will not, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, adversely affect the integrity of the European site concerned.</p> <p>National planning policy on biodiversity, landscape and heritage will still apply, so local authorities will need to continue to have regard to policies aimed at the conservation and enhancement of the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible. Local authorities can still develop local biodiversity action</p>

Strategic Environmental Assessment topic	Implications of Strategy policies	Likely significant environmental effects of revocation
	<p>promoted higher housing figures. The 2009 sustainability appraisal on these proposed changes indicated that the proposed level of growth and development had the potential to affect biodiversity assets in the West Midlands and in neighbouring areas. Impacts would be both direct (e.g. land take, increased disturbance through noise/recreation/traffic etc., habitat ‘nibbling’) and indirect (e.g. changes in air quality, water quality and quantity). Although it also noted that such effects will depend on where development is located and how it is implemented.</p> <p>The proposed Phase Two revision included a number of policies aimed to mitigate and reduce some of these effects, such as policies SR2 (to plan for comprehensive green infrastructure network), SR3 (maintaining and enhancing biodiversity assets) aim to support biodiversity, and SR4 (Safeguarding the integrity of European Sites).</p>	<p>plans, in co-operation with Natural England, and prepare similar policies to those in the Strategy.</p> <p>Local authorities are expected to continue to work together, and with communities, on conservation, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment including biodiversity. Authorities will be able to continue to draw on available information, including data from partners, to address cross boundary issues such as the provision of green infrastructure and wildlife corridors. The proposed “duty to co-operate” will play a key role in enabling local authorities to proactively and positively address these issues.</p> <p>Local plans will also continue to be subject to sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment, which includes an assessment of the effects on biodiversity.</p>
Population	<p>Chapter 7 (Prosperity for all) contains a range of policies to support the regional economy by ensuring appropriate provision of employment land (PA6), to deliver the proposed high-technology corridors (PA3), regional and major investment sites (PA7-PA8) in</p>	<p><b>Revocation is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects on the population.</b></p> <p>There is no reason why positive effects cannot ensue through a combination of local authority intervention, third sector action and responses from the market</p>

<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment topic</b>	<b>Implications of Strategy policies</b>	<b>Likely significant environmental effects of revocation</b>
	<p>regeneration zones (PA2) and regional logistic sites (PA9).</p> <p>Other policies in the Regional Strategy together with the focus on a more concentrated pattern of development provide supporting measure for ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and that they help reduce social exclusion and disadvantage, for example, by improving the region's transport network (T1); promoting job accessibility, education and training (PA1); and ensuring appropriate housing provision (CF3).</p> <p>A possible weakness of a more concentrated development pattern in urban centres is that it might leave areas outside these centres (particularly rural areas) at a disadvantage with regard to service provision, investment and employment opportunities, particularly those areas suffering from a lack of infrastructure and poor access.</p>	<p>outside the Strategy's scope. It would be for local authorities, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to determine the regeneration needs of their areas. The proposed duty to co-operate could assist with this. Local Enterprise Partnerships can play a key role in assisting local authorities deliver these.</p> <p>The Government's economic white paper (published October 2010) sets out the Government's vision for local growth, shifting power away from central government to local communities, citizens and independent providers. This means recognising that where drivers of growth are local, decisions should be made locally.</p> <p>National planning policy will still apply, and local authorities will need to have regard to policies on housing supply and transport. In addition, the proposed duty to co-operate will play a key role in enabling local authorities to proactively and positively address these issues.</p> <p>Local plans will also continue to be subject to sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment, which includes an assessment of the effects on the population.</p>

Strategic Environmental Assessment topic	Implications of Strategy policies	Likely significant environmental effects of revocation
Human health	<p>A key issue identified by the Strategy is the need to create balanced and stable communities across the West Midlands. Its town and city centres, the six regeneration zones and three high technology corridors will provide the spatial focus for economic growth and diversification (PA policies).</p> <p>The Strategy's objectives to deliver more sustainable and balanced communities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) creation of a variety of high quality, healthy, affordable and sustainable living and working environments (QE3, QE4);</li> <li>b) provision of sufficient number and variety of jobs to meet employment needs, along with associated education and training opportunities (PA1);</li> <li>c) delivery of modern urban transport networks, with an emphasis on public transport provision (T1); and</li> <li>d) rejuvenated city, town, and local centres to serve communities with high quality services, to promote identity and social cohesion and to drive economic change (PA11).</li> </ul> <p>Policy UR4 sets out the principles for local authorities to work with partners and local communities to assist</p>	<p><b>Revocation is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects on human health.</b></p> <p>Local authorities are best place to deliver planning policies to support the health and well being of local communities. National planning policies will be carried forward by local authorities, other relevant bodies and communities as best fits the local area.</p> <p>National planning policy will still apply including for housing supply. It will be for local authorities to establish the right level of local housing provision in their area, including affordable housing. They will also need to continue to identify a long-term supply of housing land as well as to determine their other development needs including to support sustainable transport.</p> <p>National planning policy relevant to health and well-being, which underpins the concept of sustainable development, should be reflected in local plan policies for local communities. Local plans will continue to be subject to sustainability appraisals which include an assessment of the impact of options on human health.</p> <p>Also, the various European Union and national standards for reducing air and water pollution and greenhouse gas</p>

<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment topic</b>	<b>Implications of Strategy policies</b>	<b>Likely significant environmental effects of revocation</b>
	<p>delivery of urban renaissance through improved service delivery (such as education, health and social care, leisure and recreation facilities, community facilities, open space, and emergency services).</p> <p>There are also potential environmental and health benefits that could be delivered through the Strategy's policies which promote walking and cycling, reducing the need to travel and managing transport demand.</p> <p>It was noted that the proposed levels of development and economic growth may increase emissions. The proposed housing, development and other growth may increase emissions and air pollution, affecting the quality of the environment, and that the freight (T10) and airport (T11) proposals may result in some negative effects. Airport expansion can give rise to some adverse effects such as air quality, noise and visual intrusion.</p>	<p>emissions being taken forward by local authorities and other agencies should help contribute to the improved health of the population. Local authorities should therefore be able to contribute to the improved health of the population by contributing to the achievement of European Union and national standards for air and water quality.</p>

<p>Soil</p>	<p>Policies CF5 encourages local authorities to optimise the opportunities for recycling land and buildings for new housing development, contributing to the regional target of 76% development on previously developed land between 2001-11.</p> <p>Policy QE6 sets out the regional priorities for conserving, enhancing and, where necessary, restoring the quality, diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape character (both in urban and rural areas) in the West Midlands.</p> <p>The Strategy includes a reference to agricultural land quality under paragraph 8.38. This is a general requirement for local authorities to take into account the implications of the pattern of agricultural land quality for the distribution of development in the preparation of plans and consideration of development proposals.</p> <p>In assessing the proposed changes under the Phase Two revision, the 2009 sustainability appraisal indicated that it is very likely that the Strategy would allow for the decontamination and remediation of some existing contaminated land on previously developed land. This would be supported by new waste policies which seek to ensure that all Waste Planning Authorities prioritise sites for the recycling of construction and demolition waste, and in particular that facilities for soil remediation are provided in the Black Country, Stoke</p>	<p><b>Revocation is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects on soil.</b></p> <p>Soil impacts are locally specific and appropriately considered at the local level. The revocation of the Strategy should not have an effect of local authorities' capacity and responsibilities to deal with contaminated land, including securing remediation as part of the redevelopment of brownfield and contaminated land.</p> <p>Local authorities should continue to have regard to national planning policies, and it will be for them to determine how they can best protect soil quality in their areas.</p> <p>For development on agricultural land, local authorities should continue to have regard to national planning policies, including policies to protect the best and most versatile land to support food production. Policies to reduce urban sprawl, including Green Belt, will also help protect soils.</p> <p>Local plans will also continue to be subject to sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment, which includes an assessment of the effects on soil.</p>
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	and Staffordshire.	
Water	<p>The Strategy, through policy QE9, sets out the regional objectives for managing the water environment (including protecting/improving water quality, managing demand capacity/supply issues, reducing effects on biodiversity).</p> <p>There are no specific policies on managing flood risk or air quality – although a general approach is set out in paragraphs 8.42-8.44 (on flooding) and 8.45-8.46 (on air quality).</p> <p>The final panel report for the proposed Phase Two revisions recommends a new policy QE9 (Water management and water cycle studies) and a new policy QE10 (Development and Flood Risk). These policies would have supported key aspects of environmental management in the West Midlands.</p> <p>Growth in housing and business growth promoted by the Strategy may affect water quality if sewage infrastructure does not have the required capacity. Policy was due to be updated under Phase Three to take proper account of the European Water Framework Directive and the requirement for all local planning authorities to adhere to actions and the long term objectives of the West Midlands' strategic river corridors (the Severn and Humber river basin management plans). Following the Examination-in-</p>	<p><b>Revocation is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects on water.</b></p> <p>Regulatory mechanisms exist to ensure an adequate, safe and sustainable water supply. National policy already gives the Environment Agency, water and sewerage companies, developers, landowners, local authorities and others an important role in taking a proactive approach and work together to identify, characterise, plan and manage the water environment taking into account biodiversity sites of international importance. The proposed duty to cooperate will play a key role in enabling local authorities to proactively and positively address these issues.</p> <p>Where appropriate, local authorities should, as now, work in partnership with the Welsh Authorities and statutory nature conservation bodies in Wales in considering wider cross-boundary effects of their local plans. It is expected that this would include the consideration of potential impacts on the water quality of rivers that flow into Wales or potentially additional abstractions from water resources in Wales.</p> <p>Statutory requirements under the Water Framework Directive will continue to apply and be implemented principally in accordance with River Basin Management Plans, supported by national planning policy. Local</p>

<sup>17</sup> West Midlands RSS – The Impact of Housing Growth on Public Water Supplies, Environment Agency 2007

