

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	30 JULY 2009
TITLE OF REPORT:	REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY PHASE 3 – CONSULTATION
PORTFOLIO AREA:	ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC HOUSING

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To respond to the consultation on the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy – Options for Phase Three Revision.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT the responses to the consultation questions posed in the Phase Three Options document as set out in the appendices to this report be approved.

Key Points Summary

- The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (RSS) was approved in 2004 and has been reviewed in three phases. Phase 1 concerned the Black Country and was approved in 2007. Phase 2 sets out policies to update the main housing, employment and commercial allocations; it was the subject of an Examination in Public in April, May and June this year. The Inspector's report is due in September. Phase 3 has now reached "Options" stage and is the subject of a new consultation which closes on 14th August. This report is the chance for the Council to state its views on the proposed policies.
- The policies cover five topic areas:
 1. Critical Rural Services,
 2. Gypsies and Travellers,
 3. Culture Sport and Tourism,
 4. Quality of the Environment,
 5. Minerals.
- The appendices to this report propose responses to three areas of the above policies: Critical

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Peter Yates, Planning Policy Manager on (01432) 261952

Rural Services, Gypsies and Travellers, and (within Quality of Environment) policies for renewable energy. Comments on the other topics are more technically based and are proposed to be delegated to Officers.

- The detailed recommendations are drafted with the principle in mind that the final approved regional planning policies must give the Council sufficient discretion to develop its own more locally based policies in the LDF in a way which protects the interests of the communities in Herefordshire.
- The consultation sets out the Options for the various topic areas and lists the specific questions being posed by the West Midlands Regional Assembly. The suggested answers on behalf of Herefordshire Council are set out in the appendices to this report after each set of Options.

Alternative Options

- 1 Not to respond to the consultation; however this would remove the Council's ability to influence future regional strategic direction.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To inform the West Midlands Regional Assembly of the Council's views on the consultation.

Introduction and Background

- 3 This is a proposed response to the consultation as set out in the Key Points Summary above.

Key Considerations

- 4 The key considerations are set out in the appendices in the context of each topic.

Community Impact

- 5 Most of the topics raised in the consultation have the potential to have a high impact on the wellbeing of communities in the County, especially in respect of emerging policies on service delivery and environmental issues including flooding and climate change policies. It is therefore appropriate that the Council takes this opportunity to influence the development of these regional policies.

Financial Implications

- 6 None in respect of the consultation.

Legal Implications

- 7 None.

Risk Management

8. There is a risk that by not responding the Council will have less influence on the final outcome of the Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Consultees

- 9 The Council is itself a consultee and is therefore not obliged to carry out any consultations of its own. The Planning Committee was invited to make views at their meeting on 3rd July, and a “Stakeholder” event was held, on half of the Regional Planning Body, at the Courtyard on 7th July.
10. The Planning Committee raised the following points:
- With respect to Rural Services: if the Regional Planning Policies make assumptions about public transport in rural areas as a means to access services then it is important that there is also financial support for such bus services. This may need to come from regional sources. In other words, the spatial planning policies need to be backed up with finance where relevant such as for rural public transport,
 - The allocation of pitches to be found for Gypsies and Travellers is perceived to be unreasonably high given the under-occupancy (typically 25%) of the authorised pitches which exist at present. Herefordshire appears to have been given a large allocation on the basis that we provide a lot of spaces to begin with. It appears that those Councils which are less good at providing pitches are “rewarded” by being allocated fewer sites/pitches to find in the Regional Spatial Strategy,
 - Concern was expressed about the funding of additional gypsy sites. If the Region wishes to provide money to provide new sites then that can be accepted as ringfenced money for that purpose. However, in the current (and likely future) straightened financial circumstances, the Council is unlikely to be giving priority from its own resources for new gypsy sites in the light of the current rates of under occupation of authorised sites in the County,
 - Concern was also expressed about two other groups: “Travellers” as opposed to “Gypsies” who may not, actually, have a culture of moving around the country, and Travelling Showpeople. The Regional Spatial Strategy suggests an allocation for showpeople sites despite the evidence in the Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment which did not identify any need for sites for Travelling Showpeople in the County.
- 11 The stakeholder event at The Courtyard raised the following issues:
- There are links between tourism, culture and the environmental “assets” of the county, and tourism is especially important to the well-being of the county. The list of “Assets” appears to omit the River Wye as a significant regional feature for environmental reasons and for sports provision. The sports facilities at the Royal National College for the Blind are significant at regional, national and international levels and should be recognised as such,
 - With regard to Critical Rural Services there is a risk of Option 1 implying that only the Market Towns and larger villages will be supported leaving other settlements to decline. Thought must be given to community-led planning and Parish Plans are part of this. Broadband access is also very important for the rural economy and service provision,
 - The proposed targets for Gypsies and Travellers need to be backed up with more evidence. There is significant under-occupancy of existing authorised sites, and there is no evidence of need for sites for Travelling Showpeople in the County. There are many variations in the status of both “Gypsies” and “Travellers”. There may be management issues on some of the sites which won’t be solved by simply providing more. Perhaps part

