

Chapter 6

Communities for the Future





Communities for the Future

Introduction

- 6.1 *The government's key housing policy goal is to ensure everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live¹. 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 unaffordability 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 *The WMRSS Revision seeks to retain a strong emphasis on urban renaissance and the concentration of new housing development within the MUAs close to where demand arises. Excessive development on greenfield sites outside the MUAs could fundamentally undermine the process of urban renaissance. To support this renaissance, residential environments within the MUAs will need to be made more attractive, so that they can increasingly retain their economically active population.*
- 6.3 *At the same time, new housing provision will need to be made in other parts of the Region to meet housing demand. Parts of this provision will be focused on named settlements capable of balanced and sustainable growth but provision will also be made for a spread of development to meet the requirements of other settlements, market towns and rural areas.*
- 6.4 *The distribution, location and type of new housing development have an important role to play in delivering the urban and rural renaissance agendas and regard should be had to the relevant chapters of the WMRSS. In increasing the level of development in the MUAs, particular attention should be paid to the policies in the Quality of the Environment Chapter (Chapter 8) and the Towards a More Sustainable Region Chapter (Chapter 2).*
- 6.5 *Delivering the WMRSS strategy will require a co-ordinated approach to housing provision across administrative boundaries and between planning and housing authorities, private house builders, the Housing Corporation and private and social housing landlords. Through the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) (2005)² the Regional Housing Board (RHB) will identify regional priorities for housing market interventions and targeting of capital public investment resources.*
- 6.6 *Within the overall housing requirements of the West Midlands, the need for affordable housing is critical for the Region and affects all parts. Policy CF7 on 'Delivering affordable housing' requires both local planning authorities and the RPB to work closely with the RHB with regard to the RHS and the strategic housing market areas.*

¹Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing, Communities and Local Government 2006.

²Regional Housing Strategy – WMRA & GOWM (2005).



Housing within the Major Urban Areas

- 6.7 Research into the Region's housing markets indicates that substantial areas within the MUAs need to provide more attractive choices of home and community environments, to encourage economically active and independent households to stay. Whilst the West Midlands has not experienced the worst cases of low demand for housing or abandonment that were evident in more northern regions, there are still risks of localised housing market failure which the Housing Pathfinders are seeking to address. To do this effectively, the WMRSS and the RHS have developed a co-ordinated approach to encourage economically active residents to remain in these areas facilitating an increase in the wealth of the conurbations.
- 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 the decrease in 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 The North Staffordshire conurbation, particularly the inner core, has experienced a decline in population and economic activity which has led to a weak housing market in this inner core. The concerted actions being put in place with the support of government and in conjunction with the local authorities have a good prospect for success if these are sustained and economic development is renewed to underpin other aspects of regeneration.

CF1

Housing within the Major Urban Areas

- 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 Housing Corporation and Registered Social Landlords to:
- a) significantly improve the quality of the existing housing stock both through enhanced renovation programmes and increased rates of redevelopment



Communities for the Future

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

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 employment and surplus open space uses to release land for housing development.





Communities for the Future

- 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. In parts of the City Region, in particular Birmingham, there is an aspiration to develop 'eco-centres' to accommodate new housing growth.*
- 6.13 *Within Birmingham and Solihull, early concentration of development will be within the East Birmingham/North Solihull corridor, covering both authorities and as set out in the New Growth Points submission. Within Birmingham, further growth areas are being developed as part of the City Region vision for growth in the centre and south of the city. Within Solihull, priority will be given to the development within that part of the Borough that is identified as part of the MUA and that supports urban renaissance. To deliver the proposals in this area, no urban extensions are needed in the period up to 2026.*
- 6.14 *Within Coventry, development will initially be concentrated around the city centre and other priority regeneration areas. If, after further investigation, additional development sites are needed to meet the required housing trajectory, the LDD should seek to bring forward greenfield urban extensions. Any proposed extensions should initially be within the Coventry administrative boundary and then if necessary, and following joint studies with Warwickshire authorities and the City Council, adjacent to the city within other local authority areas. This would involve amendments to the Greenbelt boundaries.*
- 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. No urban extensions are needed in the period up to 2026.*