	<p>Public on Phase Two, it was recommended that water issues be considered under Phase Two. Policy QE9 was introduced to promote strategic working in order to meet the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>The proposed Phase Two revision initially did not consider water transfer, river catchment, and other water related linkages between the West Midlands and the South West and Wales. Following the Examination-in-Public, it was agreed that the inter-regional relationships diagram should show the “river catchments and water quality” linkages with the South West and Wales, and also “water transfer” with Wales.</p> <p>A study<sup>17</sup> produced by the Environment Agency in 2007 indicated that the housing growth scenarios considered as part of the proposed Phase Two revisions would place additional pressure on water resources in many areas, although water efficiency measures would reduce the pressures on supplies, cutting deficits and delaying the need for new water resource developments. The new policies QE9, QE10 and SR4 will assist mitigate such effects. In addition the 2009 sustainability appraisal highlighted the importance for local authorities to plan for the necessary sewage infrastructure.</p> <p>The Environment Agency has indicated that the 2009/10 ‘water resource management plans’ used the proposed Phase Two revision housing figures. The removal of the regional strategy could impact on these</p>	<p>authorities should work co-operatively with other authorities, the Environment Agency and water companies to ensure the spatial planning aspects of River Basin Management Plans are applied.</p> <p>The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 contains provisions for regional working and co-operation such as the establishment of regional flood and coastal committees and the bringing together of lead local flood authorities who will have a duty to cooperate, to develop local strategies for managing local flood risk. In addition, the Flood Risks Regulations 2009 impose a duty on the Environment Agency and lead local flood authorities to take steps to identify and prepare for significant flood risk.</p> <p>The proposed Phase Two revisions were never implemented, so are therefore not technically under consideration for revocation. Nonetheless, for water resource planning purposes, it will still be possible for housing numbers to be identified through the local plan process. Local authorities should continue to plan for and address water infrastructure implications of development through policies in their local plans, reflecting local circumstances and priorities and actively engaging with interested parties. Water companies will have an opportunity to work with local authorities on water infrastructure implications as part of local plan preparation.</p> <p>The location of development will be a critical component</p>
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	<p>plans as the assumption in them may now be incorrect if the housing allocation figures radically change.</p>	<p>of this. River Basin Management Plans identify the pressures that the water environment faces and include action plans requiring cross boundary and input from a range of organisations. The proposed duty to co-operate will play a key part in supporting local authorities to address these issues.</p> <p>Local plans are subject to sustainability appraisal, strategic environmental assessments and, where appropriate, habitats regulation assessment of their local plans which includes an assessment of water issues.</p>
Air	<p>The Strategy's approach on air quality is set out on paragraphs 8.45-8.46.</p> <p>The Strategy's focus for a less dispersed spatial pattern has the potential to curb traffic growth. The Strategy seeks to improve accessibility and the performance of the (public) transport system, whilst reducing the past trends in car traffic and trip length growth. The Strategy promotes walking and cycling (T3) and development of an integrated public transport network (T5).</p> <p>The proposed airport expansion (T11) might result on some adverse effects on air quality.</p>	<p><b>Revocation is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects on air quality.</b></p> <p>National planning policies, including those on air quality, sustainable development and transport will continue to apply and inform local plan policies and development management decisions. The benefits of more sustainable transport provision and infrastructure and sustainable locations for development should be supported locally through land use and transport planning.</p> <p>In areas of poor air quality, including those within, or adjacent to, an Air Quality Management Area, local authorities will need to work closely with relevant partners to ensure that development has taken proper account of relevant air quality matters.</p>

<p>Climatic factors (including climate change)</p>	<p>The Strategy does not include a specific policy on climate change, although the approach is set out in paragraphs 2.10-2.16. Policy CC1 applies specifically to the Black Country.</p> <p>The Strategy does not include a specific policy on managing flood risk either, although the approach is set out in paragraphs 8.42-8.44.</p> <p>Other policies in the Strategy should assist in the mitigation of and adaptation to the effects of climate change, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting a more sustainable pattern of development which reduces the need to travel and encouraging the use of more sustainable forms of transport (T1,T2);</li> <li>• encouraging the use of sustainable drainage systems (QE9);</li> <li>• increasing tree cover (QE8);</li> <li>• promoting the reuse of materials (M3, WD1); and</li> <li>• supporting new industries and technologies that address climate change, and encouraging renewable energy and energy conservation (EN policies)</li> </ul> <p>A set of environmental policies were developed as part of the proposed Phase Two revision process aiming to</p>	<p><b>Revocation is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects on climate factors (including climate change) in the West Midlands.</b></p> <p>See comments under ‘water’ and ‘air’ above.</p> <p>Through their local plans, local authorities should contribute to the move to a low carbon economy, cut greenhouse gas emissions, help secure more renewable and low carbon energy to meet national targets, and to adapt to the impacts arising from climate change.</p> <p>Local authorities are expected to have regard to policies which require them to consider how their proposed provision of new development, its spatial distribution, local and design should be planned to support the delivery of renewable and low-carbon energy and energy efficiency measures, limit carbon dioxide emissions and ensure new development minimises future vulnerability in a changing climate.</p> <p>It is expected that local authorities will continue to work together across administrative boundaries to plan development that properly minimises the impact of the changing climate, particularly from flooding and coastal change. For flooding matters, local authorities already have a duty to cooperate under the Floods and Water Management Act 2010. This contains provisions that cover regional working and co-operation such as the establishment of Regional Flood and Coastal</p>
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	<p>bring the regional strategy up to date with latest policy developments on climate change (mitigation and adaptation) and other aspects of sustainable development.</p> <p>It was initially proposed that the Strategy's Phase Three revision would consider an update of the 'quality of the environment' policies in the Strategy and the need for new policies related to flood risk, renewable energy and Green Belt. Following the examination in public, it was agreed that these policies would be covered in the Phase Two revision.</p>	<p>Committees and the bringing together of lead local flood authorities (unitary and county councils), who will have a duty to cooperate, to develop local strategies for managing local flood risk.</p> <p>In addition, the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 imposes a duty on the Environment Agency and lead local flood authorities to determine whether a significant flood risk exists in an area and if so to prepare flood hazard maps, flood risk maps and flood risk management plans.</p> <p>In addition, local plans are subject to sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessments which includes an assessment of the effects on climatic factors including climate change.</p>
<p>Cultural heritage and the historic environment</p>	<p>The Strategy (policy QE5) and introductory text 8.1-8.3 recognises the importance of the historic environment, plus cultural schemes/projects, in creating distinctive roles for different places, helping to raise their profile, enhancing the sense of place and being a source of local pride. Policy QE1 with its coverage of the historic environment as part of integrated approach for conserving and enhancing the environment is also relevant. Also QE6 (landscape) by promoting an integrated approach to considering the character of the landscape and townscape.</p> <p>There was some general concern expressed in the 2009 sustainability appraisal about the potential for impacts upon both natural and historic assets, as a</p>	<p><b>Revocation is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects on the cultural heritage and the historic environment in the West Midlands.</b></p> <p>The most important historic and heritage sites are subject to statutory protection. This is supported by national planning policy on the protection and conservation of the historic environment as a whole, which inform local plans and development management decisions.</p> <p>It is expected that local authorities will continue to work together, and with communities, on conservation, restoration and enhancement of heritage and the historic environment. The proposed duty to co-operate will assist with this. Authorities can continue to draw on available</p>

	<p>result of the levels of growth and development in the proposed Phase Two revisions. However, there were policies proposed to mitigate these concerns.</p>	<p>information, including data from partners, to address cross boundary issues.</p> <p>In planning for the historic environment, local authorities should still liaise with English Heritage to identify and evaluate areas, sites and buildings of local cultural and historic importance, and explore ways for the management, enhancement and regeneration of those areas. Such proposals should inform development plans and planning decisions.</p> <p>In addition local plans are subject to sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment which includes an assessment of the effect on cultural heritage and the historic environment.</p>
Landscape	<p>Policy QE6 promotes the conservation, enhancement and restoration of the West Midlands landscape. Furthermore, policy QE2 (restoring degraded areas and managing and creating high quality new environments) can help to enhance environmental assets by developing brownfield land for green space or biodiversity value, particularly if this prioritises areas of poor environmental quality. It aims to enhance landscapes and townscapes, promote health benefits and alleviate flood risk.</p> <p>The Strategy's emphasis on major urban areas and urban/rural renaissance aims to help to regenerate degraded environments and to focus investment on parts of the West Midlands with significant levels of</p>	<p><b>Revocation is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects on the landscape.</b></p> <p>National planning policies provide for countryside protection, including protections for valued landscapes and nationally designated areas (which are also subject to statutory protection).</p> <p>In addition, the revocation of top down targets will remove pressure to review Green Belt to accommodate growth. Protecting the Green Belt brings many environmental benefits including safeguarding the countryside and preventing urban sprawl. It is for local authorities to review their Green Belt boundaries, having regard to relevant national policy. Current planning policy and the draft National Planning Policy Framework</p>

	<p>deprivation, helping to promote environmental justice and supporting urban renaissance.</p> <p>The 2009 appraisal on the proposed Phase Two revisions indicated that large amounts of previously developed land will be used to deliver the new housing figures proposed. However, the appraisal also concluded that it seems likely that some of the land required for this additional development will be greenfield land, and may possibly also be Green Belt land. While visual and landscape impacts would be likely where Green Belt or previously undeveloped areas were used, the proposed Phase Two revisions also included mitigating effects on land use and landscape where possible, for example, by promoting maximum use of previously developed land and promoting development in the larger settlements.</p>	<p>contain strong policies protecting the Green Belt from inappropriate development.</p> <p>Potential significant effects on landscapes should be identified by local authorities through the strategic environment assessments of their local plans, environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment of specific projects.</p>
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## THE BLACK COUNTRY

