Cabinet – 19 November 2008

The Regional Spatial Strategy Preferred Option

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew, Deputy Leader and Regeneration

Service: Regeneration

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1.   Summary of report

This report seeks approval of a proposed response to the West Midlands Regional Assembly's Draft Preferred Option, related to the Phase 2 Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). (A copy has been placed in each of the Members' rooms and is available on the Council's Committee information website.) As Members will be aware, the RSS is now part of the Council's Development Plan, and has to be taken into account when the Council determines planning applications. However, the RSS is being reviewed in phases. Phase 1 was geographical and covered the Black Country. Policies based on it are now part of the updated RSS. Work on Phase 2 started in May 2006. Phase 2 is concerned with subject areas rather than geography; specifically housing, the economy, transport, waste management and town centres across the region. **Annex 1** is a recommendation from Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 6th November 2008, which it is recommended that members approve. The main points of our response are attached to this report as **Annex 2. Annex 3** sets out the details and, where necessary, recommended changes to the policies contained in the Preferred Option. **Annex 4** responds to work commissioned by the Government that proposes higher housing totals across the Region than those put forward by the Preferred Option (though Walsall's position is unchanged). It is important for Walsall Council to continue to put its view forward about these issues, in order to ensure that, as far as possible, the new RSS policies are in tune with the Borough's needs and aspirations.

2.   Recommendations

2.1   That the proposed response made by officers, summarised in this report and set out in detail in the annexes 1, 2 and 3, be approved.

2.2   That Cabinet notes and endorses the recommendation made by the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 6th November 2008, as set out in Annex 1 of this report.

2.3   That work with other authorities and the Regional assembly continue in order to address the specific issues raised by the RSS Phase 2 Revision and the further work commissioned by the Government.

2.4   That the Executive Director, Regeneration in consultation with the portfolio holder for Regeneration be authorised to (a) give consent for any further technical work funded regionally or from within existing resources and (b) approve formal representations on behalf of the Council as considered necessary

3.   Background information

This report is going to Cabinet because it deals with statutory consultation undertaken by the WMRA in accordance with Section 4(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The response will represent the public position of the Council.

4.   Resource considerations

4.1   **Financial**: none at present, but it is likely that there will be a need to commission, jointly with other Met area authorities, external work to respond to work prepared for the Government that proposes extra housing across the West Midlands, over and above the agreed RSS totals. The costs of any such work have not yet been established, but will fall within the present financial year, 2008/09 and are expected to be funded through joint regional funds. Should this not prove the case and funds over those already available within the service be required then a further report will be placed before cabinet. Annex 3 paragraph 8 deals with the reason for this in more detail. The policies and priorities set by the RSS will be likely to influence the regeneration funding available for Walsall in the future. If, for example, policies to encourage development to be concentrated in the south-east of the Region are carried forward, Walsall could lose out financially in relation to infrastructure funding that would support such development.

4.2   **Legal**:   The RSS is now part of the development plan for the Borough under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and therefore has to be taken into account in determining planning applications where relevant.

4.3   **Staffing**: staff time in compiling the response and contributing to the process

5.   Citizen impact

5.1   The RSS changes will influence planning decisions about where to locate housing, industry, offices, shopping facilities, waste management facilities and the amount of parking available in the town centre. The RSS strategy, and its proposed revisions, are essentially concerned with pursuing an urban renaissance. The planning decisions based on this should generally affect the Borough's citizens for the better, as long as Walsall's interests can be

protected under the changes. If not, investment will continue to be channelled elsewhere, to the detriment of the Borough and its citizens. It will be particularly important to ensure that housing is balanced by sufficient job opportunities, and to provide the kind of housing that Walsall's citizens want; otherwise they will continue to move away from the Borough to fulfil their aspirations.

6.   Community safety

There are no direct implications for community safety.

7.   Environmental impact

The RSS has sustainable development at its heart. The Environment as an issue is scheduled for Phase 3 revisions to the RSS, though it could be argued that many of the phase 2 topics – notably climate change and transport – have an impact on the environment and sustainable development

8.   Performance and risk management issues

Risk: There is a risk that the RSS Revision will include policies that may not be in the long term interests of Walsall. It is important therefore that the Council continues to take a full role in the formulation of the RSS revision in order to minimise this risk as far as possible

Performance management: none at this stage. But when the RSS is approved, performance against the requirements of RSS policies will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report.

9.   Equality implications

There are no direct implications for equality.

10.   Consultation

The RSS Phase 2 Revision Project Plan includes a Statement of Public Participation, setting out how the WMRA will involve partners and the local community, how it will distribute information and how comments will be dealt with. As stated above, Walsall Council provided initial advice to the WMRA about the topics covered in the RSS Phase 2 Review. This report is concerned with helping them pick the Preferred Options about development to submit to the Government.

Background papers

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Draft Preferred Option, by WMRA
Development of Options for the West Midlands RSS in response to the NHPAU
Report, by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners

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Tim Johnson   Councillor Adrian Andrew
Executive Director   Deputy Leader
Regeneration & Performance   Portfolio Holder: Regeneration
19th November 2008   19th November 2008

Annex 1 – Recommendation of Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel Meeting – 6th November 2008

That Cabinet request the West Midlands Regional Planning Body to amend the Regional Spatial Strategy Preferred Option Figure 8, dealing with existing and potential public transport, to include the existing rail line between Walsall and Wolverhampton, the potential rail line between Stourbridge and Lichfield and the potential triangular passenger service between Birmingham, Walsall and Wolverhampton, reflecting the aspirations set out in the Walsall Rail Service and Facilities Improvement Plan.

Annex 2

West Midlands RSS Draft Phase 2 Revision Preferred Option - Main Issues

Walsall Council generally supports the RSS Preferred Option. In Annex 2 we propose some detailed changes and make some comments in track-change mode with the aim of further improving the document, as well as suggesting typographical, stylistic and grammatical improvements. This Annex focuses on over-arching issues, and is intended to put our detailed comments in context.

General Observations

1.   Changes published in the RSS Phase 2 Revision will need to be considered in relation to the whole of the RSS, including the Phase 1 Revision changes that were made after the Phase 2 Draft preferred option was published. This is a particular issue in relating to the Black Country. There is a need for further clarification in relation to, for example, policies on climate change and urban renaissance (see further below).

2.   We think the document is too long and in many places duplicates existing policies. Some policies do not appear to involve any specific regional issue that would result in the RSS adding value. Therefore there is ample scope for making it more user-friendly by either deleting these policies or rewording them in such a way as to make them relevant to development control in the West Midlands Region. We would point in particular to policies SR1(c), SR2, SR3, SR4, CF6, CF7A&C, CF8, W5, W7, W8, PA4, T1, T2, T3 and T4. The reasoned justification paragraphs need also to be slimmed down.

3.   Many policies seem to be more exhortatory or descriptive rather than consisting of actual requirements, merely concerned with encouraging various interests within the planning system to do something; particularly those encouraging stakeholders to work together to achieve some desired object. It is not made clear how these policies could actually be implemented, and there are no means of monitoring compliance or enforcement discussed. If the policy is capable of being implemented and enforced, and its terms are reasonable, then it needs to include specific duties with the wording 'require'. Otherwise it should either be deleted or form part of the Reasoned Justification. We draw attention specifically to SR1, SR3,

CF1A, PA1A, PA5 and PA11A. The Reasoned Justification, too, contains a lot of purely descriptive material – for example much of the transport chapter's introduction would be better represented on a map or plan.

4.	As to remaining policies, we would point out that, given that the RSS is now part of the development plan, there is a need for concise policies that can be easily operated at the development control level. However in many cases the policies do not make a clear distinction between what local authorities are being asked to do in their production of LDFs and what development control planners are being required to do when determining a planning application. We would draw your attention to the specific examples of SR1(c), CF2(b), and CF4, but there are likely to be more.

5.	Where a policy is referring to the MUAs or non MUAs, it should be clear which authorities are affected by the policy. For example, in relation to housing, the ratios appear to be based on authority-wide data. But some authorities such as Birmingham, Solihull and Walsall fall partly within the MUAs and have significant areas of Green Belt or open land outside the MUAs. Policy W6 refers to "all Waste Planning Authorities outside the MUAs" and Policy W12 refers to "Waste Development Frameworks for the non MUAs." It is not clear whether policies such as W6 and W12 apply to the whole of these authority areas or only to the parts within/ outside the MUAs. There needs to be a clear statement about where individual policies apply, so that districts which fall partly within and partly outside the MUAs will know whether or not to apply the policy district-wide.

Matters of Principle

6.	We strongly endorse the continued emphasis in continuing to promote an urban renaissance, especially in a situation where there is pressure to depart from it in relation to a number of forms of development, notably but not only in relation to the location of new housing, which, as paragraph 3.2, maintains, is pivotal to this over-arching objective. Our suggested changes and recommendations are nevertheless important in order to ensure that, in the detail of the proposed policies, progress is maintained towards this objective in what could be very adverse circumstances ahead.

7.	In this context, and assuming provision in the Major Urban Areas (MUAs) is 100, the existing RSS table 1 projects an annual average rate of housing provision at 160 for the rest of the region to 2007, falling to 111 between 2007 and 2011 and 70 between 2011-21. The new RSS, in its table 1 and paragraph 6.23, changes the rate for the rest of the region to 120 from 2006-2026. (Indeed, the RSS Preferred Option is much closer to the NLP options in relation to the development ratios between the MUA and the rest of the region than it is to the existing RSS). Whilst we are disappointed that the pace of change is slowed down significantly compared with existing policy, we can give qualified support (see next paragraph) to the Preferred Option numbers and ratios, given that there is also a need, particularly in the MUAs, to maintain a good supply of industrial land in order to balance housing development with job opportunities.

8.	However, the proposed housing policies, whilst they contain minimum numbers for the MUAs, do not make clear that the numbers need to apply in the rest of the Region are maximum ones. This also appears to be the case in relation to office

developments (table in PA13A), which are important to the economic diversification of the MUAs in particular. There is no provision requiring authorities to refuse developments that would which take the District over the total figures set out in the relevant tables. This could mean that unlimited housing and office development could happen outside the MUAs in practice, with no actual control in relation to the RSS, particularly in view of a new paragraph inserted into PA1A that would locate economic development close to significant new housing in order to reduce commuting. Indeed, these policies together could create a decentralist dynamic of uncontrolled new housing and economic development from the MUAs. If development is to be channelled into the MUAs in order to achieve the policy objective of an urban renaissance, the housing and office figures numbers will have to be seen as maximum ones. We suggest ways to address these issues below. In doing this, we also propose amendments to help ensure that strategic centres, especially in the MUAs, achieve their intended share of investment and control out-of-centre development.

9.   A related issue of concern is with the new policies SR1, SR2, SR3 and SR4. We point out above that much of this seems either to duplicate national regulations or has no specific regional focus. But we are also concerned about the effects of these policies, were they to be carried forward. Paragraph 2.20 points to the scale of change, with increased rates of development in the MUAs being necessary to meet the need for overall carbon dioxide reductions. But the policies implicitly seem to take the narrow view that carbon neutrality of individual buildings and developments trumps the sustainable development pattern as whole. There is no guidance to assess the competing claims of a development that is ostensibly carbon neutral but located so as to promote car use and single purpose trips, as compared with an ordinary development located accessibly in a centre. In particular this could provide justification for more out-of-centre development and housing on greenfield land, contrary to the thrust of other policies. It should be obvious, and needs to be set out explicitly, that the maintenance of a sustainable settlement pattern is more important than any particular development or premises, however low carbon these are intended to be.

10.   Moreover, the higher standards expected of buildings themselves – notably in the CABE 'Buildings for Life' standards – could militate against brownfield land development in view of the abnormal costs associated with developments, which are a particular feature of the MUAs. Again, this could justify housing and other developments on greenfield land where it is easier and quicker to build from scratch, to reach these standards. And again, this could act to the detriment of the MUAs and an urban renaissance, and contrary to the aspirations set out in paragraph 2.20. Moreover it is not evident, from our review of the relevant CABE material, that adherence to the CABE standards would actually produce any reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. There needs to be a review of policy associated with these standards in order to ensure that they contribute to a sustainable development pattern on the ground, not just in theory.

Annex 3

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

Phase Two Revision Draft

Proposed Detailed Changes by Walsall Council

(N.B. This only includes chapters and sections where actual changes are being proposed. The Draft Preferred Option sets out the policies in full, and a copy of this has been placed in each of the Members' rooms)

December 2007

Chapter 2

Towards a More Sustainable Region

2.20   *Planning policies have a major role to play in tackling climate change, including contributing towards the national objective to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20% below 1990 levels by 2010 and by 60% from 1990 levels by 2050. The scale of change and development in the MUAs, which is necessary to meet the objectives of both economic and environmental transformation, and the proposed growth at the Settlements of Significant Development, provide an opportunity to make a significant contribution to the reduction in growth of carbon dioxide emissions. However, the scenario analysis undertaken by the Stockholm Environment Institute for the Region makes clear that only a combination of measures, including addressing the emissions from the Region's existing building stock, will deliver significant reductions. Whilst policies can help to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from transport, significant reductions may depend on the introduction of new technologies to cut vehicle emissions. It needs to be stressed that the correct location of development in a sustainable settlement pattern is more important than whether individual buildings and developments are low-carbon and carbon-neutral. Buildings that are carbon neutral but which are in an unsustainable location – for example out-of-centre commercial developments that attract large amounts of people by car - should not be considered as contributing to the reduction of climate change, given that carbon dioxide emissions associated with car transport are a fast-rising contributor to global warming. On the other hand, developments located on centres are more likely to promote linked trips and be accessible by a choice of transport modes, contributing to the overall reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.*

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Policy SR1   Climate Change

Comment:: There is a need to give more thought as to the implications in practice : e.g. will carbon-neutral developments on greenfield sites outweigh non-carbon neutral developments on previously developed sites, developments which are located in town centres, or refurbishment of existing buildings? As it stands, this policy could harm the urban renaissance and the promotion of a sustainable settlement pattern, Many sustainable and previously developed sites in the Major Urban Areas carry large abnormal costs. This policy could have the unintended effect of diverting developments to places where 'carbon -neutrality ' could be achieved for individual developments at the expense of a sustainable settlement pattern and an urban renaissance, because the overall effect on car travel is not taken into account and compared with locations that are accessible to a choice of means of travel. In particular it could legitimate out-of-centre commercial developments and greenfield housing developments over more sustainable and socially inclusive patterns of development.

Therefore there is a need for this policy to describe and uphold a sustainable and socially equitable pattern of development as the major contribution that the West Midlands can make to counter any adverse effects of climate change. It should set out that the location of development – whether carbon neutral or not – is of paramount importance in view of the need to maintain an overall reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, and that carbon-neutrality of individual buildings is only part of the effect on climate change. In particular, out of centre development proposals should be required to demonstrate that the overall effect on climate change – ie that including the carbon emissions from car trips – would be less than if located in a more central location as set out in the sequential approach to development.

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Regional and local authorities, agencies and others should include policies and proposals in their plans, strategies and programmes to:

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A.   *Exploit opportunities arising from the growth and environmental transformation of the MUAs, and the concentration of new development outside the MUAs at Settlements of Significant Development, to both mitigate and adapt to the worst impacts of climate change by:*
(i) developing and using renewable energy to supply both new and existing development;
(ii) reducing the need to travel; and
(iii) reducing the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill;

B.   *Enhance, link and extend natural habitats so that the opportunities for species migration are not precluded and biodiversity can adapt to climate change and hence help to mitigate its affects by reducing 'heat islands', acting as carbon 'sinks', absorbing flood water and providing renewable energy;*

C.   *Require all new development to:*

(i) minimise resource demand and encourage the efficient use of resources, especially water, energy and materials;
(ii) encourage the construction of climate-proofed developments and sustainable buildings to help ensure their long-term viability in adapting to climate change;

Comment: this part of the policy appears to be requiring development to encourage something. Is this able to be operated at the DC level, bearing in mind the RSS is supposed to be part of the development plan and should be capable of being applied in this way?

(iii) avoid development in areas at risk of flooding and direct development away from areas at highest risk; protect essential infrastructure against flooding; and promote the use of sustainable drainage techniques and natural flooding of land in appropriate locations;
(iv) facilitate walking, cycling and public transport;
(v) facilitate effective waste management; and
(vi) protect, conserve, manage and enhance environmental and natural, built and historic assets;

Comment: this is already covered in various national policy guidance.

D.   Regularly monitor progress and review policies accordingly.

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Creating Sustainable Communities

2.22   *Sustainable communities can only be created and maintained if they contribute to environmental, social and economic objectives. New development can create durable places where people want to live and will continue to want to live. This means the delivery of sustainable communities that are designed and planned at an appropriate size, scale, density and mix. Each location needs to be chosen to be accessible to a range of employment, and to be large enough to support essential services, including decentralised energy infrastructure, cultural opportunities, a network of green infrastructure to promote healthy living, and a good public transport network which is linked to other nearby towns.*

2.23   *Many places within the Region's MUAs, older industrial towns and some market towns have areas within them which require sustained and substantial regeneration. There is a need to retain population, provide a mix of housing that is affordable, meets needs throughout people's lives and is of high quality low carbon design. Regeneration should also support and expand economic activity, improve the quality of the built, historic and natural environment, and improve the overall quality of life.*

2.24   *The scale of proposed new development in the Region means that outside the MUAs some significant development will need to be brought forward in a phased manner, with an emphasis on development of brownfield land, to*

complement urban renaissance. The principal focus for this will be in Settlements of Significant Development, - need to describe these here or cross reference to where they are described– it's the first time they have been introduced where it is intended that new neighbourhoods providing for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures should be developed. Sustainable communities should include a range of carbon neutral housing which demonstrates exemplar design standards and sustainable construction techniques (SR3). They should also promote a good public transport network, as well as opportunities to improve health and increase physical activity levels through a network of green infrastructure provision. Sustainable communities should also create a sense of place, by safeguarding and enhancing the distinctive character and qualities of existing towns. Plans, strategies and programmes must consider the potential impact of new development and increased traffic levels on European nature conservation sites and adopt measures to minimise these impacts.

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2.25   *To meet the need for new housing, it is essential that local authorities work with other partners to address the full range of issues associated with sustainable communities, and that LDDs provide the spatial planning dimension of the sustainable community strategy.*

Policy SR2   Creating Sustainable Communities

Regional and local authorities, agencies and others in their spatial plans, strategies and programmes, should make provision for the full range of spatial requirements needed to create sustainable communities. These should be of an appropriate size, scale, density and mix within the MUAs and the Settlements of Significant Development, as broadly indicated in Policy CF2, and in other areas where development is concentrated, including the requirement:

A.   to provide for the planned levels of new housing, with sufficient population to achieve a well integrated mix of homes and inclusive communities, and to meet people's housing needs throughout their lives, including the provision of affordable housing;

B.   for new employment generating activities to meet the needs of the existing population and any population arising from new housing development, and to create wealth within the community;

C.   to create attractive, well-designed, adaptable, safe and secure developments, which have a sense of place, that respond to the distinctive features of the site, integrate with their surrounding context, respect and enhance local character, and maximise the reuse of buildings and brownfield land;

D.   for necessary services and social infrastructure to meet the needs of the population, including health, education and skills, spiritual, sport and recreation, and cultural facilities, and the requirements of the emergency services;

E.   *for a comprehensive green infrastructure network that provides the full range of environmental services, including mitigation and adaptation to a changing climate, accessible green space for walking and cycling, sport and recreation, health and wellbeing and protects, consolidates and enhances biodiversity and geodiversity, especially the Region's European sites, and its historic assets and landscape character;*

F.   *to provide the necessary public transport infrastructure so as to improve accessibility to employment, services and facilities both within and between settlements, particularly for the least affluent members of society, and give priority to the most low carbon forms of transport, such as walking and cycling, and reducing the need to travel by car, thus minimising the generation of transport-related emissions and the adverse effects associated with such emissions; and*

G.   *to provide the environmental infrastructure needed to support new development, such as larger scale renewable and decentralised energy generation, including combined heat and power, and community heating systems, sewerage infrastructure, sewage treatment works, sustainable drainage systems, water treatment, reuse and recycling of waste, resource recovery facilities and soft and hard infrastructure needed for flood risk management.*

Comment: need to check that this does not replicate existing national policy guidance. We think that in most cases it does. In the case of issues that are regionally significant, such as water supply , the RSS should identify the particular locations and situations where this is going to be important.

Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy SR3   Sustainable Design and Construction

Comment: This policy is very confusing and there are too many sets of standards. There could be real problems in the practical application of this policy by developers and by DC officers, because it refers to a wide range of standards prepared by different bodies with different objectives. How is 'dialogue' expected to resolve disputes over which standards should apply to a particular development or plan? What weighting or priority should we give to each set of standards?

Some of these targets fail to provide adequate detail for the setting of standards and timescales for their implementation (see B, D and G), Some are already statutory requirements being administered through other regulatory systems, e.g. C (Code for Sustainable Homes) and F in part (SWMP).

In our view there should be one set of minimum standards in order to avoid confusion. The legal standards do not need to be repeated here,

other than a reference in the RJ because they apply anyway. The only set of standards that is regionally specific is A, so we think that the standards set in the RSS should be based on this.

Whatever standards are applied, they should not have the effect of restricting development in the MUAs in view of the generally higher development costs, otherwise the overall urban renaissance objective could be frustrated. Where viability is a significant issue there should be provision for departure or variations from the non-statutory standards. In this context we have particular misgivings about the CABE 'Building for Life' standards. Firstly, expecting all medium and large scale developments to achieve the CABE 'Building for Life' Very Good standard is unrealistic and probably unachievable, as nationally only 5% of schemes completed between 2001 and 2006 and assessed by CABE actually achieved this standard. Quite aside from the actual process of applying the standards to applications being extremely time-consuming and resource intensive (for which authorities may not have budgeted) such onerous standards could adversely affect the viability of many developments in the MUAs where development costs are greater. Secondly, it is unclear that achieving a high score would actually result in lower carbon dioxide emissions. Reducing carbon dioxide emissions is not addressed specifically in the 'Buildings for Life' guide.

