



# Observatory Business Plan 2010/11

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# 1 Executive Summary

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## 1.1 Context

The Business Plan for 2010/11 is set in the context of further consolidation against a backdrop of uncertainty which will require us to be flexible in our response to potential national and regional changes.

There are a number of national and regional policies that influence the work of the Observatory. These include the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill which received Royal Assent in November 2009. The Act creates:

- The responsibility for developing a single regional strategy, which will provide a blueprint for housing, transport and economic development. This will create a coherent action plan for recovery in each region and will be developed jointly by the Regional Development Agencies in partnership with a new local authority Leaders' Board
- A new requirement for councils to undertake an economic assessment of their area - to ensure that authorities can understand the challenges, make informed decisions and contribute to the development of the regional strategy
- New powers to create 'Economic Prosperity Boards' - to give local authorities the ability to create an executive decision-making body at sub-regional level to promote economic development and regeneration across council borders, within the overall framework of the regional strategy
- The creation of Multi Area Agreements (MAAs) with statutory duties - these will provide a further option for local authorities to work together on economic development by allowing MAAs to be put on a similar statutory footing to Local Area Agreements

Our ambition remains to position the Observatory as the central shared intelligence base for the new strategy.

During the year we plan to build on the successful outcomes of our work for the shadow Joint Strategy & Investment Board and place additional emphasis on developing our links with Local Authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships.

## 1.2 Planned activity

Our plan includes a significant amount of commissioned research, including our work to support the Regional Skills Partnership and to inform the development of a regional skills strategy. We will take forward the final year of a three year programme of work to support similar advisory bodies such as the Enterprise Board, the Innovation and Technology Council and the Economic Inclusion Panel.

We will develop further the State of the Region process, by continuing the ongoing thematic dialogues and introducing others, and produce a synthesis report in the autumn.

We will continue with our series of highly regarded seminars and workshops to engage with both policy colleagues and the regional data and intelligence community. Our annual conference will build on the very successful 2009 conference, and reinforce the theme of “better evidence...better policy”.

### 1.3 Delivery mechanisms

The Observatory will remain an effective co-ordinator of regional partners, to ensure that the research undertaken is aligned with policy needs. We will continue to develop the Regional Data and Intelligence Network and refine our offer to the network. We will work with the topic groups, data groups and User group to maximise the way in which these groups can both inform the Observatory’s activities and facilitate the delivery of the Business Plan.

### 1.4 Resources

Following successful applications in 2008, our funding from key regional partners (Advantage West Midlands, Learning and Skills Council, ESF and ERDF) was secured which gives us some certainty of funding to March 2011. During the year we will be seeking funding from partners to enable us to continue our work for the region.

There are no plans to increase our staff numbers and there will be no automatic permanent recruitment to replace any staff that may leave during the year. Instead, short term appointments will be used to maintain our flexibility to respond to changes in our operating environment.

### 1.5 Key risk to achievement

The main risk to the achievement of this Business Plan is the outcome of the general election which is due to be held by June 2010.

## 2 Context

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### 2.1 The Observatory's purpose and strategic objectives

The Observatory's mission is set out in the constitution as

"The 'West Midlands Regional Observatory' (the Observatory) constitutes a collaborative approach between public, private and voluntary agencies in the West Midlands to the generation, interpretation and sharing of information and intelligence.

The Observatory's purpose is to improve the quality of strategy formulation and policy-making in the West Midlands by enhancing and sharing understanding amongst partners of the opportunities and threats facing the region and its sub regions. ...The participating agencies consider it essential to these purposes that the information produced by the Observatory is based upon robust and reliable data<sup>1</sup> and that the analysis and interpretation of these data is seen to be both knowledgeable and independent of any single agency".

The Observatory's purpose can be summarised as:-

**"...to improve the quality of strategy formulation and policy-making  
in the West Midlands;  
better evidence...better policy...better lives"**

and its strategic objectives are set out below.

Strategic Objectives
1. Support regional policy decision-making through the provision of intelligence based conclusions and (where appropriate) policy implications.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document 'data' refers to facts and figures - often statistics generated by the day to day operations of agencies in the region; 'information' and 'intelligence' refer to interpretations of data generated by adding knowledge and understanding (e.g. by linking data from different knowledge domains or by making pertinent comparisons between different times and places).

2. Monitor and evaluate the progress and impact of regional strategies and programmes.
3. Engage the region in determining regional data and intelligence priorities and seek better alignment of regional resources.
4. Coordinate and facilitate the delivery of agreed new research priorities where appropriate.
5. Provide effective access to intelligence to encourage higher standards of evidence - based decision-making.
6. Lead best data and intelligence practice by sharing best practice for research methods and specifications, backed up by an enquiry service.

## 2.2 National Policy Influences

Whilst our main focus of activity is the West Midlands, there are a number of national policies which influence our work of the Observatory. These include “New Industry New Jobs”, and “Skills for Growth” - the national Skills Strategy. But perhaps one of the more important is the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act. This Act requires that a new regional strategy be developed for the West Midlands by the West Midlands Leaders Board and Advantage West Midlands.

Government has recently published a policy statement on regional strategies. The full implications of this are currently being considered, but it is clear what is expected of a regional strategy, as shown by the following extract of the policy statement:-

*“The Regional Strategy should:*

- Set out a clear spatial vision for all parts of the region over a 15-20 year time frame, taking account of implications beyond this time frame.*
- Be based on a sound evidence base, supported by a sustainability appraisal which includes consideration of environmental limits and a Habitats Regulation Assessment and other required assessments.*
- Set out the policies needed to deliver the vision, in particular bringing together:*

*- policies for sustainable economic growth, the development and use of land and policies designed to contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, and*

*- other relevant policies, including those which are focussed on the needs of business and the enhancement of the environment and the social, health and well being of the region.*

*These policies should, where appropriate, be locationally specific by relating to different parts of the region.*

- Set out the long, medium and short-term actions required to implement the policies and vision. These should be included in a separate Implementation Plan giving details such as when, how, where and by whom they will be delivered.*
- Set out the outcomes expected from the delivery of actions and the indicators that will be used to monitor progress towards them. Where possible the indicators should be quantified targets so that progress can be more effectively monitored and, if necessary, remedial action taken.*
- Be concise and easily accessible*

The statement also emphasises the importance of evidence, and an extract is given below:

*"An evidence base that is informed and shaped by regional and local partners and that takes account of best available information is more likely to provide not only a sound basis for strategy-making but also a foundation for greater ownership of the Regional Strategy and its implementation.*

*Revisions of the Strategy must be made on the basis of a common and comprehensive evidence base presented in a clear way that takes account of best available information. Responsible regional authorities should ensure that the evidence base is:*

- Proportionate and relevant to the policies being prepared and makes use of the most current data and information available.*
- Underpinned by an analysis of the economic, demographic, environmental and social, health and well being challenges and the opportunities within the region over the lifespan of the Strategy and beyond.*
- Informed by the outputs from local area economic assessments and Annual Monitoring Reports.*
- Informed by relevant advice from central government on the assumptions to be made in relation to regional funding availability and affordability.*
- Informed by the expertise and views of stakeholders who have a stake in the future of the region and/or may be affected by the policy decisions in the Regional Strategy.*

- *Informed by and consistent with the UK Government's sustainable development principles.*
- *Informed by national policy.*
- *Informed by other relevant strategies in other regions and devolved administrations.*

*In preparing their evidence base, responsible regional authorities should also:*

- *Assess whether any gaps exist in the evidence base necessary to support the Regional Strategy.*
- *Work with national government, statutory agencies and regional data providers, such as observatories and intelligence networks from the region, and co-operate with adjoining regions on cross-boundary issues, to assemble any required additional information and data.*
- *Assemble relevant regional evidence gathered in support of wider government policy initiatives.*

Also at a national level, there is considerable discussion of the guidance to support the statutory duty placed on Local Authorities to produce local economic assessments. Whilst the primary purpose of these assessments will be to inform local and sub-regional policies and strategies, they will also form part of the evidence base for the new regional strategy. This will require a degree of consistency across each region. We are engaged in the debate about how to achieve this, nationally through the Association of Regional Observatories and at a regional level working with the regional transition team and local authorities.

"Skills for Growth", the national skills strategy, was published in November 2009. The Regional Skills Partnership has taken on responsibility for producing an annual statement of regional skills priorities and a more detailed skills strategy, which will form the platform for the development of the skills priorities in the wider regional strategy. Our 2009 Regional Skills Assessment is already informing the development of the statement of priorities. This research, along with work now underway to identify the employment and skill needs of key Impact Investment Locations and to understand the skills and wider issues to be tackled to support the region's economic recovery, will inform the development of the skills strategy.

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act received Royal Assent in November 2009. Under this Act, local authorities will take on responsibility for securing education and training for all 16 to 19 year olds, to create a single, joined up offer for all children and young people from 0 to 19. We are working with regional partners, notably the Regional Planning Group for 16-19, to develop the evidence base needed for local authorities to fulfil this role.