- 3.40 The Black Country is the only sub-regional area which has specific policies applying to it, developed through the Phase One review process. As there is no sub-regional structure to the Strategy, the Black Country policies are placed in various sections of the strategy.
- 3.41 A sustainability appraisal was undertaken on the Strategy's Phase One revision: The Black Country and the supporting Black Country study. This considered the environmental, social and economic effects of various spatial options, the preferred land use strategy and proposed policies for inclusion in the Regional Spatial Strategy. The final report was published in March 2006.
- 3.42 The sustainability issues emerging from the sustainability appraisal on Phase One were not dissimilar to those identified in the 2004 Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands. In fact, the appraisal highlighted that the existing dispersed pattern of development was unsustainable and that significant change was necessary in the Black Country to improve its environmental, economic and social conditions. Other challenges included:
- some areas with high levels of deprivation including poor health, crime, housing quality, education and skills;
  - some areas with poor quality environment including biodiversity, soil, air and water quality;
  - traffic growth and the impact on climate change;
  - modernising and diversifying the economy; and
  - improving the quality and range of housing stock.
- 3.43 The sustainability appraisal on the Phase One revision focused on the following revised policies:
- Policy UR1A: Black Country regeneration priorities, based on four strategic centres and two corridors;
  - Policy CF3: levels and distribution of housing development, which sets a target for the annual average rate of housing provision;
  - Policy PA11: the network of town and city centres, which replaces Dudley with Brierley Hill/Merry Hill as a strategic centre;
  - PA11A: Brierley Hill/Merry Hill and Dudley. This sets out proposals for the future expansion of Brierley Hill/Merry Hill and planning conditions including public transport improvements, car parking management and development of a master plan; and
  - Policy T12: priorities for transport investment, which sets out the range of transport infrastructure priorities for the Black Country covering public transport and highway improvements.

3.44 The sustainability appraisal considered the likely social, economic and environmental effects of the proposed policy options and it drew the following conclusions:

- Social – The proposed policies contributed positively to social objectives covering crime, poverty, housing, education and health by focusing development on centres and corridors where the highest levels of deprivation occur.
- Economic – There were positive benefits on objectives relating to the economy including those relating to jobs, skills and new technology from the Regional Spatial Strategy revised Phase One policies. The policies provide a clear framework for economic regeneration with the focus on the four centres and employment land investment corridors. There are close links to other strategies relating to education and skills and innovation.
- Environmental – The references in Policy UR1A to the urban park and landscape action plan contributed very positively to objectives relating to the landscape, biodiversity, heritage and local environmental quality. Whilst growth in traffic was likely, the overall approach of corridors and centres plus public transport investment would help in delivering the transport objective. The effects on other objectives covering natural resources, waste and climate change were considered to be positive although they were dealt with in more detail by other policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy. However, the sustainability appraisal highlighted some concern regarding the level of detail provided in policy (PA11A) on the environmental priorities for Brierley Hill.

3.45 The sustainability appraisal also indicated that the spatial strategy for the Black Country could deliver beneficial effects that might well extend outside the sub-region. For example:

- contributing to meet housing needs and providing services/facilities for those living in the periphery neighbouring other sub-regions; and
- promoting recreation, culture and historic heritage (through the development of environmental corridors and beacons in the Black Country) could have a knock-on effect outside the sub-region in terms of how the area is perceived by potential visitors and investors from neighbouring areas/other regions.

3.46 The Habitats Regulations Assessment and appropriate assessment<sup>18</sup> of the Phase One revision concluded that, with the mitigating and protective measures introduced on water provision and treatment, the final spatial strategy for the Black Country would not have significant adverse impacts on sites of international importance for nature conservation.

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<sup>18</sup> Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Proposed Changes to the West Midlands Draft Phase 1 Regional Spatial Strategy, GOWM, August 2007.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive Annex I (h)

### **Outline of reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information**

- 3.47 The reasonable alternatives to revocation of the Plan and difficulties in undertaking the assessment are considered in Chapter 1.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive Annex I (i)

### **Description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring**

- 3.48 Having regard to the fact that the revocation of the Strategy would mean there would no longer be a strategy whose implementation could be monitored, and it is not proposed to require monitoring at a regional level, this Environmental Report does not set out any envisaged measures for monitoring. This does not mean however that the effects of implementing planning policies in the West Midlands will no longer be monitored.
- 3.49 Local authorities in the West Midlands will continue to monitor their own plans in line with the statutory expectations placed on them, including those arising from the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and the requirements in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area or the planning of its development. These matters include the principal physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area and, in keeping them under review, local authorities can examine relevant matters in relation to any neighbouring area to the extent that they may be expected to affect their area.

## Annex A

### Regional Strategy policies and effects of revocation

This table sets out the policies of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands with their objectives. It has not been possible to include information on sustainability issues raised during the preparation of the Strategy as no sustainability appraisal or strategic environmental assessment was carried out. The right-hand column provides a commentary on the key environmental issues arising in assessing the likely effects of revocation.

The commentary reflects the Government's view that the issues for sustainability identified in the assessment, where not removed by revocation of the Regional Strategy, can be mitigated by means other than through a regional strategy including through a combination of national planning policy, local authorities working collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly co-ordinated and the protections provided for by national and European legislation. This assumption is applicable throughout the commentary and not repeated for every policy under consideration.

Policies	Objectives	Revocation – key environmental issues
<b>The spatial strategy</b>	Paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 provide the overall spatial policy framework for planning for sustainable development across the West Midlands	Revocation of the Strategy would mean that it is for local authorities to determine the priorities for their areas, taking account of national sustainability policies and strategies and implementation at the local level through the local plan. Local authorities have a legal obligation to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Strategic planning can be pursued through partnership working between authorities and other bodies, as they consider appropriate. The proposed duty to cooperate could assist with this.
<b>CHAPTER 4 – URBAN RENAISSANCE</b>		
<b>UR1 – Implementing urban renaissance in major urban areas</b>	<p>The Strategy promotes the development of major urban areas as main areas for growth and development to counter the existing trend towards outward movement of people and jobs.</p> <p>The policy sets out the objectives, mechanisms, and actions to promote the sustainable regeneration of the major urban areas. Targeted action is directed to areas with greatest need and areas of opportunities to create growth.</p> <p>Correlation with policies QE3, QU4 (high quality, affordable and sustainable environment); PA1 (job accessibility, education and training); T1 (improved and accessible urban transport network); PA11</p>	<p>Revocation of the Strategy would mean that it is for local authorities to address more spatial/strategic issues locally, working with neighbouring authorities and other bodies as needed. The proposed duty to co-operate could assist with this. Local authorities would have more flexibility to determine the spatial patterns for development and growth in their areas, so it can be located where it is most appropriate.</p> <p>Local authorities are required by law to undertake sustainability appraisals of their local plans. This should consider the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the plan and will be able to act upon any likely effects identified with the</p>

Policies	Objectives	Revocation – key environmental issues
	<p>(improved city, town and local centres – accessibility to services and social cohesion). This highlights the importance of an integrated approach towards delivery: integrated land use decisions and cooperation with other agencies and partners.</p>	<p>plan's proposed pattern of development.</p> <p>Local enterprise partnerships can play a key role in assisting local authorities deliver the regeneration needs for their areas. Local authorities, business, and civic leaders, working together strategically through local enterprise partnerships, are best placed to understand the development and social needs of their area.</p>
<p><b>UR2 – Towns and cities outside major urban areas</b></p>	<p>This policy identifies local areas for regeneration outside the major urban areas, i.e. Biddulph, Kidderminster, Rugby, Tamworth, Burton upon Trent, Leek, Rugeley, Telford, Cannock, Redditch, Stafford and Worcester.</p> <p>The local regeneration areas identified are based on those areas that contain at least one of the most deprived 20% of wards nationally.</p>	<p>Revocation of the Strategy would mean that it would be for local authorities, working with adjoining authorities and partners, to determine the regeneration needs within their areas, and then to include appropriate policies in their local plans.</p> <p>Where appropriate, local enterprise partnerships can play key roles in delivering any regeneration needs identified. The proposed duty to cooperate could assist in ensuring partnership working and strategic planning across neighbouring authorities and in consultation with local communities.</p>
<p><b>UR3 – Enhancing the role of city, town and district centres</b></p>	<p>This policy reinforces the focus of the Strategy towards a less dispersed pattern of development across the West Midlands.</p> <p>The policy sets out the objectives, mechanisms, and actions to maintain and enhance the role of these areas in delivering urban renaissance</p>	<p>Comments on policy UR1 and UR2 apply.</p>

Policies	Objectives	Revocation – key environmental issues
	programmes in order to provide services for local communities, a sense of identify and as drivers of economic growth. This policy particularly applies to the network of towns and city centres set out in policy PA11.	
<b>UR4 – Social infrastructure</b>	The policy encourages service providers to work with local authorities and community organisations to assist delivery of urban renaissance through improved service delivery (such as education, health and social care, leisure and recreation facilities, community facilities, open space, and emergency services).	The objectives of this policy could be delivered through means other than a regional strategy. Local authorities will still need to plan for the needs of their communities, including the provision of services required within the local plan area.
<b>CHAPTER 5 – RURAL RENAISSANCE</b>		
<b>RR1 - Rural renaissance</b>	The policy sets out the objectives to promote the sustainable regeneration of rural areas within the West Midlands. The policy makes a distinction between rural areas under the influence of major urban areas (southern Staffordshire, northern Worcestershire and much of Warwickshire) which have generally good access to services, and rural areas remote from major urban areas (rural west and parts of Staffordshire) where access to services is generally poor.	The Strategy recognises the need for development and growth options to be developed at the local level, working with local communities, taking account of local needs and circumstances; and for this approach to be defined through the local development documents. Revocation should not have an effect on this proposed approach.  As with policy UR1, this policy promotes a less dispersed pattern of development. Comments on policy UR1 apply.