This target should be set and justified locally, taking into account local circumstances. The District Valuer should have a role in assessing the viability of schemes where abnormal development costs are an issue.

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Local Planning Authorities in their LDDs and in determining planning applications should ensure that all new buildings are designed and constructed to the highest possible environmental standards, and should work towards the achievement of carbon neutral developments, by:

A. *Ensuring that all planning applications for medium and large-scale development (greater than 10 residential units or 1,000 square metres) are accompanied by a sustainability statement. This should demonstrate that at least the 'good' standards, and wherever possible 'best practice' standards, as set out in the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist for Development, are achieved for each category. Appropriate targets should be set for individual developments through dialogue between the Local Planning Authority and developer, in Area Action Plans, or through a planning brief or master plan approach. Where a higher standard is required elsewhere in this policy, it should be applied;*

B. *Ensuring that all new housing developments meet the CABE Building for Life 'good' standard, and that all medium and large scale developments (greater than 10 residential units) meet the 'very good' standard;*

C. *Ensuring that all new homes meet at least level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and considering the potential for securing*

higher standards of energy efficiency for new homes at level 4 before 2013 and zero carbon Level 6 before 2016. Offices and other non-domestic buildings should aim for 10% below the target emission rate of the current Building Regulations by 2016;

D. *Ensuring that all new medium and large scale development (greater than 10 residential units or 1,000 square metres) incorporate renewable or low carbon energy equipment to meet at least 10% of the development's residual energy demand. Local authorities may use lower thresholds for the size of developments and set higher percentages for on-site generation where considered appropriate;*

E. *Maximising the potential for decentralised energy systems such as combined heat and power and community heating systems based on renewable and low-carbon energy;*

F. *Promoting the use of local and sustainable sources of materials, and the preparation of Site Waste Management Plans to ensure that at least 25% of the total minerals used derives from recycled and reused content;*

G. *Requiring that all new homes meet or exceed the water conservation standards in Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, that offices meet the BREEAM offices scale, and that other buildings achieve efficiency savings of at least 25%;*

H. *Requiring the use of sustainable drainage systems and integrated surface water management in all medium and large developments, unless it can be demonstrated that it is not practicable to do so; and*

I. *Promoting and seeking opportunities to introduce similar energy and water efficiency standards and sustainable drainage systems in existing buildings.*

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Improving Air Quality for Sensitive Ecosystems

2.31   Despite air quality in the Region improving over recent years, future trends in
Policy SR4   Improving Air Quality for Sensitive Ecosystems

Local Planning Authorities in their LDDs should consider the potential impacts of new developments and increased traffic movements on all European sites and adopt mitigation measures to minimise and where possible avoid adverse impacts by :

   A. *Reducing the need for travel (T2) through the development of sustainable communities (SR2);*

B. Securing the fullest possible use of sustainable transport choices (T1), including the use of public transport (T2) and reducing the use of the car and associated transport emissions to air;

C. Avoiding the siting of new sources of emissions near to sensitive European sites or development that would increase traffic levels on roads near sensitive sites;

D. Ensuring that the air quality effects of proposed development on all European sites are considered, even when the proposal does not directly affect the site, including the use of appropriate traffic management measures;

E. Ensuring that development is only permitted where it is clearly demonstrated by the developer, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that the development will not result in any significant increase in NOx emissions, or where development would result in such an increase, it includes measures to secure an equivalent improvement in air quality or reduction in emissions from other sources; and

F. Reviewing Air Quality Strategies and considering the contribution of air emissions to background levels of diffuse air pollution, taking account of risks to all European sites and to sensitive local receptors.

Comment: again, need to check to ensure that the policy does not replicate other policy and regulations (notably PPG13 and the Habitats Regulations) . In relation to the regionally specific elements (eg NOx), there is a need to set out which parts of the region are affected and what actions need to be taken to rectify matters at a strategic level.

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Chapter 3

The Spatial Strategy for the Development of the West Midlands

3.4 At the same time, some rural areas *were identified as* suffer*ing* from insufficient economic activity and suitable *affordable* housing *to meet local needs* to support a balanced population. This *led to* people either leaving or needing to travel greater distances to access services and job opportunities and result*ed* in a threat to the maintenance of sustainable rural communities . *It also* detract*ed* from the overall sustainable economic prosperity of the Region.

(need to maintain the imperfect tense throughout. Also, sentence is too long.)

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3.5 In this context, four major challenges *were* identified for the Region *and these have remained fundamental through the WMRSS Phase Two Revision*:

a) **Urban Renaissance** - developing the MUAs in such a way that they can increasingly meet their own economic and social needs in order to counter the unsustainable outward movement of people and jobs facilitated by previous strategies;

(increasingly is synonymous with 'more of')

b) **Rural Renaissance** - *supporting rural communities to achieve their economic and social potential whilst embracing the challenges of access and climate change*;

c) **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

d) **Modernising the transport infrastructure of the West Midlands** - supporting the sustainable development of the Region.

3.8 To achieve sustainable communities, different responses are required dependent on circumstances around the Region. However, as places have functional inter-relationships with each other, for example sharing housing markets or relying on each other to provide *employment,* leisure *or* shopping opportunities, these different responses should be complementary to each other.

Spatial Strategy Objectives

3.22 A substantial part of dealing with the 80% output gap will entail the promotion of diversification within the economy; the encouragement of new business formation in more high value sectors; and the improvement of the drivers of productivity – identified by HM Treasury[1] as skills, enterprise, innovation, competition and investment. Notwithstanding these factors, ? low rates of innovation and a poor record on skills are the primary sources of the Region's productivity challenge.

Comment : not sure this paragraph makes sense – seems to be the wrong way round. Surely the low rates of innovation etc need to be addressed through the promotion of the appropriate measures -

The Sub-Regional implications of the Strategy

3.23 The West Midlands is a diverse Region. The metropolitan MUA conurbation centred upon Birmingham-Solihull, the Black Country and Coventry lies at the core of the Region. To the North is the North Staffordshire conurbation. Surrounding the MUAs are the Shire Authorities with networks of towns and villages, some of which provide links and gateways to neighbouring regions. In practice, there are many and varied functional relationships between these different parts of the Region - some interconnecting in different ways. The Regional housing market analysis undertaken for the RHS demonstrated the

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[1] *Productivity in the UK Series, HM Treasury*

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coincidentally self contained nature of the housing market at the Regional level. Very localised cross boundary relationships occur in some places but their extent and scale is such that these are best left for sub-regional or local housing strategies, and local development frameworks to address. The application of Spatial Strategy principles therefore needs to acknowledge the understanding now available to the Region based upon the shared evidence base of the Region's housing markets, together with the analysis and consultation underpinning the review of the WMES.

The Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region

Birmingham

3.26 *Birmingham, at the heart of the City Region, is a major centre for economic activity and is a major contributor to the Regional and national economy; its continuing development is critical to enhancing its position as a global city (Policy PA12). (no need for capitals here). Birmingham has a vibrant city centre, a successful international airport acting as a key gateway to the Region and contains many prosperous areas; but it also faces the challenge of social and economic inequalities and the need to regenerate many of its communities. Some of these communities are located within the inner areas but also extend to the west and east, including links with North Solihull.*

3.27 *Birmingham's 20-year vision is to secure long-term sustainable growth in its population, rising from around 1 million people to a population of up 1.1 million by 2026. Along with increased investment to provide new employment opportunities, it is proposed that this growth should be focused across four areas:*

- *East Birmingham which, together with North Solihull, makes up the East Birmingham/North Solihull Regeneration Zone (PA2) and Eastern Housing Market Renewal and Growth Corridor (identified as a New Growth Point bid);*

- *South West Birmingham, including the Longbridge redevelopment as part of the Central Technology Belt extending into Worcestershire (PA3);*

- *The Urban Living Housing Market Renewal Area in the north west of the City (CF1) linking with opportunities arising from the South Black County and West Birmingham Regeneration Zone (PA2); and*

- *The further expansion of the City Centre and Eastside (PA12), acting as a major economic driver for the City and the wider Region.*

3.28 *The continued urban renaissance of Birmingham, as the Regional Capital, will be crucial to the Region, but the form of development in the wider Region will also have implications for the renaissance of the city. This particularly applies to transport links, where the successful delivery of key infrastructure projects, such as the redevelopment of Birmingham New Street Station and the development of extended public transport networks, will be vital to improving the city's local, Regional and national accessibility.*

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3.29   Within Birmingham and Solihull the WMES will complement the WMRSS in aiming to achieve Birmingham's status as competing as a global city by supporting the development of the city centre and maximising the benefit of the major transport, commercial and cultural assets.

Solihull

3.30   Solihull plays a pivotal role within the Region with strong links to both Birmingham and the surrounding area of Warwickshire. *It is attractive to new investment because of its r*egionally important assets including Birmingham International Airport, the National Exhibition Centre, two Regional Investment Sites (Birmingham and Blythe Valley Business Parks), a vibrant town centre within its boundaries, as well as excellent access by both road and rail and a high quality of environment. The continued development of the Airport, within the framework of Policy T11, together with improved public transport links, is important both to the economy of Solihull and the Region and to national and international connectivity.

3.37   For the Black Country the WMES will act in a complementary manner to the WMRSS in the development of the strategic centres, and the creation of the Employment Land Corridors for future knowledge-based businesses.

Comment: 'knowledge-based ' industries could imply almost anything . Need to be more specific in order not to justify town centre uses such as offices being justified in out-of-centre locations under this.

Telford

3.38   Telford is the largest urban area in the West Midlands Region outside of the MUAs. It *is included* in the Central Housing Market Area but has a strong housing market relationship with the adjoining West Housing Market Area, especially in Shropshire. Telford is part of the wider Birmingham, Black Country and Coventry City-Region. As the infrastructure of the town was designed for a much larger population than at present, there is considerable potential for further growth. Telford has a range of development sites available in sustainable locations, with the capacity to accommodate additional development without significant impact *on* local communities. This is reflected in the identification of the town as a New Growth Point and its WMRSS designation as a Settlement of Significant Development in Policy CF2.

3.39   Telford's function is generally one of a freestanding self contained employment area. It has localised travel to work and migration links to surrounding authorities, such as Shrewsbury, rather than significant longer distance commuting patterns with the Black Country and Birmingham. However, whilst Telford is a separate local housing market area, as a Local Regeneration Area it is nevertheless competing with the Black Country for new investment and the attraction of skilled workforce (i.e. AB households). The *implications for* the urban renaissance aims of the Black Country must therefore be an important consideration in determining the on-going rate and form of development of the town.

c) *phases housing land releases to encourage regeneration in the MUAs by giving priority to:*
- *sustainable locations first- but how are these defined? and foremost and, within those locations brownfield land before greenfield land;*
- *then, if necessary, urban extensions within Local Authority areas; and*
- *only as a last resort, cross-boundary urban extensions in the North-South Corridor (later in the plan period),if no more suitable alternative capacity is available;*

d) *enables specific local Green Belt boundary adjustment for sustainable urban extensions to be made through LDFs when and where essential to meet long term needs;*

e) *proposes releases of land for housing geared to maintain a constant average annual supply across the Sub-region.*

3.53 *The County Town of Stafford shares sub-regional housing market characteristics with the North Housing Market Area centred upon the Stoke – Newcastle under Lyme urban conurbation and the Central Housing Market Area. Stafford also shares, with Lichfield and Tamworth, similar housing market influences extending out from the West Midlands Conurbation. Stafford provides an opportunity to help meet the housing and local regeneration needs of the County in a balanced and sustainable way without damaging the renaissance prospects of the MUAs. Whilst there are opportunities for significant development within the urban area, some greenfield development will be required and liaison with adjoining authorities will be necessary to enable the most sustainable pattern of development to be considered (CF3).*

3.54 *Further development across the County will be at a scale to support the on-*

3.65 *Outside Worcester, further development in the County will be focused within other larger settlements and market towns acting as strategic locations for housing as well employment growth. In the case of Redditch, the town is designated as a WMRSS Settlement of Significant Development given the scale of housing required to meet its needs (i.e. reflecting the population structure of this previous New Town). With limited development capacity within the town itself, this will require extensions to the urban area, including provision in adjoining Districts (CF3) with implications for Green Belt. This will require close liaison between authorities in the preparation of their Core Strategies. Any greenfield extensions will also need to be appropriately managed and phased, to ensure that new housing provision does not encourage migration from Birmingham and the Black Country.*

Shropshire and Herefordshire - the Rural West

Delivering and Monitoring the Spatial Strategy

3.75 The Spatial Strategy will be delivered *through* the implementation of its policies and their effective integration and co-ordination with other relevant

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strategies, action plans and investment strategies such as those for transport, the economy, education, housing, health, *skills* and the environment. This will require a high level of *ongoing* co-operation between the Region's public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders. The RPB, *Regional Development Agency and Regional Housing Executive are together seeking* to broaden involvement in new and innovative fora. *A considerable amount of this work will need to be developed and delivered sub-regionally. New* delivery vehicles may also be required to complement local strategic partnerships, *sub-regional partnerships, Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders and other activities.*

3.76

Chapter 6

Communities for the Future Chapter

Introduction

6.1   *The Government's key housing policy goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live[2]. Over the last 10 years, general market housing has become progressively unaffordable to first time buyers and insufficient social and shared equity housing has been built to meet needs. The Government believe that the problem of lack of affordability could get worse unless there is a step-change increase in the level of new house building across the country. The Government is looking for a rise in the level of new house building across England to 240,000 per annum with 2 million new homes provided by 2016 and 3 million new homes by 2020. The West Midlands Region's share of this growth is estimated to be in the order of 19,000 new dwellings (net) per annum.*

6.2   *6.8   There are however significant differences in housing markets between and within the conurbations. The West Midlands conurbation accounts for just under half the population of the Region. Despite losing population over many years through net out-migration, the area still has a relatively young age structure and high demand for housing. This is particularly the case for Birmingham. However, parts of the economy of the conurbation remain weak relative to most other parts of the Region. The conurbation includes areas of weak housing markets covered by Renew and Urban Living Pathfinders, together with two regionally significant areas of housing market intervention – 'Evolve' (Telford and the Black Country) and East Birmingham/North Solihull. As regeneration policies are successful, these vehicles for securing urban renaissance will make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements and creating sustainable communities.*

6.9

CF1   Housing within the Major Urban Areas

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[2] *Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing, Communities and Local Government 2006*

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A. *The potential for new housing development within the West Midlands conurbation should be maximised in order to seek to retain economically active population within the MUAs, subject to the need to maintain a balance between employment prospects and housing development and to secure environmental safeguards.*

B. *Within the North Staffordshire conurbation, development should be concentrated within priority regeneration areas identified within the Local Development Framework to complement the process of housing market renewal.*

C. *In order to create a variety and choice of good quality housing within the MUAs, local authorities (through their development plans and housing strategies) should work with the private sector as the major provider of new housing, the Homes and Communities Agency, and Registered Social Landlords to:*

(nb the Housing Corporation is being merged with English Partnerships to form a new Homes and Communities agency).

   a. *significantly improve the quality of the existing housing stock both through enhanced renovation programmes and increased rates of redevelopment;*

   b. *increase the scale and range of new housing development opportunities in appropriate locations guided by the Regional Housing Strategy and local and sub regional housing strategies;*

   c. *create and protect well served and attractive urban communities and living environments (QE3-4 and SR2) within which more people will wish to live and invest, through the provision of appropriate housing types, tenures and densities; and*

   d. *ensure the provision of appropriate affordable housing in line with policy CF7 and local and sub regional housing strategies.*

D. *The approach set out in C above should be adopted across all parts of the MUAs, in order to retain economically active households, provide support for new or existing local services and facilities, and to create and maintain sustainable communities.*

E. *Significant action and investment, including where appropriate large scale redevelopment, should be targeted within those parts of the MUAs where the housing market is weak, particularly in the two market renewal/low demand Pathfinder areas of west and north Birmingham/ east Sandwell and Stoke on Trent/ Newcastle under Lyme as well as the housing market intervention areas of East Birmingham/North Solihull and Evolve: The Black Country and Telford.*

F. *Action to renew and redevelop neighbourhoods should also be focused in those areas where there is a risk of problems of decline spreading to adjoining housing areas, particularly in parts of Birmingham, Coventry,*

Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The Regional Housing Strategy provides a framework for action in these areas, which are shown as Housing Renewal Areas on the Communities for the Future Diagram.

G. Both Market and Housing Renewal Areas should be reflected in local authority development plans, together with details of where initiatives to rehabilitate the existing housing stock will be concentrated and where clearance and redevelopment is expected.

6.10 *In order to secure the regeneration of the MUAs, it is essential that the economically active population and the wealth of the cities can be increased. This requires the delivery of a significant higher level of housing development than is currently being built. At the same time, significant improvements to the current housing stock and to the overall quality of life are urgently required.*

6.11 *In implementing Policy CF1, major restructuring of the urban fabric will be required in some areas which may, for example, involve consolidating surplus employment and open space uses to release land for housing development.* Nb housing should never impinge on land needed for employment purposes – it should only be promoted on surplus employment land or land which, though still in employment use, is incompatible in amenity terms with neighbouring uses

6.12 *The metropolitan area of Birmingham, Coventry, Solihull and the Black Country, which makes up the Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region, is a major economic driver and source of employment opportunities within the Region. The success of the urban renaissance strategy is acknowledged to be partially dependent on a range of factors being improved, including education provision and standards, skills and training and quality health facilities. Alongside progress on these aspects the ambition expressed through the WMRSS is that provided a sufficient choice of attractive residential environments is made available, the Spatial Strategy assumes that net out-migration can be stemmed. Achieving the levels of housing identified for the metropolitan area over the plan period to accommodate those households who would otherwise have migrated out of the MUAs, will depend upon a commitment to large-scale housing renewal and redevelopment. This will require a proactive approach to redevelopment with high replacement ratios for cleared housing stock and a willingness to support an increase in overall densities, as long as these densities are compatible with the overall objective of attracting people back into the Major Urban Area, as a crucial part of the urban renaissance .. In parts of the City Region, in particular Birmingham, there is an aspiration to develop 'eco-centres' to accommodate new housing growth.*

6.15 *Priorities for development within the Black Country have been established as part of the WMRSS Phase One Revision. This seeks to concentrate new development within and adjacent to the four strategic centres of Wolverhampton, Walsall, West Bromwich and Brierley Hill/Merry Hill and in the corridors between them.*
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6.16   *Within the North Staffordshire conurbation, the economy and housing market still show signs of weakness, for which concerted efforts to comprehensively regenerate the area are being pursued. The RENEW urban pathfinder is seeking to turn around the fragile housing market. Thus, a period of restraint on housing development is necessary, both within and outside the conurbation, to enable the fledgling housing market to regain strength before the area can fulfil its potential to attract market housing at a level consistent with the size of the conurbation. Housing development should be concentrated within the urban core of the conurbation. Over time, as there are positive signs of a significant improvement within the North Staffordshire conurbation housing market, it should be possible to make further provision for higher average rates of housebuilding, as part of a further review of the WMRSS. No urban extensions to the conurbation are likely to be needed in the period up to 2026.*

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Housing beyond the Major Urban Areas

6.19   *Attractive and sustainable communities need to be developed and maintained across all parts of the Region. It is important that communities are allowed to grow and change and that housing demands are met, including through greenfield extensions where appropriate, as long as the housing is not overprovided in relation to the maximum figures set out in table 1.. However, it is also important that development does not undermine the urban renaissance of the MUAs. As a result of the Habitats Regulation Assessment, the importance of consolidating habitats and buffering impacts of development, on European nature conservation sites must be considered.*

CF2   Housing beyond Major Urban Areas.

A.   Beyond the MUAs, strategic housing development should be concentrated in and adjacent to towns which are capable of balanced and sustainable growth. These are the Settlements of Significant Development, namely Worcester, Telford, Shrewsbury, Hereford, Rugby, Burton upon Trent, Stafford, Nuneaton/Bedworth, Warwick/Leamington Spa and Redditch. These Settlements of Significant Development:

i)   act as sub-regional service centres;

ii) *have the capacity to accommodate additional development without significant harm to local communities and in sustainable locations;*

iii) *are able to balance housing and employment opportunities and provide social infrastructure and services to meet the needs of expanded settlements;*

iv) *are able to deliver local regeneration priorities through new development; and*

v) *either already have or are capable of developing good accessibility by public transport and through increased provision for walking and cycling.*

These Settlements of Significant Development are shown on the Communities for the Future diagram.

Comment: existing CF2 (b) is unnecessary and the wording is not effective as a policy. 6.21 covers the issue adequately

B. **Housing development elsewhere will only be permitted where it will support the need to meet local housing requirements, particularly for affordable housing; promote local regeneration or support the retention or creation of local services. Development should be prioritised in villages which still have a range of services and within these, priority should be given to the reuse of previously developed land and the conversion of existing buildings.**

Comment: need to make this policy more DC friendly

6.21   *In general, the principles of sustainability will lead to the majority of housing development in rural areas being focused on market towns and larger rural settlements. In some circumstances, it will also be appropriate to consider small scale housing provision in smaller settlements, where this can be shown to contribute directly towards regenerating the rural economy or sustaining a local community, by meeting proven housing needs and where the impact on the environment and the landscape is acceptable.*

Levels and Distribution of New Housing Development

6.22   *The scale of housing provision and its distribution seeks to complement the overall aspirations of the WMES and the RHS. The delivery of policies CF1 and CF2 will rely on close partnership working between planning and housing authorities. As well as private housing builders, private and social housing landlords and through the Regional Housing Board, the support of Government and its agencies including the Housing Corporation, the Homes and Communities Agency and Advantage West Midlands. This partnership approach should take place at regional, sub-regional and local level. All housing developments should respect the natural, built and historic environment in accordance with the QE policies.*

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6.23 *The distribution of housing in Table 1 sets out how the Region will respond to the higher level of housebuilding required by the Government. This distribution also reflects WMRSS and RHS objectives as well as sub-regional and local regeneration priorities. The table should be read in conjunction with policy CF4 on phasing. Within the MUAs, development will be of a scale that will enable these areas to increasingly meet their own generated needs. At 2006, the ratio of new housing development between the MUAs and other areas was 1:1.3. Proposals in Table 1 imply an average ratio of new development of 1:1.2 between the MUAs and the rest of the Region.*

According to the present table 1, the rate of housing provision from 2007 to 2011 is projected as 1;1.1 in favour of the ex MUAs, falling thereafter to 1:0.7. The RSS Phase 2, which projects 1.1.2, actually projects more decentralisation than the present situation. See our overarching comments.

