

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision

Consultation Response Form on the West Midlands RSS Phase 2 Revision
Draft submitted by the West Midlands Regional Assembly

Making Comments

It is very helpful to us if you use this form to make your comments and if possible e-mail or post it to the following:

WMRSS Panel Secretary
c/o Government Office for the West Midlands
5 St Philip's Place
Colmore Row
Birmingham B3 2PW

E-mail: wm.panelsecretary@gowm.gsi.gov.uk

Deadline for Comments

Deadline for receipt of completed forms is **12.00pm on 8th December 2008**

Additional Copies

Additional copies of the form can be downloaded from the Government Office for the West Midlands web site at <http://www.go-wm.gov.uk> or www.wmra.gov.uk or can be requested by contacting Government Office for West Midlands on: 0121 352 5476.

How to complete this form

Please complete a separate copy of the form for each matter that you wish to comment on, showing each time which policy or paragraph of the WMRSS Phase Two Revision Draft Submission documents you are commenting on.

Please note that all comments will be made available for the public to read – they cannot be treated as confidential. However, please be assured, WMRSS Panel Secretary will only use the contact details provided for the sole purpose of distributing appropriate information about this consultation and the next stages of the process.

Contact Details

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I am commenting as (please tick)			
A private individual		Local Authority of Parish Council	
Business representative group		Campaign Group	
Utility and emergency services		Statutory Body or Government Agency	X
Landowner, Developer or Agent		Voluntary / Community group	
Representative of a client		Other (please specify)	
If you are commenting on behalf of a client, please add their name here			

Please indicate which Paragraph or Policy your comment relates to:	
Paragraph Chapter 9 –Transport and Accessibility Number	Policy Number

Please use the section below to give your comments.

Chapter 9 –Transport and Accessibility

The Highways Agency supports the broad thrust of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and will continue to work in partnership with the region to ensure the successful delivery of the regional spatial strategy.

Although it is recognised that this is only a partial review of the RSS, the Panel might wish to give consideration to the need for the introductory sections of the RTS to be revised so that they more properly reflect the evolution of national transport policy over the last two years including the publication of *“Delivering a Sustainable Transport System: Main Report”* (November 2008) which sets out the Governments five goals for transport, focusing on the challenge of delivering strong economic growth while at the same time reducing green house emissions.

This may also have further implications for the RSS in terms of the transport objectives and outcomes identified for the region by RTS and the future prioritisation of investment.

The Preferred Option could also provide a clearer spatial vision of what demands are likely to be imposed on the regions transport systems by 2026.It might also consider how these demands and their impacts will be influenced by RSS/RTS interventions, and what the outcomes will be for the operation of these networks, the environment, the economy or communities of the region.

The Highways Agency would like to see the RTS adopt a more long term and forward looking approach to identifying and prioritising the transport interventions required to achieve the spatial vision set out in the Preferred Option. In particular the RSS will need to respond to the risk of continued increases in traffic levels throughout the period of the RSS and its implications for economic and housing growth, congestion, and climate change. This will need to be addressed through a commitment to the introduction of measures to reduce the rate of growth of traffic levels in the period post 2016.

It is not clear whether or not the transport investment priorities identified in the Preferred Option (Policy T12) represent in all cases the right mix of interventions

required to meet the future transport needs of the region when viewed against the Governments five goals for transport as described in DaSTS.

From a Highways Agency perspective the need to maintain the reliable and resilient operation of the strategic road network is the key transport priority in the short term will be the need to make the best use of the regions existing transport infrastructure. This might be achieved by the implementation of selective junction improvements to remove pinch points on the network and the move towards development of the “*managed motorway*” concept. This would involve the development and application of Integrated Demand Management Measures (IDM) on the regions key transport corridors and the further roll out of Active Traffic Management (ATM) around the Birmingham motorway box and elsewhere across the region.

It should be noted that decisions on the long term development of the strategic national transport corridors which connect the region with the rest of the UK and international markets will be taken by the new National Network Strategy Group.

In determining future priorities for transport investment across the region the Highways Agency would like to see the RTS give priority to those measures that will have the greatest impact on reducing the growth of congestion on the corridors of national importance identified in DaSTS. The RTS should also consider prioritising investment on corridors of regional importance in line with the relative level of economic and housing growth being promoted along and within the corridor. In practice this will require support for the following measures:

- Demand management measures and improvements to the local transport networks serving the MUAs and SSDs which will reduce the impact of local trips on the national and regional transport corridors;
- Developers managing down the impacts of their development on the corridors of national and regional importance;
- Access control measures on the corridors of national and regional importance;
- Improvements to road junctions that will reduce the rate of road growth and congestion on corridors of national and regional importance;
- Proposals that will make the best use of the existing infrastructure;
- Improvements in information management, including the timetabling of rail services;
- Engineering measures to enable increasing frequency of rail services; and
- Capacity enhancements to the corridors, including rail passenger services.

A key conclusion of the technical work undertaken for the Highways Agency was that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to the development of measures to address congestion on the SRN would not necessarily realise the same network benefits in all parts of the region. This supports the need for further work to be undertaken at the sub-regional level to allow a more tailored approach to be developed to tackling the problems caused by background traffic growth and the need to support the delivery of housing and economic growth. In this regard the RSS and RTS should seek to identify the key transport issues and priorities for each of the regions sub-regions/areas (however defined) as a guide to enable sub-regional partners to develop appropriate landuse and transport polices and interventions to address the needs of their areas through the

related development plan and infrastructure planning processes.

(Please continue on a separate sheet if required)