- 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.*
- 6.17 *There will be a need for significant investment in some parts of the MUAs to develop the transport capacity, social infrastructure and quality environment to ensure the development of mixed sustainable communities that appeal to a broad range of existing and new residents (SR2). This timing of increased housing development is also consistent with the Sustainable Communities Plan, which anticipates healthy markets in the pathfinder areas nationally between 2010-2015. This reflects the time necessary to bring forward capacity and create confidence in the housing markets.*

Housing beyond the Major Urban Areas

- 6.18 *Areas outside the MUAs house nearly half of the Region's population. There is considerable variation across the area which contains affluent commercial and residential centres alongside less affluent urban areas, which have had or are still experiencing manufacturing decline. Rural areas range from those within close proximity to the conurbations to more remote rural areas in the Welsh Marches and North East Staffordshire. Some towns, particularly Telford, Nuneaton and Burton upon Trent, have issues relating to housing renewal, similar to those in the MUAs.*
- 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. 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.*
- 6.20 *Telford (population around 134,000) is a larger freestanding settlement than others across the Region and is part of the Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region. As a former 'new town', with extensive areas of reclaimed land still available for development, it provides an important opportunity for the growth and further development of a large sustainable community.*



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*
- 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.

B. *Areas for new housing development, on a smaller scale, will also be accommodated within and adjacent to other urban areas, and market towns of the Region. These settlements, which need to be capable of creating balanced opportunities for housing and employment and which should already have a range of local services, will be identified through LDDs.*

C. *Development in villages should support the need to meet local housing requirements, particularly needs for affordable housing; and 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.*

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 New Homes 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.*



- 6.23 *The distribution of housing shown 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.*
- 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

- A. *Development plans should make provision for additional dwellings (net) to be built as specified in Table 1 for the period 2006-2026. Proposals for Birmingham, Solihull (that part within the MUA) and the Black Country Boroughs are minima figures. Table one 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.

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

Footnotes to accompany Table 1:

- a) Of the total provision for Birmingham, around 700 dwellings will be provided at Longbridge, in Bromsgrove District.*
- b) Dependant 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, dependant 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.*



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 and 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



Communities for the Future

- 6.25 *In determining the most sustainable form of new development, local authorities, in their LDDs should consider whether the release of Greenbelt land (within the context of policies CF1 and CF2) would provide a more appropriate option than other forms of development.*
- 6.26 *Local authorities in developing LDDs and responding to planning applications should consider the air quality impacts on European nature conservation sites so that development does not result in an increase in air pollution at the site. They should also require sustainable drainage systems as set out in Policy SR3.*
- 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.*
- 6.28 *Table 2 sets out the demolition assumptions outlined in the 2007 Housing Land and Urban Capacity Refresh Study.*
- 6.29 *In determining demand for additional housing provision, it has been assumed that current levels of vacancies in the existing housing stock remain constant. As the number of new houses in the Region increases, the number of vacancies is assumed to rise and this has been included within the background estimates of housing demand. Any significant changes to current vacancy levels may have implications for additional provision that is required. If local monitoring indicates that the overall level of vacancies is declining in a local authority, this can be taken into account in determining the capacity of sites to be identified in the LDD.*

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 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.*



Table 2 – Demolition Assumptions 2006-2026

Planning Area	Annual Demolitions 2006 - 2026	Total 2006 - 2026
<i>Birmingham City Council</i>	1,345	26,900
Black Country	1,290	25,806
<i>Coventry CC</i>	105	2,097
<i>Solihull MBC</i>	227	4,539
Metropolitan Area Total	2,967	59,342
Shropshire	18	351
<i>Bridgnorth</i>	4	87
<i>North Shropshire</i>	4	76
<i>Oswestry</i>	1	14
<i>Shrewsbury and Atcham</i>	6	115
<i>South Shropshire</i>	3	59
Telford & Wrekin	10	202
Staffordshire	106	2,116
<i>Cannock Chase</i>	29	588
<i>East Staffordshire</i>	1	28
<i>Lichfield</i>	4	72
<i>Newcastle-under-Lyme</i>	49	976
<i>South Staffordshire</i>	12	242
<i>Stafford</i>	8	150
<i>Staffordshire Moorlands</i>	3	60
<i>Tamworth</i>	0	0
Stoke-on-Trent	175	3,500
Warwickshire	102	2,030
<i>North Warwickshire</i>	13	251
<i>Nuneaton and Bedworth</i>	22	448
<i>Rugby</i>	26	517
<i>Stratford-on-Avon</i>	33	668
<i>Warwick</i>	7	146
Worcestershire	66	1,329
<i>Bromsgrove</i>	10	205
<i>Malvern Hills</i>	15	295
<i>Redditch</i>	2	30
<i>City of Worcester</i>	0	0
<i>Wychavon</i>	24	471
<i>Wyre Forest</i>	16	328
Herefordshire	25	500
Shire and Unitary Authorities Total	501	10,028
Major Urban Areas	3,191	63,818
Other Areas	278	5,552
West Midlands Region	3,469	69,370

Source: Regional Housing Land Potential Study, 2007, WMRA.