6.24 *This level of new house building will require substantial investment from the private sector, including house builders and utility providers, as well as from the private sector in terms of transport and other supporting infrastructure. This infrastructure needs to be provided, as far as possible, at the same time as the housing development, as a necessary prerequisite of development.*

CF3   *Level and distribution of new housing development*

Development plans should make provision for additional dwellings (net) to be built as specified in Table 1 below for the period 2006-2026. Proposals for Birmingham, Solihull (that part within the MUA) and the Black Country Boroughs are minimum figures. All figures outside the MUAs are maximum ones. Table 1 also shows the indicative annual development rates necessary to achieve these targets.

In certain circumstances, the most sustainable form of housing development may be adjacent to the settlement but cross local authority boundaries.   Where housing market areas cross local authority administrative boundaries, co-operation and joint working will be necessary to ensure that sites are released in a way that supports sustainable development.

Comment: if minimum figures for housing are going to be applied in the MUAs, then logically maximum figures must be applied outside – otherwise the urban renaissance will be at risk.

In the following locations, local authorities must jointly consider the most appropriate locations for development before producing or revising LDDs:

  i.   **Birmingham and Bromsgrove in relation to Birmingham;**
  ii. **Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle under Lyme in relation to the North Staffordshire conurbation;**
  iii. **The four Black Country Boroughs in relation to Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley;**
  iv. **Stafford and South Staffordshire in relation to Stafford town;**
  v.   **Cannock Chase, Lichfield and Stafford in relation to Rugeley;**

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vi. *Tamworth, Lichfield and North Warwickshire in relation to Tamworth and Lichfield Districts;*

vii. *East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire in relation to Burton upon Trent;*

viii. *Coventry, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Warwick in relation to Coventry;*

ix. *Redditch, Bromsgrove and Stratford upon Avon in relation to Redditch; and*

x. *Worcester, Malvern Hills and Wychavon in relation to Worcester.*

Table 1 : Housing proposals 2006 - 2026

Planning Area	Proposal Total (Net) 2006 - 2026	Indicative annual average 2006 - 2026
Birmingham [a]	50,600	2,530
Coventry [b]	33,500	1,675
Black Country	**61,200**	**3,060**
Solihull	7,600	380
Metropolitan Area Total	**152,900**	**7,645**
Shropshire	**25,700**	**1,285**
Bridgnorth	2,500	125
North Shropshire	6,100	305
Oswestry	4,000	200
Shrewsbury & Atcham	8,200	410
Of which Shrewsbury	6,200	310
South Shropshire	4,900	245
Telford & Wrekin	**26,500**	**1,325**
Of which Telford	25,000	1,250
Staffordshire	**54,900**	**2,745**
Cannock Chase	5,800	290
East Staffordshire	12,900	645
of which Burton upon Trent	11,000	550
Lichfield [c]	8,000	400
Newcastle-under-Lyme	5,700	285
of which Newcastle urban area	4,800	240
South Staffordshire	3,500	175
Stafford	10,100	505
of which Stafford town [d]	7,000	350
Staffordshire Moorlands	6,000	300
Tamworth	2,900	145
Stoke on Trent	**11,400**	**570**
Warwickshire	**41,000**	**2,050**
North Warwickshire	3,000	150
Nuneaton and Bedworth	10,800	540

Rugby	*10,800*	*540*
of which Rugby town	*9,800*	*490*
Stratford-on-Avon [(e)]	*5,600*	*280*
Warwick	*10,800*	*540*
Worcestershire	**36,600**	**1,830**
Bromsgrove [(e)]	*2,100*	*105*
Redditch [(e)]	*6,600*	*330*
Malvern Hills [(f)]	*4,900*	*245*
Worcester City [(f)]	*10,500*	*525*
Wychavon [(f)]	*9,100*	*455*
Wyre Forest	*3,400*	*170*
Herefordshire	**16,600**	**830**
of which Hereford City	*8,300*	*415*
Shire and Unitary Authorities Total	**212,700**	**10,635**
Major Urban Areas [(g)]	*169,100*	*8,455*
Other Areas	*196,500*	*9,825*
West Midlands Region	**365,600**	**18,280**

Footnotes:
a) *Of the total provision for Birmingham, around 700 dwellings will be provided at Longbridge, in Bromsgrove District.*
b) *Dependent upon the capacity in Coventry and the outcome of further studies, some of the allocations could be made adjacent to Coventry within Nuneaton & Bedworth and Warwick Districts.*
c) *Of the figure of 8,000 for Lichfield, dependent upon the outcome of further local studies, some of the allocations could be made relating to Tamworth and Rugeley.*
d) *Dependant upon the outcome of further local studies, some of the Stafford town allocation could be made, adjacent to the settlement, in South Staffordshire District.*
e) *Redditch Figure of 6,600 includes 3,300 in Redditch and 3,300 adjacent to Redditch town in Bromsgrove and/or Stratford upon Avon Districts*
f) *Of the figure of 10,500 for Worcester; 3,200 will be within Worcester City and 7,300 will be adjacent to the City within the surrounding districts of Malvern Hills and Wychavon*
g) *Includes the Newcastle urban area*

6.25   *In determining the most sustainable form of new development, local authorities, in their LDDs should consider whether the release of Green Belt land (within the context of policies CF1 and CF2) would provide a more appropriate option than other forms of development.*

Comment: paragraph 6.26 is unnecessary and covered by other regulations.
6.26

6.27   *Actual land requirements for housing provision will vary with the level of demolitions and the replacement rates which can be achieved on housing redevelopment sites. The proposals in Table 1 assume that there can be a 1:1 replacement. If the average ratio of new housing to demolitions in a local planning authority is less than 1:1, the authority will need to identify further land as part of the LDD. If the average ratio achieved is greater than 1:1, fewer additional housing sites will need to be identified through the LDD. The amount of land required will also be dependent on the densities achieved.*

Because of weak housing demand within the North Staffordshire conurbation, a replacement rate of 1:1 may not be appropriate in this area.

Phasing of new development

6.30   In order to deliver a higher level of housing development in the Region, while at the same time ensuring that progress on urban renaissance is not undermined, phasing of housing development in different parts of the Region will be essential. At the same time, infrastructure providers and developers need to have certainty as to where and when major developments are likely to proceed. There will inevitably be a tension between ensuring the delivery of urban renaissance within the MUAs and allowing greenfield developments which could undermine this renaissance to proceed, in order to increase the overall level of housebuilding.

6.31   The Government's policy on new housing development implies that within the West Midlands Region the level of new housing development needs to increase to around 19,000 dwellings (net) by 2016. Policy CF4 indicates how this can be achieved in different parts of the Region.

CF4   Phasing of new development

Levels of new house building across the Region must be phased to ensure that there is, overall, an increasing rate of housing provision in the period up to 2016 subject to the minimum and maximum figures set out in table 1.. Priority will be given comment: by whom? At present the policy does not say to increasing development within the West Midlands conurbation early in the plan period to retain progress on urban renaissance with development in the rest of the Region increasing at a slower rate see below. Within the North Staffordshire conurbation, average annual development rates could rise after 2016, once progress on urban renaissance has become established. Overall, levels of housing completions need to be sufficient to ensure early implementation of the strategy. The proposed trajectory for increasing house building across the Region up to 2016, together with annual average rates of build for the period 2016-2026 are set out below:

Comment: There is a need for an extra element to this policy that controls the release of planning permissions in the areas specified in the table. At the moment, (and even assuming that maximum figures are in place) the only way the Region could attempt to operate this policy could be through conformity – but an adverse conformity judgement does not necessarily stop an individual authority from granting permission.

Furthermore, the ratios implies by these figures, far from increased development in the MUAs compared with elsewhere, project greater rates outside the MUAs at all times and only falling gradually towards the end of the period. See our addendum to the table below.
Proposed phasing of housing allocations*

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	2005/6 Actual Net Completions	Rising trajectory of house building by 2016 to reach:	Remainder per annum average 2016-2026
West Midlands conurbation	6900	8000	7800
North Staffordshire conurbation	1000	900	800
Rest of Region	10,100	10,100	9,200
West Midlands Region	18,000	19,000	17,800
Ratio MUA/non MUA	1:1.27	1:1.13	1.1.07

In the preparation and review of LDDs and in determining planning applications, local authorities should use the following criteria to govern the allocation and phasing of land release at local level:

A. *The need to maintain and accelerate progress of urban renaissance;*

B. *In sustainable locations, sites which are on previously developed land should be phased early in the plan period and, in most circumstances, prior to the phasing of greenfield sites;*

C. *Sites, where the development would support regeneration through opening up further opportunities for mixed use sustainable development within cities and towns, should be phased early in the plan period;*

D. *Only where insufficient sites on previously developed land, in sustainable locations, are available to meet the housing trajectory (including the expected contribution from windfall sites) should greenfield sites be released;*

E. *The development of any Greenbelt sites should generally be phased late in the plan period and after further investigation as to whether they constitute the most sustainable form of development in the local area and represent exceptional circumstances; and*

F. *Local authorities, in allocating and phasing sites in LDDs , or granting planning permissions, should not undermine urban renaissance within the authority or in neighbouring areas, Non MUA authorities should not grant planning permissions which would have the effect of exceeding the maximum figures as set out in table 1.*

* On the basis of an overall level of provision of around 366,000 dwellings, net, 2006-2026, this could imply a provision of around 187,000 dwellings 2006-2016 and 179,000 dwellings 2016-2026, across the Region.

6.32

6.35 Realistic phasing at the local level will be determined through the preparation of LDDs and the water companies' Water Resource *Plans. Why just Water resource Plans?* Local authorities will need to work in close consultation with the Environment Agency and the water companies to undertake water cycle studies (para. 2.28). Local authorities will need to manage their allocation of land and granting of planning permissions so as to achieve the annual indicative figures for the periods 2006-2016 and 2016 - 2026 as set out in Table 1, taking account of criteria *and phasing* specified in policy CF4. This will be monitored as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.

The reuse of land & buildings for housing

6.36

CF5   The re-use of land and buildings for housing

A.   Priority should be given to the development of brownfield land and the re-use of existing buildings, in sustainable locations, before allocations on greenfield land are released for development. Local Planning Authorities through their LDDs should manage the release of sites to meet the trajectories of house building required under Policies CF3 and CF4.

B.   Local Planning Authorities should seek to contribute to the achievement of a regional minimum target for development on previously developed land of 70% between 2006 and 2016. Minimum targets for the West Midlands conurbation, the North Staffordshire conurbation and the rest of the Region are set out below:

	Proportion of development on brownfield land 2006-2016
West Midlands Conurbation	**85%**
North Staffordshire conurbation	**90%**
Rest of Region	**60%**

C.   The RPB should, through its overall monitoring, assess the progress being made on achieving the above percentages, and, where necessary, should advise where development plan reviews should seek to increase the scale of achievement in order to support the spatial strategy. In giving this advice, the RPB will take particular account of the opportunities for the reuse of redundant employment land.

Comment: what happens if an authority fails to achieve these proportions?

Making efficient use of land

CF6 **Making efficient use of land**

Local authorities should set out density policies in their development plans specific to their areas to reflect local circumstances and the findings of the housing market assessment. High density development should be encouraged on sites within and close to strategic town centres as defined in policy PA11 and in locations close to public transport interchanges.

Comment: sentence 1 replicates PPS3 para 46.

Delivering affordable housing

CF7 **Delivering affordable housing**

A. Across the Region as a whole, local authorities through their plans and strategies should set out requirements for affordable housing and aim to contribute to the delivery of a minimum of 6000 affordable housing units gross each year. This includes both social rented and intermediate tenure housing provision. Indicative minima targets per annum, within this overall target, for each housing market area are:

South HMA	**1,000 per annum minimum gross**
Central HMA	**3,800 per annum minimum gross**
West HMA	**700 per annum minimum gross**
North	**500 per annum minimum gross.**

i)

B. The Regional Housing Strategy and the implementation of associated programmes should distribute resources, taking into account the broad pattern of identified need and the likely contribution of S106 agreements.

Existing Policy CF7 A & C appears to repeat PPS3, is not specific to the Region, and is therefore unnecessary.

6.49 *There are marked differences in affordable housing needs across the Region. Broadly speaking there is poor quality and lack of choice in the MUAs plus the need to replace stock lost through clearance and redevelopment. In the south and west of the Region plus parts of North Warwickshire and the rural parts of Staffordshire, insufficient affordable housing is the main problem. All parts of the Region continue to lose social stock through 'right to buy' legislation, thus*

exacerbating existing problems. In the rural areas generally, reliance on relatively small windfall sites makes it difficult to secure affordable housing. In these circumstances Local Planning Authorities, together with the sub regional housing market area partnerships, should consider whether there is a need to seek affordable housing on smaller sites and bring forward proposals through the development plan and local and sub regional housing strategy process. Where there is difficulty in securing sites for affordable housing, local authorities and the Homes and Communities Agency New Homes Agency[3] should use compulsory purchase powers.

6.50   *Provision of affordable housing in settlements with populations below 3000 is the most difficult to deliver. The need identified for affordable homes in these settlements is likely to be of a very localised nature. Proposals for new social and low cost home ownership housing must demonstrate how it would meet local housing need or assist in the restructuring of rural economies, consistent with the RHS.*

6.51   *Local authorities in their LDDs and local or sub regional housing strategies, drawing on the strategic housing market assessments, should determine the appropriate target for their area for social rented and intermediate housing; and the criteria for determining the contribution which the private sector needs to make to such provision through S106 agreements.*

6.52   *In determining planning applications for housing, local authorities should take account of emerging policies and strategies for the provision of affordable housing.*

Delivering mixed communities

6.53   *this paragraph repeats PPs3 and is not necessary*

6.54   *Over the past few years, the proportion of private flats within the new housing stock has been at a high level due, in part, to the effect of density policies. These developments have been successful in promoting urban regeneration around many city and town centres across the Region. However, such development can only meet the needs of certain groups within the population and as lifestyles change, households have tended to move on to other areas where a wider mix of accommodation is available.*

6.55

CF8   Delivering mixed communities

i)   **A.**

ii)   **the need for a greater proportion of higher value housing in the MUAs and some other settlements across the Region.**

C.

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[3] *Working title, to be confirmed.*

Comment: Most of this policy is either covered in PPS3 or is not regionally specific. It is also unclear how CF8C could actually be implemented through the planning system.

Gypsies and travellers

Managing housing land provision

6.61   *unnecessary*

CF10 Managing housing land supply

A. **Development plans should include measures to manage the release of housing land in a manner consistent with the implementation of the WMRSS and at the rates set out in Table 1 and in line with the phasing requirements in Policy CF4.**

B. **Development plans should incorporate policies which:**

i) **Allow for the managed release of new housing land, so as to secure the development of brownfield land and conversions, as a priority, taking account of the need for any new infrastructure and ground preparation;**

ii) **Take account of potential housing land provision and the policy framework in adjoining local authority areas so as not to undermine urban renaissance in other local authority areas; and**

iii) **Take full account of the potential for windfall development and where appropriate, provide a reasoned justification, based on strong evidence that while such sites cannot be identified as part of the LDD process, they are expected to come forward at levels required, along with site allocations, to meet the ten year trajectory of housing provision required in the LDD.**

Comment: strongly support CF10 B iii as necessary to ensure that sites in the major urban areas are not disadvantaged by earlier reliance on greenfield and green belt sites elsewhere.

Chapter 7

Prosperity for All

Introduction

Policy PA1: Prosperity for All

A. *The Major Urban Areas (MUAs) will be the primary focus for additional investment in sustainable economic growth with an emphasis on creating greater opportunities for development and support for existing economic activities within agreed regeneration areas. Sustainable economic growth will also be promoted in the rest of the Region including the Settlements of Significant Development to ensure an appropriate balance between new housing and new employment land provision. The rural areas of the Region will also be supported through the sustainable modernisation and diversification of the rural economy.*

B. **In the development of related (but essentially non-land-use) policies and programmes, local authorities, AWM and other agencies should:**

    i) ensure that conditions in 'areas of need' are addressed so that they also become 'areas of opportunity'. Particular emphasis in this approach should be given to the Regeneration Zones (PA2, RR2). To the extent that needs and opportunities cannot be matched, then beneficial economic linkages should be developed between areas of economic opportunity and more economically vulnerable areas of employment need;

    ii) maintain and improve *sustainable* transport accessibility – both of goods and people – by all modes into, within and through all parts of the Region;

    iii) ensure that the environmental and cultural assets are maintained and enhanced to help attract and develop business activity;

    iv) *reduce worklessness by* develop*ing* the skills and abilities of the West Midlands people by improving access to training, higher education, ICT and employment opportunities*; and*

    v) *encourage developers to adopt sustainable construction techniques wherever practicable and to locate economic activities in locations which minimise environmental impact including climate change emissions (QE3 and T2).*

C. **Where growth opportunities are provided outside the MUAs, priority should be given to locating *economic* development where**

    i) it can help meet the needs of the MUAs and promote positive economic linkages with them in areas accessible by sustainable forms of transport;

    ii) it can help meet the needs of rural renaissance, especially of market towns; and

    iii) it can serve the needs of the local regeneration areas.

Comment: the original (ii) wording is the wrong way round and could actually reinforce decentralisation. It also contradicts paragraph 7.8 and PA6 A ii. The strategy should be to propose housing where economic opportunities exist, not propose economic growth outside the MUAs to support new housing there. This might achieve local balance at the expense of wider sustainable settlement pattern and an urban renaissance. See our overarching comments.

D. **Any development proposed on the edge of the MUAs or on other greenfield sites should meet the following criteria:**

    i) **there are no suitable alternatives available on previously developed land and buildings within built up areas;**

    ii) **the development should be capable of being served by rail or high quality public transport within easy access of centres and facilities; and**

    iii) **the development respects the natural environment, built environment and historic heritage in accordance with policies QE1-9.**

Innovation and Cluster Development related to Research and Higher/Further Education Establishments

7.23 Clusters are defined by the common technology or end product of a group of companies linked through customer and supply chains and associated training, finance and research – unlike sectors that relate to a particular business or industry classification. Innovation is encouraged in all sectors, but in most cases development should be accommodated within the employment land portfolio (PA6).

7.24 The Region's higher education and research establishments are important sources of innovation and critical to the future of the Region's economy. Development plans should facilitate their appropriate expansion and the close location of new, emerging and as yet unforeseen forms of economic activity where there is a need for physical proximity to the research or educational establishment.

Policy PA4: Development related to Higher/Further Education and Research Establishments and incubator units

A. **Development plans should facilitate the needs of higher/further education institutions and research facilities to grow and expand. They should facilitate the development of businesses supportive to the *West Midlands* Economic Strategy cluster priorities that are linked to higher/further education institutions and research facilities by the provision of sites, premises and supporting infrastructure, taking into account:**

    i) **the locational and operational requirements of the businesses;**
    ii) **the likely scale and rate of growth;**
    iii) **providing employment opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged groups and communities;**
    iv) **existing or proposed sustainable forms of transport, particularly good quality public transport; and**
    v) **the opportunities to develop previously developed land and the need to protect and enhance the environment.**

B. **Sites identified to serve a particular higher/further education institution or research establishment should be reserved for that use through specific designation and the imposition of appropriate conditions or the use of legal agreements.**

C. *A high technology hub based around Keele University in North Staffordshire has been identified and will be promoted, to maximise the benefits of the research and development capacity of the higher education sector in North Staffordshire to the economy of the wider North Staffordshire MUA.*

7.25   Development plans should consider the need for the physical enhancement and expansion of existing educational and research facilities to ensure that the educational, training and research potential of the Region can be realised.

7.26   In the case of universities, particular emphasis should be given to developing their research and development capabilities and the further encouragement of links with business, particularly with knowledge-based industries.

7.27   Implementation of this policy will require partnership working between local planning authorities, the relevant education and research establishments and those involved in economic development. The land-use requirements will vary considerably and should be addressed in detail by development plans. Inward investment agencies should support these efforts through targeted marketing of particular sites to appropriate businesses and supporting activities.

Employment Areas in Need of Modernisation and Renewal

7.28   There is an urgent need to renew many existing employment areas whose worn-out and untidy appearance discourages new investment and encourages further decline.

Policy PA5: Employment Areas in Need of Modernisation and Renewal

A. **Local authorities, AWM, local economic partnerships and other agencies should work together at a local level to improve significantly and maintain the physical and business environment of the Region's established employment areas.**

Comment: How will this policy be implemented and monitored? What if people do not work together?

B. **To assist in this process local planning authorities should consider the designation of those employment areas within their areas which are in particular need of improvement. These areas should then be reflected in development plans and backed up by implementation plans drawing on relevant powers and funding regimes.**

C. **Existing companies should be especially encouraged to participate in the revival of their local business 'communities' and to establish local partnerships. Where appropriate, local authorities and AWM should use their powers of land assembly in order to encourage the renewal process through such partnerships.**

See above comment. Also, it is debatable whether this policy is actually regionally specific

7.29 These initiatives should form part of the "toolkit" for local definition and intervention, along with other mechanisms such as those set out in the Urban Renaissance Chapter (4.12). Local strategic partnerships, the local business community and other stakeholders should play an important role in this process.