of the solution might be more transit sites rather than permanent ones,

- Both geology and minerals are very important to the county, and the issues of food security and climate change appear to be underplayed. Cross-border issues, especially with Wales, need to be taken into account,
- Appropriate infrastructure will be needed to achieve regional policy aspirations.

Appendices

12 Each Appendix deals with one topic area. The consultation options are listed and then the questions posed by the Regional Planning Body are set out with the suggested response on behalf of Herefordshire.

- Appendix A Critical Rural Services
- Appendix B Gypsies & Travellers
- Appendix C Culture, Sport & Tourism
- Appendix D Quality of the Environment
- Appendix E Minerals

Background Papers

Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 3 Review, Options Consultation Document.

APPENDIX A – Critical Rural Services

- A1 The Options paper sets out three potential ways of addressing Rural Renaissance, along with the consequences of each, in the following terms:

TABLE A – CRITICAL RURAL SERVICES	
Options	Implications
<p>Option 1: SUSTAINABLE – CLIMATE CHANGE DRIVEN</p> <p>Provide for and encourage service provision in a manner that offers the opportunity to reduce the need to travel by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. concentrating most service provision in County and Market towns, with a particular emphasis on multi-use centres. b. maximising the use of ICT and mobile facilities to deliver services elsewhere in the rural areas. c. allowing growth of housing and employment development in the County and Market towns at a level that will help support existing, and create new, services. Placing strict limits on growth elsewhere in the rural areas. d. improving public transport between the rural areas and County/Market towns, including those rural areas that are regarded as accessible. 	<p>There would be a concentration of services, not just higher-order services, in the larger towns. Because of their wider catchments, and being the focus of new development, services in these towns would be better supported, and are more likely to be created (new services) or to survive (existing services) than if located in smaller settlements.</p> <p>Limiting new development in the rural areas beyond the towns will reduce future travel between smaller settlements and the towns. This should help to reduce CO2 emissions.</p> <p>There would be fewer services in smaller settlements, and existing services might decline further and faster than would otherwise be the case.</p> <p>People in the smaller, more remote settlements who have limited access to private transport would be disadvantaged unless an adequate public transport network can be provided alongside innovative mobile service delivery and improved ICT.</p> <p>The Option suggests a focus of development on County and Market towns to support service provision. Care would have to be taken to ensure that the growth strategy of WMRSS is not prejudiced by this approach.</p> <p>The SQW Report identified significant service deprivation issues for people in “accessible rural” areas whose access to transport is limited. This option, in particular (d) above, would focus more attention on the needs of this group in</p>