Another major national influence on our activity flows from a recent evaluation by the RDAs of the ONS regional presence. The RDAs have expressed their ongoing commitment to the Regional Statisticians network. However, in light of evaluation findings which demonstrated that the value of their work was more widespread than just RDAs, the level of funding from RDAs will be reduced for 2010/11, by £100,000 (out of £1 million). Beyond this, because the current funding model is unsustainable, the RDAs have served notice of their intention to terminate the existing Service Level Agreement at the end of the year. Discussions about the future funding of the Regional Statisticians on a more sustainable basis beyond this point are ongoing. Whilst discussions are continuing with ONS, they are unlikely to make a permanent appointment to fill the current vacancy in the West Midlands.

## 2.3 Regional issues

The economic recession has hit this region hard, and in many ways the impact is more severe than in other regions. The West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) articulated a £10bn output gap, attributable 80% to drivers of productivity (skills, enterprise, innovation and infrastructure) and 20% to economic exclusion. We have been commissioned to undertake research into these aspects of the WMES so that the challenges can be better understood and appropriate policy responses made, and are part way through this work programme.

Since publication of the strategy, the output gap has increased to £16bn, which reinforces the importance of this research.

The State of the Region report 2009, published in October 2009, raised some challenges for the region, including:-

- Reducing levels of worklessness, made worse by the recession, particularly amongst young people, people with disabilities or health problems and certain minority ethnic groups
- Raising qualification levels in the region's workforce and making better use of those qualifications, particularly by increasing the number of people with higher qualifications employed in the private sector
- Dealing with the implications of an increasingly diverse and ageing regional population, with growing differences between the types of people living in different parts of the region
- Fostering the innovative approaches needed for the region to meet challenges such as climate change and for its businesses to prosper in the future economy
- Meeting the demands for increased housing and an efficient transport system without damaging a natural environment which is already particularly fragmented in the region

- Improving the image of the region by enhancing the environment, improving local services, combating anti-social behaviour and strengthening the region's cultural and sporting assets

Many of these will be informed by the work of the Observatory over the coming year, notably taking forward the debate on making the region "Fit for the Future".

We will take forward at a regional level the work needed to deliver national strategies. This includes facilitating the evidence base for the Strategy for the West Midlands for the shadow Joint Strategy and Investment Board, and the regional skills strategy for AWM, building on our work for the Regional Skills Partnership. We will also help develop the knowledge base needed to support the delivery of the twenty Impact Investment Locations identified as priorities for the region.

## 2.4 Positioning of the Observatory

The position of the Observatory must be set in the context of the changing policy context at both national and regional level. We want to be at the heart of the evidence base for the Strategy for the West Midlands, and be seen as the partner of choice for regional evidence.

As noted earlier, the major risk to the achievement of this plan is the outcome of the forthcoming general election. The positioning of the Observatory will be reviewed in June 2010 when there will be greater clarity on where the Observatory can make the most appropriate contribution to the region's needs for evidence.

## 3 Planned activity

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### 3.1 Activities to support strategic objectives

The planned activity for 2010/11 is set out in this section of the Business Plan, demonstrating how the activity will support the strategic objectives. A summary of the key milestones is given in Annex One.

#### 3.1.1 Support regional policy decision-making through the provision of intelligence based conclusions and (where appropriate) policy implications.

##### 3.1.1.1 State of the Region Process

2009/10 saw the publication of the first six thematic reports produced through the new State of the Region process, along with the first annual synthesis report. Two further thematic dialogues began during the year and one of the previous dialogues continued beyond the publication of the first thematic report. In addition, the debate initiated through the Observatory's book *West Midlands: Fit for the Future?* is being continued through the State of the Region process. This means that at the start of 2010/11, there will be four thematic dialogues which are ongoing covering equality and diversity; regional image and identity; sustainable communities; and positioning the region for economic recovery.

During 2010/11, we will initiate further thematic dialogues to ensure that at least four dialogues are ongoing at any point in time. We anticipate that some of the new dialogues will be linked to the Strategy for the West Midlands, developing evidence in areas where there are currently gaps in the evidence base required for the strategy. We expect to publish 4-6 further thematic reports, including reports for each of the dialogues which were ongoing at the start of the year.

Each dialogue will commence with a consultative period, typically including an initial workshop, bringing together policy-makers and researchers in the thematic area to discuss priorities for developing the evidence base to inform policy. A work plan will then be developed to progress each dialogue towards the production of the thematic report. Experience from the past year has suggested that the work plan is most effective when it involves external contributions, either through the RDIN Topic Groups or by involving subject experts, including academics. We expect to use this approach in most of this year's thematic reports.

To date, all of the thematic reports published have taken the form of traditional text-based reports, albeit published electronically. This may not be the best way of ensuring that the reports have a maximum impact on policy-makers. Therefore, during the year we propose to test other approaches to publishing the findings from the State of the Region process, either replacing or supplementing traditional reports.

The State of the Region process will culminate at the Observatory's Annual Conference where the annual State of the Region synthesis report will be published. As in 2009/10, this report will draw together the key conclusions from the process and provide a commentary on what they tell us about the state of the region and about future priorities. The report will be published as a hard-copy document but will come with an accompanying memory stick which will provide access to other outputs from the process and to a wider bank of useful material.

### 3.1.1.2 Integrated Policy Model

During 2009/10, the Observatory completed the development of its new modelling tool, the Integrated Policy Model (IPM). Unlike most previous models, it can project future developments across economic, demographic and environmental dimensions together, using the relationships between the different dimensions. It can also produce separate figures for the 34 local authority areas in the region, taking account of the interactions between neighbouring areas.

In order to ensure that the IPM is available to a wide range of potential users without the work involved impacting unduly on the Observatory's other priorities, we have appointed contractors to run the model on our behalf. The contractors will primarily carry out work as directed by us. However, they will also be able to encourage use of the IPM amongst their own clients, subject to any such work being approved by the Observatory and to the payment of a licence fee, equivalent to the management fee which will be payable by our own customers.

The Observatory will charge a management fee for use of the model. This will cover our costs in managing the contract described above but will also fund any updates and enhancements of the IPM. This will include the standard annual updates of the base data within the model and also any additional functionality which we wish to add to it. This may take advantage of similar models in other regions, building in functionality that has been developed there.

Whilst the IPM provides a spatial dimension, the local authority areas used are quite large and, in some cases, relatively heterogeneous. Previous scoping work identified the potential to develop a second phase of the model, allowing disaggregation to around 900 areas across the region. In order to deliver this second phase, we will need to secure funding from a range of regional partners. We will investigate the feasibility of raising sufficient funding to develop the model, perhaps in partnership with academia to allow us to access research council funding. If we are able to finance the model then we expect to commission it during the year.

### 3.1.1.3 Regional Skills Partnership

We continue to provide a wealth of data to support the work of the Regional Skills Partnership. One of the key reports is the Regional Skills Assessment, produced on an annual basis which provides an overview of the key skills and labour market challenges the region faces. Specifically the Assessment provides intelligence:

- On businesses' recruitment, skills, training and other support needs to inform the work of Sector Skills Councils, Business Link, AWM's Skills and Cluster teams, Chambers of Commerce, the CBI, the FSB and EEF
- To ensure that organisations commissioning demand-led education and training (notably HEFCE, the LSC and its successor bodies and local authorities) and those charged with developing and delivering appropriate provision (notably universities, FE colleges, private training providers and voluntary and community organisations) make sure that this is directly connected to current and likely future labour and skills needs. The Assessment will also track progress in raising levels of participation in education and training and in the attainment of skills and qualifications.
- To inform organisations providing careers information, advice and guidance (notably Connexions and the new Adult Careers Service) about recent and likely future growth sectors and occupations and associated skill needs
- On recent and expected employment growth by sector, occupation, sub-region and locality and trends in worklessness and other measures of skills related deprivation to inform the work of organisations connecting disadvantaged communities with emerging employment opportunities (such as the LSC/SFA and Jobcentre Plus via the integrated employment and skills programme)
- On the changing needs labour market and the evolving demand for skills from individuals, businesses and the regional economy to inform:
  - o The development of Local Economic Assessments by local authorities
  - o Commissioning of 16-19 learning by local authorities, the new Young People's Learning Agency, AWM and GOWM, providing analysis to complement data and intelligence from the LSC and DCSF

Other work for the Regional Skills Partnership includes updating the scale of the challenge, which will take place over the summer of 2010, specific research as detailed later in the Business Plan, and briefings that monitor the impact of the downturn on skills and the labour market.

#### 3.1.1.4 Scale of the Challenge

The Observatory continues to carry out a programme of work around key challenges identified in the West Midlands Economic Strategy, aiming to understand the scale of the challenge facing the region. During 2009/10, one of the strands of the programme, covering Transport, was removed because it did not easily fit with the overall structure of the programme. We are discussing what our role should be in future transport research with Advantage West Midlands and the Leaders Board.