Policies	Objectives	Revocation – key environmental issues
<b>RR2 – The rural regeneration zone</b>	<p>The policy identifies this zone as the primary focus for investment in rural areas. Emphasis is given to establishing a network of rural service centres, where possible based on market towns and large villages, but possibly requiring a more scattered pattern in the most sparsely populated areas. The ‘rural regeneration zone’ covers parts of the rural areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire.</p> <p>Responsibility to implement this policy rests with Advantage West Midlands.</p>	<p>The purpose of the zone is to bring together partners from the public, private and voluntary sector to develop and implement a programme of economic regeneration into rural areas of most need within the West Midlands. It is possible for this to still be done without this policy, should local authorities and others wish to continue to invest in particular rural areas to aid their regeneration. Where appropriate, local enterprise partnerships can play key roles in delivering any regeneration needs identified. The proposed duty to co-operate will also assist in ensuring partnership working and strategic planning across neighbouring authorities and in consultation with local communities.</p>
<b>RR3 – Market Towns</b>	<p>Sets out the criteria for identifying market towns within development plans (i.e. ability to accommodate development and their relationship with other settlements in the area), and their key role in helping to regenerate rural areas, including the provision of services and other facilities to their rural hinterlands.</p>	<p>Market towns are integral to the delivery of policies RR1 and RR2, as a focus for rural renaissance or as a centre of tourism (PA10). Comments on policies RR1 and RR2 apply.</p>
<b>RR4 – Rural Services</b>	<p>The policy sets out the objectives and action for improving provision/accessibility to services within rural areas.</p> <p>This policy was going to be subject to review under</p>	<p>The objectives of this policy could be delivered through means other than a regional strategy.</p> <p>Local authorities will still need to plan for the needs of their communities, including the provision of services</p>

Policies	Objectives	Revocation – key environmental issues
	<p>the proposed Phase Three revision. There was a requirement in Phase Three to identify and prioritise the critical services that needed to be protected, enhanced or secured in different parts of the West Midlands, and establish mechanisms for dealing with them. However, Phase Three was never completed and therefore is not technically part of the Strategy which is being revoked.</p>	<p>required within the local plan area. See comments on policies RR1 and RR2.</p>
<p><b>CHAPTER 6 – COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE (housing)</b></p>		
<p><b>CF1 - Housing within the major urban areas (plus paragraph 3.8)</b></p>	<p>The policy requires local authorities and their partners to work together to ensure cross-sector coordination in support for the actions to improve the quality/availability of new/existing housing, particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in the market renewal/pathfinder areas of W/N Birmingham, East Sandwell, and Stoke-on-Trent/Newcastle under Lyme, and</li> <li>• areas of increasing decline in parts of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton</li> </ul> <p>With intervention levels defined at the local level.</p>	<p>The objectives of this policy could be delivered through means other than a regional strategy.</p> <p>Local authorities can work together and with partners to determine the appropriate levels and locations for housing provision in their areas.</p> <p>Local authorities are required by law to undertake sustainability appraisals of their local plan policies. This should consider the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the plan and will be able to act upon any likely effects identified with the plans proposed pattern of development. New or revised development plan documents will be subject to sustainability appraisal, strategic environmental assessment and appropriate assessment.</p>
<p><b>CF2 – Housing beyond the Major</b></p>	<p>Outside the major urban areas lower levels of housing are proposed (enough to meet local needs) to discourage out-migration. It identifies 5 areas to</p>	<p>See comments on policy UR1.</p>

Policies	Objectives	Revocation – key environmental issues
<b>Urban Areas (plus paragraph 3.9)</b>	act as sub-regional centres. These are: Rugby, Shrewsbury, Hereford, Telford and Worcester.	
<b>CF3 – Levels and distribution of housing development</b>	The Strategy provides for 207,620 dwelling for the 2007-2021 period. The policy includes a series of environmental safeguards to ensure proposed levels of housing provision are properly tested (through detailed housing capacity studies) so they do not add pressure on urban open space/playing fields and green space; priority on previously developed land.	<p>The figure promoted in the Strategy maintained the housing development trend promoted through RPG11. This element of the Strategy was due to be superseded by the Phase Two revision which considered a preferred option housing provision figure of around 340,000 dwellings for the period 2006-2026.</p> <p>Removing the housing targets within the Strategy gives greater flexibility for local authorities to determine the quantum and distribution of new housing in their areas.</p> <p>The proposed duty to cooperate in the Localism Bill should assist by encouraging strategic approaches to housing and infrastructure provision.</p> <p>National planning policy already requires local authorities to prepare housing implementation strategies as part of their local development frameworks to ensure that sufficient, suitable land is available to achieve their housing and previously-developed land delivery objectives.</p>

<p><b>CF4 – The reuse of land and buildings for housing</b></p>	<p>The policy requires local authorities to optimise the opportunities for recycling land and buildings for new housing development, contributing to the regional target of 76% of development on previously developed land in 2001-11.</p>	<p>Local authorities are still required to set local targets and include a strategy for bringing previously-developed land into housing use in their local development documents under current national planning policy on housing.</p> <p>The proposed Phase Two revision proposed to delete this policy. The sustainability appraisal indicated that deleting this policy would not have a significant effect, as the differences in levels of housing growth that would have resulted from the old phasing policy were marginal.</p>
<p><b>CF5 – Delivering affordable housing and mix communities</b></p>	<p>It identifies specific areas where a lower threshold than the national guidance might be required: Southeast of the region, corridor between Malvern Mills to the Warwickshire border, and in some rural areas (with population of 3,000 or less).</p> <p>It also requires local authorities to make adequate provision for travellers.</p>	<p>Current national policy on housing already requires local development frameworks to set targets for the amount of affordable housing needed, based upon the findings of the strategic housing market assessment and other local evidence.</p> <p>With regard to travellers, the Strategy is not location/scale specific. This element of the Strategy was due to be reviewed in the proposed Phase Three revision. Local authorities have a statutory duty to assess accommodation needs of travellers as part of their wider housing needs assessments. The Housing Act (2004) requires local authorities to take into account their housing strategy in respect of meeting such accommodation needs.</p> <p>The Government considers that local authorities are</p>

		<p>best placed to determine how to meet their housing needs – including the right level of site provision for travelling sites. Local authorities have a statutory duty to assess accommodation needs of travellers as part of their wider housing needs assessments. There is national planning policy for the provision of traveller sites. The Government has consulted on a new planning policy for traveller sites. Under this local authorities are expected to assess the needs for traveller sites and to use this to identify land in their development plan documents.</p>
<p><b>CF6 – Managing land provision</b></p>	<p>The policy requires local authorities to incorporate policies in their local development documents to allow for the managed release of housing land.</p>	<p>Local authorities can still incorporate policies in their local plans relating to managing the release of land for housing.</p> <p>Local authorities are already required by law to publish their timetables for revision to their plans called the ‘local development scheme’. Councils can review this quickly or provide real time information to the general public.</p>

**CHAPTER 7 – PROSPERITY FOR ALL (the regional economy)**

**PA1 – Prosperity for all**

At the time the Strategy was produced, a strategy for the management of the regional economy was set out within the Regional Economic Strategy.

This policy sets out the vision for strengthening and modernising the regional economy. It follows the general spatial principles of focusing development and growth in the regional urban areas, particularly in and around the major urban areas.

It encourages economic growth to be focused primarily on the major urban areas and sets out criteria for developing relevant plans/policies in local development documents.

It also provides criteria for directing growth opportunities outside or beyond the major urban areas.

Its main aim is not to encourage further decentralisation of people/jobs from the major urban areas.

The objectives of this policy could be delivered through means other than a regional strategy.

The Government’s economic white paper (published October 2010) sets out its vision for local growth, shifting power away from central government to local communities, citizens and independent providers. This means recognising that where drivers of growth are local, decisions should be made locally.

The *Plan for Growth* document (included in the Budget 2011) confirms the Government’s commitment to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support growth.

National planning policy addresses economic impact issues, including town centre hierarchies and sustainable patterns of economic growth and employment. These will continue to inform the preparation of local plans and the development management process. Local plans will continue to be subject to sustainability appraisal which will assess how sustainable development has been integrated into plans, and the impact of policy options<sup>19</sup>.

The proposed duty to cooperate and the local enterprise partnerships can play a key role in

<sup>19</sup> *Impact Assessment on the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies*, DCLG, December 2010