CF4 Phasing of new development

Levels of new house building across the Region will be phased to seek to ensure that there is, overall, an increasing level of housing provision in the period up to 2016. Priority will be given 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. 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:

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*

Proposed phasing of housing allocations*

	2005/6 Actual Net Completions	Rising trajectory of house building by 2016 to reach:	Remainder per annum average 2016-2026
West Midlands conurbation	6,900	8,000	7,800
North Staffordshire conurbation	1,000	900	800
Rest of Region	10,100	10,100	9,200
West Midlands Region	18,000	19,000	17,800

Source: Regional Housing Land Potential Study, 2007, WMRA.

* 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.



Communities for the Future

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 should not undermine urban renaissance within the authority or in neighbouring areas.

6.32 The distribution of housing proposals in the period up to 2016 implies increasing development rates quickly within the West Midlands conurbation, to support urban renaissance and the growth proposals of the City Region. Development proposals for the North Staffordshire conurbation do not however increase to the same extent or as rapidly, within the North Staffordshire conurbation. This is a reflection of the weak housing market which currently exists within this conurbation and the need to concentrate development early in the WMRSS period, within the urban core, to ensure the maximum opportunity to secure regeneration of the priority areas identified within the housing pathfinder action plans. If this regeneration is successful, development rates within the North Staffordshire conurbation could be increased post 2016, following a review of the WMRSS.

6.33 In order to meet the government's requirement to increase housebuilding rates across England by 2016, the housing trajectory for the rest of the Region, outside the conurbations, requires a continued level of development which is consistent with the building rate achieved during 2005/6. This will require careful management of land releases in-line with the required housing trajectories, particularly until LDD allocation strategies are approved.

6.34 Policy CF4 should be read in conjunction with the sub-regional specific phasing issues set out in Chapter 3, and policy CF10 on managing housing land supply. Following monitoring of the implementation of housing provision in the early years of the WMRSS, it may be possible to subsequently amend targets for the period post 2016, as part of a further review of the WMRSS.

6.35 Realistic phasing at the local level will be determined through the preparation of LDDs and the water companies' 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 specified in policy CF4. This will be monitored as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.



The reuse of land and buildings for housing

- 6.36 The re-use of land and buildings for housing is a critical factor in securing urban renaissance across all the urban settlements in the Region. Local Planning Authorities in drawing up their core strategies and site allocation documents should give precedence to the development of brownfield land and the reuse of existing buildings, where appropriate, within urban areas. Local authorities in developing their LDDs should consider whether any special policy protection needs to be given to the development of gardens either across the whole authority or within particular areas to retain the character of settlements.
- 6.37 While policy CF5 gives priority to the development of brownfield land, sites need to be in sustainable locations. Local Planning Authorities in their LDD preparation will need to balance the requirement for making efficient use of brownfield land against the requirement to build in sustainable locations.

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. Minima 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.

- 6.38 The RPB, local authorities, private developers and relevant funding agencies such as the new homes agency and AWM should work together to bring forward the necessary levels of previously developed land. In implementing this policy, account should be taken of the policies in the Quality of the Environment Chapter, in particular policy QE2 and Sustainable Region Chapter (SR1 & SR2).
- 6.39 In considering the reuse of employment and commercial land and buildings for housing development, local authorities should take account of the policies relating to Prosperity for All (PA6, PA6A, PA6B), to ensure that the most important and versatile sites are protected for employment related uses.