Provision of Employment Land *and Premises*

7.30 Ensuring the provision of employment land *and premises* in the right amounts, of the right type and in the right places *for all types and sizes of business* is a key part of the Spatial Strategy. However, experience has shown that certain types of site are very difficult and time-consuming to provide. The "portfolio" of employment sites set out in policy PA6 is intended to ensure that desirable employment development is not lost due to lack of site availability. However, any proposals for employment development should be subject to the other policies of *the WMRSS* including those which seek to protect the environment.

7.31 It is important that accessible employment opportunities and attractive sites for developers are provided to support the urban renaissance and Spatial Strategy. Should there be insufficient sites on previously developed land of sufficient size, quality and location, to support the diversification and modernisation of the Region's economy, some greenfield development for employment purposes may be necessary. The RPB should monitor the scale and distribution of employment land allocations and permissions to ensure that it supports the Spatial Strategy.

7.32 Local planning authorities should provide a range of sites, but not necessarily the whole portfolio. Regionally and sub-regionally significant, strategic sites will have cross-boundary implications and should be brought forward and monitored by the RPB. To avoid over-provision where strategic sites are located within an authority's area then these should be reflected as part of the portfolio for that authority.

7.33 Only sites where development is a realistic possibility should be included in the portfolio. To inform the review of this guidance the RPB should review the Regional employment designations and, in preparing their development plans, local planning authorities should review all their employment sites for market realism and sustainability in terms of accessibility by public transport.

7.34 *It is also very important that a range of premises are available to meet the needs of business – including SMEs - throughout the Region. Local authorities will need to maintain information on the supply, and where*

Deleted: *businesses*

Deleted: *and I*

Deleted: *want*

necessary, intervene directly or indirectly to make sure there is an adequate choice to meet the needs of their areas.

Policy PA6: Portfolio of Employment Land[4] *and Premises*

A. **Local authorities, AWM, local economic partnerships and other agencies should aim to provide and maintain a range and choice of readily available[5] employment sites *as well as ensuring an appropriate stock and supply of business premises of all types and sizes* to meet the needs of the Regional economy. *The* portfolio *of employment land* should be developed in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and will include the following hierarchy of sites:**

  i) **First tier sites/locations of Regional significance including:**

   - **Regional Investment Sites (RIS) – see policy PA7;**
   - **Major Investment Sites (MIS) – see policy PA8;**
   - **Regional Logistics Sites (RLS) – see policy PA9.**

  ii) **Second tier, locally-significant employment for which development plans should establish*, within the context provided by PA6A,* the level and distribution for their areas within the following categories:**

   - **Sub-regional Employment Sites – high-quality attractive sites, generally 10 to 20 hectares in size in sustainable urban locations – including market towns - with potential to meet both cluster priorities and local needs. Sites in this category should be suitable to attract clients with an international/ national/ regional choice of location. Land in this category would usually need to be located on or have a direct link to the strategic highway network and be, or proposed to be, well served by public transport.**
   - **Good Quality Employment Sites – good quality sites suitable for locally based investment. Sites in this category are likely to exceed 0.4 hectares in size. This category may include larger sites which are some distance from the strategic highway network as well as sites within rural areas.**

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[4] *Employment land for the purposes of policies PA6, PA6A and PA6B, is defined as land suitable for development within use classes B1 (except offices located in town centres which are covered by PA11), B2 and B8 and also some sui generis uses such as waste management facilities which have characteristics and require land and property requirements which would normally only be found in employment areas. See also paragraph 7.36.*
[5] *Readily available: A site is defined as readily available if ALL the following conditions are met:*
  o *The site EITHER has planning permission AND/OR is allocated for economic development in the development plan AND/OR is committed by an appropriate Council resolution*
  o *No major problems of physical condition*
  o *No major infrastructure problems in relation to the scale of development/ activity proposed*
  o *The site is being actively marketed.*

- **Other Employment Sites** – land likely to be of interest only to local investors. Sites in this category are likely to be either very small (less than 0.4 hectares in size) or only likely to be suitable for marginal or 'bad neighbour' activities. This category may also include small sites within rural areas.

B. *Local authorities should maintain information on the supply of premises and where necessary intervene to ensure there is an adequate choice to meet the needs of business including SMEs within their areas.*

7.35 To ensure that strategic sites are identified, re-assessed for their appropriateness and implemented, progress on RIS, MIS and RLS should be monitored on a continuing basis by the West Midlands Employment Land Advisory Group (WMELAG) on behalf of the RPB. The RPB should encourage the active participation of a broad range of interests, including representatives from the *business sector and other interests*, in this process.

Policy PA6A: Employment Land Provision

Local Planning Authorities should make provision for a continuing five-year reservoir of readily available employment land outside town centres throughout the plan period. In order to ensure the availability of land to meet this requirement Local Planning Authorities in preparing their development plan should also take account of, and where appropriate, make provision for likely longer-term employment land requirements taking account of the need to control the release and identification of land through the Plan, Monitor, and Manage process. In meeting both the five-year reservoir and longer-term requirements priority should be given to the identification and development of brownfield land in accordance with Policy PA1. Full consideration of anticipated brownfield recycling should be taken into account.

<mark>Table X</mark> below includes district level requirements of both new and redeveloped employment land for the five-year reservoir across the Region and indicative amounts of land required in the longer term. In respect of the latter the amounts have been set cautiously to avoid the unnecessary release of large amounts of land. Local Planning Authorities should, however, see these longer term requirements as indicative and subject to testing and possible revision as part of Core Strategies. In the MUAs the five-year reservoirs should be seen as minima. The amounts of employment land reflect the need to balance new housing and population change with new employment.

There are a small number of circumstances where employment land provision might need to be made in an adjoining authority's area. Such circumstances are identified in the table and the relevant authorities will be required to hold cross-boundary discussions throughout the preparation of Core Strategies to ensure that such requirements are satisfactorily met.

In some areas existing commitments significantly exceed likely future employment land needs. To address this issue the relevant Local Planning Authorities must carefully reconsider land allocations and the appropriateness of renewing extant planning permissions.

**Table X*: Employment Land Provision*

District	Rolling five-year reservoir (ha)	Indicative long-term requirements (ha)
Birmingham [a]	130	390
Black Country [a]	185	555
Coventry [a] [b]	82 [d]	246 [d]
Solihull [a]	15	45
Metropolitan Area	412	1236
Telford & Wrekin	50	150
Herefordshire	37	111
Stoke-on-Trent [a]	55	165
Bridgnorth	6	18
North Shropshire	22	66
Oswestry	8	24
Shrewsbury & Atcham	28	84
South Shropshire	8	24
Shropshire	72	216
Cannock Chase	28	84
East Staffordshire	50 [c]	150 [c]
Lichfield	33	99
Newcastle [a]	28	84
South Staffordshire	8	24
Stafford	40	120
Staffordshire Moorlands	6	18
Tamworth	14	42
Staffordshire	207	621
North Warwickshire	11	33
Nuneaton & Bedworth [b]	32	96
Rugby [b]	36	108
Stratford [b]	17	51
Warwick [b]	30 [e]	90
Warwickshire	126	378
Bromsgrove [b]	7	21
Malvern Hills [b]	11	33
Redditch [b]	17 [f]	51 [g]
Worcester [b]	27 [h]	81 [i]
Wychavon [b]	23	69

Wyre Forest	*11*	*33*
Worcestershire	*96*	*288*
MUA	*495*	*1485 (47%)*
Non-MUA	*560*	*1680 (53%)*
Region	*1055*	*3165*

Footnotes:
The amounts of employment land in this table do not include RIS (Policy PA7), MIS (Policy PA8) and RLS (Policy PA9).

(a) *in these districts the five year reservoir is to be regarded as a minima.*

(b) *in these districts discussions will be required to ensure that cross-boundary issues are resolved.*

(c) *Proposals for the development of employment land on the site of the former Drakelow Power Station in South Derbyshire should be taken into account during the preparation of the Core Strategy for East Staffordshire.*

(d) *There is unlikely to be sufficient land within Coventry to meet employment land requirements over the plan period. Joint discussions will be required between, Coventry CC, Rugby BC, Nuneaton & Bedworth DC and Warwick DC to ensure continuity of supply. Due to its size and strategic significance Coventry's employment land needs should be taken into full account when proposals for the redevelopment of the site of the former Peugeot Assembly plant are considered.*

(e) *Includes 50% share of Warwick University expansion.*

(f) *Of which 8 ha will be provided within Bromsgrove and/or Stratford the distribution to be determined through discussions and agreement on preparation of Core Strategies.*

(g) *Of which 24 ha will be provided within Bromsgrove and/or Stratford the distribution to be determined through discussions and agreement on preparation of Core Strategies.*

(h) *Of which 9 ha will be provided within Malvern and Wychavon, the balance to be determined by a joint Core Strategy.*

(i) *Of which 27 ha will be provided within Malvern and Wychavon, the balance to be determined by a joint Core Strategy.*

In *preparing their development plans*, local authorities, in conjunction with AWM, should *take account of*:

i) *the needs of* existing businesses and take account of the needs of inward investors;

ii) *the need to ensure that employment opportunities are accessible to areas of significant new housing development;*

iii) the strategic priority given to Regeneration Zones *and High Technology Corridors* in meeting employment needs within the Region;

iv) the potential for the maximum use of recycled land for employment purposes to meet these needs but to recognise that the use of some greenfield land *may* be required *where all other alternatives have been considered;*

v) that in all cases land allocations should take account of the need to protect and enhance the Region's natural, built and historic environment;

vi) a classification of employment sites within their areas according to the hierarchy *in PA6* both in development plans and for the purposes of regional monitoring through the RELS database;

vii) *any deficiencies in the supply of land, especially within the MUAs,* and action required to remedy this; and

viii) the extent to which office developments should be restricted on certain sites (in accordance with PA11).

Policy PA6B: Protection of Employment Land and Premises

Employment land and premises are a valuable resource to the economy of an area and should be protected from competing uses where it can be demonstrated that they make an important contribution to the portfolio within an authority's area.

Local planning authorities, in conjunction with the relevant strategic authority and AWM, should regularly review existing employment land and the development pipeline within their area to establish (a) the continued suitability of sites for employment development and (b) to ensure the continuing supply of readily available and attractive sites. Such reviews will form an important part of the evidence base for Core Strategies. This assessment should take account of:

i)   **the physical suitability of the use of the land for employment purposes;**
ii)   **a realistic assessment of the market attractiveness *and viability* of the site for employment purposes, irrespective of the attractiveness of the land for alternative, higher-value uses;**
iii)   **whether the site is or can be served by high-quality public transport; and**
iv)   **the *potential contribution of the land to the* level of employment land required over the plan period *(see PA6A).***

Where the *employment land* review establishes that existing employment sites have no realistic prospect of development under current market conditions in their current physical state within the plan period, careful consideration should be given *in priority order* to:

i)   **what remedial action/infrastructure works will be required to justify the retention of the site within the portfolio;**
ii)   **identification/re-allocation of the site for *mixed uses; and***
iii)   *identification/re-allocation of the site for an alternative use.*

In considering development proposals that involve the loss of business premises, Local Planning Authorities should ensure there is an adequate range of premises to meet the needs of business in their area.

In the event of the unexpected closure of a large employer over 10 hectares in size or other threshold, to be determined through the preparation of Core Strategies, then the redevelopment of the land for non-employment uses should not be permitted in advance of the development plan process.

7.36   *Policies PA6, PA6A and PA6B* do not cover land suitable for employment purposes within town centres. In accordance with PA11 and *PPS6*, large-scale office developments (Class B1(a), more than 5,000m^2 gross floorspace) should be located *in the first instance* within the network of strategic town and

city centres. Where large-scale office developments are proposed, particularly outside strategic centres *a conformity assessment will be required unless the proposal has been identified in an up-to-date Development Plan*. Such proposals should be made explicit and justified through the development plan process.

Policy PA7: Regional Investment Sites

A. **Within the portfolio of employment sites, provision should be made for a series of Regional Investment Sites (RIS) the purpose of which will be to support:**

    i) **the diversification and modernisation of the Region's economy; and in particular**

    ii) **the development of the Region's cluster priorities as identified in the *West Midlands* Economic Strategy.**

B. **Regional Investment Sites will be identified within development plans. The RPB should be consulted on such proposals. Sites should be:**

    i) ***in the order of* 25–50 hectares;**

    ii) **high-quality sites attractive to national and international investors;**

    iii) **served or capable of being served by multi-modal transport facilities and broadband IT infrastructure;**

    iv) ***possess good quality public transport links, or be capable of having such links provided;***

    v) **well related to the motorway and trunk road network;**

    vi) **located within, or close to, the areas of greatest need; and**

    vii) **accessible to effective education and training opportunities to ensure that the employment benefits are available to the local workforce.**

C. **Taking account of current *provision* (set out below), at least one RIS should be made available within or linked by public transport to:**

    i) **each of the Urban Regeneration Zones; and**

    ii) **each of the High-Technology Corridors.**

D. **In some circumstances, a particular RIS may serve the needs of more than one Zone/Corridor.**

E. **New RIS will be required to meet the needs of the following High-Technology Corridors/Regeneration Zones:**

    i) **Birmingham to Worcestershire HTC*; and***

    ii) **South Black Country and West Birmingham RZ.**

F. **Additional provision may be required** *to serve the needs of* **the** *Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone and East Birmingham and North Solihull Regeneration Zone.*

G. **The potential for bringing forward proposals within the Regeneration Zones should be considered first. Development proposed on the edge of MUAs or on other greenfield sites should meet the criteria set out in policy PA1.**

H. ***Joint working between the relevant local authorities and key partners including AWM should identify how the gaps and potential gaps in provision set out in E. and F. above are to be filled. The outcome of the joint working should then be taken forward through the relevant Core Strategies.***

7.37 Developments on RIS will be strictly controlled to ensure that they support the objectives of the Spatial Strategy *and be of the highest quality falling within Classes B1* **b and c** *and, where appropriate, B2*. In particular, large-scale speculative *office* development which can be more appropriately accommodated within town centres and warehousing-only developments will not be permitted.

Comment: need to restrict uses within the B Class here to accord with PA 13B

7.38 The following areas are currently considered to be adequately served by RIS; the North Staffordshire RZ; North Black Country and South Staffs RZ; Wolverhampton to Telford HTC*; and Coventry-Solihull-Warwick HTC. In respect of the Birmingham to Worcestershire HTC, the emerging Longbridge Area Action Plan proposes an RIS which would serve this corridor.*

7.39 Current *RIS* where development has commenced or is identified in an adopted development plan *or taken forward through the development control process*:

• *Ansty*	*Coventry Solihull Warwickshire HTC & Coventry Nuneaton RZ[6]*
• Birmingham Business Park	Coventry Solihull Warwickshire HTC & E Birmingham/N Solihull RZ
• Blythe Valley Park *& extension*	Coventry Solihull Warwickshire HTC
• Hilton Cross	N Black Country & S Staffs RZ & Wolverhampton to Telford HTC
• Wolverhampton Business Park	N Black Country & S Staffs RZ & Wolverhampton to Telford HTC
• Wobaston Road	N Black Country & S Staffs RZ & Wolverhampton to Telford HTC
• Blythe Bridge	North Staffordshire RZ
• Chatterley Valley	North Staffordshire RZ

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[6] The changes made in respect of Ansty are proposed on the understanding that the site is to be taken forward as a site with multiple occupiers (i.e. an RIS) in accordance with the extant planning permission rather than a single user MIS as previously proposed in RPG11.

Policy PA8: Major Investment Sites

A.   Within the portfolio of employment sites, provision should be made for *up to* two Major Investment Sites (MIS) the purpose of which will be to meet the need for accommodating very large-scale investment by single users with an international choice of locations in order to help diversify and restructure the Regional economy.

B.   The MIS will be identified within development plans. The RPB should be consulted on such proposals. Sites should be:

   i)   in the order of 50 hectares;
   ii)   high-quality sites;
   iii)   served or capable of being served by multi-modal transport facilities and broadband IT infrastructure;
   iv)   *possess good quality public transport links, or be capable of having such links provided;*
   v)   well related to motorway and trunk road network, but avoiding sites immediately adjacent to motorway junctions where this is likely to exacerbate congestion problems;
   vi)   located in areas close to a large pool of labour with employment needs;
   vii)   accessible to effective education and training opportunities to ensure that the employment benefits are available to the local workforce; and
   viii) supported by the RPB.

C.   The Region should at all times have *up to two sites* readily available for development in order to respond quickly to demand. Development proposed on the edge of MUAs or on other greenfield sites should meet the criteria set out in policy PA1.

D.   *One* MIS *has* already been identified at Wobaston Road (north of Wolverhampton), and the Regional priority will be to direct suitable investments to *this* location.

E.   *In the event that development of the MIS at Wobaston Road is committed then a further site will need to be identified and brought forward as a matter of urgency.*

7.41   MIS should be located within or close to the MUAs and have good quality existing or potential public transport links to areas of employment need.

7.42   Development on MIS will be strictly controlled to ensure that they support the objectives of the Spatial Strategy. In particular, large-scale, speculative development, which can be more appropriately accommodated within town centres and warehousing-only developments, will not be permitted.

7.43   In the event that a MIS is released for a development significantly smaller than 50 hectares, then the balance of the land allocated should remain

undeveloped pending either expansion by the user or for its consideration through the development planning process.

Warehousing and Distribution

7.44 Warehousing and distribution is an important and fast growing sector within the Regional economy accounting for almost 9% of all jobs. However, traffic generation, particularly from large distribution facilities can make their location within urban areas problematic.

Policy PA9: Regional Logistics Sites

A. **Within the portfolio of employment sites, provision should be made for Regional Logistics Sites (RLS) the purpose of which will be to provide opportunities for the concentrated development of warehousing and distribution uses.**

B. **RLS** *with existing or potential for dedicated access to the Regional rail and highway networks* **will be identified within development plans. The RPB should be consulted on such proposals. Sites should** *also***:**

    i)   **be in the order of 50 hectares or more;**
    ii)   **possess good quality public transport links, or** *be* **capable of having such links provided;**
    iii) **be served or proposed to be served by multi-modal transport facilities and broadband IT infrastructure;**
    iv) **have easy access to an appropriate labour supply and education and training opportunities;**
    v)   **aim to minimise environment***al impact;*
    vi) *have a suitable configuration which allows large-scale high-bay warehousing, intermodal terminal facilities, appropriate railway wagon reception facilities and secure parking facilities for all goods vehicles (see also policy T10); and*
    vii) *be located away from incompatible neighbours allowing 24-hour operations and no restrictions on vehicle movements.*

C. *Based on a study of the future demand for logistics within the Region it is estimated that at least 150 hectares of land could be required on RLS-type locations to serve the West Midlands in the period up to 2021.*

D. **The Region should have a choice of RLS available at any point in time and consideration and priority should be given to bringing forward** *additional land taking account of the following in priority order:*
- *To upgrade the existing rail-connected logistics facility at Birch Coppice near Tamworth to a RLS.*
- *The scope for the realistic extension of existing RLS within the region and DIRFT which adjoins the regional boundary near Rugby, subject to local environmental and other constraints and recognising the proximity of Hams Hall and Birch Coppice and the need to avoid an*

> ***over-concentration of RLS development within the same broad
> location.***
> - ***The potential for new rail-served facilities to serve (a) the needs of the
>   Black Country located in southern Staffordshire and (b) to serve the
>   North Staffordshire conurbation.***
>
> ***Discussions between the relevant local authorities and key partners
> including AWM in the areas identified above should identify how RLS
> provision will be met and subject to agreement by the RPB the sites
> should then be taken forward through the relevant Core Strategy.***
>
> ***Annual monitoring will be important to ensure that there is adequate
> provision for this sector throughout the plan period.***

7.45 Development uses on RLS will be strictly controlled to ensure that they
support the objectives of the Spatial Strategy, with B1/B2 development not
being permitted unless it is demonstrated that this is essential to support the
primary purpose of the site.

7.46 Major concentrations of warehousing and distribution will be discouraged both
within urban areas and immediately adjacent to motorway junctions, where a
high level of heavy goods traffic would further exacerbate congestion. *There
are other important sites within the employment land portfolio within the
Region that will accommodate logistics developments. These include
Hortonwood, Telford which is rail connected and Fradley. In the longer-run the
redevelopment of the former Drakelow Power Station site near Burton-upon-
Trent offers potential for logistics-related development which would help serve
the West Midlands Region.*

Tourism and Culture

7.47 Local authorities, AWM, the Regional Cultural Consortium, tourism bodies and
other cultural agencies should encourage the further development of tourism
and culture, including media and sport, as a key element in the diversification
of the Regional economy. In so doing, recognition will be given to the
important contribution that tourism and culture can make to employment
generation, to local business development, environmental quality, educational
opportunities and regeneration.

7.48 Tourism and culture should be developed in an integrated and sustainable
way through a partnership approach, taking into account existing national and
Regional policies in the Regional Cultural Strategy and the Regional
Sustainable Tourism Strategy to be produced by AWM. In developing policies
and programmes, all organisations will be encouraged to contribute to the
Region's distinctiveness, diversity and multi-cultural strengths carefully
considering the need to balance the needs of visitors and the host community,
and to avoid significant damage to the environment.