		ensuring economic strategic priorities and infrastructure delivery is properly coordinated.
<b>PA2 – Urban regeneration zones</b>	<p>This promotes the focus of development/investment within the following regeneration zones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Birmingham and North Solihull</li> <li>• North Black Country and South Staffs (Future Foundations)</li> <li>• North Staffordshire</li> <li>• Coventry and Nuneaton, and</li> <li>• South Black Country and West Birmingham (Arc of Opportunity)</li> </ul> <p>It requires local partnerships to identify strategic priorities within each zone. These zones will be the primary focus for meeting much of the new development needs and infrastructure for the West Midlands.</p>	<p>It will be for local authorities, working with adjoining authorities and key partners, to determine the regeneration needs within these areas, and to include appropriate policies in their local plans.</p> <p>Where appropriate, local enterprise partnerships can play a key role in delivering any regeneration needs identified. The proposed duty to co-operate will also assist in ensuring partnership working and strategic planning across neighbouring authorities and in consultation with local communities.</p> <p>Comments on policy PA1 will also apply.</p>
<b>PA3 – High technology corridors</b>	<p>In order to encourage the diversification of the regional economy, three high-technology corridors are identified within which cluster developments, closely linked to the West Midlands’ critical research and development capabilities and advanced technologies, are promoted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birmingham to Worcestershire (Central Technology Belt)</li> </ul>	<p>The objectives of these policies could be delivered through means other than a regional strategy.</p> <p>Local authorities will still be able to plan for the needs of their communities, including in relation to the provision of commercial and educational facilities which will assist in driving economic growth and employment opportunities. Local authorities will still be able to identify areas in their local plans which are</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire, and</li> <li>• Wolverhampton to Telford</li> </ul>	<p>in need of modernisation and renewal.</p> <p>Where appropriate, local enterprise partnerships can play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities aimed at driving economic growth and the creation of local jobs.</p> <p>See also comments on policy PA1.</p>
<b>PA4 – Development related to higher &amp; further education and research establishments and incubator units</b>	<p>PA4 encourages local authorities to facilitate education/research institutions to grow and expand by providing sites, premises and infrastructure for related businesses. It also seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote innovation by encouraging employment development focused around education and research institutions, and</li> <li>• encourage greater access to employment opportunities in high technology hubs for disadvantaged groups and communities.</li> </ul>	
<b>PA5 – Employment areas in need of modernisation and renewal</b>	<p>The policy requires local authorities to identify these areas in their local development documents and to develop implementation plans to improve their physical/business environment.</p>	
<b>PA6 – Portfolio of employment land</b>	<p>The policy provides criteria for identifying the level and distribution for their areas of different categories of employment land, within a hierarchy of sites (policies PA7 to PA9).</p>	<p>Local authorities will still be able to identify land which is suitable for employment purposes, and take appropriate actions to protect such through their local plans.</p> <p>See also comments on policy PA1.</p>
<b>PA7 – Regional investment sites</b>	<p>The policy aims to support the diversification/modernisation of the economy and clusters. Policy PA7 seeks to provide sufficient</p>	<p>See comments on policy PA1 and PA6.</p> <p>It will be for local authorities, working with adjoining authorities, to determine the growth needs for their</p>

	<p>employment sites within the regeneration zones and high technology corridors to support new businesses and economic development in these key areas, and particularly those based on innovative technologies exploiting research and development, i.e. the high-technology corridors and regeneration zones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birmingham to Worcestershire</li> <li>• Coventry and Nuneaton, and</li> <li>• South Black Country and West Birmingham</li> </ul> <p>Additional provision may be required in the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire areas.</p>	<p>areas, and to make provision for such in their local plans.</p> <p>The duty to cooperate and the local enterprise partnerships can play key roles in ensuring economic strategic priorities and infrastructure delivery is properly coordinated.</p>
<p><b>PA8 – Major investment sites</b></p>	<p>The policy aims to accommodate very-large scale investment by single users with an international choice of locations. There is a recommendation for 2 new major investment sites, with 3 already identified in Peddimore (Birmingham), Wobaston Road (north of Wolverhampton), and Ansty (to the north east of Coventry).</p>	
<p><b>PA9 – Regional logistic sites</b></p>	<p>The policy aims to provide opportunities for the concentrated development of warehousing and distribution uses. Priority is given to bringing forwards previously developed sites in North Staffordshire and Telford.</p>	

<b>PA10 – Tourism and culture</b>	The policy requires local authorities to include in their local development documents policies that support the further development and success of key regional tourism and cultural assets (an indicative list is provided).	This objective could be delivered by means other than through a regional strategy.
<b>PA11 – The network of towns and city centres</b>	PA11 identifies a network of 25 towns and cities which will be the focus for major retail development; major cultural, tourist, social and community venues; and large scale leisure and office. Specific factors are considered in paragraph 7.61.	This objective could be delivered by means other than through a regional strategy.  It will be for local authorities, working with adjoining authorities, to determine the retail, cultural and social needs of their communities, and to make provision for them in their local plans.
<b>PA12 – Birmingham’s role as a world city</b>	The policy requires authorities across the West Midlands and other key partners to support further investment and development to further enhance the city’s status as a world city.	The policy encourages planning authorities in Birmingham to undertake joint and coordinated work with neighbouring authorities and regional partners to support wider development opportunities for Birmingham, and to identify such policies and proposals in development plans across the West Midlands. It is possible for this to still be done without this policy, through collaborative working between local authorities and key partners.
<b>PA13 – Out of centre retail development</b>	No development of this kind envisaged/encouraged during the period covered by the Strategy.	National planning policy on promoting the vitality and viability of town centres will continue to apply.

<b>PA14 – Economic development and the rural economy</b>	The policy encourages the sustainable diversification and development of the rural economy through the growth of existing businesses and the creation of new enterprises.	Implementation of the Rural Development Programme for England by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Natural England, Yorkshire Forward and the Forestry Commission will assist rural diversification and development within the West Midlands.
<b>PA15 – Agriculture and rural diversification</b>	Local development documents to include positive policies promoting agriculture and farm diversification.	It will be for local authorities to determine through their local plans their approach to the protection and use of agricultural land, in line with national planning policy.  Comments on policy PA14 will also apply.
<b>CHAPTER 8 - QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT</b>		
<b>QE1 – Conserving and enhancing the environment</b>	The policy sets out the objectives and actions for identifying, protecting or enhancing environmental assets of (sub)-regional significance through local development documents. These should also provide guidance on where mitigation measures and/or compensation measures will be required.	The objective of this policy could be delivered by means other than through the Strategy.  National planning policy will continue to expect the planning system to conserve and enhance the natural environment. The overarching legislative framework (national and international) remains unchanged..
<b>QE2 – Restoring degraded areas and managing and creating high quality new environments</b>	The policy requires local authorities to include in their local plans policies that optimise the contribution that the natural, built and historic environment can make to the physical, economic and social regeneration of the West Midlands. It encourages local authorities to work together with	Local authorities should continue to work together, and with communities, on conservation, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment – including biodiversity, geo-diversity and landscape interests. Authorities should continue to draw on available information, including data from partners,

	other agencies and local communities in developing regeneration schemes.	to address cross boundary issues such as the provision of green infrastructure and wildlife corridors.  Revocation would not have an adverse effect on European sites. The statutory requirement for local authorities to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessments of their plans and appropriate assessment of relevant projects will remain.
<b>QE3 – Creating a high quality built environment for all</b>	The policy sets out elements that should be taken into account by local authorities in creating more sustainable built environments. The Strategy recognises that ‘this will only be achieved through multi-agency/multi-disciplinary approaches and with the involvement of local communities’.	This policy reflects national planning policy on sustainable development.
<b>QE4 – Greenery, urban green space and public spaces</b>	The policy sets out the objectives, mechanisms and actions required from local authorities, in partnership with other agencies, in undertaking assessments of local need, auditing local provision and developing strategies for green space.	National planning policy requires local authorities to undertake assessments of local needs for open and green space and audits of existing provision. The proposed duty to cooperate will assist local authorities in taking a strategic approach.
<b>QE5 – Protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment</b>	The policy sets out the regional priorities and opportunities for identifying, protecting, conserving and enhancing the diverse historic environment of the West Midlands. The following areas are identified:	National planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment will continue to apply.  Local authorities should continue to liaise with English Heritage to identify and evaluate areas, sites and buildings of local cultural and historic importance, and explore ways for the management, enhancement and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birmingham Jewellery Quarter</li> <li>• Strategic river corridors (Severn, Wye, Trent and Avon)</li> <li>• Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage site</li> <li>• the historic transport network</li> </ul>	regeneration of those areas.
<b>QE6 – The conservation, enhancement and restoration of the region’s landscape</b>	The policy sets out the regional priorities for conserving, enhancing and, where necessary, restoring the quality, diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape character (both in urban and rural areas) of the West Midlands.	<p>Nationally important landscapes (e.g. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) are subject to statutory and national policy protection.</p> <p>National planning policy provides for higher quality building design and materials in line with local distinctiveness which should help protect urban landscapes. Current national planning policy requires that local plans provide sufficient protection for landscape areas, using tools like landscape character assessment.</p> <p>Furthermore, potential significant effects on landscapes should be identified by local authorities through the strategic environmental assessment of their local plans, environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment of specific projects.</p>
<b>QE7 – Protecting, managing and enhancing the region’s biodiversity and nature</b>	The policy sets out the regional priorities and opportunities for maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity resources and to help meet the West Midlands share of the UK’s Biodiversity Action Plan. Cross-boundary cooperation is specially required in	See comments on QE1 and QE2.

<p><b>conservation resources</b></p>	<p>the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the strategic river corridors and tributaries of the Severn, Trent, Avon and Wye, river catchments, and issues in current local Environment Agency's plans, and</li> <li>• priorities derived from English Nature's Natural Areas Framework and associated Area Profiles and the West Midlands Biodiversity Audit.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>QE8 – Forestry and woodlands</b></p>	<p>The policy sets out objectives and actions for local plans, and other strategies and programmes, to encourage tree planting and woodland management.</p>	<p>The Forestry Commission identifies priorities for woodland management.</p>
<p><b>QE9 – The water environment</b></p>	<p>The policy sets out the regional objectives for managing the water environment (including protecting/improving water quality, managing demand capacity/supply issues, reducing effects on biodiversity).</p> <p>There are no specific policies on managing flood risk although the approach is set out in paragraphs 8.42-8.44.</p> <p>The policy was reviewed as part of the Phase Two revision to take proper account of the European Water Framework Directive and the requirement for all local planning authorities to adhere to actions and the long term objectives of the West Midlands' strategic river corridors (the Severn and Humber</p>	<p>The objectives in this policy could be delivered by means other than through a regional strategy.</p> <p>National policy already gives the Environment Agency, water and sewerage companies, developers, landowners, local authorities and others an important role in taking a pro-active approach and work together to identify, characterise, plan and manage the water environment taking into account biodiversity sites of international importance.</p> <p>In achieving integrated water management and delivering the requirements under the EU Water Framework Directive, local authorities should continue to cooperate with the Environment Agency and water companies to ensure their local plans take</p>