	relation to public transport provision.
<p>Option 2: COMMUNITY BASED</p> <p>Adopt a “bottom-up” approach by facilitating local people, together with voluntary and community groups, to identify service needs, scale and locations.</p> <p>Locally led reviews of service levels may be a useful basis for justifying the case for the protection/enhancement of services.</p> <p>Develop this work through Parish Plans, Community Strategies, LTPs and LDFs.</p>	<p>In contrast to Option 1, Option 2 would foster service development and protection of existing services throughout the rural settlement hierarchy.</p> <p>To give this option chance of success, local authority LDFs and LTPs should consider locally identified service reviews and adopt a flexible approach to their implementation to manage needs and expectation.</p> <p>Unless it was carefully managed, this option could generate unrealistic wish-lists for services in unsustainable locations. The scope and nature of service reviews may have to be carefully prescribed at the regional or sub-regional level to try and avoid this.</p> <p>If it could be made to work, this option would bring local knowledge and understanding of service needs to the fore, and give local people ownership of decision making. In contrast, there would be little regional planning involvement, although overall programming, funding and monitoring would still rest with the regional bodies.</p> <p>There is a risk with this option that, in order to support more widespread service provision, there would be pressures for more scattered housing development. However to maintain existing services, or provide new ones, often needs significant population and therefore considerable new development. This could lead to more private travel, with adverse consequences for CO2 emissions</p>
<p>Option 3: STATUS QUO</p> <p>Accept that the existing RSS polices on Rural Renaissance and related topics are adequate in dealing with rural service provision, and reject the need for any further definition of critical rural services</p>	<p>The current policy RR4 is very general about the location of services and there are major questions over its implementation. Therefore if the status quo is chosen as the option to take forward, it will need to be accompanied by details on how the policy can be made to work more effectively.</p> <p>LDPs and LTPs should consider setting out clear policy guidance on service</p>

	<p>provision, reflecting the outcome of locally led reviews of services, Community Strategies and Parish Plans.</p> <p>Because it is less specific about service location the status quo does offer a measure of flexibility, particularly compared to Option 1. However flexibility can also lead to uncertainty, making the task of policy development in LDPs and LTPs more difficult.</p>
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- A2 In effect the three options above represent (1) concentrating service in existing service centres, or (2) distributing rural services widely where possible and practicable, or (3) leaving the issue to local planning authorities to resolve through their own Local Development Documents.
- A3 One of the difficulties created by the phased approach to the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy is that the policy on rural services is being consulted on in phase 3 whereas policies on housing and employment growth were consulted on in phase 2. The most obvious way to bring these two closely related issues together would be for them to be considered together in the Council's own Core Strategy. It may transpire that once the housing figures for the rural areas are finalised then the appropriate distribution of rural services will become self evident.

Critical Rural Services: Suggested Response

- A4 In the light of the above options the following questions are posed, with suggested responses as appropriate:

Question CRC1. Studies have shown that it is very difficult to define rural services as “Important” or “Critical” and that pursuing these definitions is unlikely to be of much value. Do you agree with this view?

Suggested response: It is difficult to define a difference between “Important” and “Critical” on a region-wide basis because each settlement has its own character and will have different levels of service available. Definitions of this nature are best left to be dealt with at local planning authority level through their own Local Development Frameworks. Policies generally need to account for the fact that individual settlements do not exist in isolation but operate as part of a local network where it may be wrong to “downgrade” any one settlement.

Question CRC2. The evidence report by SQW identified significant service deprivation issues for people in “Accessible” rural areas whose access to transport is limited. Do you think more attention should be given to the service needs of this group?

Suggested Response: This is simply a matter of finance available to subsidise (and optimise the use of subsidies) for rural public transport. If a policy in the RSS is likely to result in more central funding for certain types of rural transport then such a policy would be welcomed.

Question CRC3: Arguments have been put forward that new development should be allowed in settlements lacking a service base in order to reverse a cycle of decline in such places (for example in the Matthew Taylor Report). Do you agree with this view?

Suggested response: Investing in services in areas lacking a service base will be very difficult to reconcile with basic principles of sustainability. Few people will be able to use such services without travelling long distances. However, there may well be scope to allocate development to settlements

where there are some services present, in order to increase the likelihood of those services continuing in operation and even new ones added. Care must, however, be taken to ensure that unrealistic aspirations are not encouraged. In some cases it will be more appropriate to consider groups of villages/settlements rather than assess them individually – and this is a concept which will be explored as part of the consultations on our own Core Strategy. The fine detail of this is best left to local planning authorities in their Local Development Frameworks.

Question CRC4. Three policy options for rural service developments are suggested above. Please state if you have a preferred option. ?