Policy PA10: Tourism and Culture

A. Development plans should generally encourage both the improvement of existing provision as well as the creation of new facilities, subject to the capacity of infrastructure and the environment to accommodate the new facilities and visitors associated with them. They should include policies that support the further development and success of key Regional tourism and cultural assets such as:

- The National Exhibition Centre.
- Birmingham International Airport.
- The International Convention Centre and Eastside regeneration in Birmingham.
- Historic town and city centres such as Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Worcester and Lichfield.
- Stratford-upon-Avon and Shakespeare Country.
- Warwick Castle.
- The Region's network of live theatre and music venues.
- The Malvern Hills and the Marches and the small parts of the Peak District National Park (covered by RPG for the East Midlands) and the Cotswolds that lie within the West Midlands Region.
- Black Country Heritage Attractions .
- Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, the Severn Valley Steam Railway and West Midlands Safari Park.
- Alton Towers and Drayton Manor Park.
- Stoke and the ceramics and pottery heritage.
- The canal network.
- The Region's significant historic sites, buildings and gardens.
- The Region's registered museum collections, major libraries and archive collections.
- Indoor and outdoor sports stadi**ums** and venues of all types.

B. Where large-scale, innovative projects can contribute to the overall "offer" of the Region, these should also be encouraged in suitable locations well served by public transport and where this can make an appropriate contribution to urban or rural regeneration. In this respect it is important that development plans take forward and carefully consider the long-term potential of the National Forest.

C. Within development plans, local authorities should identify those areas where the development of sustainable tourism can be encouraged to the benefit of the local economy and employment without damaging local environment or character. In doing so, they should assess the cumulative impact of tourism on the environmental assets (including biodiversity), character, infrastructure and local economy of each area, and on the needs of local residents. In the light of these factors, it may be necessary to limit development to particular types or scales of tourism. Plans should also include proposals to mitigate any problems caused by existing tourism.

7.49 Where it is appropriate to encourage tourism development, plans should identify the facilities needed to support it. These may include, for example,

accommodation, improvements to public transport, Regional footpaths or cycle routes, alterations to the rights of way system and opening up of inland waterways. Particular attention should be given to promoting links between urban areas and the countryside.

7.50   Proposals for large-scale tourism developments in particular will need to demonstrate that they are compatible with the environment and character of the countryside and the other criteria in the final part of this policy. Those which cannot do so should not be permitted in rural areas.

7.51   AWM, local authorities, Visit Heart of England and other industry bodies should continue to develop aspects of the tourism package of the Region and encourage the development of networks of complementary attractions and facilities in an effort to maximise the value of visitors to the Region. The quality of the natural, built and historic environment and the availability of cultural facilities, including sport, and recreation are important aspects of this policy and regard should be had to the relevant sections of the Quality of the Environment Chapter.

Town and City Centres

7.52   Town and city centres are at the heart of communities throughout the Region and their future health and attractiveness will be a major determinant of the quality of life for everyone. *The accessibility of centres by all forms of transport, including walking, cycling and particularly by public transport, is also a key attribute. A strong network of strategic centres, providing the main focus for higher level retail, commercial, cultural and service activities, balanced by a network of smaller town, district and local centres providing for day-to-day needs, offers the best prospect for ensuring that everyone continues to enjoy good access to shops and other services while at the same time addressing the climate change challenge.*

7.53   Policies PA11 to PA13*C* together with UR2 and UR3 address the key strategic issues affecting town and city centres and the location of development. The network of town and city centres in policy PA11 should be seen as a network within the polycentric concept of complementary centres rather than one of centres competing with each other. *It is intended that each of the strategic centres should play its part in the sustainable development of the Region, with growth and development shared between them in a way which enables a more effective network of centres to be maintained.*

Comment: if policies UR1 and UR1C&D are mot reviewed and replaced by the Phase 2 Revision, then these will need to be referred to.

Policy PA11:   The Network of Town and City Centres

A.   *The following* network of strategic town and city centres across the Region *is identified*:

Tier 1: Birmingham.

Tier 2: Brierley Hill, Coventry, Stoke-on-Trent, Wolverhampton.

Tier 3: Burton, Hereford, Leamington Spa, Shrewsbury, Solihull, Telford, Walsall, Worcester.

Tier 4: Cannock, Kidderminster, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Nuneaton, Redditch, Rugby, Stafford, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sutton Coldfield, Tamworth, West Bromwich.

Comment: There does not seem to be a policy purpose for these classifications,

The Regional Centres Study previously identified a 5- tier hierarchy and proposed that this should be a basis for monitoring, although this was only on the basis of comparison retail turnover. However the tiers are recognised in the review as simply intended to be helpful, rather than imposing a formal hierarchy. In our view their inclusion implies that developments in some centres might be larger or more important than in other centres, when this does not necessarily accord with the RSS strategy. For example the Black Country's strategic centres, following the clear conclusion of RSS Phase 1, are proposed for large amounts of office development to lead the regeneration of a relatively weak part of the MUAs.

If the tiers do not impose a formal hierarchy, and if it is recognised the relative position of centres could change over time (as a result – of properly justified - planning / development proposals) then they would not be objectionable in themselves.

However, the inclusion of the tiers in policy does tend to obscure the strategy of the RSS, which is to:
- promote urban renaissance, with investment in the ten strategic centres in the MUAs (and particularly those in the Black Country) as a priority, whilst other strategic centres are to play a complementary role; and
- to promote investment to support weaker centres.

These points should be included in Policy PA11, rather than in the reasoned justification (para. 7.57 a&d). The policy should identify the MUA and vulnerable centres as priorities for investment against which the impacts of proposals elsewhere should be assessed.

B.   This network of 25 town and city centres will be the *preferred location* for:
   i)   major retail developments (i.e. *where the comparison retail element exceeds 10,000 m^2 gross – see also PA12A*);
   ii)   uses which attract large numbers of people including major cultural, *indoor sport,* tourist, social, *leisure* and community venues (see also PA10 and UR3); and

     iii) **large scale office (Class B1a) developments (i.e. those of 5,000m^2 or more gross floorspace – *see also PA13A*).**

Developments which will generate additional visitor numbers should be accompanied by measures to minimize their potential to create or add to congestion or poor air quality on the highway network.

Comment: The changes to this part of the policy are to be supported. It should be noted that if Part ! policies are not to be replaced, there would be a need to refer to Policy UR1C in part iii).

7.54   Town and city centres are the drivers of the Regional and sub-regional economies and are of crucial importance to the Region's economic and social well-being and to the achievement of a sustainable pattern of development. Centres should be a key focus for future regeneration activities. *As transport hubs they also provide an opportunity to encourage the use of public transport and maximise the benefits of any investment. The RTS contains a number of policies which will improve sustainable access to centres – particularly T1-T7.*

7.55   Local authorities should take a proactive approach through their town centre strategies to identifying potential sites and premises for development within these centres, including, where necessary and appropriate, the wider use of compulsory purchase powers. Priority should be given to encouraging balanced development of a wide range of town centre uses and thereby avoiding the vulnerability associated with excessive reliance on a single function. *Mixed use developments incorporating a range of uses, including residential, should be encouraged.* Where major education or health institutions, public administration or other community uses are located within or in close proximity to town or city centres particular attention should be paid to facilitating their retention and expansion (UR4). *Town and city centres should also be the preferred location for major strategic indoor community, cultural and sporting venues.*

7.56   *The town and city centres included within the strategic network vary significantly in terms of their size and character. This is reflected in the division of the network into four tiers. These tiers reflect the current size of the centres, as measured by their comparison retail turnover. This division is intended to be helpful, as a guide to the current role and status of individual centres. However it should be emphasised that i*t is not intended to impose a formal hierarchy of distinctive roles for the strategic centres – other than to recognise the unique character of Birmingham as the Regional capital and *a global* city (PA12). *It is recognised that individual centres will need to develop and change in line with their particular needs, and also to respond to changes in the distribution of population within the Region, and this is reflected in the indicative requirements for additional comparison retail floorspace and offices set out in PA12A and PA13A. It is also recognised that the relative position of centres within the network may change over time.*

7.57   The following factors are of particular importance in developing strategies for individual centres:

a) the ten centres in the network within the MUAs (Birmingham, *Brierley Hill,* Coventry, *Stoke-on-Trent*, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Solihull, Sutton Coldfield, Walsall, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton), have a key role to play in achieving Urban Renaissance *and should be priorities for investment to support this, particularly in the Black Country in line with the strategy for that area*;

b) *the centres outside the MUAs should play a complementary role, and should support growth where this is required by the strategy. This will be particularly important in the Settlements of Significant Development (Worcester, Telford, Shrewsbury, Hereford, Rugby, Burton upon Trent, Stafford, Nuneaton/Bedworth, Warwick/Leamington Spa and Redditch) and also those centres which serve the local regeneration areas identified in UR2;*

c) strategies for all the major town and city centres within the Regional network will be expected to have regard to their potential complementary roles in providing supporting services and activities for each other; and

d) *strategies should seek to maintain the competitiveness of centres by building on their local distinctiveness and addressing weaknesses in their offer. This will be particularly important in those centres which have performed less strongly in recent years, including Cannock, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Nuneaton, Rugby, Stafford, Sutton Coldfield, Tamworth, Telford, Walsall and West Bromwich.*

It should be recognised that what constitutes a vulnerable centre will need to be kept under review. This will be important generally during the current economic downturn. On the other hand, Lichfield has recently secured planning permission for a new shopping centre of over 20,000 sqm. gross.

7.58   The Regional Centres Study has identified no need for any centre (other than Brierley Hill in place of Dudley) to be upgraded to strategic status.

Birmingham's Role as a *Global* City

7.59   Birmingham City Centre sits at the heart of the West Midlands Region and provides many important facilities and services for the wider Region. It is recognised that, as a Regional capital, it has a special role to play in the network of centres and should continue to be developed as a major Regional capital of European and global standing.

Policy PA12:   Birmingham's Role as a *Global* City

A.   Birmingham should continue to be developed as a major Regional capital of European and international standing by providing further development opportunities and supporting infrastructure, including telecommunications, and by:

> **i)   the further expansion and development of Birmingham City Centre as a focus for international financial and business services;**

ii)	the development of Birmingham as a major centre for business tourism and major cultural, sporting and other tourist *facilities and activities*;
iii)	maintaining and enhancing the provision of a network of supporting facilities and activities across the wider Region (examples include the Regional cultural and tourism assets identified in policy PA10) maintaining Birmingham City Centre's role as the Regional shopping centre in line with policy PA11;
iv)	maintaining the accessibility of the City within the Region and strengthening its international links by air and rail;
v)	significantly improving major transport interchange facilities and overcoming capacity constraints at Birmingham New Street Station; and
vi)	the provision of high-quality residential environments, with supporting high-quality health and education services, promoting the attractions and benefits of "city centre living".

B. **Policies and proposals in development plans across the Region should support this policy, whilst having regard to policies QE3 and QE4.**

7.60 Within the context of creating the balanced network of centres set out in policy PA11, *and in line with the requirements set out in PA12A and PA13A,* Birmingham City Council, with the support of authorities across the Region and other key partners, should continue to secure development and investment that will further enhance the City's status as a world city.

7.61 The City Council should work closely with immediate neighbours, particularly Solihull MBC in relation to the Birmingham International Airport and National Exhibition Centre. Wider Regional partnerships will be significant, for example in relation to the delivery of transport improvements, to ensure that the benefits are shared as widely as possible.

Comment: If this is about town centre uses the policy should refer to Birmingham city centre. It should also be made clear as a matter of policy this should be in the context of creating and maintaining a balanced network of centres.

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Merry Hill

To include wording from the WMRSS Phase One Revision.

Comment: We take it the changes introduced by the Phase 1 Revision (paras7.64,7.64A, 7.64B and Policy PA11A) will be introduced at this point rather than as placed in the Phase 1 document, The heading should refer to 'Strategic Centres in the Black Country' and the floorspace figures from Phase 1 should be amended to match those in the Phase 2 revision.

Comparison Retail Development

7.62   Significant growth is forecast in comparison retail expenditure. Some of this growth will be absorbed by existing commitments, the expansion of internet shopping, and through efficiency improvements in the use of existing retail floorspace. However, even taking full account of this, there will be a need for additional comparison retail floorspace over the period to 2026. In line with the principle of PA11, the major proportion of this should be planned for within the network of strategic town and city centres.

Policy PA 12A: Comparison Retail Floorspace Requirements 2006-2026 (m^2)

Local authorities should plan for the construction of the following amounts of additional gross comparison retail floorspace within each centre within the network of strategic town and city centres:

	2006-2021	2021-2026
Tier 1		
Birmingham	225,000	130,000
Tier 2		
Brierley Hill	65,000	30,000
Coventry	95,000	55,000
Stoke-on-Trent	80,000	40,000
Wolverhampton	70,000	30,000
Tier 3		
Burton	40,000	25,000
Hereford	40,000	20,000
Leamington Spa	35,000	25,000
Shrewsbury	50,000	30,000
Solihull	55,000	25,000
Telford	50,000	20,000
Walsall	60,000	25,000
Worcester	55,000	30,000
Tier 4		
Cannock	25,000	10,000
Kidderminster	25,000	10,000
Lichfield	25,000	10,000
Newcastle-under-Lyme	25,000	10,000
Nuneaton	25,000	10,000
Redditch	30,000	20,000
Rugby	25,000	15,000
Stafford	30,000	20,000
Stratford-upon-Avon	25,000	10,000
Sutton Coldfield	35,000	15,000
Tamworth	25,000	10,000
West Bromwich	45,000	20,000

In the current round of LDF preparation local authorities should aim to make provision for the 2006-2021 requirement and should also have regard to the 2021-2026 requirement. However, planning permission for developments intended to meet requirements arising after 2021 should not be granted before 2016.

Comment: This policy can be supported in general terms, especially because it was based on comprehensive region-wide assessment. However, the economic downturn since the assessment means the figures should be applied with care to ensure the strategy to support the urban renaissance and weaker centres is not undermined by any reduced capacity being monopolised by the strongest

centres.

It is important to require, as a matter of policy, justification for any proposals that would exceed the floorspace 'targets' (rather than simply including a reference in the reasoned justification, para. 7.68).   The policy should state that any proposal (whether through the plan-making or development control processes) that would lead to the proposed floorspace requirements being exceeded should be justified on the basis of clear evidence to show:
- a need for development to serve the centre's catchment area at a scale and of a kind appropriate to the role of the centre; and
- any development above the floorspace requirement could not serve the catchment area from another strategic centre that had not yet met its floorspace requirement; and
- there would, individually or in combination with other schemes (including other recently completed developments, outstanding planning permissions, and proposals in other up-to-date development plans and Supplementary Planning Documents), not be an unacceptable impact on trade and/or investment in any other strategic centre, nor on the overall strategy for urban and rural renaissance: and
- the proposal would lead to an increase in access to jobs and opportunities to benefit a particular area / areas of deprivation.

The proposed RSS Phase 2 policy can replace policy UR1D introduced by the Phase 1 Revision. However the reasoned justification at paragraph 4.6H in the RSS Phase 1 should be retained and amended to refer to 2026, as it supports the emphasis on centres in the Black Country.

7.63   *These floorspace requirements are based on the West Midlands Regional Centres Study and Update undertaken by Roger Tym and Partners. They take account of a number of factors, including:*

- *population projections, adjusted to reflect the WMRSS strategy on the distribution of new housing within the Region;*
- *per capita expenditure projections;*
- *the growth of internet shopping;*
- *continued increases in floorspace efficiency;*
- *local capacity constraints;*
- *the urban renaissance focus of the WMRSS strategy;*
- *the principle of accessibility – i.e. that where possible local needs should be met locally;*

- *commercial viability.*

7.64   *The floorspace requirements are inclusive of commitments at April 2006.*
        These are significant in the case of some centres.

7.65   *The WMRSS Phase One Revision proposed floorspace requirements for the*
        four Black Country centres (Brierley Hill/Merry Hill, Walsall, West Bromwich
        and Wolverhampton). These have been reviewed and re-assessed on a
        consistent basis with the rest of the Region. This re-assessment has however
        maintained the distribution of comparison floorspace growth between these
        centres agreed through the WMRSS Phase One Revision.

7.66   *It is recognised that the delivery of town centre redevelopment projects can be*
        a lengthy process, and that the financial viability of projects may require a
        minimum scale of development. For this reason it is not proposed that there
        should be any general phasing of requirements for the period 2006-2021 but it
        is recognised and accepted that individual planning authorities may wish to
        introduce local phasing policies through their own LDFs.

Comment: In particular, local authorities should ensure retail development should be
            phased to support housing developments in their catchment areas.

7.67   *However, it is also important to recognise that there are considerable*
        uncertainties in projecting future comparison retail requirements, and that
        these uncertainties increase over time. In view of this, it is not considered
        appropriate that development proposals aimed at meeting the requirements
        identified for the 2021-2026 period should be committed at this stage. These
        requirements should be treated as indicative only and will be subject to
        revision through future reviews of the WMRSS.

7.68   *The floorspace requirements set out in this policy should be treated as specific*
        to each centre and should not normally be exceeded. However, it is expected
        that local authorities will wish to review them in the context of the preparation
        of their Core Strategies and it is accepted that this may lead to some variation,
        in the light of local circumstances. Any significant variations (i.e. by more than
        5,000m^2) should be justified on the basis of clear evidence, and if higher
        figures are proposed it should be demonstrated that this would not be at the
        expense of the health of and investment in other strategic centres in line with
        this policy and the overall WMRSS strategy for urban and rural renaissance.

7.69   *In bringing forward new retail schemes to meet these floorspace*
        requirements, local authorities should seek to ensure that the strategic centres
        maintain and improve the diversity and choice of their retail offer. This should
        include premises suitable for occupation by small shops and independent
        retailers as well as large stores and the national multiples.

Centres outside the Strategic Network

7.70   The majority of centres within the Region fall outside the network of strategic town and city centres. These include large District Centres within the MUAs, market towns, and smaller local centres in many locations across the Region. Collectively these centres are of great importance because they are the places which people use regularly to satisfy their day-to-day needs.

Policy PA12B   *Non-Strategic Centres*

There are many other centres within the Region that meet local needs and *local authorities* should identify *those centres* and develop policies *to* meet local needs. Local authorities should be proactive in encouraging appropriate development to maintain and enhance their function as town and district centres (UR3, RR3)*, in particular:*

- **convenience shopping;**
- **local service and facility provision;**
- **day-to-day comparison shopping.**

<u>*It is not expected that developments in non-strategic centres should play a strategic role or attract people in large numbers or over significant distances.*</u> *Any proposals for an increase of 10,000 m^2 gross comparison retail floorspace or more<u>, or for uses that attract large numbers of people including major cultural, indoor sport, tourist, social, leisure and community venues,</u> in a non-strategic centre should be accompanied by evidence to demonstrate the following:*

- **there is a clear local need for the scale of development proposed;**
- **the proposal would not have an adverse impact upon <u>trade or activity in/on the edge of,</u> or put at risk the delivery of development <u>in / on the edge of,</u> a strategic centre in accordance with PA12A;**
- **there is satisfactory public transport access to the centre from all parts of its catchment area either already in existence or to be provided as part of the proposal.**

*7.71   The emphasis on *strategic* centres should not preclude development plans identifying *smaller town, district and* local centres (UR3 *and RR3*) where similar local strategies and town centre management approaches might be developed, particularly where this can support urban and rural regeneration.*

7.72   The main focus of the non-strategic centres will be on meeting local needs, in particular convenience shopping, the provision of local services (such as banks, post offices, local health care facilities sports centres, libraries and restaurants) and a limited amount of comparison shopping.

7.73   However it is recognised that some non-strategic centres may be at the heart of sizeable communities, and in these cases there may be a justification for a more extensive level of provision. In this respect the key consideration is that the level of provision should be commensurate with local needs and the scale and function of the centre. It is also essential that there should be satisfactory levels of public transport access.

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7.74   *As a general principle it is not expected that requirements for additional comparison retail floorspace in non-strategic centres will exceed 10,000 m² gross, but this figure should be seen as indicative and subject to local testing.*

Comment: The approach of supporting the role of centres outside the strategic network whilst controlling developments that might be counter to the strategy for strategic centres is to be supported. However, the policy itself should make clear that strategic-scale developments should be supported without justification, and the approach should apply also to uses which attract large numbers of people as referred to in Policy PA11Bii. Impact should be assessed in terms of impact on trade / the operation of existing facilities as well as on investment.

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Out-of-Centre Development for Comparison Retailing, Leisure and other Uses that Attract Large Numbers of People

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7.75   The network of town and city centres set out in PA11 is an important element of the Spatial Strategy. The role and regeneration of these centres should not be undermined by large-scale out-of-centre retail or other development. *A dispersed pattern of such development will also be less capable of being well served by public transport and is likely to encourage more trips and in particular more trips by car. In the interests of promoting a more sustainable pattern of development and combating climate change, further significant retail development outside existing town and city centres is to be avoided. Out-of-centre proposals for other uses that attract large numbers of people (including major cultural, indoor sport, tourist, social, leisure and community venues) will need to be considered carefully against the tests in Government Policy in the context of the strategy for centres to be the preferred locations to meet the region's needs.*

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Policy PA13:   Out-of-Centre Retail Development

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It is not envisaged that any further large-scale (10,000m² gross) out-of-centre developments or extensions to existing developments will be required during the period covered by this *WMRSS to meet comparison retail needs*. Smaller-scale out-of-centre *comparison* retail proposals, and proposals for leisure, community, cultural and tourism uses, should be considered in the light of policies and proposals in development plans and take full account of Government guidance *and in particular the tests which this specifies should be applied to out-of-centre retail proposals.*

7.76   *It is considered that there is sufficient capacity within the network of strategic centres and in non-strategic centres to provide for the vast majority of comparison retail development needs which will arise over the WMRSS period. There will therefore be no need for large-scale out-of-centre comparison retail developments.*

7.77   However, it is recognised that local circumstances vary, and requirements, which cannot be met in-centre, may occasionally arise. In these cases the general principle should be that such proposals are considered *in the context of this strategy* against the tests for out-of-centre development established in national policy, and any additional local criteria set out in Local Development Frameworks.