	River Basin Management Plans).	<p>account of and apply the planning aspects of all relevant water and flood management plans.</p> <p>Building Regulations (set at national level) already encourage water conservation measures. It is Water Company Water Resources Management plans that set out how water for supply will be made available for the plan period without damaging the environment. Local authorities can still promote these measures through local plan policies.</p>
<b>QE11 – Energy generation</b>	The policy requires local authorities to encourage through their local plans proposals for the use of renewable energy sources; provide locational guidance and criteria (environmental and other) to inform decisions.	<p>The objective of these policies could be delivered by means other than through the Strategy.</p> <p>Local authorities should continue to contribute to meeting national targets for renewable energy. National planning policy expects local authorities to provide a supportive framework that promotes and encourages renewable and low carbon energy generation.</p>
<b>QE12 – Energy conservation</b>	The policy requires local authorities to include in their local plans measures to minimise energy demand from development; use of appropriate design/construction techniques to avoid energy loss; and to encourage the use of combined heat and power systems.	<p>It will be for local authorities, working with partners as appropriate, to determine how to encourage energy conservation and the take up of renewable/low carbon energies in their areas, and to make provision for such in their local plans.</p>

<b>M1 – Mineral working for non-energy minerals</b>	<p>The policy sets out the priority, actions and criteria to encourage the prudent use of available mineral resources and to maintain an appropriate on-going supply.</p>	<p>Policy M1 reflects national planning policy on minerals, which provides for development control related considerations. Technical advice provided by the Aggregate Working Parties, including their current work in sub-apportioning the Department’s guidelines for 2005-2020 to planning authority level, will still apply.</p>
<b>M2 – Minerals: aggregates</b>	<p>M2 sets out the regional provision for land won primary aggregates to 2016 (255m tonnes)</p>	
<b>M3 – Minerals: the use of alternative sources of materials</b> <b>[8.68–8.70]</b>	<p>Local plans should aim to increase the contribution of alternative sources of material by, for example, identifying sites or policy criteria for recycling sites.</p>	<p>Mineral planning authorities should continue to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals to support economic growth. They should do this within the longstanding arrangements for minerals planning. Mineral planning authorities can choose to use alternative figures for their planning purposes if they have new or different information and a robust evidence base. Delivery of environmental benefits (biodiversity, recreation) should still be ensured through appropriate local plan policies on site restoration, following completion of extraction.</p> <p>The proposed duty to cooperate should assist in ensuring mineral planning authorities work together with the minerals industry to maximise the use of secondary and recycled sources of aggregates.</p>
<b>M4 – Energy minerals</b> <b>[8.73-8.75]</b>	<p>The policy requires local plans to recognise the national and regional importance of the West Midlands indigenous coal and hydrocarbon resources for meeting future energy demands.</p>	
<b>WD1 – Targets for waste management in the region</b>	<p>The policy sets out the following targets for the West Midlands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to recover value from at least 40% of municipal waste by 2005, 45% by 2010, and 67% by 2015</li> </ul>	<p>The objective of these policies could be delivered by means other than through the Strategy.</p> <p>The European Union Waste Framework Directive sets the overall statutory requirements. Revoking the</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to recycle or compost at least 25% of household waste by 2005, 30% by 2010, and 33% by 2015; and</li> <li>• to reduce the proportion of industrial and commercial waste which is disposed of to landfill to at the most 85% of 1998 levels by 2005</li> </ul>	<p>regional strategy will not impact on these requirements.</p> <p>The focus for delivering spatial waste plans and implementing the directive lies at the local authority level. Waste planning authorities are expected to continue to take forward their waste plans to provide land for waste management facilities to support the sustainable management of waste. Data and other information prepared by partners, including the Environment Agency and other waste planning authorities will continue to assist in this process.</p>
<b>WD2 – The need for waste management facilities by sub-region</b>	WD2 out the needs for waste treatment (recycling and composting) and landfill capacity within the West Midlands.	
<b>WD3 – Criteria for the location of waste management facilities</b>	The policy requires local plans to include policies and proposals for all major waste streams.	

## CHAPTER 9 – TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

### **T1 – Developing accessibility and mobility within the region to support the spatial strategy**

This policy, and others in this chapter, aim to support and deliver the regional transport priorities and proposals set out in the regional transport strategy.

Paragraphs 9.8-9.16 provide regional context.

The policy provides the overarching framework for the West Midlands' transport strategy, including measures to:

- improve accessibility and mobility
- improve national road and rail networks
- encourage behaviour change and reduce need to travel
- improve safety and security of the transport system

Major strategic infrastructure proposals are normally developed at the national level and should take account of National Policy Statements.

The Local Transport White Paper (published on 19 January 2011) sets out the Government's vision for a sustainable local transport system that supports the economy and reduces carbon emissions. It explains how the Government is placing localism at the heart of the transport agenda, taking measures to empower local authorities when it comes to tackling these issues in their areas. The White Paper also underlines Central Government's direct support to local authorities, including through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. This should inform plans and policies delivered at the local level through local plans and local transport plans, which will be subject to sustainability appraisal, strategic environmental assessment and appropriate assessment.

The proposed duty to cooperate should assist in ensuring local authorities, the Highways Agency, the rail industry and other transport providers work together to ensure the most efficient management, operation and improvement required by the West Midlands' transport networks.

The social, environmental and economic impacts of

		any transport investment priorities (including alternatives) would have to be considered, where relevant, including environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment. The implications of any emerging schemes would need to be subject to strategic environmental assessment.
<b>T2 – Reducing the need to travel</b>	Local authorities to promote those developments which reduce the need to travel and those that generate significant travel demands to be located near public transport hubs/to maximise cycling/walking.	<p>The objective of these policies could be delivered by means other than through the Strategy.</p> <p>The Transport Act 2000 makes the preparation of local transport plans a statutory requirement. Local authorities should continue to ensure their land use and local transport plans are mutually consistent, and deliver the most sustainable and effective development for their area. The proposed duty to cooperate should assist in ensuring that local planning authorities work in partnership with public transport providers to improve the quality and provision of public transport services.</p> <p>Comments on policy T1 will apply.</p>
<b>T3 – Walking and cycling</b>	Local authorities, through their local plans, to maximise opportunities for walking and cycling.	
<b>T4 – Promoting travel awareness</b>	The policy requires local authorities to work with transport operators, schools, business and others to develop travel and transport strategies to raise awareness of alternative travel modes and reduce dependency on cars. All new development to include transport assessments.	
<b>T5 – Public transport</b>	The policy promotes the development of an integrated and affordable public transport service across the West Midlands region, following the spatial hierarchic approach promoted in chapter 4 (urban renaissance).	

<b>T6 – Strategic park and ride</b>	<p>The policy promotes the development of a network of park &amp; ride sites to reduce congestion on major centres. Proposed areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brinsford (north of Wolverhampton)</li> <li>• Worcester Parkway station</li> </ul>	
<b>T7 – Car parking standards and management</b>	<p>The policy seeks to encourage local authorities to manage car parking to reduce congestion and encourage more sustainable forms of transport.</p>	<p>Local authorities already have a range of powers to control parking provision and enforcement, through national planning policy and powers under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.</p> <p>Comments on policies T1 and T2 will also apply.</p>
<b>T8 – Demand management</b>	<p>The policy promotes measures for managing travel demand, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to manage peak demand on congested areas of the highway network</li> <li>• restriction/management of car parking, through policies T6, T7 and T9</li> <li>• charging schemes in the most congested city centres before 2011.</li> </ul>	<p>The objective of these policies could be delivered by means other than through the Strategy.</p> <p>Comments on policy T1 will also apply.</p>
<b>T9 – The management and development of national and regional transport</b>	<p>The policy sets out the regional priorities for maintaining/enhancing the West Midlands' strategic transport system.</p>	<p>The objectives of this policy could be delivered by means other than through the Strategy.</p> <p>Local authorities and other key partners will still be able to work together to manage and develop</p>

<b>networks</b>		<p>transport networks in the West Midlands.</p> <p>Any proposals and plans related to the development of national and local transport networks would be subject to environmental impact assessment and comply with the Habitats Regulations.</p> <p>Comments on policies T1 and T2 will also apply.</p>
<b>T10 – Freight</b>	<p>The policy aims to improve the efficiency of freight movements and support the development of regional logistic sites (PA9). It also requires local authorities and other agencies to develop a regional freight strategy.</p>	<p>The objectives of this policy could be delivered by means other than through the Strategy.</p> <p>Local authorities and other key partners will still be able to work together to plan for efficient freight movement in the West Midlands, and to include policies in their local plans if they consider them to be appropriate.</p>
<b>T11 – Airports</b>	<p>The policy sets out the regional priorities on air transport, i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to continue developing the potential of Birmingham International Airport. Local plans in Solihull and neighbouring authorities to provide for the expansion of the airport. Further development of other regional airports providing complementary services to be supported;</li> <li>• to support Coventry airport, as the West Midlands’ primary freight airport. Local plans in Warwick District and neighbouring authorities to provide for the expansion of the airport;</li> </ul>	<p>Any proposed revision of boundaries for airport expansion should be set out in local plans. Any potential significant effects on the environment resulting from airport expansion should be identified by local authorities through strategic environmental assessment of their local plans, and environmental impact assessment and habitat assessment of specific projects.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to improve the strategic and local transport networks and interchanges to ensure continue access by all modes (especially by public transport) to airports.</li> </ul>	
<b>T12 – Priorities for investment</b>	The policy sets out the transport investment programme for the West Midlands region.	Major strategic infrastructure proposals are normally developed at the national level and should take account of national policy statements. The Local Transport White Paper sets out the Government's vision for a sustainable local transport system that supports the economy and reduces carbon emissions. It explains how the Government is placing localism at the heart of the transport agenda, taking measures to empower local authorities when it comes to tackling these issues in their areas. The White Paper also underlines Central Government's direct support to local authorities, including through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. This should inform plans and policies delivered at the local level through local development frameworks and local transport plans, which where relevant, will be subject to sustainability appraisal, strategic environmental assessment and appropriate assessment.
<b>CC1 – Climate Change (Black Country sub-regional strategy)</b>	The Strategy includes a specific policy for the Black Country to direct detailed plans and policies in the area to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change by reducing carbon emissions and promoting the use of renewable energy.	The four local authorities in the Black Country (Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Walsall and Dudley) have developed a joint core strategy which takes forward the sub-regional strategy for the area set out in the Strategy.