Suggested response: A combination of Options 2 and 3 – because, compared with Option 1, it leaves the most discretion to local planning authorities to assess and allocate service provision in the light of local circumstances and local community needs.

Question CRC5. For your preferred option please state how best to deliver the option at the regional level, taking into account the relevant key issues and implications in this chapter.

Suggested Response: There is considerable difficulty in trying to create a single region-wide approach. The rural areas vary greatly across the region in their character and functional relationship to the major towns and cities of the Region. The villages in Herefordshire have almost no functional relationship with the Major Urban Areas in the West Midlands, but through such matters as school catchment areas and the availability of health care facilities, can have quite strong relationships with each other and with the nearest Market Towns. The provision of rural services needs linking very closely with the wider agenda for the development of the County through the Sustainable Community Strategy. The RSS policies must allow the flexibility for this to be dealt with in a comprehensive manner in our own Core Strategy rather than have an overarching philosophy of styles and types of service provision imposed at the Regional level. The Regional Planning Body will need to consult with local authorities to establish a preferred methodology for any service audits and monitoring needed to ensure consistency of approach.

APPENDIX B – Gypsies and Travellers

B1 The consultation sets out three options.

TABLE B – GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS	
Option	Comment
<p>OPTION 1: Need Where it Arises:</p> <p>Option 1 would see additional pitch requirements being distributed largely on the basis of the findings from the sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (with some additions to fill information gaps). The implicit assumption in this Option is that requirements will usually be met in the District in which they arise. The geographical pattern of requirements reflects the location of current site provision, unauthorised sites and concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers living in housing. There is zero or very low requirements in several Districts. While the GTAAs suggest that many Gypsies and Travellers favour living in the areas where they were interviewed, it is not known to what extent preferences are distorted by the pattern of current provision/ lack of provision or local enforcement policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would meet the need for new pitches identified by the GTAAs ▪ Would reinforce existing patterns of residential Gypsy and Traveller provision – with some authorities continuing to make very low levels of pitch provision ▪ Will not significantly expand Gypsies and Travellers choices as to where they can legally reside in the West Midlands Region
<p>OPTION 2: Planning Criteria:</p> <p>Option 2 would see additional pitch requirements being distributed on the basis of both ‘need where it arises’ and the potential land supply within each District for new sites. Three-quarters of requirements are distributed on a ‘need where it arises’ basis as in Option 1. The remaining 25% of requirements are distributed in relation to the footprint (area in hectares) of opportunities on unconstrained land within each District. Opportunities broadly reflect access to key services. Constraints include, for example, flood risk zones, Green Belt and built-up areas. The ‘need where it arises’ element in this Option takes account of Gypsy and Travellers’ wishes to retain community and support links, while the planning opportunities and constraints element takes account of development potential.</p> <p>A map of all constraints (map 14) is available from the Assembly website, together with maps of the opportunities (maps 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would see additional pitch requirements being largely distributed in line with existing patterns of provision but would also deliver a limited re-distribution and thereby increase the areas where Travellers can legally reside in the West Midlands Region ▪ Would re-distribute some pitch requirements towards those areas which have unconstrained areas of land, together with areas of opportunity, with the balance of opportunity areas being in Shropshire and Herefordshire
<p>OPTION 3: Re-distribution:</p> <p>Option 3 would see some additional pitch requirements being re-distributed beyond the areas where need currently arises to other parts of the Region. The</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would expand the areas in which Gypsies and Travellers could legally reside in the West Midlands Region

<p>underlying rationale is that there should be no District in the Region where Gypsies and Travellers cannot live on authorised sites. Option 3 allocates a minimum of 14 pitches to all Districts. Requirements to meet this minimum are 'diverted' from all other Districts so that those with the highest 'need where it arises' requirements contribute most to the diversion. The Option seeks to maximise choice for Gypsies and Travellers and, by spreading new provision, increases the areas of search for suitable locations for new sites. The minimum of 14 pitches is set to provide opportunities for a range of site provision while reducing the risk that families would be unduly isolated from other community members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The costs associated with making additional provision and the task of identifying suitable land would be more equitably shared between each District authority, than currently ▪ Could potentially lead to new pitches being provided in areas where significant demand does not exist but due to the overall scale of need across the Region (identified by the GTAAs) this is considered unlikely
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B2 Options 1 and 2 would result in 109 spaces being allocated to Herefordshire. Option 3 allocates 100. The full table of allocations is set out in the Annex to these appendices below.