Offices

7.78   National planning policy identifies offices as a town centre use, and seeks to direct new office development to in-centre locations. Office development is also an economic driver, and the promotion of office development can be an important part of the restructuring and diversification of local economies away from a dependency on manufacturing.

7.79   Despite national policy, in 2003 – 2005 only 31% of office completions in the West Midlands were in town centre locations, and at April 2005 only 28% of office commitments were in-centre. Many of these developments and commitments are in greenfield locations with poor public transport access. In the interests of moving towards a more sustainable pattern of development, and combating climate change, it is important to shift the focus of new office development towards town centres or at least to locations within the urban area accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, as proposed in T2, and to implement accompanying traffic management measures as envisaged in Chapter 9.

7.80

Comment: should be deleted because it conflicts with PPS6.

Deleted: *However in practice it must also be recognised that there are some office developments which are unlikely to be attracted to centres, and if the Region fails to make provision for this, the investment may simply be lost to other areas, to the detriment of the Regional economy and without any overall benefit in terms of climate change. An element of out-of-centre office development is therefore likely to continue to be required.¶*

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Local authorities should plan for the construction of the following amounts of new office development (square metres gross) within or on the edge of each of the centres within the network of strategic town and city centres for the period 2006-2026. The figures for the MUAs are minima, those outside the MUAs are maxima

Tier 1
Birmingham	**590,000** *- quote total figures for all districts*

Tier 2
Brierley Hill	**220,000**
Coventry	**250,000**
Stoke-on-Trent	**85,000**
Wolverhampton	**220,000**

Tier 3
Burton	**30,000**
Hereford	**45,000**
Leamington Spa	**45,000**
Shrewsbury	**20,000**
Solihull	**50,000**
Telford	**110,000**
Walsall	**220,000**
Worcester	**55,000**

Tier 4
Cannock	**30,000**
Kidderminster	**40,000**
Lichfield	**30,000**
Newcastle-under-Lyme	**60,000**
Nuneaton	**30,000**
Redditch	**45,000**
Rugby	**30,000**
Stafford	**45,000**
Stratford-upon-Avon	**20,000**
Sutton Coldfield	**20,000**
Tamworth	**30,000**
West Bromwich	**220,000**

Comment: This policy should set out, in a column, how much office floorspace each district should plan for. It should take existing commitments in terms of vacant floorspace, allocations and consents into account, and should stipulate that offices should follow the sequential approach as set out in PPS6. The totals for the MUAs should be minimum, for the rest of the region maximum. There is no need to make separate provision for out-of centre offices as these can be treated in the same manner as retail and leisure for the purposes of national policy, and subject to PA13B. Offices that exceed these totals outside the MUAs should only be approved

if they cater to the local catchment only (eg public sector services); otherwise they should be directed towards centres within the MUAs.

On another issue, this policy can replace Policy UR!C introduced by the Phase 1 Revision. However the supporting text at paragraph 4.6G can be retained to refer to the importance of office development for the Black Country's strategic centres, although the detail will need to be updated.

7.81   If there is to be a shift in the focus of investment in new office floorspace away from out-of-centre locations and into town and city centres, it is essential that a supply of high quality in-centre office floorspace is provided. Priority should therefore be placed on addressing this supply-side deficiency. This will involve a pro-active approach to bringing forward office development opportunities, but will also require measures to improve the attractiveness of the strategic centres to office investment. The quality of public transport access, car parking, the quality of the environment and the range of supporting facilities, such as restaurants, bars and leisure facilities will be particularly important in this respect.

7.82   A number of the strategic centres have capacity constraints, and it is recognised that in these cases there may be difficulties in accommodating all of the office requirements set out in this policy in-centre. In these circumstances sites in edge-of-centre locations with good pedestrian links to the centre should be identified.

7.83   The figures contained in this policy have been derived from the baseline estimate of future office requirements contained in the West Midlands Regional Centres Study. However the figures have been further adjusted to reflect:

- the policy objective of substantially increasing the proportion of in-centre development (after allowing for existing commitments based on previous consents that are not necessarily in-centre). This figure allows for some continued office development in other locations, including centres outside the strategic network. It is an 'aspirational' target, but one which is capable of being achieved;

> **Deleted:** *. It is assumed that 65% of uncommitted office developments outside the Black Country will be in-centre.*

- the need to promote diversification of the local economy in areas with high levels of manufacturing employment;
- the existence of capacity constraints in some centres; and
- the distribution of new housing proposed in this WMRSS.

7.84   In the case of the four Black Country centres (Brierley Hill, Walsall, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton), the figures are based on those agreed through the WMRSS Phase One Revision but they have been updated to relate to the 2006-2026 period.

7.85   It is expected that over the period of this WMRSS, this policy will result in about 65% of office development taking place in or on the edge of the strategic centres. However, this figure will be lower in the early years because of the number of outstanding out-of-centre commitments, and will increase over time.

Comment – this 65% figure appears to have no evidential basis; indeed, given the huge outstanding stock of planning permissions outside centres, it is very unlikely to be achieved. To achieve 65%, there would have to be a complete ban on any new office development outside any strategic centre, including small offices in smaller centres – yet the policy as existing is far too weak to achieve this. In any case, the 65% in-centre figure could be interpreted as a ceiling by those proposing out-of-centre development, particularly in Birmingham.

7.86   *The requirements proposed in this policy should be seen as broad estimates and it is recognised that it will be necessary to review them through the process of preparing Core Strategies. However, within the MUAs they should be seen as minimum figures, outside the MUAs maximum ones and if lower figures are proposed, clear evidence to justify this position will be required.*

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| Deleted: *lower limits,* |

Policy PA13B: The Location of Office Development

| Deleted: *Large-scale* |
| Deleted: *outside the Strategic Centres* |

In line with PA11, large-scale office developments (5000 m² gross and above) should be located in or on the edge of the strategic centres.

Proposals for large-scale office developments in or on the edge of other centres will be permissible only where all the following conditions are satisfied:

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- **a clear need for the proposal has been demonstrated, and this need could not be satisfied within a strategic centre;**
- **there would be no adverse impact on the office market or the prospects of office development schemes proceeding within a strategic centre;**
- **adequate public transport access exists to all of the intended catchment or will be provided as part of the proposal; and**
- **there would be no unacceptable adverse environmental effects.**

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Where the first two of these conditions are met, consideration should first be given to sites in or on the edge of town or District centres outside the strategic network and secondly to other locations enjoying high levels of public transport accessibility. In view of the previous pattern of office developments that have occurred largely out-of-centre in this region, it will be important to adhere to all the policy tests where further out-of-centre office developments are proposed.

The sequential approach as set out in PPS6 should continue to be applied to all office proposals, including those falling below the threshold set in this policy. For office developments over 5,000m2 the sequential approach should be applied across the whole of the catchment area the development is intended to serve. It is likely that this will be on a sub-regional basis.

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| Deleted: *outside town centres,* |
| Deleted: *<#> Where, in combination with other proposals, committed developments or recently completed schemes, a proposal below the threshold would be likely to have wider effects, care should be taken to ensure that any potential impact on strategic centres is taken into account.¶* |

Where planning permission is granted for general employment development (B1/B2/B8), this should be subject to a condition excluding B1(a) floorspace, other than that required for ancillary purposes. Any

exceptions to this should be justified in accordance with the criteria set out in this policy.

Comment: Rewording to clarify and improve the policy, in particular to distinguish between offices proposed outside the strategic centres and offices proposed out-of-centre.

7.87 7.88

Comment – planning policy is about locating the right thing in the right place, not making allowance for offices and other commercial uses that 'may not be attracted' to the appropriate location. Given that most offices do not appear to be attracted to town centres (with the exception of Birmingham and, to a lesser extent, Coventry), this would provide a carte blanche to maintain the present highly damaging investment patterns, which have an adverse effect not only on town centres but a sustainable development pattern in general and the urban renaissance in particular. Furthermore this wording would appear to allow planning consent by blackmail. Paragraphs 7.87 & 7.88 need to be withdrawn, in view of proposed rewording of PA13B

It is very important that, in view of the serious problems that this region has with the amount of out-of-centre office developments, that the policy tests in PPS6 are adhered to. Thus, out of centre office proposals should:

- *demonstrate a need that could not be satisfied in any existing centre*
- *they must not, individually or in combination with other schemes (including other recently completed developments, outstanding planning permissions, and proposals in other up-to-date development plans and Supplementary Planning Documents) be likely to have an adverse economic impact upon the vitality and viability of any existing centre through the deterrence of investment which would help sustain and enhance that centre.*
- *demonstrate accessibility to the whole of catchment by a choice of transport modes is as good as if the proposal were to be located in a nearby centre.*

7.89 *In the past, out-of-centre office development has sometimes come about as a result of planning permissions being granted for the development of general employment sites for B1, B2 and B8 uses, with no restrictions on the amount of B1(a) floorspace. In the future it is important that any such permissions are appropriately conditioned to ensure that they are consistent with the objectives of this policy and the other policies in this Chapter, including PA6A, para 7.36 and PA7.*

Regional Casinos

7.90 *The Gambling Act 2005 introduced a new context for the gaming industry and in particular a new range of casinos. This includes the concept of 'regional casinos' – which would have a minimum total floorspace of 5000m^2 and would provide a large number of gaming machines offering unlimited prizes.*

7.91 *There are uncertainties over how many such casinos will ultimately be permitted, but in view of the Regional character of these facilities it is*

Deleted: *Alongside positive measures to promote office development in centres, there is also a need to adopt a more careful approach to proposals for further office development in out-of-centre locations.¶*
¶

Deleted: *It is accepted that there may be occasions where it will continue to be necessary to allow additional out-of-centre office development. Examples may include those locations where capacity constraints limit the potential for in-centre development so that some local needs can only be met out-of-centre, and the need to make provision for certain types of office activity which may in practice not be attracted to in-centre locations. Where such proposals come forward, it is important that they are clearly justified and that they are not at the expense of in-centre development. In applying the sequential approach to office schemes care should be taken to ensure that all the strategic centres which could reasonably accommodate the development, including those in other local authority areas, are assessed before other locations are considered.*

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important that guidance is provided on the factors to be taken into account in considering suitable locations for any proposals which do emerge.

Policy PA13C: Regional Casinos

Any proposals for regional casinos within the Region should be considered in relation to the following:

- *the extent to which the proposal would promote the urban regeneration objectives of the WMRSS strategy;*
- *the consistency of the proposal with national guidance on the location of casinos contained in PPS6;*
- *the extent to which the proposal would complement existing leisure, sport or tourism facilities, and be consistent with PA10;*
- *the extent to which the proposal would be satisfactorily served by public transport from all parts of its catchment.*

Comment: Casinos are a town centre use as recognised though the reference to PPS6. Therefore the policy should refer to PA11B ii.

7.92   One of the main arguments in favour of regional casinos is their potential contribution to urban regeneration. The primary factor in considering the location of any regional casino proposal within the Region should therefore be that it should generate the maximum regeneration benefits. In addition, regard should also be had to the policies for tourism and leisure contained within PA10, and to national policy in PPS6, which identifies casinos as a town centre use, and to public transport accessibility.

The Rural Economy

7.93   In rural areas, particularly those not within reach of jobs in or close to urban areas, the economic development priorities are to broaden the economic base, reduce over-reliance on traditional employment and provide a wider range of local job opportunities. The emphasis should be on *regenerating local communities, so as to create sustainable and modern local economies, rather than attracting business or jobs away from urban areas.*

Policy PA14:   Economic Development and the Rural Economy

A.   Development plans and other strategies should support the sustainable diversification and development of the rural economy through the growth of existing businesses and the creation of new enterprise. This should be undertaken in ways that meet local employment needs, maintain viable and sustainable local communities, conserve and enhance environmental assets and respect local character and distinctiveness.

B.   Development plans should ensure that, subject to policy PA15, most economic development is concentrated in towns and other large

settlements accessible to their rural hinterlands. Development should be consistent with the character and environment of the settlement.

C. **Priority should be given to: economic activity with strong links to the rural area, including for example food and drink processing, tourism and leisure, the environmental economy and businesses ancillary to farming and forestry; and to sustainable new activity which will strengthen *and diversify* the Region's rural economy.**

D. **Encouragement will be given to the provision of affordable broadband services in rural areas to aid the development of businesses using ICT, including increased opportunities for home working *and live work units.***

7.94 The land-use planning system has only limited influence on the nature of new economic development. It is important that local planning authorities work with those responsible for rural development, for example AWM and local economic partnerships, through the England Rural Development Programme, and through the use of European Structural Funds to give priority to the types of economic activity identified in the policy.

7.95 ICT will be particularly important to rural economic development. It can often help existing businesses to develop and diversify and allow the introduction of new enterprises. Local authorities should take account of AWM's Regional ICT strategy which includes the extension of broadband services to the Region's rural areas and encourages the use of ICT to develop the skills base in those areas.

Agriculture and Farm Diversification

7.96 Agriculture remains one of the most important activities in the Region's rural areas and has strong inter-dependency with many other sectors.

Policy PA15: Agriculture and Farm Diversification

Development plans and other strategies should recognise the continuing importance of the agricultural sector in the Region. Development plans should include positive policies to promote agriculture and farm diversification through the development of innovative business schemes including sustainable tourism, environmentally sustainable farming, forestry (QE8) and land management, new and innovative crops, on-farm processing adding value to existing production and the promotion of local marketing and supply chains. Any development should be appropriate in scale and nature to the environment and character of the locality.

7.97 Farm diversification, both agricultural and non-agricultural, covers a wide range of potential activity which can add value to agriculture and supplement farm incomes. Of particular significance to the Region will be the continued development of Regional and local food products, organic produce, local supply chains and marketing and links to the Region's strong and growing

environmental economy and tourist industry. Guidance on the reuse of buildings in the countryside is given in PPG7.

7.98   Forestry and woodland planting and management (QE8) can make an important contribution to the economy, environment and community life of the rural West Midlands.

7.99   Other policy documents relevant to agriculture and farm diversification include 'A new Direction for Agriculture', the Action Plan for Farming, the England Rural Development Plan and the Rural White Paper.

Chapter 8 - Quality of the Environment

Part 4 – Waste Policies

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Policy W1:   Waste Strategy

Waste should be considered as a resource and each Waste Planning Authority, or sub region, should allocate enough land in its LDDs to manage an equivalent tonnage of waste to that arising from all waste streams within its boundary, taking into account the Waste Hierarchy. In addition to facilities to reprocess, reuse, recycle and recover waste an allowance will need to be made for waste transfer stations and where appropriate for landfill.

Comments:

The "equivalent self sufficiency" concept (i.e. the general principle that each authority should make provision for managing a tonnage of waste equivalent to that arising in their area – see Waste Background Paper page 16) is supported in principle. However, this does not come across clearly in the wording of the policy. Indeed, it is not entirely clear what the policy is asking authorities to do, over and above what is already set out in national policy guidance.

For example, the statement that "waste should be considered as a resource" is not locally-specific, as it is one of the key themes of the national waste strategy and one of the key planning objectives of PPS10. Waste Planning Authorities are already required to have regard to these issues (PPS10, paragraph 3). The policy as it stands adds nothing to this, as it does not explain the relevance of "waste as a resource" to the West Midlands, or how authorities should address this issue in their LDDs.

The same is true of the following statement that each authority "…should allocate enough land in its LDDs to manage an equivalent tonnage of waste to that arising from all waste streams within its boundary..." It is not clear what this means, or what timescale these site allocations should cover. The policy seems to go further than national policy guidance, which advises that authorities should allocate sufficient sites and areas to demonstrate 10 years' worth of the annual rates of capacity set out in the RSS, i.e. the Municipal and C & I waste apportionments (PPS10, paragraphs 17-18). There is no justification for this in the Waste Background Paper or in any of the technical evidence.

The statement about the waste hierarchy is also not locally-specific as national policy guidance already advises that authorities should help drive waste management up the "waste hierarchy" (PPS10, paragraph 3). If this reference is to be retained, the policy needs to explain why this is of particular importance in the West Midlands.

We would therefore suggest re-wording the policy as follows:

Waste Planning Authorities in the West Midlands should adopt the "equivalent self sufficiency" concept. This means that in its LDF/ MWLDF, each Waste Planning Authority should identify sufficient capacity to manage a tonnage of

waste equivalent to that arising from all waste streams within its administrative area up to 2026, and should allocate suitable sites or areas for this purpose where necessary. Within the West Midlands, there is still heavy reliance on methods of waste management that are towards the bottom of the "waste hierarchy," such as waste disposal and energy recovery. This is wasting potentially valuable resources. Waste Planning Authorities should therefore support proposals that are likely to reduce waste and make more efficient use of resources, such as those involved in reprocessing, reusing, recycling or recovering materials from waste and the other facilities needed to support these such as bulking, sorting and transfer facilities.

8.80   Data shows that the Region is largely self-sufficient in terms of meeting its own needs for waste treatment and disposal *and movements across the Regional boundary are balanced.* However, the acknowledged net flow of household and *commercial and* industrial waste *and construction and demolition waste* from the metropolitan area to landfill in the shire counties and the reverse flow of *metal, waste electrical electronic equipment (WEEE), end of life vehicles (ELV), paper and hazardous* wastes *and other material* means there is continued importance in co-ordinating waste planning at the Regional level. Thus *providing more facilities to maximise its potential as a resource and to manage waste, close to where it arises, further up the waste hierarchy. (there appears to be wording missing in the last sentence)*

Policy W2:   Targets for Waste Management
Each Waste Planning Authority, or sub-region, through their LDDs, will need to plan for a minimum provision of new facilities to reprocess and manage waste in accordance with the tonnages set out below in 5 year bands, at sites distributed across their areas.

Comments:

Recent trend data on Municipal Waste arisings in the Black Country suggests that future arisings are likely to be lower than was assumed when the RSS apportionments were calculated.

The Black Country authorities have appointed Atkins to undertake a Black Country Waste Planning Study to inform the preparation of the joint Black Country Core Strategy. The study report will be published before the RSS Examination. Waste projections up to 2026 have been modelled as part of this study. Atkins have used both their own model and the RSS model (developed by WMRTAB) to develop their projections. This modelling work has used the most up-to-date arisings data.

The results of both modelling exercises do not differ greatly from each other, but there are significant differences between the results and the apportionments proposed in Table 5 of the RSS Phase 2 Revision. The findings of the Atkins modelling exercises suggest that in 2025/26, the Black Country is likely to be dealing with around 680,000 tonnes of Municipal waste arisings, rather than 754,000 tonnes as is envisaged in Table 5.

The policy or the RJ should therefore clarify that the apportionments set out in the table are meant to be a guide, and should be refined through further technical work at

a local level. Where there is evidence that Municipal Waste arisings are significantly different to what is assumed in Table 5 of the RSS, Waste Planning Authorities should be able to set their own local apportionments based on more up-to-date or more accurate technical evidence.

The WMRSS policy for Commercial and Industrial Waste is based on a premise that reflects more waste being managed as a resource, and being managed by authorised recyclers or facilities further up the waste hierarchy, and at a greater level of change than that which is proposed in the Waste Strategy for England. This anticipates a higher level of diversion that will arise from the increase in the Landfill Tax Escalator from £3 per tonne to £8 per tonne and from producer responsibility obligations.