Making efficient use of land

- 6.40 *It is important to make the most efficient use of available housing land, in order to reduce the amount of greenfield land that needs to be taken for development and to support urban renaissance. Higher density housing development can be important in the renaissance of town and village centres. In addition, increased population density encourages the provision and use of public transport and the retention and development of social and community facilities close to where they are needed.*
- 6.41 *However, the mix of development must meet the needs of the area and enable high design standards to be met; enhance the natural and historic environment; and enable the provision of a range of social and community facilities. In some cases high density developments, such as flats may actually house fewer permanent residents than for example family housing. The provision of new housing should ensure a mix of housing stock which provides for a range of types, size and tenure, and supports the provision of local services, whilst meeting the changing needs, lifestyles and aspirations of residents. Such provision could have an impact on the densities that can be achieved.*
- 6.42 *Strategic town centres and other locations close to public transport interchanges provide an opportunity to secure an urban renaissance growth strategy through high density development. However, even in these locations there needs to be a mix of provision, to include accommodation for families so that they can remain in their communities as their lifestyles change.*

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.

Delivering affordable housing

- 6.43 *An adequate supply of affordable housing is essential for the Region's economic competitiveness and the quality of life of those people living in the Region, who cannot compete on the open market. Across the West Midlands, there is a shortage of affordable housing in both urban and rural areas and it is essential that the housing needs of households who are unable to access or afford market housing are met. The provision of affordable housing is a priority of the RHS; by creating "pathways of housing choice" the RHS aims to enable people to live near their work in pleasant and affordable homes. To address this failure in the housing market all LDDs and Local Housing Strategies will need to develop housing proposals in accordance with the housing market sub-regions defined by the Regional Housing Strategy.*
- 6.44 *For the period covered by this strategy, a study undertaken by Cambridge University³ has estimated that there could be a need for around 6,200 social dwellings per annum arising from demographic need and the need to replace social houses lost through 'right to buy' legislation. In addition, the study estimates that around 3,500 social houses are needed per annum to replace demolished stock. A breakdown of the estimates for each Housing Market Area is set out overleaf in table 3:*

³Household projection-based estimate of housing demand and need in the West Midlands in 2006-2026: Unconstrained, Cambridge Centre for Housing & Planning Research, 2007.



Table 3: Annual need for social housing for rent and affordable intermediate housing arising from:

Sub Regional Housing Market Areas (from RHS 2005) ⁴	Demography and replacing 'right to buy' Numbers of units p.a.	Re-housing from numbers of units demolished p.a.
North HMA	600	300
Central HMA	3,600	3,000
South HMA	1,400	100
West HMA	600	100
Total	6,200	3,500

6.45 *The Cambridge study also estimates that there could be a need for around 3,000 intermediate houses per annum in the Region. Of this total, one third is already included in the overall estimate of need for social housing set out above with the other two thirds coming from an estimate of requirements for the market sector.*

6.46 *Local authorities, particularly those with large house clearance programmes will need to determine whether the affordable housing requirement arising from these programmes can be met on housing redevelopment sites, as part of the 1:1 replacement requirement.*

6.47 *Evidence from local authorities as to what resources they are likely to be able to secure through S106 agreements, relating to an increased level of new housing development, and through resources from the Housing Corporation, suggest that a realistic estimate of likely delivery across the Region, at least in the short and medium term, could be in the order of 6,000 dwellings per annum. However, this will be dependent on the continued availability of funding and on the mix between social and intermediate housing that is achieved. These indicative targets will need to be reviewed as sub-regional housing market assessments are finalised.*

6.48 *In order to deliver “pathways to housing choice”, local authorities should use and interpret the findings of up to date sub-regional housing market assessments and, where appropriate, local studies to determine need for more affordable housing provision, to identify the gaps in provision and to identify the methods by which provision, including the percentage of provision, type, tenure and size, can be made as part of new and mixed-use development schemes.*

CF7 Delivering affordable housing

A. *Local authorities should keep under review the need for affordable housing in their area, based on local or sub-regional housing market and housing needs assessments, using a broadly consistent approach as advised by government policy and the Regional Housing Executive. Both social rented and intermediate housing should contribute to meeting needs, dependent on the particular requirements and market circumstances of an area. Opportunities should be sought within the existing housing stock where this would help the creation of mixed communities as well as through new build.*

⁴ See Figure 4 in Chapter 3: Local authorities by Sub-regional Housing Market Area.



Communities for the Future

B. 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 6,000 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.

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

(vii) 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.

D. 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.

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.



Communities for the Future

Where there is difficulty in securing sites for affordable housing, local authorities and the Homes and Communities Agency should exercise using compulsory purchase powers.