The remaining strands of the Scale of the Challenge programme cover Enterprise, Innovation, Economic Inclusion and the Low-carbon Economy. This programme aims to replicate elements of the successful programme of work to inform the Regional Skills Partnership. The outputs of the programme will both inform the work of, and be guided by, advisory boards such as the Regional Enterprise Board, the Innovation & Technology Council, the Economic Inclusion Panel and the Climate Change Panel. The programme as a whole is overseen by a project board with representatives from the Observatory, AWM's strategy team and the relevant policy leads. Each strand is also supported by advisory groups bringing together key regional partners, including data suppliers.

Work plans have been developed for each of the strands of work for 2010/11. Quantifying and monitoring the challenge facing the region in each policy area will continue to be a key element of the programme, as will evidence about the scale of action needed to close the gap in regional performance. Beyond this, we expect that the work plan for 2010/11 will have a particular focus on the inter-connections between the different strands and with other policy areas, notably skills. This will enable us to provide a more integrated picture of the scale of the challenge than would be possible by considering each strand in isolation and also draw out policy implications that cut across the strands. We anticipate that the programme of work will generate a series of research reports during the year, including some aimed at filling gaps in the regional evidence base.

#### 3.1.1.5 Cultural Observatory

During 2009/10, we continued to host the West Midlands Cultural Observatory. At the start of the year the management of the Cultural Observatory passed from Culture West Midlands to the Arts Council for England, following the winding up of the Regional Cultural Consortia. Funding has now been secured from Advantage West Midlands to allow the Cultural Observatory to continue to operate until at least 2012. As before, the cultural research analyst will continue to be hosted by us.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the main cultural agencies have initiated a Culture and Sport Evidence (CASE) programme. As part of the CASE programme, they have appointed a regional research co-ordinator, who will establish some core elements of regional cultural research. We will reflect on the implications of their proposals for the Cultural Observatory as they emerge during the course of the year.

Priorities for the Cultural Observatory during 2010/11 will include the monitoring and evaluation of activities relating to the 2012 Cultural Olympiad and other Olympic and Paralympic activities; development of cultural elements of the evidence base for the Strategy for the West Midlands; the role of culture in “place-shaping”; and assessment of the impact of the changing economic situation on the cultural sector.

The Cultural Observatory will continue to co-ordinate the Cultural Research and Intelligence Group (CRAIG) and the Cultural Research and Intelligence Network (CRAIN). In June 2010, CRAIN will hold its first conference. Subject to the success of this event, we anticipate that this will become an annual event.

#### 3.1.1.6 Short-term Economic monitoring

Since the onset of the economic recession in the second half of 2008, the Observatory has developed a range of reporting arrangements for timely monitoring of economic trends. This has included contributions to the monthly economic bulletin produced by Advantage West Midlands and our own quarterly bulletins covering skills and labour market issues; population and worklessness; and the cultural sector. We anticipate that these bulletins will continue into 2010/11 but that they may be consolidated into a single publication.

Because many of the key economic data series are not sufficiently timely (often being published a year or more after the end of the period to which they refer), our short-term monitoring has involved the use of wider range of evidence sources. We anticipate that the demand for timely monitoring information will continue, even once the economy begins to recover from the recession. Therefore, the Observatory will continue to work with partners to identify and, where necessary, develop new data sources which will improve the timeliness and reliability of monitoring information.

#### 3.1.1.7 Evidence Base for the Strategy for the West Midlands

From April 2010, under the terms of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the RES and RSS will together become the single Regional Strategy. However, during 2010/11, the region will continue to develop a new strategy, to be known as the Strategy for the West Midlands, which will, in due course, replace the existing strategies.

The Observatory has already been involved in a number of projects which will form part of the evidence base for the Strategy for the West Midlands, in addition to our ongoing research work which will also contribute to the evidence base. Key examples include the Regional Integrated Economic Assessment, completed in 2008/09, and the Analysis of Sub-regional Dynamics, completed during 2009/10.

In parallel with this, we have been working with colleagues from Advantage West Midlands and the West Midlands Leaders Board, to develop proposals for the production of the remainder of the evidence base for the Strategy for the West Midlands. The initial stages of this involved a review of the existing evidence base undertaken during 2009, which identified a number of key challenges to be addressed.

We are currently working with Advantage West Midlands and the West Midlands Leaders Board to develop proposals for how the evidence base for the strategy should be developed to address the challenges identified by the review. Whilst the proposals are being developed, it is difficult to specify exactly what the Observatory's role in building the evidence base for the strategy will be. However, we anticipate that we will have a leading role in co-ordinating work on the evidence base and that we will also deliver some elements ourselves, determined by our expertise and capacity.

Whilst some of the Observatory's contribution to the evidence base may build upon our existing work around the key economic themes covered by our Scale of the Challenge and skills research programmes, we also expect to be involved in research in other areas. This might include areas such as the environment, land use & planning, community safety and health. Where necessary, we will call on expertise from RDIN Topic Group members and other regional partners to support our work in these areas. If it goes ahead, the proposed Regional Lifestyle Survey (see section 3.1.4.2), will also be designed to contribute to the evidence base.

Amongst the activities which we anticipate that we will be involved in are cataloguing and synthesising the existing evidence base; carrying out or co-ordinating research to fill gaps in the evidence base; closer links with iterative policy development in some areas; researching relevant evidence from other regions and internationally; and participation in testing scenarios for future development of the region.

#### **3.1.1.8 Local Economic Assessments**

One key part of the evidence base for the Strategy for the West Midlands will be the Local Economic Assessments (LEAs) which each strategic local authority will have a duty to produce. We are working with the region's local authorities, through the Regional Economic Development Officers Group (REDOG), to develop a consistent approach which will ensure that the assessments can fulfil this role. We are also discussing with local authorities how we can provide support for them as they develop their LEAs.

Our work on LEAs may include activities such as contributing to regional workshops on key issues; providing tailored information from our existing research outputs (an example being the six sub-regional profiles produced as part of the 2009 Regional Skills Assessment); signposting to datasets and other evidence sources; sharing good practice through our networks and communications; providing direct advice to local authority officers; or even preparing elements of LEAs under contract.

In addition to LEAs, there is likely to be a need for wider local authority evidence to feed into the evidence base for the Strategy for the West Midlands. We will work with partners to assist in this process.

### 3.1.2 Monitor and evaluate the progress and impact of regional strategies and programmes.

#### 3.1.2.1 Monitoring the Strategy for the West Midlands

During 2009/10, as in previous years, the Observatory was involved in monitoring both the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This included the preparation of a monitoring report on performance indicators for the RES and the contribution of a chapter on progress towards Urban and Rural Renaissance for the Annual Monitoring Report for the RSS.

From April 2010, under the terms of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the RES and RSS will together become the single Regional Strategy. At this stage, it is not yet clear what the arrangements will be for monitoring the Regional Strategy. However, we anticipate that the Observatory will continue to be involved in monitoring to a similar extent as under the previous arrangements.

Whilst the existing RES and RSS will become the first version of the new Regional Strategy, during the coming year the region will continue to develop the new Strategy for the West Midlands. It is unlikely that any part of this strategy will be in place by the end of 2010/11, so any monitoring arrangements will not come into existence until subsequent years. However, it is likely that work will begin during the year to establish proposals for future monitoring. The Observatory will play a full role in that work and will seek to ensure that we are able to play an appropriate role in future monitoring arrangements.

### 3.1.2.2 ONS

Since April 2007, the Regional Statisticians from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have been based at the Observatory. This arrangement will continue during 2010/11. However, following a national evaluation undertaken during 2009/10, Regional Development Agencies have served notice of their intention to terminate the current Service Level Agreement with ONS at the end of the year. At the time of writing, discussions about the future of the Regional Statisticians beyond that point are ongoing. We will actively contribute to these discussions with the aim of ensuring the long-term sustainability of the funding arrangements.

As in previous years we have developed an outline work programme which has been approved by the Observatory Board. This includes a significant role for the Regional Statisticians in supporting the programmes of work on skills and on the Scale of the Challenge and that they will contribute to the State of the Region process. We also expect that they will contribute to the development of the evidence base for the Strategy for the West Midlands and provide support for local authorities developing Local Economic Assessments.

### 3.1.2.3 Regional Perceptions Indicator

During 2009/10, the Observatory delivered the first version of the Regional Perceptions Indicator. The report of findings was published in November 2009. The Board of Advantage West Midlands has indicated that they expect the work to be repeated every two years. Therefore, we do not anticipate that the indicator will be updated during 2010/11. However, towards the end of the year, we expect to commission the survey work required to deliver an updated Regional Perceptions Indicator during 2011/12.

We have agreed with AWM that the data from the Regional Perceptions Indicator will be made available to external organisations subject to the payment of a charge. The same will apply to further analysis of the data undertaken by the Observatory. We have prepared a data sharing protocol detailing the terms under which the data will be provided and used.