Landfilling as a % of total Commercial and Industrial waste	*2002*	*2010*	*2015*	*2020*	*2025*
	42%	*35%*	*30%*	*25%*	*25%*

Table 5

MUNICIPAL WASTE MINIMUM DIVERSION BY WASTE PLANNING AUTHORITY										
Municipal Waste Management	2005/6		2010/1		2015/6		2020/1		2025/6	
	Min. Diversion from landfill	Max. Landfill	Min. Diversion from landfill	Max. Landfill	Min. Diversion from landfill	Max. Landfill	Min. Diversion from landfill	Max. Landfill	Min. Diversion from landfill	Max. Landfill
Birmingham	498,000	62,000	551,000	57,000	575,000	53,000	602,000	46,000	612,000	56,000
Coventry	150,000	29,000	185,000	15,000	200,000	14,000	213,000	16,000	221,000	23,000
Black Country	388,000	237,000	504,000	177,000	565,000	139,000	615,000	114,000	632,000	122,000
Solihull	83,000	11,000	93,000	8,000	96,000	6,000	100,000	5,000	101,000	6,000
Met Area Sub-Total	**1,244,541**	**362,218**	**1,475,015**	**274,482**	**1,583,618**	**227,126**	**1,683,766**	**193,291**	**1,721,456**	**220,981**
Herefordshire	24,000	68,000	43,000	59,000	60,000	48,000	69,000	45,000	74,000	46,000
Shropshire	60,000	118,000	109,000	85,000	194,000	10,000	206,000	10,000	217,000	10,000
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	379,000	280,000	491,000	227,000	559,000	185,000	613,000	158,000	636,000	163,000
Borough of Telford & Wrekin	26,000	78,000	64,000	57,000	88,000	46,000	108,000	40,000	121,000	42,000
Warwickshire	92,000	223,000	181,000	165,000	236,000	126,000	272,000	107,000	288,000	110,000
Worcestershire	78,000	234,000	160,000	181,000	212,000	143,000	242,000	127,000	254,000	130,000
Shire Area Sub-Total	**533,310**	**978,345**	**906,151**	**756,612**	**1,201,752**	**543,212**	**1,356,219**	**475,909**	**1,434,545**	**488,750**
WEST MIDLANDS REGION	**1,777,850**	**1,340,563**	**2,381,167**	**1,031,094**	**2,785,369**	**770,338**	**3,039,985**	**669,199**	**3,156,001**	**709,731**

Table 6

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL WASTE DIVERSION BY WASTE PLANNING AUTHORITY

Industrial & Commercial Waste	2005/6		2010/1		2015/6		2020/1		2025/6	
	Min. Diversion from landfill	Max. Landfill	Min. Diversion from landfill	Max. Landfill	Min. Diversion from landfill	Max. Landfill	Min. Diversion from landfill	Max. Landfill	Min. Diversion from landfill	Max. Landfill
Birmingham	613,000	444,000	698,000	376,000	869,000	373,000	1,191,000	397,000	1,191,000	397,000
Coventry	216,000	156,000	246,000	132,000	306,000	131,000	419,000	140,000	419,000	140,000
Black Country	943,000	684,000	1,074,000	578,000	1,338,000	572,000	1,832,000	611,000	1,832,000	611,000
Solihull	99,000	71,000	111,000	60,000	139,000	59,000	190,000	63,000	190,000	63,000
Met Area Total	**1,871,000**	**1,355,000**	**2,129,000**	**1,146,000**	**2,652,000**	**1,135,000**	**3,632,000**	**1,211,000**	**3,632,000**	**1,211,000**
Shropshire	211,000	153,000	241,000	129,000	300,000	128,000	410,000	137,000	410,000	137,000
Telford & Wrekin	198,000	144,000	226,000	121,000	281,000	121,000	386,000	128,000	386,000	128,000
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	868,000	628,000	987,000	531,000	1,229,000	526,000	1,684,000	561,000	1,684,000	561,000
Warwickshire	353,000	256,000	402,000	216,000	501,000	214,000	686,000	228,000	686,000	228,000
Worcestershire	441,000	320,000	503,000	271,000	627,000	268,000	858,000	286,000	858,000	286,000
Herefordshire	97,000	71,000	110,000	59,000	137,000	59,000	188,000	62,000	188,000	62,000
Shire & Unitary Authorities Total	**2,169,000**	**1,571,000**	**2,469,000**	**1,327,000**	**3,075,000**	**1,316,000**	**4,212,000**	**1,402,000**	**4,212,000**	**1,402,000**
West Midlands Region Total	**4,040,000**	**2,926,000**	**4,598,000**	**2,473,000**	**5,727,000**	**2,451,000**	**7,844,000**	**2,613,000**	**7,844,000**	**2,613,000**

The Need for Waste Management Facilities by Sub-Region

8.86   *Following the guidance in PPS10 the RPB has "considered the need for additional waste management capacity of regional or sub-regional significance and will reflect any requirement for waste management facilities identified nationally." The RPB has not been notified of the need to make provision for any facilities to meet a national need. The RPB has through the RTAB carried out technical work to determine a broad indication of the needs for reprocessing, recycling/composting and recovery facilities for all waste streams in the West Midlands. It has taken into account that there may be a need for facilities of a Regional and sub-regional nature arising from the economies of scale to manage certain waste streams and the technical requirements to locate some waste management facilities at a distance from "sensitive receptors". The work takes into account the extent to which existing, and consented waste management capacity, not yet operational, would satisfy any identified need.*

Comment: The above paragraph is effectively saying there is no clear evidence of a need for specific facilities of a regional or sub-regional scale in the West Midlands – which suggests Policy W3 should provide further guidance on how such needs might be identified in the future, e.g. through the "Zero Waste Places" initiative.

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8.87   *A number of authorities have been identified as having a significant shortfall in facilities to manage an equivalent tonnage of waste to that arising in their area. These particular authorities should make provision for larger facilities of a Regional and sub-regional nature in the MUAs, Settlements of Significant Development or the other large settlements identified in the Broad Locations for Waste Management Facilities Diagram, or, depending on the characteristic of the waste management facility, in close proximity to these locations, by identifying a range of sites of different sizes and in a variety of locations to assist in meeting the shortfall in the tonnages which have been indicated. The broad locations are described in paragraph 8.79.*

8.88   *In managing waste, the characteristics and properties of the material and the proximity to economic quantities of material are more important than the source of the material as municipal or commercial and industrial waste. To allocate specific waste streams or technologies to particular locations would stifle the opportunity for innovation in managing waste as a resource, therefore the sites which are identified in the LDDs should be capable of accommodating a variety of technologies and size of facility. The changes in the Landfill Tax are already having a significant impact in making it viable to introduce and to develop new markets to utilise what is currently considered to be waste as a resource. Over the life of the WMRSS there will be a 'sea change' in 'resource management' and the waste scene as it is today will rapidly be overtaken as business and local authorities seek to avoid paying the Landfill Tax and LATS penalties. There is no evidence base to support the allocation of facilities to manage particular waste streams or apply particular technologies to any one broad location and by being too rigid and specific in allocating specific technologies to sites the WMRSS could have an adverse*

affect on the introduction of new developments in resource management and innovation and enterprise.

See comment in relation to paragraph 8.86 above. Paragraph 8.88 also suggests that there is currently no evidence of a 'regional' need for any particular type of facility or to manage any particular type of waste.

Gap analysis by WPA utilising the estimated projected capacity plus quantifiable expansion plans (million tonnes)

Projection Option - C&I High - MSW 3	Treatment Capacity Required	Projected Throughput + Quantified Expansion	Treatment Gap
Birmingham	1.81	1.27	0.54
Coventry	0.62	0.36	0.26
Shropshire	0.61	0.45	0.15
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	2.39	1.13	1.25
Borough of Telford & Wrekin	0.54	0.05	0.49
Warwickshire	1.04	0.45	0.60
Worcestershire	1.22	0.31	0.91

A Table showing the 'Treatment Gap' for all WPAs In the West Midlands is available on the WMRA web site at
http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=121
Final WMRTAB Report May 2007

Policy W3:   The Need for Waste Management Facilities

Comment: see above comment in relation to paragraph 8.86 – the statements in this paragraph suggest the policy needs amending as follows:

Authorities which have a 'Treatment Gap' in facilities to manage waste should make provision in their LDDs for a pattern of sites and areas suitable for new or enhanced waste management facilities in, or in close proximity to, the MUAs, Settlements of Significant Development, and other large settlements identified in the Broad Locations for Waste Management Facilities Diagram. Future technical work undertaken as part of the "Zero Waste Places" initiative may also identify a need for facilities of a Regional and/ or Sub-Regional scale (N.B. this needs to be defined). The following WPAs are well placed to accommodate such needs:-

Birmingham; Coventry; Dudley; Sandwell; Solihull; Walsall; Wolverhampton; Stoke-on-Trent; Newcastle-under-Lyme; Hereford; Rugby; Shrewsbury; Telford; Worcester; Bromsgrove; Burton-upon-Trent; Cannock; Droitwich; Kidderminster; Lichfield; Nuneaton and Bedworth; Redditch; Rugeley; Stafford; Stratford-upon-Avon; Tamworth; Warwick and Leamington Spa.

Where such a need has been identified through the "Zero Waste Places" initiative or through RSS monitoring, the regional planning body will take

Deleted: *In addition to meeting local needs, these*

Deleted: *locations*

Deleted: *facilities of a Regional and/or sub regional scale to reprocess, re-use, recycle or recover value from waste, allowing for the requirements of different technologies. These settlements comprise*

*__the lead on addressing this need and will work with the relevant WPA(s)
and other partners to address this through an appropriate DPD.__*

__Comment:__ If – as is currently the case - the RSS is not able to identify a need for particular
"facilities of a regional/ sub-regional scale" it should explain how this is going to happen, i.e.
through the proposed "Zero Waste Places" initiative or through future monitoring. In our view,
regional requirements can only be identified by the RPB – it is not the role of individual WPAs
to do this. It is also unclear what type or size of facility would fall within the scope of this
policy, and there is a need for a clear definition of the type and scale of the facilities likely to
be involved.

We assume that the RPB will be using the "Zero Waste Places" initiative to take this forward,
in the light of the announcement made on 21 October 2008. This indicated that the West
Midlands initiative would be focusing on businesses and organisations that produce large
quantities of waste, and identifying region-wide waste infrastructure needs..

Criteria for the Location of Waste Management Facilities

8.89   *Given the need for a major investment programme in new waste management
facilities it is important to safeguard the sites of existing waste management
facilities. The only exception to this is where such facilities are in locations
which do not meet current environmental and amenity considerations of local,
national or European importance, or they are required for more appropriate
land uses, in which case they should normally be relocated, not extinguished.
It is also important to protect these sites from residential development and
community facilities being developed very close to their boundaries which may
subsequently result in complaints from the new neighbours.*

Policy W4:   Protection of Existing Waste Management Facilities

> *__Waste Planning Authorities should safeguard and/or expand suitable
> sites with an existing waste management use, provided that they meet
> local environmental and amenity criteria, and do not pose risks to
> European and National protected sites. Waste Planning Authorities
> should not allow the continued operation of existing sites to be
> compromised by new development on adjoining land.__*

Comments:

Welcome this policy, but it isn't clear what is meant by "local environmental and
amenity criteria." The implication is that authorities will need to set these out in their
LDFs/ MWLDFs. However, GO-WM have previously advised the Black Country
authorities that policies should be locally specific. It may not be possible for
authorities to identify "local environmental and amenity criteria" at all – any
environmental protection policy would have to relate to particular locations i.e. we
would have to say that such and such an area was not suitable for certain types of
activity, and explain why.

8.90   *Waste management facilities are generally classified as 'sui generis', i.e. they
do not fall within any of the Use Classes in the Town & Country Planning Use
Classes Order, and therefore a specific planning permission is required to
operate each waste management facility. However, some waste management*

activities might be considered to be 'not materially different' from an industrial activity which took place in the building or on the land immediately prior to the proposed waste management activity. In these circumstances it might be held that a specific planning permission is not required. It is probable that each case will need to be considered on its own merits and no general guidance can be given as to whether planning permission is required or not. This means that it will not be possible for WPAs to pro-actively plan for every new waste management facility that may be required within their area, as not all activities will need permission.

8.91 Circumstances across the Region vary from densely populated urban areas to very sparsely populated rural areas and the level of investment in infrastructure to handle and dispose of waste differs. *Provision will need to be made in LDDs for sufficient land to provide facilities to manage waste. In some cases this may involve identifying specific sites which are suitable for particular waste management facilities but more frequently it will be a case of identifying which particular industrial areas are suitable for waste management facilities, provided that they meet a range of environmental and amenity criteria and have good transport connections, and ensuring that sufficient land is available on a range of sites of different sizes and locations, either within or on the edge of settlements, or at a distance from sensitive receptors.*

Policy W5: The Location of New Waste Management Facilities

Where there is evidence that additional capacity is required, WPAs should identify additional sites based on the following criteria:

- *ensuring a range of sites of different size and geographical distribution; and*
- *good accessibility to the source of waste arisings and/or end users; and*
- *good transport connections including, where possible, rail or water.*

In the first instance such sites should be:

- *Sites with current use rights for waste management purposes; or*
- *Active mineral working sites or landfills where the proposal is both operationally related to the permitted use and for a temporary period commensurate with the permitted use of the site; or*
- *Previous or existing industrial land; or*
- *Contaminated or derelict land; or*
- *Land within or adjoining a sewage treatment works; or*
- *Redundant agricultural or forestry buildings and their curtilage.*

In every case the proposal should be capable of meeting local environmental and amenity criteria, and not pose risks to European and National protected sites.

Comment: some parts of this policy appear to duplicate national policy guidance, - e.g. PPS10, paragraph 21 and locational criteria in PPS10, Annex E

8.92   *The management of waste in rural areas can pose particular problems due to the dispersed nature of settlements. This will be exacerbated by the increase in the quantity of controlled waste that will arise due to the reclassification of agricultural waste as controlled waste meaning much of it will now need to be managed at licensed facilities.*

8.93   *The number of facilities which manage "green waste", whether from gardens or from kitchens and retail and catering premises, are increasing. The Environment Agency may require a health risk assessment for bio-aerosols for certain categories of waste facility such as "open windrow" and "in-vessel" composting where these are within 250 metres of "sensitive receptors". The requirement to locate these facilities away from "sensitive receptors" means that they are frequently located in the open countryside and sometimes in the Green Belt (and in adjoining authorities) if they are to be close to and to serve the MUAs and major settlements. In many cases these facilities will not have any greater visual or amenity impact than agricultural activities which are an integral part of maintaining the Green belt in an attractive and economically sound basis. The policy for locating facilities on open land must respect the need to keep that land open whilst at the same time allowing facilities to manage green waste and waste arising in rural areas in a sustainable way.*

Policy W6:   Sites outside the Major Urban Areas and Other Larger Settlements

All Waste Planning Authorities outside the MUAs should identify sites for the treatment and management of waste arising from areas of low population and scattered communities and for facilities which need to be at a distance from 'sensitive receptors'. Additional sustainable waste management capacity in rural areas for waste recovery or recycling should be based on:

- **effective protection of amenity and the environment; and**
- **the proposed activity being appropriate to the area proposed.**

Businesses, including agricultural undertakings, should adopt sustainable waste management practices, and where relevant, best agricultural practice, with regard to their waste arisings.

Comments:

No objections to the policy. However, it is not entirely clear which MPAs this policy applies to. They policy should clarify whether it applies to non-MUA areas as defined on the Spatial Strategy Diagram, or the WPAs that do not have any of the MUAs within them. As the policy appears to apply to the rural areas and there is a separate policy W7 applying to Green Belt areas, we suggest it should be the latter.

Policy W7:   Waste Management Facilities and Open Land

Waste management facilities should only be permitted on open land, including land within the Green Belt, where they are:

- *close to the communities producing the waste; and*
- *where there are no preferable alternative sites; and*
- *where it would not harm the openness of land, or the objectives of Green Belt; or*
- *where it can be demonstrated to be necessary to support an existing essential activity and to facilitate other key development; or*
- *would assist in agricultural diversification; or*
- *would not adversely affect the biodiversity and geodiversity value of the area.*

Comment: this policy does not appear to be regionally specific

Hazardous Waste

8.94   *The West Midlands Region, although traditionally a relatively more industrialised region than elsewhere, does not generate proportionately more Hazardous Waste than other regions. The Region produced 665,000 tonnes of Hazardous Waste in 2003 and is a net importer, treating more hazardous waste than it generates. There are various generic types of Hazardous Waste which need to be managed in different ways. There are only two sites in the UK which treat highly volatile liquid wastes, and there has been no indication from national Government that there is a need for a new facility of national importance in this Region, or elsewhere, to manage this waste.*

8.95   *Since the change in name, from Special Waste, and the change in definition of Hazardous Waste, the construction and demolition sector has been much more careful about the categorisation of which wastes on a site are hazardous, and which are not. As a consequence the quantity of Hazardous Waste arising from construction and demolition projects has reduced significantly and more contaminated soils are being treated 'in situ' rather than being removed from site and landfilled. There has also been a reduction in the number of landfill sites accepting Hazardous Waste and, because of the increasing costs of disposal and transport, alternative methods of managing Hazardous Waste have been developed, substantially reducing arisings, and greater care is being taken by the industry in categorising waste as hazardous.*

8.96   *It has not been possible to estimate a figure for the facilities that will be required to manage Hazardous Waste as the industry is still adjusting to the changes in regulation. Without information on tonnages, discussions are taking place with the Environment Agency and Government Office for the West Midlands to make sure that adequate and safe provision will be made for Hazardous Waste arising within the Region.*

Comment: since these paragraphs were drafted, the Environment Agency has published hazardous waste data for 2006. This is the first complete data set since the above-mentioned changes. However, as it is only one years' worth of data, it does not provide a safe basis for long-term planning. It is unlikely that WPAs will have a

clear picture of hazardous waste arisings and management until a few years' trend data is available.

8.100 *If developers adhere to 'considerate construction' practices, the recycling of demolished structures which takes place on the demolition site need not cause nuisance to adjoining occupiers. In calculating the amount of employment land that will be required in the future, and how much existing employment land can be redeveloped for housing, the need for recycling sites, and urban quarries to accommodate 'off-site' recycling should be taken into account by WPAs. Urban quarries are modern sites for recycling Construction and Demolition Waste for use as recycled aggregates with very little material going to landfill and which can be located in the built up area without causing a visual or environmental nuisance.*

Comment: On-site recycling usually takes place as a temporary activity involving mobile crushers, and therefore does not require planning permission. It therefore cannot be controlled by policies such as W9, and on-site CD&EW management can only be encouraged or influenced through policies such as SD3. With regard to "urban quarries," not all permanent or long-term temporary CD&EW processing falls within the description in paragraph 8.100 above. The paragraph should define what this means in more detail and explain that these are activities which are either contained within a building or are well-screened from adjoining uses, to discourage the type of activity that causes nuisances. The Environment Agency has commented on this in relation to the Black Country Core Strategy, and it would be surprising if they haven't made similar comments in relation to the RSS.

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8.101 *Two Regionally significant facilities reprocessing Hazardous Waste are already located in the Black Country. The residues from these processes are further treated, but a large proportion of the residual material is landfilled. On the basis of current information these plants are well placed to manage the Region's Hazardous Waste and they could be expanded, if required. However, there remains a need to make provision for additional facilities to manage contaminated soils arising from redevelopment activity in the Region.*

8.102 *The redevelopment of "brownfield sites" in the Region will produce some waste which cannot be recycled on site because of its hazardous nature. However it can be treated at specialist facilities to remove or neutralise the hazardous substances and allow it to be used again. Authorities at the centre of the West Midlands and North Staffordshire MUAs, where most of the contaminated soils are likely to arise, would therefore be the most appropriate and sustainable locations for any new facilities which are required to manage contaminated soils arising in these broad locations. In preparing their Joint Core Strategy for Waste, the Black Country Councils and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent should give specific priority to identifying new sites for facilities, to store, treat and remediate contaminated soils.*

Comments:

The information set out in paragraphs 8.101 and 8.102 is based on comments by stakeholders/ anecdotal evidence, not on any sound technical evidence. Whilst there

is some evidence of a demand for facilities in the Black Country for handling and processing contaminated soils, no waste operators have expressed an interest in developing a permanent facility in the area, and the technical work being done to inform the Black Country Core Strategy suggests it is not commercially viable. There is currently no effective mechanism for bringing forward waste management facilities which are not commercially viable, even where there is a "need"/ "demand."

Policy W8: Hazardous Waste – Safeguarding Sites

Comments:

We suggest this policy should be deleted as it is unnecessary duplication. It is not necessary to have a separate policy on protecting hazardous waste facilities when W4 could cover it if it was made clear that it also applied to hazardous waste facilities.

Policy W9: Construction and Demolition Waste

> *All Waste Development Frameworks and Local Development Frameworks should give specific priority to identifying new sites for facilities, to store, treat and recycle soils and Construction and Demolition waste.*

> *More Construction and Demolition Waste should be recycled through promoting 'urban quarries' – modern material recovery facilities contained within a building or well-screened from adjoining uses - where material can be recycled to a high standard where there is evidence that there is a need for additional facilities.*

Comments:

It is unclear how this policy can promote "on-site" recycling and we would suggest deleting this, as this is covered (to the extent that the RSS can influence it) in Policy SR3. The policy needs to include a more specific definition of "urban quarries" – see comments in relation to paragraphs 8.99 – 8.100 above.

Policy W10: Sites for Contaminated Soils

> *The Core Strategies for the Black Country Councils and for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent should give specific priority to making provision for facilities, to store, treat and remediate contaminated soils, where there is evidence of a need/ demand for such facilities, and where there is evidence that such facilities can be delivered.*

Comment:

In accordance with the revisions to PPS12, site allocations must be deliverable, in which case there is currently no prospect of allocating any sites for this purpose in the Black Country Core Strategy. We therefore suggest the policy should be amended as indicated above.

Deleted: *Waste Development Frameworks and Local Development Frameworks should safeguard existing sites for the treatment and management of Hazardous Waste, where they meet local environmental and amenity criteria, and do not pose risks to European and National protected sites.¶*
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a) maximising 'on-site' recycling; and¶
b)

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Policy W11: New Sites for Landfill

Waste Development Frameworks and Local Development Frameworks should restrict the granting of planning permission for new sites for landfill to proposals which:

a)   are necessary to restore despoiled or degraded land, including mineral workings; or

b)   which are otherwise necessary to meet specific local circumstances; and

c)   are supported by robust evidence of suitability and need arising from a shortage of local capacity that exists in the plan period; and

d)   where geological conditions are suitable for landfill operations.

Policy W12: Hazardous Waste – Final Disposal Sites

Waste Development Frameworks for the non MUAs, should identify final disposal sites for Hazardous Waste, including where necessary encouraging the creation of separately appropriate engineered cells in landfills for Stabilised Non-Reactive Hazardous Waste, where the geological conditions are suitable.

See comments relating to W6.

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Chapter 9

Transport and Accessibility

Introduction

Comment: there appears to be a large amount of information that simply describes the region rather than justifying the transport policies. How useful is this in relation to the intended purpose? There is a need to avoid the over-provision of information and clutter

9.1   *This chapter sets out the West Midlands Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). It provides the context for transport in the Region; the policy framework that needs to be followed. It is supported by the priorities for investment and concludes with the indicators that need to be monitored. The RTS provides the Regional framework for Regional and Local Transport Planning within the Region.*

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9.11   *A major transport challenge for the Region is balancing the needs of new housing and the economy against increasing levels of congestion on the strategic network. Congestion has a negative impact on transport capacity and performance. (nb impact is a noun not a verb) This in turn creates adverse impacts on the environment, the economy and society as a whole. As a*

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consequence, a cross-cutting theme of the RTS in the West Midlands is the need to manage the increasing demand for travel. Locational policy as set out in Chapter 3, has a key role to play in maximising the use of public transport with residents of urban areas being significantly more likely to use this mode. The importance of changing travel patterns generally has been clearly demonstrated in various multi-modal studies and other regional/sub regional technical work. Achieving the major changes needed requires a holistic approach supported by a coherent package of measures including:

- *measures to reduce the need to travel;*
- *provision of good quality, well designed walking and cycling facilities;*
- *promotion of travel awareness initiatives;*
- *a significant improvement in public transport;*
- *well-designed park and ride facilities;*
- *better management of public and private car parking;*
- *appropriate demand management measures; and*
- *better management of transport networks.*

b.   South West to North East

9.26   This broad corridor comprises the M5, M42/A42, A38 north of Birmingham, A46 and M69, together with the railway route between South Wales/Bristol-Birmingham-Derby and Birmingham-Leicester. The reintroduction of the Stourbridge to Lichfield rail line would create new capacity for railfreight , avoiding the need to use the heavily congested central Birmingham lines which are operating at full capacity. This would facilitate improved access from the Region to ports in the south-west and Wales. It will also provide a stepping stone to wards the improvement of rail passenger services in the Black Country and from the Black Country to the south-west and north-east. The corridor encompasses two High Technology Corridors (PA3) and also other local corridors where the aim is to improve links between areas of opportunity and need. This includes the A38 north which is intended to be managed (with some improvements) to support the regeneration of Birmingham as well as providing a nationally significant connection.