- 6.50 *Provision of affordable housing in settlements with populations below 3,000 is the most difficult to deliver. The need identified for affordable homes in these settlements is likely to be of a very localised nature. The provision of new social and low cost home ownership housing must demonstrate how it will 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 shared equity 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 *In accordance with PPS3, Local Planning Authorities should plan for mixed and balanced communities, which provide sufficient housing provision and ensure that the right mix of housing stock is provided in the right places. Local authorities will need to take account of findings from local and strategic housing market assessments and plan for a mix of housing on the basis of the needs of different types of households that are likely to require housing over the plan period, as well as the type, tenure and size of development required.*
- 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 *There is now recognition that a more balanced spread of development is required, including more family friendly housing, in all communities. Two and three bedroom houses with small gardens have the advantage that they provide a more flexible, future proofed housing stock, meeting both the needs of families and other households; first time buyers and people seeking to trade down in the housing market as they retire. However, increasing the proportion of 'family' accommodation will have implications for the densities that can be achieved, particularly in the MUAs.*
- 6.56 *Demographic trends will result in a considerable increase in the proportion of older people by 2026. Along with changing lifestyle and housing aspirations, an ageing population also gives rise to specific housing requirements, including flexible accommodation that meets lifestyle changes such as lifetime homes and specialist provision such as 'extra-care' housing.*
- 6.57 *Provision for vulnerable groups is also required both within the market sector and social stock.*
- 6.58 *Housing market characteristics and conditions vary across the Region. Some parts of the Region, particularly the MUAs, require a higher proportion of more 'upmarket' houses to encourage professional and managerial workers to locate within the cities, thus increasing the wealth of the area and stemming out migration. The RHS and the Housing Market Assessments have*



Communities for the Future

identified the housing market characteristics and conditions in relation to each of the four sub-regional Housing Market Areas. A definition of the four strategic housing market areas is set out in Figure 4 in Chapter 3.

A summary of the key themes is set below:

Central HMA

Central HMA 1 (Birmingham, Solihull, Lichfield and Tamworth): Addressing deprivation and unmet housing needs of a high level of BME households in the MUAs have led to acute and growing requirement for more affordable housing, with high levels of social rented housing needed in the inner city areas. In terms of property type and size, housing need is most acute for 4 and 5 bed properties, with a requirement for intermediate housing to meet the needs of younger newly forming households. Considerable opportunities exist to further the renewal of the MUA residential stock and environment. This includes Urban Living (Pathfinder) and the East Birmingham/North Solihull area of market restructuring as well as other major areas of change in South West Birmingham.

Central HMA 2 (Coventry and north Warwickshire authorities): Huge disparities exist across this sub-regional housing market area, in terms of affordability, demographics and housing type and a range of housing and initiatives are required to meet housing needs. Long-term provision in North Warwickshire and Rugby will need to take into account the affects of an increasing ageing population, where provision in Coventry and Nuneaton will need to make provision for aspirational housing to reduce the level of out-migration.

Central HMA 3: New housing provision will need to support the regeneration of the Black Country and its aspiration to increase the provision of social class A and B households, as well as support the delivery of the housing intervention programmes, to provide new build tenures, investment in refurbishment of stock, increase access to housing for BME groups and make provision for family housing.

North HMA: Priorities will focus on the delivery of a good choice of appropriate quality housing support, to support economic growth and regeneration. This includes the replacement and renewal of housing stock and provision for a wider range of housing types including the provision of affordable housing and supported housing for vulnerable groups.

West HMA: Provision will need to accommodate increased needs for affordable housing for rent and sale to meet local needs (key workers) and to respond to the changing demographics. The area has a high proportion of detached dwellings and with an increasing ageing population, provision will need to accommodate local needs e.g. bungalows and extra care facilities.

South HMA: An increasing ageing population profile is creating an additional demand for sheltered and extra care home accommodation. Increasing affordability problems, compounded by a low proportion of social housing stock, have placed pressures to increase the provision of affordable housing to accommodate the needs of younger and newly forming households as well as the sustainability of rural communities. Rebalancing the housing market will require a move away from larger homes towards a mixed supply of smaller homes for owner occupation and rent.

6.59 The exact mix of provision required can only be determined through sub-regional and local housing market and needs assessments informing the Local Development Plan process.

CF8 Delivering mixed communities

A. Using the evidence available from sub-regional and local housing market assessments, local authorities should set out in development plans, the general mix of types of accommodation that need to be built in a particular area. Account should be taken of housing needs and available supply in areas within and adjacent to the housing market area.