<p><b>UR1A – Black Country Regeneration Priorities</b></p>	<p>The policy sets out the objectives, mechanisms, and actions to promote the sustainable regeneration of the Black Country. This section also includes policies looking at the following aspects:</p> <p><b>UR1B</b> – Housing and employment land</p> <p><b>UR1C</b> – Strategic office development in the Black Country</p> <p><b>UR1D</b> – Retail floor space</p>	
<p><b>QE10 – Transforming the environment of the Black Country</b></p>	<p>The policy sets out the priorities and actions for taking forward the approach set out in the Black Country study.</p>	
<p><b>PA11A – Strategic centres in the Black Country (Brierley Hill and Dudley)</b></p>	<p>The policy sets out the strategic priorities to plan growth in the four strategic centres in the Black Country: Brierley Hill, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Bromwich.</p>	

## Annex B

### Saved structure plan policies

County level Structure Plans were abolished under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, but the policies in them remained in force until the new regional spatial strategies were published. In 2007 the Government wrote to planning authorities to advise them which policies would be saved after 27 September 2007. Some of these policies remain in force as they have not been replaced by policies in either the regional spatial strategies or development plan documents. This annex lists such policies for the West Midlands and where they remain relevant the environmental implications of their revocation.

Policy	Policy has been implemented or expired	Generic policy	Applicable national policy in place	Superseded by local plan policy	Still relevant – environmental implications of revocation
<b>Shropshire and Telford &amp; Wrekin<sup>20</sup> Structure Plan 1996-2011</b>					
<b>Policy 16</b> Air quality	X	X			Local authorities will still need to meet their obligations under the European Air Quality Framework Directives (96/62/EC) and (1999/30/EC),

<sup>20</sup> For full policies link below:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.aspx?documentID=371&pageNumber=3](http://www.telford.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.aspx?documentID=371&pageNumber=3)

<http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/TWC-PC-jointsavedstructure.pdf>

Policy	Policy has been implemented or expired	Generic policy	Applicable national policy in place	Superseded by local plan policy	Still relevant – environmental implications of revocation
					(2002/3/EC)
<b>Policy 33</b> Safeguarding rail infrastructure	X	X			The management of regional transport priorities and proposals to be developed through local plans.  Any proposed revision of boundaries for airport expansion should be set out in local plans. Potential significant effects on the environment resulting from airport expansion could be picked up by authorities through strategic environmental assessment of their local plans, and environmental impact assessment/appropriate assessment of specific projects.
<b>Policy 36</b> The Trans-European Network (TEN)	X	X			
<b>Policy 41</b> Air transport	X	X			
<b>Policy 67</b> Environmental considerations (for waste management development)	X	X			Revoking this policy will not impact on these requirements or the ability of waste authorities to implement the

Policy	Policy has been implemented or expired	Generic policy	Applicable national policy in place	Superseded by local plan policy	Still relevant – environmental implications of revocation
					<p>Directive.</p> <p>The European Union Waste Framework Directive sets the overall statutory requirements. The focus for delivering spatial waste plans and implementing the directive lies at the local authority level. Waste planning authorities are expected to continue to take forward their waste plans to provide land for waste management facilities, to support the sustainable management of waste. Data and other information prepared by partners, including the Environment Agency and other waste planning authorities will continue to assist in this process.</p>

### Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011

Proposals in the Structure Plan covered the period to 2011, and have been implemented through the Local Plans produced by the nine authorities in the County (because a five-year housing land supply to 2011 will already be in place).

Policies relating to Newcastle under Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent may be regarded as superseded by their joint core spatial strategy (adopted in 2009). Similarly, in relation to all policies relating to South Staffordshire, which adopted its core strategy in May 2011. In relation to minerals and waste policies (MW1-9), these will be soon superseded by the Joint Waste Core Strategy for Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent, which is due to be published in 2011.

No other policy listed will have been superseded by development plan documents across the remaining local authorities which are still in the process of producing their local development frameworks. Some core strategies have been completed or are close to examination but there is no prospect of there being county-wide coverage for some time.

<b>D1</b> Sustainable forms of development		X	X		
<b>D2</b> The design and environmental quality of development		X	X		
<b>D3</b> Urban regeneration		X	X		
<b>D4</b> Managing change in rural areas		X	X		
<b>D5A</b> Green Belts			X		
<b>D5B</b> Development in Green Belts		X	X		

<b>D6</b> Conserving agricultural land		X	X		
<b>D7</b> Conserving energy and water		X	X		
<b>D8</b> Providing infrastructure services, facilities and/or mitigating measures associated with development		X	X		
<b>E1</b> Employment land provision and distribution			X		
<b>E3</b> Locational factors for new sites		X	X		
<b>E5</b> Major investment site			X		
<b>E6</b> Implementation and programming		X			
<b>E7</b> Existing industries		X	X		
<b>E8</b> Loss of employment land and buildings		X			
<b>E11A</b> Tourism		X	X		

<b>E11B</b> Major tourist attractions		X	X		
<b>E12</b> Tourist accommodation		X	X		
<b>H3</b> Mixed use developments		X	X		
<b>H4</b> Portfolio sites		X			
<b>H6</b> Conversions		X	X		
<b>H10</b> Affordable housing and rural areas		X	X		
<b>H11</b> Housing in open countryside		X	X		
<b>T1A</b> Sustainable location		X	X		
<b>T1B</b> An integrated transport strategy		X	X		
<b>T2</b> Urban areas		X			
<b>T3</b> Rural areas		X	X		
<b>T4</b> Walking		X	X		
<b>T5</b> Cycling		X			

<b>T6</b> Motorcycling			X		
<b>T7</b> Public transport provision		X	X		
<b>T8A</b> Improving the rail network		X	X		
<b>T8B</b> New stations				X	Includes specific proposals for Bridgtown and Brinsford.
<b>T9</b> Taxis and private hire vehicles		X			
<b>T10</b> Freight transport		X	X		
<b>T11</b> Management of traffic		X			
<b>T12</b> Strategic high network		X	X		
<b>T13</b> Local roads		X			
<b>T14</b> Routes of national and regional significances		X	X		
<b>T17</b> Lorry and coach parking facilities		X			
<b>T18A</b> Transport and development		X			
<b>T18B</b> Operational requirements for employment developments		X			

<b>T19</b> Airfields and heliports		X	X		
<b>NC1</b> Protection of the countryside general considerations		X			
<b>NC2</b> Landscape protection and restoration		X	X		
<b>NC3</b> Cannock Chase area of outstanding natural beauty		X	X		
<b>NC4</b> Protecting the Peak District National Park		X	X		
<b>NC6</b> Important semi-natural habitats		X	X		
<b>NC7A</b> Sites of international nature conservation importance		X	X		
<b>NC7B</b> Sites of National Nature Conservation Importance		X	X		
<b>NC7C</b> Sites of local nature conservation importance		X	X		
<b>NC9</b> Water resources		X			

<b>NC12</b> National and community forests		X	X		
<b>NC13</b> Protection of trees, hedgerows and woodlands		X	X		
<b>NC14</b> Sites of archaeological importance			X		
<b>NC15</b> Sites of national archaeological importance			X		
<b>NC16</b> Registered historic battlefields			X		
<b>NC17A</b> Historic parks and gardens protection			X		
<b>NC17B</b> Historic parks and gardens management and protection			X		
<b>NC18</b> Listed buildings			X		
<b>NC19</b> Conservation areas			X		
<b>TC1</b> Ensuring the future of town centre			X		

<b>TC4</b> Local shops		X	X		
<b>TC5</b> Small scale retail facilities in the countryside		X			
<b>R1</b> Providing for recreation and leisure			X		
<b>R2B</b> Chasewater				X	Covered by Lichfield Plan
<b>R3</b> Recreational facilities in the countryside			X		
<b>R4</b> Public access land		X			
<b>R5A</b> Water areas and rivers		X	X		
<b>R5B</b> The Tame and Trent Valley			X		
<b>R7</b> Canal facilities		X			
<b>R8</b> Restoration of canals		X			
<b>MW1</b> The need for minerals		X	X		
<b>MW3</b> The efficient use and recycling of minerals		X	X		

<b>MW4</b> Conservation and minerals resources		X	X		
<b>MW5</b> Sustainable waste management		X	X		
<b>MW6</b> Evaluation of proposals		X	X		
<b>MW7</b> Relationship to conservation and/or development initiatives		X	X		
<b>MW8</b> Transportation of mineral and waste		X	X		
<b>MW9</b> Reclamation		X	X		

Warwickshire <sup>21</sup> Structure Plan 1996-2011					
<b>GD7</b> Previously developed sites	X				This policy was meant to supplement policy GD3, which was not saved.
<b>I12</b> Industrial land provision	X				This will ultimately depend on land identified in local plans.
<b>T10</b> Developer contributions	X		X		Policy T10 sets out the County Council's intentions to secure contributions from developers for transport schemes where they are reasonably related to development proposals.
<b>TC2</b> Hierarchy of town centres	X				
<b>T7</b> Public transport	X				The management of regional transport priorities and proposals to be developed through local plans, which should inform the local development framework process.

<sup>21</sup> For full policies link below:

[http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/76185D2C8928FA1A80256F1E00432B63/\\$file/Wasp.pdf](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/76185D2C8928FA1A80256F1E00432B63/$file/Wasp.pdf)

### Worcestershire<sup>22</sup> Structure Plan 1996-2011

Proposals in the Structure Plan covered the period to 2011, and have been implemented through the local plans produced by the six authorities in the County (a five-year housing land supply to 2011 is already in place).

