



## Sustainable Development Indicators

Measuring the scale of the challenge

Version 1.0

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### Introduction

This note analyses the performance of the West Midlands across a set of sustainable development indicators. We have also included an estimation of the scale of the challenge that the West Midlands is facing in order to close the gap with England and the best performing region.

The Poster 'The Scale of the Challenge, Sustainable Development Indicators' presents this information in a one pager summary.

Finally, we have excluded London from the 'Best Performing Region' analysis in order to make the comparisons more relevant to the West Midlands. This is because its geography means that, for many indicators, London's figures are significantly different from those for other regions.

### Summary

The West Midlands is performing better than the national average on four of the nine sustainable development indicators: Regional Index for Sustainable Economic Wellbeing (R-ISEW) per capita, R-ISEW per capita as a proportion of GVA per capita, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita and total industrial and commercial energy consumption per employee.

For the majority of the sustainable development indicators, the West Midlands' rankings tend to fall in the middle of the table (fourth or fifth place).

The best performing indicator for the West Midlands is final energy consumption per head where it ranked third among the English regions. On the other hand, the worst performing indicator is the proportion of people working from home or using sustainable means of transport where it ranked at the bottom when compared with the rest of the English regions.

## CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

The West Midlands performed better than the national average in terms of the **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita** and ranked fifth when compared to the rest of the English regions. Between 2006 and 2007 the West Midlands achieved a 2 per cent reduction (from 8.3 to 8.2 tCO<sub>2</sub>) which was the same percentage reduction achieved across England as a whole.

The gap with the best performing regions<sup>1</sup>, the East of England and the South East, increased slightly mainly because they achieved faster reduction of their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by GVA** show the level of emissions generated for every pound of GVA produced. The West Midlands performed slightly worse than the English average (480 against 474 tCO<sub>2</sub> /£m GVA). Between 2006 and 2007 the West Midlands achieved a reduction of 6.8 per cent in this indicator. The gap with the best performing region<sup>1</sup>, the South East, was reduced slightly.

## Energy consumption

The West Midlands performed slightly worse than England in terms of the **final energy consumption per head** (27,300 kWh against 27,233 kWh). The West Midlands achieved an improvement in the ranking from fourth to third position between 2006 and 2007. This improvement is a result of a slight reduction of the West Midlands level coupled with the South East region increasing its level of energy consumption. However, the fall in the West Midlands was lower than most other regions and the England average.

The gap with the South West, the best performing region<sup>1</sup>, increased between 2006 and 2007. This is because the South West was able to reduce its energy consumption per head faster than the West Midlands.

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<sup>1</sup> London was excluded from the 'Best Performing Region' analysis in order to provide a more relevant comparison to the West Midlands.

The **total energy consumption by GVA** is also known as energy intensity. A lower value would show that there is a greater output per unit of energy input, suggesting greater energy efficiency. The West Midlands achieved a slightly greater level of energy efficiency between 2006 and 2007 (down from 1.7 to 1.6 kWh per £ of GVA). However, it is less energy efficient than the English average and it also stayed fifth in the ranking. The gap with the best performing region, the South East, did not change between 2006 and 2007.

The **total industrial and commercial energy consumption by employee** in the West Midlands was reduced 2.3 per cent between 2006 and 2007 (from 21,600 kWh to 21,100 kWh). Even though the West Midlands stayed in fourth place compared to the rest of the English regions; the gap with the best performing region, the South West, increased by 4.5 per cent.

## Economic wellbeing

The Regional Index for Sustainable Economic Wellbeing (R-ISEW) is an attempt to measure the portion of economic activity which delivers genuine increases in our quality of life<sup>2</sup>.

The West Midlands slightly increased its **R-ISEW per capita** between 2006 and 2007 (from £11,357 to £11,392) and it is still above the English average. The region is still fifth in the ranking against the other regions.

The South West was the best performing region with a per capita R-ISEW of £13,927 in 2007. The gap between the West Midlands and the South West increased by 24 per cent between 2006 and 2007.

In 2007, the **R-ISEW per capita as a proportion of the GVA per capita** in the West Midlands was 66.4 per cent. This was higher than the English proportion (55.3 per cent) and 10.1 per cent behind the best performing region, the South West.

In the West Midlands, the R-ISEW per capita as a proportion of the GVA per capita decreased 1.4 per cent points between 2006 and 2007. This was the third highest decrease among the English regions. It also shows that the proportion of GVA per capita delivering genuine increases in quality of life in the region is not improving.

The highest increase achieved by an English region between 2006 and 2007 was 1.6 per cent points by the South West.

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<sup>2</sup> West Midlands Regional Observatory (2009) *Understanding the Regional index of sustainable economic wellbeing as an indicator of sustainable economic growth*, p. 4

## Sustainable Transport

The proportion of people working from home or using sustainable means of transport<sup>3</sup> declined in the West Midlands from 25 per cent in 2008 to 22 per cent in 2009. This indicator is not only performing below the English average but it is also the lowest proportion when compared with the rest of the English regions.

In order to catch up with the English average, the West Midlands needs to shift around 237,000 people to either work from home or use sustainable means of transport. The South East is the best performing region<sup>1</sup> with 28 per cent of its population working from home or using sustainable transport.

## Recycling

In the West Midlands 36.6 percent of household waste was recycled in the period 2008/2009. This is slightly below the English average with was 37.6 per cent for the same period. The South West was the best performing region with 44.5 per cent of waste recycled.

The West Midlands needs to recycle 24.6 thousand tonnes more of waste in order to catch up with the English average. The challenge is considerably higher if we want to catch up with the best performing regions, the East of England and the East Midlands (203.2 thousand tonnes more of waste to be recycled).

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<sup>3</sup> This includes using public transport (bus, train, light rail/underground), cycling or walking to work.