Developing Accessibility and Mobility within the Region

9.50   Policy T1 provides the overarching framework for the *RTS*. At its heart is the importance of improving accessibility *and mobility, whilst avoiding past trends of increased car traffic and longer journeys.*

9.51   *The policy sets out the various measures needed to deliver the objectives of the RTS, with an emphasis on awareness raising, through education campaigns, to bring about behavioural change and creating the right conditions to encourage people with jobs to choose to live in close proximity to their workplace.*

9.52 High density developments should be encouraged in locations well served by public transport. Out-of-centre commercial development proposals for designated town centre uses in PPS6 should not be considered accessible simply because the proposal concerned is close to an individual rail station or

bus or metro stop; they need to demonstrate accessibility to all of the intended catchment and compared, in accessibility terms, with more central sites (see PPG13).

Policy T1: Developing accessibility and mobility within the Region to support the Spatial Strategy

A.   Access within and across the Region will be improved in a way that supports the Spatial Strategy, reduces the need for travel, expands travel choice, tackles congestion, improves safety and protects the environment.

B.   This will be achieved by:

i)   measures to improve significantly accessibility and mobility within the MUAs, including the development of high quality sustainable and public transport, so that they are able to accommodate greater levels of development, retain population and attract new jobs;

ii)   measures to improve accessibility and mobility in other urban areas, market towns and rural areas so that more sustainable means of travel are encouraged and local regeneration initiatives are supported;

iii)   measures to improve national road and rail networks to ensure that strategic links to external markets are maintained and the Region does not become a transport bottleneck undermining national economic growth;

iv)   measures to encourage behavioural change across the entire Region; and

v)   measures to improve the safety and security of the transport system.

Reducing the Need to Travel

9.53   Land use changes can have significant implications for the demand for transport. The Spatial Strategy aims to develop balanced communities with appropriate levels of housing, jobs and services. In preparing local development plans authorities can influence the level of transport demand likely to be generated by developments.

Policy T2: Reducing the need to travel

Local authorities, developers and other agencies should work together to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and to reduce the length of journeys through:

i)   ensuring that those developments which generate significant travel demands are located where their accessibility to their

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catchment by public transport, walking and cycling is maximised. **Large developments which have a more than local catchment should be located in the strategic network of centres, which are public transport hubs, and according to the sequential approach.**

ii)   **Development that attracts large amounts of visitors should only be located close to metro stops and rail stations outside centres if there is no capacity in the relevant centres within the catchment of the proposed development. Higher-density residential development will however be supported in such locations in accordance with policy *CF6* subject to amenity;**

iii)   **promoting patterns of development which reduce the need for travel (UR4), including a more balanced provision of different uses in larger settlements including the S*ettlements of Significant Development (CF2)*;**

iv)   **encouraging those developments which generate significant freight and commercial movements to locate close to suitable inter-modal freight terminals, rail freight facilities, or roads designed and managed as traffic distributors;**

v)   **encouraging the use of telecommunications for the purposes of business and for other service provision; and**

vi)   **supporting the retention and enhancement of local service provision, especially where public transport provision is poor.**

Comment: We are not sure whether these policies actually add anything to national policy, and mostly do not have any regional import.   We have however reworded part of it to refer to the need to ensure that the transport policies do not provide loopholes that adversely affect centres' vitality and viability .

Policy T3: Walking and cycling

Comment; this policy seems to replicate PPG 13 and in any event is not regionally specific

Promoting Travel Awareness Initiatives

9.55   It is vitally important that the awareness of the impact of individual travel decisions is raised. Whilst most of the necessary action must be at the local level there is a need to address cross-boundary issues in a co-ordinated and effective manner. Past trends have resulted in lifestyles which are highly car dependent, often involving lengthy commuting into the MUAs.

9.56   Improved cross boundary information, services, and ticketing will expand the available choices for individuals. Sub-regional campaigns and personal travel advice will help to increase awareness of the alternatives to the car. Regional campaigns aimed at business can address the alternatives to business travel and the scope for home*/tele-working. The WMES is also seeking to improve the Region's Information and Communication Technology infrastructure which will also contribute to reducing the need to travel.*

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<#>developing safe, secure, direct, convenient and attractive networks which connect town centres, local facilities, educational premises, public transport interchanges, residential and employment areas;¶
<#>giving pedestrians and cyclists priority in residential areas and town centres;¶
<#>providing links between smaller settlements and centres and development of greenways and quiet roads;¶
<#>developing the National Cycle Network;¶
<#>making the most effective use of canal towpaths; ¶
<#>expanding 'cycle & ride' and cycle carriage on public transport; and¶
<#>ensuring that new developments and infrastructure proposals improve walking and cycling access.¶

Policy T4: Promoting travel awareness

A. **Local authorities and transport operators should work together and with schools, businesses and other appropriate organisations to develop travel and transport strategies and plans that increase the awareness of alternative travel choices and reduce current levels of car use. Strategies should be implemented in a co-ordinated way across the Region.**

B. **Development plans should support this approach by requiring all planning applications involving significant travel demands to include transport assessments in line with the advice in PPG13 and provide proposals for travel plans. Travel Plans will not be required for developments proposed in strategic centres given that these centres are already public transport hubs and accessible to their catchments.**

C. **Authorities should include in their next local transport plans targets for work and school travel plans in accordance with the targets in this *WMRSS*.**

Comment: again, is there a specifically West Midlands regional need for this policy? it would appear to replicate national guidance

Comment: Figure 8 is too diagrammatic and needs to be improved – see equivalent Diagram 6 of the Draft East Midlands RSS.

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Policy T5: Public Transport

A. **The development of an integrated public transport network where all people have access to high quality and affordable public transport services across the Region is a key element of the Regional vision.**

B. Local authorities, transport operators and other agencies, including the *Department for Transport*, should work together towards achieving this vision thereby providing attractive and reliable alternatives to the use of the private car.

C. **An integrated hierarchy of public transport services will be developed with the highest priority being given to investment in infrastructure and services to support the regeneration of the MUAs. This will include investment in:**

   i) **the development of high quality public transport systems, building upon the existing Metro system within Birmingham, and the Black Country;**

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   ii) **improved rail services on key routes, including new rolling stock and capacity enhancements;**

   iii) **the development of integrated networks of high quality bus services, including the further extension of bus quality partnerships and the introduction of bus lanes and priority**

measures, re-allocating road space where necessary, with road and junction widening where there is no other practicable solution; and

iv)	improved interchange facilities both within and between different modes of travel, including the provision of further 'park & ride' facilities (T6).

D.	Outside the MUAs, an integrated hierarchy of public transport services should be developed with priority given to the improvement of services and interchanges within urban areas, and the development of links with catchment areas. In rural areas, priority should be given to the development of community and public transport services, particularly those providing links from rural hinterlands to key local service centres.

E.	In all cases, the aim will be to achieve a frequent, reliable, affordable, secure and attractive public transport service which takes into account the needs of all users, including disabled people and others with reduced mobility. Local authorities, the PTE and transport providers should work towards the provision of integrated public transport services with an emphasis on travel information and ticketing arrangements, particularly across boundaries and modes.

Policy T6: Strategic Park & Ride

*A.	Locations should be considered against the following criteria:*

*i)	congestion benefits, including any future introduction of demand management measures;*
*ii)	frequency, capacity and quality of the public transport offer;*
*iii)	environmental, design and traffic impact;*
*iv)	potential for interchange with other public transport services; and*
*v)	implications for the wider public transport network.*

*B.	Strategic locations are identified at:*

*i)	Brinsford, north of Wolverhampton; and*
*ii)	Worcester Parkway at the crossing of the Worcester/Oxford and Birmingham/Cheltenham railways.*

*C.	Potential locations have been identified at:*

*i)	Bromsgrove;*
*ii)	in the vicinity of the M40/M42;*
*iii)	East of Shrewsbury;*
*iv)	Longbridge (Birmingham);*
*v)	in the vicinity of the M5 Junction 3;*
*vi)	north of Stratford;*
*vii)	Telford;*
*viii)	Lichfield Trent Valley and;*
*ix)	in the vicinity of Stoke Station.*

9.81 The RPB guidance is for local authorities to work with neighbouring authorities to produce sub-regional maximum parking standards for new developments. When adopting local parking standards local authorities should assess the risks and benefits to:

- *the promotion of more sustainable travel choices by discouraging use of the private car;*
- *the reduction of congestion;*
- *sustainable economic growth;*
- *investment in neighbouring town centres;*
- *the vitality and viability of existing town centres in the context of parking available at out-of-centre developments; and*
- *create more pleasant town/city centres.*

Policy T8: Demand Management

A. Local authorities should work together *with relevant national and Regional partners* to identify the measures needed to manage demand on congested parts of the highway network*. This is likely to include the* motorways and trunk roads, town and city centres *identified in the WMRSS.*

B. Initially local authorities and others should consider the *use of parking standards and management of car parking, park and ride* and the management and re-allocation of highway space *for public transport (T5, T6,T7 and T9).*

C. Local authorities should be encouraged to bring forward local charging schemes in the more congested *areas, taking account of the impacts on* the:

   i)   environment – including sustainability and climate change;
   ii) economy – including the relevant local area and across the Region; and the wider competitiveness of the region as a whole
   iii) community – including residents and businesses;
   iv) renaissance – both urban and rural; and
   v)   capacity - pressure on other parts of the transport network – including roads and public transport.

Policy T9: The Management and Development of National and Regional Transport Networks

A.   The Primary Route Network (PRN) within the Region will consist of motorways, trunk roads and other primary routes as identified on Figure 6.

B.   Local authorities and the Highways Agency will give high priority to investment in the maintenance, management and selective improvement of this network in order to maintain accessibility for essential movements, including freight, within and through the Region. This includes those parts of the Trans European Road Network which pass through the Region.

C.   Local authorities, the Highways Agency, transport operators and other agencies should work together to provide and maintain a strategic transport system which:

   i)   enhances the competitiveness of the Region by providing journey time reliability;
   ii)   provides improved links and accessibility both within the Region and to other UK and European regions and beyond; and
   iii)   supports the Spatial Strategy, particularly by providing improved accessibility in those parts of the Region in greatest need of regeneration.

D.   In bringing forward detailed policies, proposals and programmes, consideration should be given to:

   i)   optimising the use of existing infrastructure across all modes;
   ii)   ensuring capacity is safeguarded by appropriate selection of development location, minimising the need for local movements to use the strategic network (T1);
   iii)   adopting the priorities for investment in strategic networks (T12) to support the objectives and policies of *the WMRSS*, and ensuring the investments are not undermined by inappropriate development;
   iv)   ensuring that motorways and trunk roads are managed and improved to operate effectively as part of the national transport network, including the use of appropriate demand management techniques to improve journey time reliability;
   v)   road building only after all other solutions have been examined and where proposals support other objectives of the *WMRSS*; and
   vi)   ensuring the Region is provided with an improved and integrated rail network to encourage greater use of rail, particularly for longer distance travel both within the Region and beyond.

E.   New accesses on the PRN will not be encouraged and should not inhibit the strategic function of these routes. Where development proposals impact on the PRN, local planning authorities should ensure that transport and environmental impact assessments are undertaken to ensure that the function of the network is maintained and appropriate financial contributions to improvements are made. Developments such as shops, offices, leisure and other town centre uses should not be

located at or close to the motorway network in view of the fact that they would increase congestion as well as the negative effect on centre vitality and viability.

Freight

9.93 Freight movement is often thought of solely in terms of manufacturing, construction and retailing sectors where its involvement is often highly visible and understood. However, the totality of the business sector, including, for example, office related services, is a massive generator of freight trips by lorry, van, car and motorcycle.

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9.95 *The M6 motorway is the primary north-south trunk route through the Region for freight moved by road. The section of the motorway through Birmingham is one of the most heavily used motorways in Europe. The M6 Toll Road was built to provide extra capacity at this section of the national road network, but it currently carries relatively few Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). The M6 Toll traffic comprises 7% HGVs compared with a typical 30% on the "parallel" M6.*

9.100 *The most recent comparisons produced by the Civil Aviation Authority show BIA as being used by 9.04m and Coventry Airport by 0.616m passengers per annum. Freight movements comprised 1,299 tonnes at Birmingham, and 608 tonnes at Coventry in 2007. Data for the other airports and airfields in the Region are not currently published.*

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9.107 *Air transport has a major impact on the environment and climate change. Nationally and internationally the Government and the aviation industry are working to minimise these negative impacts. Regionally it is important that airport policy is strongly linked with environmental and climate change policies. Any new developments must be designed to take full account of the sustainable development principles.*

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Policy T11: Airports

A. *The roles of Birmingham International Airport, Coventry Airport, and Wolverhampton Business Airport are outlined in the 2003 Air Transport White Paper.*

B. *Birmingham International Airport (BIA) will continue to be developed as the Region's principal passenger airport. It is expected to accommodate future growth to serve more distant international destinations. This will require an extension of the main runway and associated facilities. Beyond the period of this WMRSS it may be necessary to provide a second shorter runway. Development plans in Solihull and neighbouring authorities should include policies to provide for the assessment of any expansion proposals. Criteria for such proposals should include the*

requirement that they are subject to rigorous assessment and must demonstrate:

i)   *that social, economic and environmental impacts (positive and negative) have been considered in line with the principles of sustainable development;*

ii)   *that unavoidable harm will be reduced through mitigation; and*

iii)   *where harm cannot be avoided or mitigated, it should be compensated for.*

C.   *BIA should achieve a minimum modal share by public transport of 25% (passengers, employees and visitors) by 2012 and 30% by 2020. The targets and the actions required to deliver them should be made clear and monitored, in the Airport Surface Access Strategy and Local Transport Plans.*

D.   *The further development of other airports should be done according to a sequential approach that measures the impact on BIA as the principal passenger airport for the Region. Coventry Airport and Wolverhampton Business Airport and the other airfields in the Region should be in accordance with the roles set out in the ATWP and should complement the role of BIA as the Region's principal passenger airport. Development plans for the relevant local planning authority (and neighbouring authorities where appropriate) should include policies for the assessment of expansion proposals, with criteria the same as those set out in T11B and mode share targets that are challenging and deliverable.*

E.   *Developments to support airport expansion should demonstrate good practice in resource and energy efficiency measures, sustainable design and construction and aim to be carbon neutral.*

F.   *The Region should also work with other regions to develop improved public transport access to other key airports beyond the region, as appropriate.*

Annex 4 – Response to the Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Report

1.   The Draft RSS Preferred Option was published in December 2007. There was to be a 12 week consultation from 7th January to 28th March 2008. But on 7th January, Baroness Andrews, the Parliamentary Under Secretary at the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), told the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) that in her view the RSS Preferred Option had not provided enough housing to meet even the 2004 household projections, let alone the levels envisaged by the Government's Housing Green Paper of an extra 240,000 houses nationally a year by 2016. She would therefore ask the Government Office for the West Midlands to commission work to look at options that could deliver higher housing numbers in the West Midlands Region. This work would be submitted to the Examination Panel as part of the Government's evidence. To enable Local Planning Authorities to have an input into this work, and to be able to comment on it themselves as part of their response to the RSS Preferred option, the consultation deadline was extended, first to 23rd May 2008 and then (because of delays in appointing consultants) to 8th December.

2.   The consultants appointed were Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP). They published their findings on 7th October. WMRA asked interested parties to respond the NLP work separately to any response on the Preferred Option. Accordingly, the rest of this annex describes the NLP work, expresses points of concern, and states what is intended to be done about it.

3.   The submitted RSS 2 Preferred Option contains a strategy based on meeting housing need and delivering regeneration & growth within prioritised built up areas across the Metropolitan Area / City Region as a whole, combined with a north south growth corridor linking Nuneaton / Bedworth to Warwick / Leamington via Coventry (the Urban Renaissance strategy. The NLP report contains three scenarios distributing between 51,500 and 80,000 additional dwellings (over and above the 365,000 identified in RSS 2 Preferred Option) by 2026. All three options include:

- **no change to Black Country and Coventry figures**
- **higher levels of housing for Birmingham** (an additional 10,000 across all scenarios) **and Solihull** (between 5000 and 13000 additional dwellings)
- a **range of no change to 10,000 additional dwellings in Telford and Wrekin.**
- **significant housing growth**, over and above the RSS figures, in all options, **for Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire.**
- An **increase in two of the three options for Staffordshire** (but no increase for authorities in South Staffordshire).

4.   The report is huge and detailed, and Walsall officers have had limited time to appraise it, given the lateness of its publication, competing priorities (including our response to the rest of the RSS itself) and our the Committee deadlines. However, some initial work has been carried out by the CEPOG support team, on behalf of the West Midlands Met Districts, which Walsall officers endorse. This indicates the following strong concerns:

- The NLP work is **based on trend based analysis and projections which are themselves challengeable** and is arithmetically rather than policy driven
- It is one dimensional **in focusing on supply side factors rather than identified needs** and does not fully address environmental and social implications.
- **It challenges current strategy and so goes beyond its brief.**

- The study, were it to be acted on, **would undermine the urban regeneration and growth based policies** currently supported by City Region authorities as all scenarios lead, to varying degrees, to a greater concentration of growth in the south / south east of the Region.
- It **would require delivery at unprecedented levels** and it is unclear whether sufficient infrastructure will be in place, raw materials available or whether the development and construction industries will have the capacity to deliver.
- It **has been prepared in a 'top down' manner** and does not fully explore local impacts.

5.　Walsall Officers strongly support these points. Indeed, officers consider that, though Walsall is not proposed to accommodate any extra housing as a result of this study, it could be adversely affected in the long run by any diversion of infrastructure funding to support housing in the south-east of the region, were the NLP Report to be accepted by the Examination Panel and subsequently acted on, given that abnormal costs associated with delivering housing are more prevalent in places like Walsall. This could endanger much needed regeneration funding for the Borough from both the public and private sector.

6.　The West Midlands Planning & Transport Sub–Committee is proposed to continue to formally support the RSS 2 Preferred Option as submitted to Government, stress its success to date and its deliverability, and challenge the NLP study's findings and conclusions as necessary. A report proposing a collective strategic response to both the RSS2 preferred Option and the NLP study will be presented to its meeting on 28th November.

7.　These issues have also been discussed by City Region Council leaders and Chief Executives. They have expressed concern about the potential implications of the NLP work for the regeneration of the MUAs. Similar concerns have also been expressed at a recent meeting of Black Country Consortium Directors. The Black Country Consortium has therefore proposed to submit a response to the NLP work and the RSS Phase 2 Revision, based on the main points identified in the Black Country Councils' reports to their Cabinets.

8.　In the covering report on the RSS Preferred Option it is recommended that this Council supports the RSS Preferred Option in principle (though the proposed response contains comments and proposals to improve it to ensure that it sticks to its primary overall objective of regenerating the Major Urban Areas such as Walsall).   The initial view on the NLP work as set out by CEPOG support officers is in line with the objectives of Walsall Council to regenerate the Borough, and therefore it is recommended that the West Midlands Planning and Transport Sub-Committee view, as set out in paragraph 4 of this annex, is supported.

9.　The RSS Examination in Public is scheduled to start at the end of April 2009. Work will need to be done to prepare for the RSS Examination in general, but also to respond to the NLP work in detail. The response to the NLP report will require extensive work that cannot be carried out by any one Authority. In view of the short timescales and other pressures on Walsall Council officers' workload (such as producing the statutory Annual Monitoring Report by the end of the year for the Government, as well as progressing the Black Country Joint Core Strategy), it is likely that there will be a need to commission, jointly with other Met area, authorities, external work to deal with the NLP report. If this proves to be the case, the regional authorities will recommend the use of the Metropolitan Area Commissioning Fund, a fund managed within the realm of CEPOG for such joint works. Should any additional council funding be required which cannot be met from within existing budgets then a further report will

be put to cabinet. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for regeneration authorise the participation of Walsall in any actions related to the NLP work and Walsall's response to it, resourced by joint regional funds.

C.Local authorities in their development plans, together with local or sub-regional housing market partnerships in their local or sub-regional Housing Investment Strategies, should:

i)set an overall target for the amount of affordable housing to be provided;

ii)ensure that the overall target for affordable housing is minima and contributes to the overall figure for the sub regional housing market area;

iii)set separate targets for social-rented and intermediate affordable housing;

iv)seek to maximise the contribution which the private sector can make towards meeting affordable housing needs by setting out the range of circumstances in which affordable housing will be required and the criteria for negotiation with private developers to provide and subsidise such housing as part of developments meeting policy thresholds; and

v)in order to meet rural needs, in rural areas and small rural settlements consider the application of lower site thresholds for negotiation because of the contribution of small sites to the overall land supply, in accordance with PPS3 and consider the option of allocating sites as 100% affordable sites;

vi)actively promote the use of rural exception sites in accordance with PPS3 to meet local housing needs; and

consider how their own land resources and those of strategic partners can be used to support a higher level of social rented and intermediate tenure housing provision.