B3 It can be seen from the full table of allocations that Herefordshire is given the largest numerical allocation of any county in the Region. This would appear to reflect the nature of the County rather than, necessarily, the hidden demand for additional pitches. The County has a large number of long term tolerated sites which add significantly to the supply and thereby would reduce the demand if these sites were taken into account.

Gypsies , Travellers and Travelling Showpeople: Suggested Response

B4 In the light of the above options the following questions are posed, with suggested responses as appropriate:

Question GTQ1: Do you agree with the total residential pitch requirements (939 pitches) as identified by the sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments – can you provide any other evidence?

Suggested Response: As an estimate of global need it does not take account of the under occupation which habitually affects existing sites. The apparent lack of capacity should take account of these unused spaces which exist at present. Additionally there is a significant number of long term tolerated sites (around 60 pitches in Herefordshire) which, if counted, would reduce the numerical need significantly. The result is to direct a disproportionate level of allocation to those districts and counties where Gypsies and Travellers currently frequent – which is not always the same as where they would wish to frequent. This issue then compromises the list of options which follow which appear to direct more sites to the areas with the most at present, rather than trying to establish whether there is a need for a wider choice of sites across the region. Effectively those authorities which already make the most generous provision at present are being “Punished” whilst those authorities which make little provision are not being asked to improve their performance to any significant degree.

Question GTQ2: Do you think the 3 options listed for the provision of residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches provide a good range of solutions – do you think there is another Option which could be explored?

Suggested response: See previous answer – the picture would change significantly if under-occupancy of existing sites and long term tolerated pitches were taken into account. Another approach would be to respond solely to demand for additional pitches arising from family growth

rather than estimates of latent demand.

Question GTQ3: Which is your preferred option of the three options, and why?

Suggested response: Option 3 because it acknowledges some (albeit not much) re-distribution of pitches around the region instead of maintaining the current distribution of “Hotspots”.

Question GTQ4: You may wish to consider need in specific parts of the West Midlands Region (for example in a particular City or sub-Region) – please state where and provide any comments on this specific area in the region.

Suggested response: The particular characteristic of Hereford in this context is one of a large, rural area with, outside the Market Towns and Hereford, a sparsely distributed population. Thus, whilst the GTAA report suggested that there is a large unmet demand for pitches, in practice the current demand is met through long term tolerated sites. This will not be the case in other, more densely populated sub-regions, and thus there is a justification for a different approach in Herefordshire which recognises the role of tolerated sites.

Question GTQ5 and GTQ6: Do you think the numbers allocated for transit provision [in Herefordshire this equates to 10 pitches] will meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers?

Suggested Response: There are 10 unused transit pitches in the County at present and, therefore, there already is the potential provision to meet this need. Any decision on relocating this provision is best left at the local level.

Questions TSQ1 and 2: Do you think the additional number of pitches allocated for Travelling Show People will meet their needs? [in Herefordshire this equates to a share of 9 plots allocated to Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford/Wrekin in Option 1 and 19 plots in Option 2]

Suggested response: There is no evidenced need (from the GTAA) for any provision for Travelling Showpeople pitches in Herefordshire. Given the acknowledged preference of Travelling Showpeople for sites in the West Midlands conurbation there is no need to allocate sites in Herefordshire.

Question TSQ3: Do you agree that the plot numbers for Travelling Showpeople should be allocated on a County basis, rather than down to District basis?

Suggested Response: This distinction is not significant to Herefordshire.

APPENDIX C – CULTURE, SPORT AND TOURISM

- C1 The options for Culture Sport and Tourism deal with matters of broad principle along with the question as to whether individual sites of regional, national and/or international significance should be listed in the policy. Culture, Sport and Tourism are, of course, all important in their own right for the County but the particular options being considered are ones of detailed refinement which can be developed as appropriate in our Core Strategy in due course in order to allow detailed consideration. It is **recommended** that the response is delegated to the **Cabinet Member for Environment and Strategic Housing** (taking into account the views expressed by both Planning Committee and the Stakeholder meeting concerning the importance of the River Wye and the sports facilities at the Royal National College for the Blind).