### 3.1.2.4 Skills research

We have developed an index of regional skills performance on behalf of the Partnership, underpinned by a three tier framework of indicators that focus on overall economic performance, broad skills outcomes and progress at an operational level. This provides headline measures of success and will be an integral part of the monitoring and evaluation of the Skills Action Plan. The framework and index will be updated in summer 2010.

However, while the shifts in the index against national averages are important, these are driven by other factors as well as the outcomes of initiatives within the Skills Action Plan. We are also developing additional indicators that relate specifically to the desired outcomes from successful business engagement articulated in the plan. These will be updated on a quarterly basis during 2010/11.

### 3.1.2.5 Other Research Projects

During the year, the Observatory will carry out a range of additional research on behalf of partners in the region. Over the last year, the increased commitment of staff resources to longer-term research programmes, such as those outlined above, has meant that we have been involved in fewer ad-hoc research projects. This is likely to continue to be the case in the coming year. The key test will be whether by undertaking the project we can strengthen the evidence base underpinning the development of regional policies.

Amongst potential projects which have already been identified for 2010/11 are: data and analytical support for Government Office West Midlands; development of information to support inward investment advisors; monitoring of the effectiveness of Impact Investment Locations; and research to support or co-ordinate evidence from the regional programme of work on DfT's Developing a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) initiative.

### 3.1.3 Engage the region in determining regional data and intelligence priorities and seek better alignment of regional resources.

#### 3.1.3.1 Identification and Filling of Research Gaps

Working with regional partners to identify and fill research gaps remains a priority for the Observatory, and is a continuing focus for the Regional Data & Intelligence Network (RDIN). Over the past two years, progress on filling research gaps has been slower than previously, due, in part, to newly emerging strands of work competing for resources. As a result, we have now adopted a more proactive approach to identifying, assessing, prioritising and filling gaps.

We are now maintaining a register of research gaps identified, regardless of the source. Furthermore, the identification of gaps is now a standard element of all research projects, State of the Region dialogues and RDIN Topic Group meetings. Gaps identified are assessed by the most relevant RDIN topic group to ensure that they are relevant and are then prioritised in consultation with the RDIN User Group. As part of that consultation we also seek ways of filling the gaps which have been prioritised, either through securing funding for the Observatory or by collaborating with partners.

The first such discussion with the User Group took place in November 2009 and seven priority gaps were identified. Two of these are being taken forward by the Environment Topic Group and one other is being discussed a possible project for collaborative work between Topic Groups. Three other gaps may form part of evidence base work for the Strategy for the West Midlands. We have discussed the remaining gap, relating to the impact on the region's economy of emerging economies such as India and China, with UKTI and AWM and have agreed a brief for a research project in this area which will be completed during the forthcoming year.

One issue which has been highlighted in relation to research gaps is the need to increase the use of evidence from outside the region, including international evidence and comparisons. Whilst this may be taken forward through projects identified as wider research gaps, we will also seek to build this element into our other research projects, as appropriate.

### 3.1.3.2 Data Groups

We will continue to chair and co-ordinate the activity of data groups to support the Regional Skills Partnership and the Economic Inclusion Panel. The activities of the data groups include:

- Reviewing the range of research activity in their policy areas being undertaken by partners across the region
- Identifying key synergies and opportunities for collaboration and pooling expertise
- Identifying gaps and weaknesses in the evidence that need to be addressed
- Agreeing priorities for new research and developing a work programme to address these
- Ensuring that the catalogue of relevant existing data sources is updated regularly and that new data sources are added as appropriate
- Engaging with similar data activity that supports their policy areas in other regions where appropriate

### 3.1.3.3 Local Authority Contacts

A number of recent policy and organisational developments mean that the Observatory will need to work more closely with the region's local authorities in the future. In the past, our links with local authorities were patchy and depended on particular individuals. We are now building stronger and more systematic links with local authorities to ensure that our work complements and supports theirs.

As part of this process we have identified lead contacts for each sub-region (see section 5.1). As well as providing a first point of contact for local authority staff, they have been working with their authorities to understand better how the Observatory can help local authorities, and how we can work together more effectively. During 2010/11 we will be particularly concentrating on how to ensure that our outputs can have an increasing influence on local policies and strategies.

In January 2010, the Observatory hosted a workshop for local authority research practitioners across the region. This was organised in collaboration with the Local Authority Research & Intelligence Association (LARIA). The aim is to discuss approaches to networking and sharing of good practice, particularly to enable those authorities with limited research resources to learn from their peers. The Observatory is discussing the outcomes of that workshop with colleagues from LARIA and Improvement & Efficiency West Midlands (IEWM).

During 2009/10 IEWM initiated the Local and Regional Intelligence (LARI) project. This aims to improve the effective and efficient use of intelligence across the region's local authorities. The Observatory will participate in this project as part of the steering group, through the practitioner group and through involvement in specific strands of work, as appropriate.

To assist in managing and developing local authority contacts we will have implemented a customer relationship management (CRM) system towards the end of 09/10 and will review and develop this during 2010/11.

### 3.1.4 Coordinate and facilitate the delivery of agreed new research priorities where appropriate

#### 3.1.4.1 Skills research

Two key projects are now underway to support the development of a skills strategy for the region.

The first project will identify the scale and nature of job opportunities expected to be generated by the Impact Investment Locations identified by the shadow Joint Investment & Strategy Board. The work will focus on the 16 sites that have seen most progress, identifying the key sectors and occupations in which jobs are expected to be created and the skill levels required.

The second project will identify the issues, challenges and opportunities facing the region's economy as it emerges from recession - from a skills perspective but also in relation to other policy areas such as enterprise and innovation. This will help focus limited resources and maximise their impact. As well as synthesising the wide range of existing evidence to identify key trends, issues and challenges we will also commission forecasting work and scenario development. This will identify the likely shape of the regional economy and key growth sectors over the next 3-5 years as we move out of recession into recovery. The research will also identify the potential benefits for the regional economy of up-skilling of the existing workforce to boost value added, productivity and diversification into higher value added products and markets and of attracting and developing more high growth businesses and embryonic high value added sectors and clusters linked to the government's "new industries new jobs" agenda.

#### 3.1.4.2 Regional Lifestyle Survey

Towards the end of 2009/10, the Observatory began a review of the demand within the region for a second Regional Lifestyle Survey, similar to the first which we carried out during 2005. The aim of the review is to establish the feasibility of running a second such survey, including the likelihood of attracting sufficient funding. The review will also make proposals for the scale and scope of the survey.

If the review determines that there is sufficient demand for a second survey, and that it will be feasible to run it, we expect to carry out the survey during the latter part of 2010/11. Details of the scale, scope, timing and funding of any survey will be agreed following the review. We expect that, if a survey does take place, it will be designed to inform policy across a variety of different themes and organisations. In particular, the survey would provide an element of the evidence base for the Strategy for the West Midlands. It would also support the work of local authorities and organisations in fields such as health, housing and community safety.

#### 3.1.4.3 Register of consultants

This service was introduced in 2008/09 and currently contains 27 consultants and generates steady traffic of approximately 30 viewings per week, which has changed little during the year. This year's user satisfaction survey showed that the Register of Consultants had relatively low levels of user satisfaction, which concerns us, even though the service costs little to provide. We will therefore endeavour to understand what users require to increase their satisfaction with it and either improve it or discontinue the service.

### 3.1.5 Provide effective access to intelligence to encourage higher standards of evidence - based decision-making.

Our website, [www.wmro.org](http://www.wmro.org), is our primary means of providing access to intelligence. At the end of 2010/11 the current version of the website will be nearly three years old. The Observatory's practice has been to replace its website every three years to keep the image fresh and to introduce technical improvements to benefit users and ourselves. Although at this stage we do not want to commit to a replacement in early 2011/12, we will in the coming year evaluate the costs and benefits of a major website upgrade and make a decision on how to proceed.

Our "Observations" blog (<http://wmro.wordpress.com>) will continue to form part of our communications strategy.

#### 3.1.5.1 Regional Information Services

During the last year we took the decision to alter the way in which we build and update the regional resource catalogue by making use of technology to substantially automate the process. We have successfully incorporated an external crawl and indexing technology that allows us to automate the selective harvesting of resources from partner websites. At the time of writing, we are harvesting resources from AWM and the LSC and by the end of the year we will have included the Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Public Health Observatories. However, we want to go much wider than this and so during 2010/11 we will do the analysis, rule formulation and coding necessary to harvest results from the strategic local authorities.

By the start of the year we will have reviewed the usefulness and sustainability of the other information services we offer through the website (e.g. regional organisations, the directory of specialists and research gap handling). During the year we will modify, augment or discontinue these services in the light of this review. We will also ensure that each information service is made self-contained, so that if future contraction in funding requires the ending of services then individual services can be removed without disrupting the rest.