Worcester City, Wychavon District Council and Malvern Hills District Council are in the process of producing a joint South Worcestershire Development Plan. This document will combine the former South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy and Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan into a single document.

Wyre Forest District Council adopted the Local Development Framework's Core Strategy in December 2010.

Redditch District is in the process of producing the Core Strategy and Site Allocation Development Plan. Bromsgrove District Council has just completed the public consultation on the Draft Core Strategy 2 which presents the spatial visions and objectives for the future growth and development of the District until 2026.

<b>SD.1</b> Prudent use of natural resources		X			
<b>SD.2</b> Care for the environment		X			
<b>SD.3</b> Use of previously developed land		X			
<b>SD.4</b> Minimising the need to travel		X			
<b>SD.5</b> Achieving balanced communities		X			

<sup>22</sup> For full policies link below:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/environment-and-planning/strategic-planning/structure-plan.aspx>

<b>SD.8</b> Development in sustainable rural settlements		X			
<b>SD.9</b> Promotion of town centres		X	X		
<b>CTC1</b> Landscape character		X			Proposals for development, and associated land use change or land management, must demonstrate that they are informed by, and sympathetic to, the landscape character of the area in which they are proposed to take place.
<b>CTC2</b> Skylines and hill features		X			
<b>CTC3</b> Area of outstanding natural beauty		X			
<b>CTC5</b> Trees, woodlands and hedgerows		X			
<b>CTC6</b> Green open spaces and corridors		X			
<b>CTC7</b> Agricultural land			X		
<b>CTC8</b> Flood risk and surface water drainage			X		

<b>CTC10</b> Sites of international wildlife importance		X	X		
<b>CTC12</b> Sites of regional or local wildlife importance		X			
<b>CTC14</b> Features in the landscape of nature conservation importance		X			
<b>CTC15</b> Biodiversity action plan		X			
<b>CTC16</b> Archaeological sites of national importance		X	X		
<b>CTC17</b> Archaeological sites of regional or local importance		X	X		
<b>CTC18</b> Enhancement and management of archaeological sites		X			
<b>CTC19</b> Areas and features of architectural significance		X	X		
<b>CTC 20</b> Conservation areas		X			
<b>CTC 21</b> Re-Use and conversion of buildings		X	X		

<b>D.5</b> The contribution of previously developed land to meeting the housing provision	X			X	
<b>D.6</b> Affordable housing needs	X		X		
<b>D.8</b> Affordable housing for local needs in rural areas			X		
<b>D.10</b> Housing in the open countryside outside the Green Belt		X			
<b>D.12</b> Housing in the Green Belt		X			
<b>D.14</b> Housing development in rural settlements beyond, and excluded from, the Green Belt		X			
<b>D.16</b> Re-Use and conversion of buildings		X			
<b>D.17</b> Residential mobile homes		X			
<b>D.18</b> Gypsy sites			X		
<b>D.19</b> Employment land requirements	X			X	

<b>D.24</b> Location of employment uses within class B		X			
<b>D.26</b> Office development (class A2 and class B1)				X	
<b>D.27</b> New building for business uses outside the Green Belt		X			
<b>D.28</b> New building for business purposes in the Green Belt		X			
<b>D.29</b> Change of use of buildings in rural areas for employment purposes		X			
<b>D.31</b> Retail hierarchy		X		X	
<b>D.32</b> Preferred locations for large scale development			X		
<b>D.33</b> Retailing in out-of-centre locations			X		
<b>D.34</b> Retail developments in district and local centres		X			
<b>D.35</b> Retail in rural settlements		X		X	

<b>D.36</b> Farms shops		X			
<b>D.37</b> Shops in community building in rural settlements		X			
<b>D.38</b> General extent and purpose of the Green Belt					The policy sets out the general extent of the Green Belt.
<b>D.39</b> Control of development in the Green Belt		X			
<b>D.40</b> Green Belt boundary definition		X			
<b>D.43</b> Crime prevention and community Safety		X			
<b>D.44</b> Telecommunications			X		
<b>T.1</b> Location of development		X			
<b>T.2</b> Resources		X			
<b>T.3</b> Managing car use			X		
<b>T.4</b> Car parking			X		
<b>T.5</b> Bus facilities		X			

<b>T.6</b> Rail facilities		X			
<b>T.7</b> Interchange facilities		X			
<b>T.8</b> Interchange facilities in the Green Belt		X			
<b>T.9</b> Rural transport		X			
<b>T.10</b> Cycling and walking		X			
<b>T.11</b> Assessment of new roads		X			
<b>T.12</b> Road schemes					The policy seeks to protect the lines of proposed new road Schemes, and can be delivered through other means.
<b>T.13</b> Motorway service areas		X			
<b>T.15</b> Freight/goods transfer		X			
<b>T.16</b> Accident reduction		X			
<b>T.17</b> Retention of rail policy		X			
<b>T.18</b> River Severn		X			

<b>T.19</b> Airfields		X			
<b>RST.1</b> Criteria for the development of recreation and sports facilities		X			
<b>RST.2</b> Location of informal countryside recreation developments		X			
<b>RST.3</b> Public rights of way		X			
<b>RST.4</b> Recreational walking routes		X			
<b>RST.5</b> Recreational cycling routes		X			
<b>RST.6</b> Horse riding routes		X			
<b>RST.7</b> Recreation in areas of outstanding natural beauty		X			
<b>RST.9</b> Waterways and open water areas					The policy seeks to protect the alignments of the Droitwich and Droitwich Junction Canals against development likely to obstruct restoration or adversely affect associated operational and historic structures. This policy can be delivered through other means.

<b>RST.11</b> Major sports facilities		X			
<b>RST.12</b> Recreation provision in settlements		X			
<b>RST.13</b> Golf courses		X			
<b>RST.14</b> Tourism development		X			
<b>RST.15</b> Development of tourism potential		X			
<b>RST.16</b> Tourist accommodation		X			
<b>RST.17</b> Holiday chalets		X			
<b>RST.18</b> Holiday Caravan Sites		X			
<b>RST.19</b> Touring caravan sites		X			
<b>M.1</b> Regional production		X			
<b>M.2</b> Safeguarding of depots		X			
<b>M.3</b> Mineral extraction		X			
<b>M.4</b> Restoration and aftercare		X			

<b>M.5</b> Abberley and Malvern Hills	X				
<b>M.6</b> Recycled materials		X			
<b>EN2</b> Wind turbines			X		
<b>EN3</b> Waste to energy		X	X		
<b>WD.1</b> Waste hierarchy			X		
<b>WD.2</b> Location of waste handling and treatment facilities		X	X		
<b>WD.3</b> Waste management facilities		X			
<b>WD.4</b> Landfill		X			
<b>IMP.1</b> Implementation of development		X	X		

## Annex C

### West Midlands: local plans (as at August 2011)

The following lists the development plan documents (including mineral and waste development plan documents) and saved local plan policies, which would form the relevant development plan for the areas in question in the West Midlands, if the regional strategy and saved structure plan policies were revoked.

<b>Planning Authority</b>	<b>Current status (composition) of the local development framework</b> (including where saved policies from earlier local plans remain in place, pending approval of the core strategy)	<b>Other relevant (saved) policies and other near complete development plan documents</b>
Birmingham	Core strategy	Local plan saved policies The Longbridge Area Action Plan
Bromsgrove	Local plan saved policies	The Longbridge Area Action Plan
Cannock Chase	Local plan saved policies	The Minerals and Waste development plan document prepared by Staffordshire County Council
Coventry	Core strategy	Local plan saved policies
Dudley	The Black Country Core Strategy (Joint - Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton) - replacing the housing, employment and minerals policies within Dudley's local plan	Local plan saved policies Brierley Hill Area Action Plan
East Staffordshire	Local plan saved policies	

Herefordshire Unitary Authority	Local plan saved policies	
Lichfield	Local plan saved policies	Minerals and Waste local plan
Malvern Hills	Local plan saved policies	
Newcastle-Under-Lyme	Core strategy (Joint - North Staffordshire - Stoke/Stafford - Newcastle-under-Lyme)	Local Plan saved policies Staffordshire County Council Minerals and Waste Development Framework (saved policies)
North Warwickshire	Local plan saved policies	Warwickshire County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan (saved policies)
Nuneaton & Bedworth	Local plan saved policies	
Redditch	Local plan saved policies	Herefordshire and Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan
Rugby	Core Strategy	
Sandwell	The Black Country Core Strategy (Joint - Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton) replacing the housing, employment and minerals policies within Sandwell's local plan	Tipton Area Action Plan Smethwick Area Action Plan Local plan saved policies
Shropshire Unitary Authority	Core strategy	Local plan saved policies
Solihull	Local plan saved policies	
South Staffordshire	Local plan saved policies	
Stafford Borough Council	Core strategy (Joint - North Staffordshire - Stoke/Stafford)	Local plan saved policies
Staffordshire County Council	Local plan saved policies	Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent Minerals and Waste Local Plans (saved policies)
Staffordshire Moorlands	Local plan saved policies	Biddulph Town Centre Area Action Plan

Stoke-on-Trent Unitary Authority	Core strategy (Joint - North Staffordshire - Stoke/Stafford)	Local plan saved policies
Stratford-on-Avon	Local plan saved policies	
Tamworth	Local plan saved policies	
Telford & Wrekin	Core strategy (Joint strategy with Shropshire County Council)	Central Telford Area Action Plan Local plan saved policies
Walsall	The Black Country core strategy (Joint - Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton)	Local plan saved policies
Warwick	Local plan saved policies	
Warwickshire County Council	Local plan saved policies	Minerals and Waste local plan (saved policies)
Wolverhampton	Core strategy (Joint - Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton - Black Country)	Local plan saved policies
Worcester City	Local plan saved policies	Balanced Housing Market Local plan saved policies
Worcestershire County Council	Local plan saved policies	Minerals Local Plan
Wychavon	Local plan saved policies	