- B. *In determining the mix of new housing provision, Local Planning Authorities should consider:*
- i) *the needs of different groups (for example, students, young people, migrants, an ageing population, black and ethnic communities and families with children) to ensure the construction of an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures*
 - ii) *the need for a greater proportion of higher value housing in the MUAs and some other settlements across the Region.*
- C. *Local authorities, developers and social housing providers should co-operate to create more balanced and mixed communities through the provision of a range of housing types and tenures within new housing developments and sites across all parts of the Region.*

Gypsies and travellers

- 6.60 *The West Midlands Regional Assembly delivered an Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Policy to Ministers in March 2007. The policy on sites for gypsies and travellers will be amended as part of the WMRSS Phase Three Revision. For completeness, the existing policy (unchanged) is set out below.*

CF9 Sites for gypsies and travellers

Development plans should ensure that adequate provision is made for suitable sites to accommodate gypsies and other travellers. Such provision should reflect the order of demand in the area as indicated by the trends shown by the ODPM annual count and any additional local information.

Managing housing land provision

- 6.61 *The government requires that the planning system delivers a flexible, responsive supply of land (PPS3 para. 52). In managing the release of housing land, Local Planning Authorities should have regard to the advice in PPS3 in determining the most appropriate approach for their area.*

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 area*
 - 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.*