#### 3.1.5.2 RDIN Seminars

In addition to the annual conference, we plan to deliver six seminars over the course of 2010/11 (four through the RDIN topic groups). Content and structure of the 2010/11 programme will be driven by the topic groups and the Regional Data and Intelligence Network, taking in to account evaluations of the 2009/10 seminar programme and the 2008 User Satisfaction Survey. Given the current economic climate, the Observatory will consider making these seminars free of charge in 2010/11.

### 3.1.5.3 Annual conference

Following the highly successful 2009 conference, we will soon begin to plan for the 2010 conference. At present, it is too early to determine a topic, but it is highly likely the focus will continue to be on facilitating evidence based policy. Evidence to support the forthcoming Strategy for the West Midlands, cuts in public spending and the economic recovery of the region are likely to provide some content. Given the current economic climate, and reduced revenues at the 2009 conference, we will consider reducing both the delegate fee and sponsorship costs at the 2010 conference, in order to ensure the right organisations are represented. We may also make the conference half a day in length rather than full-day. As part of our follow up from the 2009 conference, we will continue the "West Midlands: Fit for the Future?" debate through an ongoing State of the Region dialogue. This will involve further events, blog posts and articles. It is likely that the Topic groups will also be involved in this work.

### 3.1.6 Lead best data and intelligence practice by sharing best practice for research methods and specifications, backed up by an enquiry service.

The work-plans of the Regional Data and Intelligence Network Topic Groups for 2010/11 will include targets for the groups to share best practice between members and other groups, and also to disseminate relevant information via the Network. We will offer increased opportunity for interaction between the topic groups and with the wider network, in particular through holding a series of cross-over meetings between groups in 2010/11. There will also be provision for dissemination via various Communications channels, both internal (the Oracle, e-newsletters, events etc) and external (Local press, Specialist press, external networks etc). Details of this are in the Topic Group work-plans (see appendix 1) and the Observatory's 2010 Communications Plan.

Last year we moved our largely manual enquiry service to one that is predominately on-line. In the light of operational experience and user feedback, we will identify further opportunities for developing this service and we will take these forward in the coming year.

## 3.2 Key performance indicators

The measurement of the Observatory's achievement of strategic objectives, and business plan, will be through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The suite of KPIs proposed is set out below:-

Key Performance Indicator	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual (Jan 2010)	Target
KPI-1: Overall customer satisfaction rating	3.00	3.11	3.00	n/a	3.10
KPI-2: Customer rating of State of the Region Report/process	3.20	3.13	3.20	n/a	3.20
KPI-3: Composite measure of partner engagement	3.00	2.81	3.00	n/a	3.00
KPI-4: Composite measure of web access and enquiries handled	+15%	+83%	+15%	+4%	+10%
KPI-5: Average project satisfaction rating	3.00	2.60	3.00	2.60	3.00
KPI-6: Ratio of non core/grant income to total income	0.45	0.59	0.60	0.44	0.60
KPI-7: Staff satisfaction rating	3.00	3.10	3.30	n/a	3.30

## 4 Delivery mechanisms

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### 4.1 Partnership working

By its very nature, the Observatory works in partnership with a number of regional organisations. Whilst much of the work falls to the Observatory, there is an emphasis on our role in being a catalyst for activity, be it a debate around policy implications, reaching agreement on regional research priorities or ensuring best practice.

### 4.2 The Regional Data and Intelligence Network (RDIN)

The RDIN plays a key role in both informing the activities of the Observatory and also in helping deliver the Business Plan, particularly through the four topic groups and the User Group.

#### 4.2.1 Topic groups - work plans

The review of the topic group structure at the end of 2008/09 led to some important changes in the way that the groups and the wider data and intelligence network operate. The groups have become more involved in State of the Region work, the Research gap register and informing the evidence base for the forthcoming Strategy for the West Midlands.

Work plans for the Economy and Labour Force, Geographical Information, Population & Society and Environment groups have been developed and agreed, informed by the review of topic groups. These are set out in Annex Two of the Business Plan.

The groups will be involved in informing 2010/11 State of the region dialogues (specifically Sustainable Communities and Fit for the Future), as well as informing the Observatory's work for the forthcoming Strategy for the West Midlands (particularly the environmental evidence base), Low carbon economy research and post-recession economy research.

The groups will continue to assess whether their membership is appropriate for the work they plan to do and make appropriate changes. The Environment group has been very successful in increasing membership over 2009/10, and now has a broad representation of regional partners. As a result the group will be less concerned with increasing membership. All of the other groups will make a concerted effort to widen their membership and encourage individuals involved in policy as well as data leads within the region to join topic groups.

All topic groups now have Board ambassadors, who will be invited to contribute to the assessment of membership of their chosen topic group and act as a conduit to the Board.

We will review and assess the effectiveness and usefulness of the Regional Data and Intelligence Network during the year, to inform our application of further funding from 2011 onwards.

#### 4.2.2 User group

The User Group meets twice yearly, once to provide input into the business plan, and secondly to review progress towards meeting the objectives set out in the business plan. They also act as a conduit between the Observatory Partnership Board and all topic groups.

This year three RDIN representatives have been nominated to the Partnership Board: Claire Edwards (GI), Martin See (Env) and Richard Wilson (P&S). It is the role of the RDIN Board representative to provide a report on RDIN activity to the Partnership Board for discussion, and to feedback to the User Group and Topic Groups the key issues from the Board, thus providing high level guidance on the work of the RDIN.

#### 4.3 RSP data group

The Observatory's work for the Regional Skills Partnership will continue to be delivered in partnership with the RSP data group. This group, which is chaired by the Observatory, enables data, analysis and research findings to be shared across a range of regional partners. It takes an overview of the range of research being undertaken in the Region, identifying gaps in the evidence base. Working with policy colleagues, the data group seeks to prioritise gap filling research, and the data group is a source of advice and expertise to develop research proposals.

The RSP data group also provides links to other regions, government and other national bodies through representation on the RSP cross-regional research group.

## 4.4 State of the Region Reference group

The State of the Region process will be overseen by a reference group drawn from key regional partners supplemented by those leading the ongoing State of the Region dialogues. The group also incorporates two independent members to ensure that the process is rigorous and innovative. The group will advise on the process and its outputs, play a key role in communication and in encouraging engagement and ensure that it achieves its aim of improving the link between research and policy.

## 4.5 Economic Inclusion data group

As part of the work programme on the scale of the challenge, the Observatory chair and support a data group that focuses on Economic Inclusion. The group was established in summer 2008 with the aim of providing the partners within the Economic Inclusion Panel with a comprehensive, robust and up to date evidence base to inform its strategic thinking and action planning.

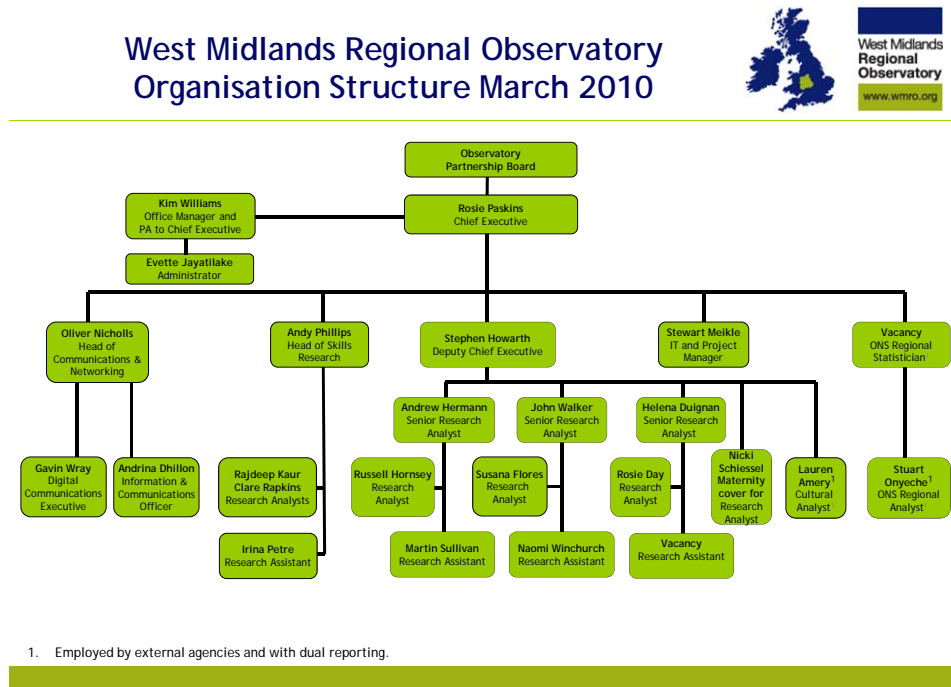
## 4.6 Association of Regional Observatories

We are active members of the Association of Regional Observatories and currently chair the group. We will continue to build links with other members of the association and plan to benchmark our activity with two Observatories during the year. This will inform the delivery of our research in particular.