APPENDIX D – QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

- D1 The issues covered in this section include the very important ones of making the best use of Brownfield land (in preference to Greenfield land where there is a choice), provision of green spaces, management, protection and enhancement of the historic environment, the Region's landscapes and biodiversity and natural assets, woodland management and the recognition of the importance of agricultural land. These are all issues which are being taken up in the background studies to, and developed further in, the Core Strategy and thus the proposed revisions to the Regional policies will support work currently being undertaken without significantly changing the direction of the emerging Core Strategy. It is therefore **recommended** that technical responses to these issues be delegated to officers.
- D2 Principal changes worth noting are the proposed revisions of policy QE4 previously headed '*Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Spaces*' to '*Green Infrastructure*'; reflecting the widely adopted approach of planning and developing multifunctional green space at a range of geographic levels and scales, providing for a broad range of activities and aspirations, and changes to policy QE6 '*The Conservation, Enhancement and Restoration of the Region's Landscape*'; intended to reflect significant change in national policy and commitment to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) (signed by the UK government in February 2006 and implemented in March 2007).
- D3 Green infrastructure, as with 'grey' infrastructure (roads, water and drainage provision, energy supply, etc.) should be planned in advance of development to ensure truly sustainable places and communities. A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the county is in the process of being developed as part of the Growth Point agenda and Core Strategy. Similarly, the ELC is a voluntary 'code of conduct' developed to further the understanding, protection and enhancement of landscapes through the recognition that all landscapes matter and have some importance and that importance is best identified and understood by people living in those landscapes. Again, the identification of distinct landscapes, their significance and sensitivity, value and condition is being considered in the development of the Core Strategy.
- D4 An alternative and simplified approach to the management of environmental assets is proposed by the revision of policy QE1, recognising the need to take an integrated and holistic approach to the management and protection of the environment at all scales. Options extend to; protecting and enhancing key assets and poor quality environments; targeting areas affected by significant growth, protecting and enhancing key assets and poor quality environments; extending protection and enhancement of key assets and poor quality environments across the region, but with a focus on major urban areas and regeneration zones.
- D5 The proposed options also propose revisions to the policies on floodplain management including implementation of the Water Framework Directive. This work is also being undertaken anyway as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy and thus the proposed revisions to the Regional Planning policies merely reinforce the work which is being undertaken anyway.
- D6 It is **recommended** that the response to the Quality of Environment policies discussed above is delegated to the **Cabinet Member for Environment and Strategic Housing**.

D7 The section on Renewable Energy Generation proposes a significantly enhanced review of the policies. The main policy choices are:

TABLE C – RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICIES	
Options	Implications
<p>Option 1: Retain existing RSS Policy EN1 with the aspiration that the region meet the national target for generating electricity from renewable sources – this means setting targets to generate 10% of electricity from renewable sources by 2010, with a further target of 15.5% by 2015 and 20% by 2020.</p>	<p>Would reduce the demand on fossil fuels, make a positive contribution to tackling climate change and would be consistent with national targets.</p> <p>Would encourage the development of a “green economy” based on renewable energy and low carbon technologies and provide employment benefits.</p> <p>Locational requirements of renewables (particularly in high wind speed areas) could create significant landscape impacts and lead to negative effects in regard to biodiversity.</p> <p>This Option does not include a target for renewable energy to contribute to heat consumption or transport.</p>
<p>Option 2: Adopt Regional Energy Strategy targets for renewable energy which requires 5% of electricity consumption by 2010 rising to 10% by 2020; 0.3% of heat consumption by 2010 rising to 1% by 2020; and for at least 460 GWh of liquid biofuels to be produced for transport use in the region – this means targets for 2010 which would be equivalent to up to 75 MW of landfill gas fuelled generators, 100 1.5 MW wind turbines (in rural and urban areas) and 27 1MW biomass/biogas powered generators. The regional target for biofuels by 2010 equates to approximately 44 million litres.</p> <p>[Please note that the exact mix of renewables to achieve the above targets would depend on a wide range of factors. The mix of renewable energy technologies to meet the Regional Energy Strategy target was for presentation purposes only and are not specific targets]</p>	<p>Increased level of renewable energy in the region compared with the present</p> <p>Fails to meet Government targets for renewable energy</p> <p>Would fail to meet Government climate change (CO2) targets</p>
<p>Option 3: Sub-Regional targets for renewable energy – this means the RSS including targets for the sub-regions in the West Midlands which reflect renewable energy opportunities and constraints in those areas. This would involve assessing the potential renewable energy and low carbon technology resources (for example</p>	<p>Sub-regional targets which reflect renewable energy opportunities and constraints</p> <p>Technical assessment of renewable energy opportunities and constraints in sub-regions required</p>