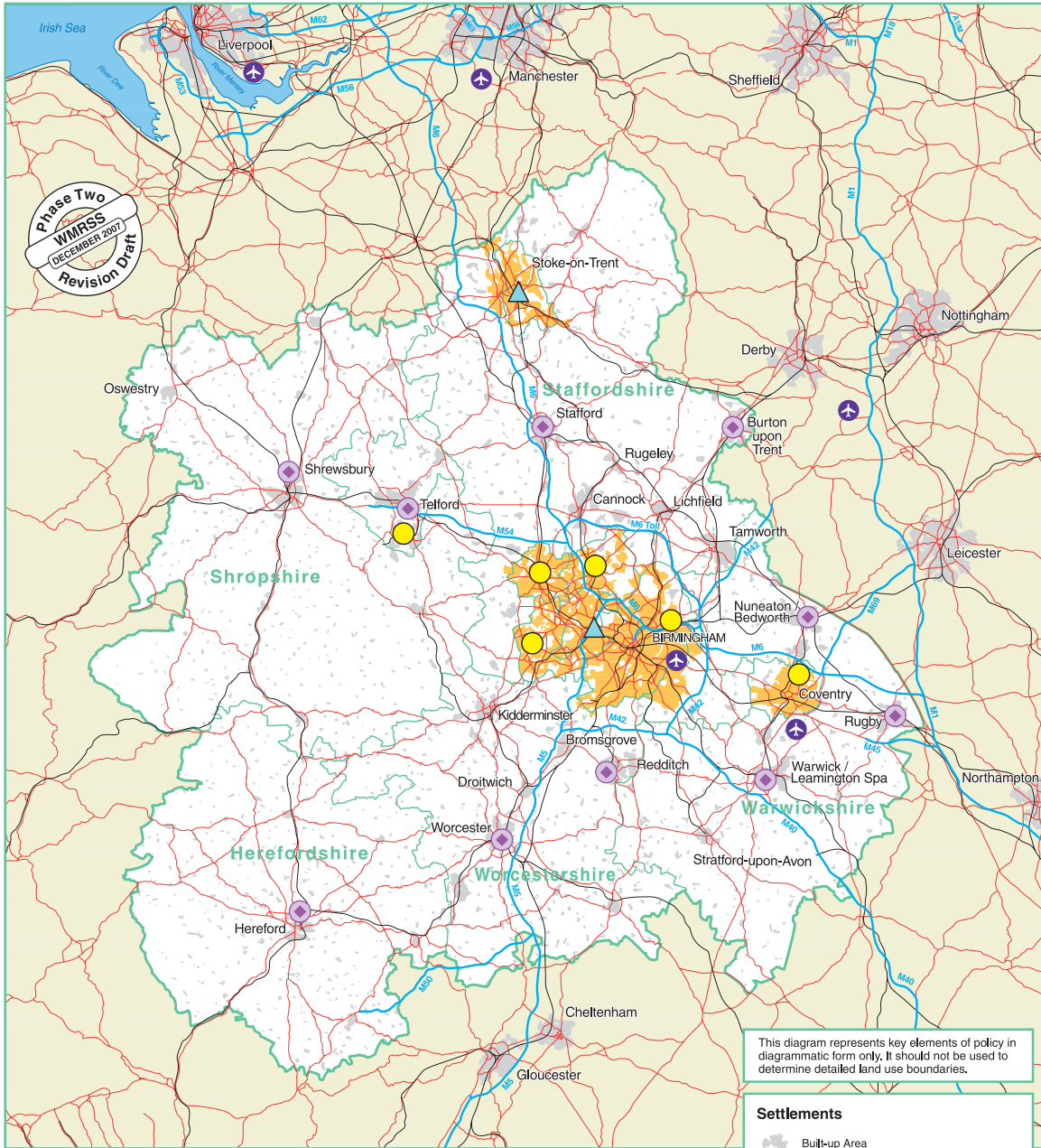
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- 6.62 *Within the Region, currently over half of all housing completions are on windfall sites while the proportion for some of the MUAs rises to around 80%. Completions on such sites and future supply are important in supporting urban renaissance both within the MUAs and across other towns within the Region. This significant contribution is likely to continue in the future. For example during 2005-6, over 70% of all new capacity identified came from windfall sites.*
- 6.63 *There are circumstances within the West Midlands which require an acknowledgement of the important role of windfall sites in future land supply contrary to the general advice in PPS3. Such sites make a vital contribution to urban renaissance and encourage patterns of sustainable development by, for example, encouraging mixed use development, particularly near town centres and within residential areas without the need for urban extensions. Most windfall sites are on previously developed land. Densities also tend to be high on windfall sites encouraging the maintenance of existing services and public transport provision.*
- 6.64 *The economy of the West Midlands Region has seen extensive restructuring over the last few decades with the loss of mining and other extractive industries and much of the manufacturing sector. The loss of manufacturing industry is projected to continue over the next 20 years. Many of these sites are not suitable for modern employment uses. Policies in Chapter 7, Prosperity for All, seek to retain the most important and versatile employment land for new employment uses but there are still large areas of previous employment land that are more suitable for housing development. There is also on going restructuring of many service industries, releasing sites for redevelopment. These sites, together with vacant and underused land and land in other 'suboptimal' uses are an important source of land for redevelopment to support urban renaissance. It is not always easy to identify the potential of such sites, during the preparation stage of the LDD, particularly*
- where a site is still in active employment use and/or provides services to the local community. However, once the current use ceases and the site is more suitable for housing development, it is important that it is brought back into active use as soon as possible. This can be handled through the development control process and the site therefore becomes a windfall site. Many windfall sites are small, but in terms of overall potential capacity, a few medium to large sites, in each local authority area can make a significant contribution to housing supply within urban areas and help create sustainable patterns of development.*
- 6.65 *There are still major uncertainties relating to the future restructuring of the economy and services within the West Midlands. It is not always possible to provide a timely response to such uncertainties through action area plans and site allocation plans. The use of windfalls provides flexibility to respond to these changes while limiting the use of peripheral greenfield sites, the development of which could undermine the actual regeneration the strategy is seeking to deliver.*
- 6.66 *The RPB will monitor permitted supply and demand on a sub-regional basis including the contribution of supply from windfall sites (together with an indication of the source of the windfalls) and provide an opportunity for the results to be discussed with other stakeholders at an annual seminar. The seminar will address the qualitative and quantitative impacts of the housing developments on the delivery of the WMRSS.*
- 6.67 *The RPB will then issue advice to local planning authorities on whether there need to be any short-term changes in supply in particular areas to reinforce the Spatial Strategy. The RPB should also comment on the extent to which any policies may need to be reviewed or more strongly enforced.*
- 6.68 *The results of this monitoring process will also inform any decision on the need for a review of the WMRSS.*



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 (Changes as at December 2007)

This diagram represents key elements of policy in diagrammatic form only. It should not be used to determine detailed land use boundaries.

- Settlements**
- Built-up Area
 - Major Urban Area - Main focus for development and investment
 - Low Demand Pathfinder
 - Housing Renewal Area
 - Settlement of Significant Development beyond MUAs

- Strategic Links**
- Motorway
 - A Road
 - Railway - Passenger
 - Airport
 - Strategic Authority Boundary