# 5 Resources

## 5.1 Staff requirements

The current organisation structure is given in the chart below:-



There was a substantial expansion in 2008 of the Observatory's resources to address the increased demand for our research and these staffing levels have been maintained in 2009/10.

We do not propose any additional substantive recruitment in 2010/11 and in order to maintain flexibility any vacancies arising through staff leaving will be filled through short term appointments, as in the latter half of 2009/10.

We will continue to host the ONS regional statisticians (up to 33% of whose time is available for regional work) and the analyst from the Cultural Observatory

We will also seek specific secondments for particular projects as the need arises.

As part of our increased focus on Local Authorities, we have allocated lead responsibilities within the team as follows:-

Birmingham and Solihull

Helena Duignan

Coventry and Warwickshire	Russell Hornsey
Dudley and Sandwell	Clare Rapkins
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	John Walker
Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire	Rosie Day
Shropshire and Telford	Rajdeep Kaur
Walsall and Wolverhampton	Susana Flores

We will build on these relationships during the year to extend them beyond the data community to policy colleagues, and strengthen our work with sub-regional/local Observatories.

## 5.2 Investors in Excellence (IiE)

As an organisation that seeks continuous improvement, we are committed to Investors in Excellence and are using the model as a tool to improve our performance.

We have developed an improvement action plan that will underpin our activities in 2010/11 and have recently been accredited with the Investors in Excellence standard.

## 5.3 IT Infrastructure

In September 2010 our office server and associated equipment will be three years old; it will then be fully written down and out of warranty. The equipment is in good condition and there are no obvious reasons to think it needs replacing, but it does give us the opportunity to review the IT services we use. In particular there maybe opportunities to take advantage of developments in telephony and mobile working that could reduce costs and improve productivity. We therefore plan to comprehensively review the options available and to either retain, upgrade or replace our core IT and telephone systems. If significant new spend is justified we will take a separate business case to the Board.

## 5.4 Summary of forecast income and expenditure

The summary budget for 2010/11 is set out below together with the forecast outturn for 2009/10, which is based on the management accounts to end January 2010.

<b>Summary of Funding and Expenditure</b>		
<b>Detail</b>	<b>2009/10 (Forecast)</b>	<b>2010/11 (Budget)</b>
	£	£
<b>Sources of Funds</b>		
Consortium funding	462,200	455,600
Sponsorship	4,411	5,411
Grant Funding	195,000	195,000
Other Revenue	645,837	878,750
Surplus carried forward	326,789	127,905
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>1,634,237</b>	<b>1,662,666</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Staff	1,050,000	1,137,435
Overhead	28,800	33,286
Premises	118,827	119,884
Project & Consultants	54,046	62,000
Operational	240,299	270,636
Depreciation	14,360	15,102
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,506,332</b>	<b>1,638,343</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>127,905</b>	<b>24,323</b>

### 5.4.1 Sources of income

The main sources of income are, set out in the following table.

Summary of Funding		
Detail	2009/10 (Forecast)	2010/11 (Budget)
	£	£
<b>Consortium Fees</b>		
Advantage West Midlands	451,700	455,600
Regional Assembly	10,000	0
Sales and other income	500	0
<b>Subtotal: Consortium</b>	<b>462,200</b>	<b>455,600</b>
<b>Sponsorship</b>		
State of the Region	1,500	1,500
Annual Conference	2,911	2,911
Regional Economic Model	0	1,000
<b>Subtotal: Sponsorship</b>	<b>4,411</b>	<b>5,411</b>
<b>Grant Funding</b>		
ERDF Technical Assistance	195,000	195,000
<b>Subtotal: Grant</b>	<b>195,000</b>	<b>195,000</b>
<b>Other Revenue</b>		
Net project revenue	645,837	878,750
Carried forward	326,789	127,905
<b>Subtotal: Other</b>	<b>972,626</b>	<b>1,006,655</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>1,634,237</b>	<b>1,662,666</b>

This year is the last of our three year funding agreement with Advantage West Midlands, and we expect to draw down a similar level of revenue funding to previous years, of around £450k.

Funding from the Regional Assembly has been falling over the last few years and ended in 2009/10.

In 2009/10 we entered into a three year contract for ERDF technical assistance which is just under £200k per annum.

Net project revenue is expected to be higher than in 2009/10 to reflect work undertaken for the regional strategy.

## 5.4.2 Net project revenue

An analysis of net project revenue is shown in the following table.

Project Income and Expenditure		
Detail	2009/10 (Forecast)	2010/11 (Budget)
	£	£
<b>Project income</b>		
Other major projects	250,783	281,250
Secondees	30,000	30,000
Other internal projects	52,637	250,000
Regional Skills Partnership	361,500	400,000
Outsourced research	72,431	187,500
Size of the Challenge	305,000	350,000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1,072,351</b>	<b>1,498,750</b>
<b>Project costs</b>		
Other major projects	187,385	225,000
Other internal projects	27,230	15,000
Regional Skills Partnership	99,500	180,000
Outsourced research	59,816	150,000
Size of the Challenge	52,583	50,000
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>426,514</b>	<b>620,000</b>
<b>Net project revenue</b>	<b>645,837</b>	<b>878,750</b>

Our most significant programme continues to be the work to support the Regional Skills Partnership, where funding has been secured from AWM for the final year of the current three year programme. Other key projects include the “scale of the challenge” work programme for AWM which now moves in to its final year. As noted earlier we expect additional work to be commissioned from us on the evidence base to support the regional strategy.

### 5.4.3 Analysis of expenditure

The main expenditure of the Observatory is on staffing and related overheads. One additional cost for 2010/11 is the external evaluation we are required to undertake as part of our core funding contract with AWM.

Summary of Expenditure		
Detail	2009/10 (Forecast)	2010/11 (Budget)
	£	£
<b>Staff</b>		
Staff	950,000	945,418
Temporary staff	100,000	192,017
<b>Subtotal: Staff</b>	<b>1,050,000</b>	<b>1,137,435</b>
<b>Overhead</b>		
Travel and expenses	6,600	6,732
Welfare	315	321
Recruitment	0	0
Relocation	0	0
Training	15,000	19,210
Parking	6,885	7,023
<b>Subtotal: Overhead</b>	<b>28,800</b>	<b>33,286</b>
<b>Premises</b>		
Rent	66,000	66,000
Service and maintenance	25,500	26,010
Utilities	3,264	3,329
Insurance	2,000	2,040
Rates	22,063	22,504
<b>Subtotal: Premises</b>	<b>118,827</b>	<b>119,884</b>
<b>Projects &amp; Consultants</b>		

Website development	30,000	30,000
State of the Region	17,046	25,000
ARO Subscription	7,000	7,000
<b>Subtotal: Projects</b>	<b>54,046</b>	<b>62,000</b>
<b>Operational</b>		
Finance and HR SLA (AWM)	25,000	25,000
Office IT operational support	14,000	17,000
Telecoms	3,000	3,000
Office equipment	12,209	13,555
Consumables and stationery	10,000	10,000
Website/ICT operations	22,000	22,000
Petty cash	1,500	1,500
Marketing and dissemination	16,000	16,000
RDIN Events	25,000	25,000
Catering & Room Hire	4,500	6,000
Professional fees	2,040	2,081
Software	10,050	4,500
Irrecoverable VAT	90,000	90,000
Contingency	5,000	5,000
External evaluation	0	30,000
<b>Subtotal: Operational</b>	<b>240,299</b>	<b>270,636</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
IT Equipment	3,500	4,204
Furniture	3,700	3,641
Fixtures and fittings	7,160	7,257
<b>Subtotal: Depreciation</b>	<b>14,360</b>	<b>15,102</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,506,332</b>	<b>1,638,343</b>

A brief summary of capital expenditure is given below.

<b>Summary of Capital Expenditure</b>		
<b>Detail</b>	<b>2009/10 (Forecast)</b>	<b>2010/11 (Budget)</b>
	£	£
<b>Computer Equipment</b>	6,000	6,000
<b>Furniture</b>	2,000	1,400
<b>Fixtures and Fittings</b>	2,000	2,000
<b>Total</b>	10,000	9,400

## 6 Key risks to achievement

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We have classified our key risks into four types: Strategic risks that may jeopardise our strategic objectives; financial risks that could undermine our budget and create financial problems; project risks that arise from our need to take on and satisfactorily deliver research on a semi-commercial basis; and operational risks that might threaten our work programme.

The risks the Observatory faces and the actions planned in mitigation are detailed in the following table:

Area of Risk	Risk Weight <sup>2</sup>		Consequences	Planned Actions
	L	I		
<b>S: Strategic Risks</b>				
S1: Failure to secure effective strategic support from partners	M	H	The Observatory becomes sidelined and increasingly irrelevant to regional research and intelligence	Ongoing communication and marketing programme at all levels (including through Partnership Board and RDIN) with partners and other organisations in the region, so that they think of the Observatory first. Proactive dissemination of research outputs to highlight publicly the work of the Observatory
S2: Failure to secure reputation for independent analysis	L	H	Our analysis is not trusted and would need to be duplicated or, at least, validated, undermining our key value proposition	Ensure effective peer review of all output for QC and validation Maintain independent Observatory identity in all events and publicity

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<sup>2</sup> L = likelihood of risk occurring; I = impact of occurrence. Arbitrary scale: L=low, M=medium, H=high.