wood and wind) and planning constraints in each sub-region and apportioning a target for that area.	sub-regions required Different targets in different parts of the region Realistic sub-regional targets might help better contribute to the achievement of regional targets.
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- D7 This choice of options is complicated by the fact that, at the Examination in Public (EIP) into Phase 2 of the RSS (which finished on 24th June) the question of “Merton Rule” type policies was challenged. (The “Merton Rule” is named after the London Borough of Merton which introduced policies to require new housing developments to provide at least 10% of their energy needs from renewable sources.) The Panel Report on the EIP is not expected until later this year and thus the basis for having a policy which goes beyond national policy guidelines is not yet certain. If, as a result of the Phase 2 policies, the Secretary of State is prepared to accept the Region having its own, more demanding renewable energy policies then the choice of the three options above becomes a realistic choice.
- D8 In Herefordshire’s context a blanket application may not be appropriate, for example for relatively small sites in villages where there is no easy access to “Renewable” energy sources. However, policies along these lines may well be appropriate for the larger scale Greenfield developments which may well be required as urban extensions to Hereford. In such cases bespoke policies could be introduced at Development Brief level.
- D9 A further set of policy options is put forward on the issue of the location of renewable energy developments (such as wind farms). The options are set out in the following terms:

TABLE D – LOCATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT	
Location of Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Technologies	Implications
Option 1: Retain existing policy EN1 in RSS which states that local authorities in their Local Development Documents should identify the environmental and other criteria which will be applied to determine the acceptability of renewable energy proposals – this means that there are no clear or consistent criteria for the Regional Planning Body or local authorities to assess whether planning applications for renewable and low carbon technologies are in appropriate locations.	No clear criteria for assessing appropriate locations for renewable energy and low carbon technology development. Inconsistent approach to assessing applications in the region.
Option 2: Criteria based policies for renewable energy and low carbon technology - this means that the RSS would set out consistent criteria against which planning applications for renewable energy and low carbon technologies would be assessed. For example this could include setting out minimum acceptable distances from residential properties, maximum noise levels and guidelines for considering the visual impact of developments on the landscape.	Clear and consistent approach to assess whether applications for renewable energy and low carbon technologies are appropriately located.

Quality of the Environment (Renewable Energy): Suggested Response

D10 In the light of the above options the following questions are posed, with suggested responses as appropriate:

Question ENV18: Do you think policy EN2 should be revised to encourage improvements to the energy efficiency of existing buildings as opportunities arise?

Suggested response: As a general rule, "Yes". A critical issue is the outcome of the current Phase 2 review of the RSS. If the Secretary of State is prepared to accept regional targets which are more challenging than national standards then further regional guidance will be needed as to how that can be achieved. Herefordshire Council will be preparing a Design Code SPD to put the latest policies into practice in a locally distinctive policy anyway.

Question ENV19: Which of the three Regional Energy Target Options do you think should be used in the RSS to promote the development of renewable energy and low carbon technologies in the West Midlands?