S3: Unsuccessful in engaging with key regional policies, particularly taking forward the outcomes of the SNR, exacerbated by uncertainty over guidance to take forward the new regional strategy and February 2009 Conservative policy statement on regional issues.	M	M	Reduced use of evidence to inform key strategies. Inability to develop comprehensive strategic overview of the Region for the new regional strategy	Pro-active engagement with partners and appropriate policy forums to identify Observatory role as we move towards the new regional strategy Increased emphasis on interaction with policy through the State of the Region process. Greater involvement with Local Authorities to facilitate local economic assessments Engagement with SNR transition team.
S4: General election and/or change in Government policy on RDAs	H	H	Uncertain future for the Observatory as currently not legally independent of the RDA	Review move to independent legal status and develop alternative funding models
<b>F: Financial Risks</b>				
F1: Unable to secure sufficient project work and revenue	M	H	Unable to secure necessary funding to meet Observatory costs. Reduced impact in regional research	Pro-actively seek projects, and seek support for them Ensure in-house capacity to deliver probable projects Maximise value of existing project work to promote Observatory offer Maintain staffing number flexibility through short term appointments
<b>P: Project Risks</b>				
P1: Poor delivery quality of project output	L	H	Loss of reputation, undermining the overall role of the Observatory	Establish quality acceptance criteria in advance for all projects Maintain strong QC processes including appropriate peer review of all projects Ensure and continuously develop Observatory skills and knowledge

P2: Observatory challenged over state aid for commercial projects	L	M	Legal action and possible penalties. Possible loss of valuable income source	Ensure all project work generates income to cover full costs Maintain a project by project P&L based on robust costing model Keep complete records of proposal, costing, and staff time allocation
P3: Time committed before contracts agreed	M	M	Failure to convert project into contracted work results in loss of income. Early investment of time may not be recovered even if project goes ahead, resulting in project losses	Monitor and minimise time allocated to developing proposals and bids Seek to secure a signed contract before starting work on any project and, where this is not possible, minimise pre-contract work and only then on large projects with strategic partners
<b>O: Operational Risks</b>				
O1: Cannot secure funded secondees from partners	H	L	Ability to manage growth and match capacity to short term project demand will be constrained, resulting in slower progress towards objectives and reduced participation by WMRO in regional research and analysis	Promote awareness among partners of the value of projects requiring seconded capacity Seek Board support in identifying and securing appropriate secondees Demonstrate value to potential seconding organisation of filling the position Effectively define requirement, job role and person spec to simplify search process
O2: Breakdown of the RDIN as an effective vehicle for communication with practitioners in the region	L	H	Loss of visibility of regional projects. Inability to link up initiatives and best practice. Loss of key resource and source of data and intelligence	Continually review the role, programme, membership and remit of the RDIN to ensure it is appropriate and valuable Offer an added-value programme of seminars, conferences and publications to RDIN members Maintain RDIN involvement in the programme and development of the Observatory, particularly State of the Region dialogues

O3: Poor staff retention and/or failure to recruit suitable employees	L	M	Reduced capacity to deliver objectives. High cost of staff recruitment and replacement.	<p>Ensure effective staff management, coaching and development</p> <p>Provide appropriate training opportunities</p> <p>Seek to provide high value, high visibility projects for Observatory staff</p> <p>Ensure resource levels adequately match demand</p>
O4: Increased demand for our work outstrips our capacity to deliver	M	M	Inability to deliver requested support, to time and to specification needed, undermining our reputation and potential influence in informing key strategies	<p>Increased focus on a planned approach to capacity building through the annual Business Plan and internal work planning mechanisms</p> <p>Take on new work that maximises progress on our strategic objectives</p>

## Appendix One: Key research activity outputs and timetable

The details of much of our research programme for the forthcoming year has yet to be determined. However, a number of outputs are already scheduled and details are provided in the table below. In some cases, we have been able to provide an indicative date for publication but these dates may change.

Theme	Project	Date for completion
Highlighting the changing needs of the labour market	2010 Regional Skills Assessment and sub regional profiles	December 2010
	E-bulletin for careers advice and guidance practitioners	Spring, summer and autumn academic terms
	Analysis to support the 14-19 agenda (detail to be agreed)	To be agreed
Evaluating the impact of the RSP	Further development of the framework of skills performance indicators	On-going throughout the year
	Annual review of performance report	July 2010
	Monitoring and evaluation of the Skills Action Plan	Quarterly to inform the RSP Board
Addressing gaps in the evidence base	Analysis of employment and skill needs at Impact Investment Locations	April 2010
	Analysis of skills and wider issues to be tackled to support the region's economic recovery	May 2010
State of the Region process	Thematic report on sustainable communities	June 2010
	Thematic report following up "Fit For the Future"	July 2010
	Thematic report on regional image and identity	September 2010
	Thematic report on equality and diversity	September 2010

Theme	Project	Date for completion
	State of the Region annual synthesis report and memory stick	October 2010
	Two further thematic reports	February 2011
Scale of the Challenge	Annual Summary Report	May 2010
	Employer Attitudes to Worklessness	October 2010
	Economic Inclusion Annual Report 2009-10	April 2010
	Economic Inclusion Annual Report 2010-11	March 2011
	Future Prospects for the Region - Final Synthesis Report	March 2011
	Impact of Enterprise on Deprived Communities	October 2010
	Performance of Existing Businesses	June 2010
	Enterprise Research Synthesis Report	September 2010
	Final Scale of the Challenge Synthesis Report	March 2011
	Analysis of Employment Structure and Trends	July 2010
	Measurement of Innovation Systems	July 2010
	Survey of Innovation in Key Sectors	October 2010
	Range of quarterly and annual monitoring reports	Various
Strategy Monitoring	Regional Economic Strategy Monitoring Indicators Report	April 2010
	Contribution to Regional Strategy Annual Monitoring Report	February 2011

Theme	Project	Date for completion
SIRS Evidence Base	Reports synthesising existing evidence base	TBC
	Reports filling gaps in the existing evidence base for the strategy	TBC
Cultural Observatory	West Midlands Culture Programme for London 2012: Evaluation (2008-2010)	April 2010
	CRAIN conference	June 2010
	Economic Impact Toolkit	January 2011
Other known research outputs	Report on impact of emerging markets on West Midlands economy	June 2010

## Appendix Two: Topic group work plans

Work plans for the Economy and Labour Force, Geographical Information, Population & Society and Environment topic groups will be finalised at the 09/10 quarter 4 group meetings. The work plans link directly to the overall KPIs and strategic objectives of the Observatory (particularly KPI-3 and KPI-8 and strategic objective 3 and 6).

### Economy and Labour Force

ELF Topic group Work Plan Project – 2010/11	Target date	Links to KPI	Responsibility
<b>Identify critical data and intelligence gaps and needed data enhancements. Agree the priority for filling those gaps and identify appropriate actions and resources to fill them.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify one gap in data and intelligence as a priority for regional research.</li> </ul>	Mar 11	1,3	Anne Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess and prioritise relevant gaps as requested through the Observatory's new gap-filling process.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	1,3	Anne Green
<b>Disseminate good practice information to the RDIN on data relevant to the theme of economy &amp; labour force</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members to post at least 6 articles on "Observations" in each 6 month period</li> </ul>	Mar 10 / Sept 10	3	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observatory to provide co-ordination and administrative support for delivery of the group's e-bulletin, which will be a synopsis of relevant Observations posts from the last six months.</li> </ul>	Mar 10 / Sept 10	3	Clare Rapkins
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve the group and wider RDIN in the international OECD study into skills levels in SMEs</li> </ul>	May 10		Anne Green
<b>Provide support to the Observatory's work programme</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist in the identification of policy &amp; research priorities for the ongoing State of the Region: Fit for the Future dialogue, particularly around the themes of drivers for the future, skills and innovation.</li> </ul>	Apr 10	2	Stephen Howarth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist in linking with relevant policy makers in the region</li> </ul>	Ongoing	2	Stephen Howarth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act as an advisory group to the Observatory's work on the post recession economy/skills needs in the West Midlands</li> </ul>	May 10	3,5	Clare Rapkins
<b>Promote and lead the work to share information within the scope of economy and labour force data and intelligence within the region and other central bodies</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members to develop one seminar on economy and labour force for the RDIN.</li> </ul>	Jan 11	3	Anne Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Observatory to provide co-ordination and administrative support for the development of the seminar.</li> </ul>	Jan 11	3	Observatory
<b>Identify resources for inclusion into the resource catalogue within the theme of economy and labour force</b>			