Suggested Response: Option 1 is essentially keeping the national targets and leaving it to local planning authorities to apply them. Option 2 needs to be adjusted to be at least as onerous as the national targets, otherwise there is no point to it. However, Regional targets may be prevented by the Secretary of State's decision on the Phase 2 policies. Biofuels, (which are referred to as a suggestion in the Option) may be seen as environmentally destructive and not suitable where there is conflict with other environmental policies. Option 3 will require a lot of work to establish the evidence for sub-regional targets and, in common with Option 2, depends on the outcome of the relevant phase 2 policies. A better option would be to allow local planning authorities to develop their own distinctive policy guidance based on the national standards. The efficacy of such guidance can then be monitored through local development frameworks.

Question ENV20: Do you think that the RSS should set regional targets for specific renewable energy and low carbon technologies such as biomass, combined heat and power, ground source heat, landfill gas, solar, wind etc.?

Suggested response: No. The technologies for all of these will change significantly during the plan period of the RSS (i.e. to 2026) and thus the relative advantages and disadvantages of each technology, and their suitability for any one site, will be likely to change. Consequently any such policy is likely to become out of date long before the end of the plan period. The most effective technology will vary from locality to locality and from site to site and therefore trying to comply with an overarching regional demand for certain specific technologies will not be practicable.

Question ENV21: Do you think the RSS should retain the existing policy EN1 or should set out clear regional criteria to assess whether applications for renewable energy and low carbon technologies are appropriately located?

Suggested response: The landscapes and characteristics of the different parts of the region are so diverse that it may prove difficult to define, at the regional level, the relative importance of different criteria. There may be conflict between trying to locate large installations close to centres of population whilst at the same time protecting residential amenities. Similarly, criteria which encourage installations in sparsely populated areas may encourage installations in localities with the highest adverse landscape impact. In the absence of specific suggestions for criteria it is not possible to comment in detail.

Question ENV22: If you think the RSS should include clear criteria for assessing applications for renewable energy and low carbon technologies (Option 2 in table D above) please tell us which are the most important factors in assessing where renewable energy and low carbon technologies would

be most appropriately located. Please rate each factor on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is the least important and 5 is the most important). (see table on next page)

Criterion	Score (from 1 to 5)
Contribution to the global environment	
Contribution to the local economy	
Impact on flora and fauna	
Noise	
Odour	
Traffic implications	
Visual impact	
Other factor(s)	

APPENDIX E – MINERALS

- E1 In common with the Quality of Environment Policies (other than renewable energy policies) above, the issues raised by this part of the consultation are being covered anyway in the work on the evidence base for the Core Strategy. That evidence suggests that there is no need to seek regionally significant new sites for minerals extraction in Herefordshire during the anticipated plan period. It is therefore **recommended** that the responses to this section are delegated to the **Cabinet member for Environment and Strategic Housing**.

ANNEX to APPENDIX B – Proposed District Allocation of Pitches

Table 1: District Allocation of Pitch Requirements under Options 1, 2 and 3

Local authority	Additional Residential Pitch Requirements		
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Staffordshire			
Cannock Chase	35	28	32
East Staffordshire	15	23	14
Lichfield	11	12	14
Newcastle-under-Lyme	20	20	19
South Staffordshire	50	44	46
Stafford	37	42	34
Staffordshire Moorlands	2	7	14
Tamworth	7	6	14
Warwickshire			
North Warwickshire	18	16	17
Nuneaton & Bedworth	29	27	27
Rugby	66	55	61
Stratford-on-Avon	45	43	41
Warwick	13	15	14
Worcestershire			
Bromsgrove	3	4	14
Malvern Hills	33	34	30
Redditch	0	4	14
Worcester	22	19	20
Wychavon	66	70	61
Wyre Forest	44	35	41
Metropolitan districts			
Birmingham	19	16	18
Coventry	3	5	14
Dudley	21	17	19
Sandwell	3	3	14
Solihull	26	23	24
Walsall	39	31	36
Wolverhampton	36	27	33
Unitary authorities			
Herefordshire	109	109	100
Shropshire	93	122	86
Stoke-on-Trent	40	36	37
Telford & Wrekin	34	46	31
West Midlands Region	939	939	939

Figure 1 shows in graphical terms the pattern of requirements resulting from each Option at county level. Staffordshire includes Stoke-on-Trent; Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are considered together.