<b>ELF Topic group Work Plan Project – 2010/11</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Links to KPI</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify 50 resources for inclusion into the resource catalogue via “Suggest a resource” or by the full submission process.</li> </ul>	Mar 11	4	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify 2 external organisations that the Observatory could approach regarding mapping projects</li> </ul>	Mar 11	4	Andrina Dhillon
<b>Review the objective of the topic group over time and evaluate the work of the group on a regular basis to secure feedback for reporting to the User Group and the Observatory Partnership Board.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a quarterly report to the Observatory Partnership Board.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	n/a	Anne Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review work programme on an annual basis.</li> </ul>	Q4 10/11	n/a	Anne Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the work programme is reviewed at every meeting</li> </ul>	Quarterly	n/a	Anne Green
<b>Nominate up to three representatives of the topic group to the User Group. The representatives will act as the main conduit between the WMRO Partnership Board and the RDIN.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair and at least two representatives from the topic group to attend two User Group meetings per year.</li> </ul>	May 09 / Dec 09	n/a	Anne Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback from the Observatory Partnership Board to group members</li> </ul>	Quarterly	n/a	Roger Mckenzie

## Geographical Information

<b>GI Topic Group Work Plan Project 2010/11</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Links to KPIs</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Promote and lead work to share geographical data and information within the region.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a watching brief on Ordnance Survey licensing arrangements and identify any data sharing and licensing issues as they arise. Communicate these to the RDIN.</li> </ul>	March 2011	3	Brian Higgs / Diane Edwards Andrina Dhillon (Comms)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a forum for sharing best practice in the provision of geographic resources for the region, and ensure their inclusion in the Resource Catalogue.</li> </ul>	March 2011	3	Diane Edwards / Andrina Dhillon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a watching brief on the quality requirements of geo-spatial metadata for the region and report to the group regularly, leading developments as required. Communicate the quality requirements to the RDIN.</li> </ul>	March 2011	3	Brian Higgs / Diane Edwards Andrina Dhillon (Comms)
<b>Disseminate good practice in the use of GI through the RDIN and RDIN topic groups.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic Group members to post at least 6 GIS related articles to "Observations" in each 6 month period.</li> </ul>	Jun and Dec 2010	3	ALL Andrina Dhillon / Katy Bregazzi
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Observatory to provide co-ordination and administrative support for delivery of the topic group's e-bulletin, which will be a synopsis of relevant Observations postings from the previous six months.</li> </ul>	Jun and Dec 2010	3	Andrina Dhillon / Katy Bregazzi
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In partnership with the P&amp;S topic group, members to develop a seminar on "Data visualisation" for the RDIN – one or two members to form a joint working group with P&amp;S colleagues</li> </ul>	Jul 2010	3	Lucy Bastin Graham Smith (with P&S)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members to develop a 3rd Annual GIS day for the region, directed at the third sector, to show how GIS can be used to influence policy and communicate complex data.</li> </ul>	Feb 2011	3	Shona Frost / Lucy Bastin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Observatory to provide co-ordination and administrative support for the development of GI day and Data Visualisation day.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	3	Oliver Nicholls
<b>Provide support to the Observatory's State of the Region process</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide GIS support to the State of the Region: Fit for the Future dialogue</li> </ul>	Ongoing	2	Claire Edwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide GIS solutions or advice regarding State of the Region work undertaken by the Observatory and other topic groups as required.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	2	All / as identified by WMRO and User group
<b>Identify resources for inclusion into the resource catalogue which may be applied to geographical investigations</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify 50 GIS resources for inclusion into the resource catalogue via "Suggest a resource"</li> </ul>	Mar 2011	4	All
<b>Identify/respond to gaps in regional geographical information, data and analysis and develop project proposals for filling them. Prioritise gaps identified and seek appropriate actions to fill those gaps.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review, update and develop the "GIS facilities within the region" document, identify new entries (including web-based resources) and publicise.</li> </ul>	June 2010	3	Oliver Nicholls / Chris Styche
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess and prioritise relevant gaps as requested through the Observatory's new gap-filling process.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	3	Diane Edwards

<b>GI Topic Group Work Plan Project 2010/11</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Links to KPIs</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Nominate up to five representatives of the topic group to the User Group. The representatives will act as the main conduit between the Observatory Partnership Board and the RDIN.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair and at least two representatives from the topic group to attend two User Group meetings per year.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	3	Diane Edwards Claire Edwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with the Partnership Board's Topic Group Ambassador to ensure two way dialogue between Partnership Board and RDIN.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	n/a	Diane Edwards Claire Edwards
<b>Review the objectives of the topic group and evaluate the work of the group on a regular basis to secure feedback to the Observatory Partnership Board.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a quarterly report to the WMRO Partnership Board.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	n/a	Diane Edwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the work programme is reviewed at every meeting,</li> </ul>	Ongoing	n/a	Diane Edwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review work programme on an annual basis.</li> </ul>	Apr 11	n/a	Diane Edwards

## Population & Society

Population and Society Topic group Work Plan 2010/11	Target date	Links to KPI	Responsibility
<b>Identify gaps in the regional evidence base. Prioritise gap-filling and highlight resources to fill gaps as part of the Observatory's gap filling process.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify gaps in data and intelligence as a priority for regional research.</li> </ul>	Mar 11	1,3	Richard Wilson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess and prioritise relevant gaps as requested through the Observatory's new gap-filling process.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	1,3	Richard Wilson
<b>Provide support to the Observatory's State of the Region process</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist in the development of a Sustainable Communities measure</li> </ul>	Apr 10	2	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise the Observatory on the best indicators to use to develop a measure of sustainable communities.</li> </ul>	Mar 10	2	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and refine the methodology of the sustainable communities work following Observatory development of a pilot.</li> </ul>	May 10	2	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist in development of a dissemination event if the pilot project is successful.</li> </ul>	Sept 10	1,2,3	All
<b>Disseminate good practice information to the RDIN on data relevant to the theme of Population &amp; Society</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members to post at least 6 articles on "Observations" in each 6 month period</li> </ul>	May 10 / Oct 10	3	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Observatory to provide co-ordination and administrative support for delivery of the group's e-bulletin, which will be a synopsis of relevant Observations posts from the last six months.</li> </ul>	May 10 / Oct 10	3	Rosie Day
<b>Provide support to the wider Regional Data and Intelligence Network?</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the needs of the group and wider data and intelligence network, through sharing relevant information and solving common problems (for example, the evidence needs of major funders in the region)</li> </ul>	Mar 11	3	Richard Wilson
<b>Promote and lead the work to share information within the region and other central bodies.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In partnership with the GI topic group, members to develop a seminar on "Data visualisation day" for the RDIN</li> </ul>	Jul 10	3	Oliver Nicholls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members to develop a second seminar for the RDIN. Possible subjects include customer profiling using segmentation.</li> </ul>	Mar 11	3	Richard Wilson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Observatory to provide co-ordination and administration for the seminars</li> </ul>	Jul 10 & Mar 11	3	Oliver Nicholls
<b>Identify resources for inclusion into the resource catalogue within the theme of population &amp; society</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify 50 resources for inclusion into the resource catalogue via "Suggest a resource" or by the full submission process.</li> </ul>	Mar 11	4	All
<b>Review the objective of the topic group over time and evaluate the work of the group on a regular basis to secure feedback for reporting to the User Group and the WMRO Partnership Board.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a quarterly report to the Observatory Partnership board</li> </ul>	Ongoing	n/a	Richard Wilson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review work programme on an annual basis.</li> </ul>	Quarter 4	n/a	Richard Wilson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the work programme is reviewed at every meeting</li> </ul>	Quarterly	n/a	Richard Wilson
<b>Nominate up to three representatives of the topic group to the User Group.</b>			

<b>Population and Society Topic group Work Plan 2010/11</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Links to KPI</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair and at least two representatives from the topic group to attend two User Group meetings per year.</li> </ul>	May 10 Dec 10	n/a	Richard Wilson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback from the Observatory Partnership Board to group members</li> </ul>	Quarterly	n/a	Jammi Rao

## Environment

<b>Environment group Work Plan Actions</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>KPI</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Bring Together Data, Information, Knowledge, Expertise and Concerns from a Wide Range of Environmental Stakeholders to Enhance the Region's Environmental Evidence Base</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm who the Topic Group's "Priority Users" of evidence are (currently this is DAG, Climate Change Office, Sustainable Development Officers Network and Policy Makers)</li> </ul>	By April 2010	1,3	Martin See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify areas to support DAG's work through better evidence. Lead contact to deliver session on DAG Work plan at Topic Group Meeting.</li> </ul>	May Meeting	1,3	Amanda Pearce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify areas to support the WM Climate Change Office work through identifying and filling gaps in the regional evidence base for climate change. Group to develop an understanding of the priorities of the refreshed Climate Change Action Plan as it develops, to inform the work of the topic group and vice versa.</li> </ul>	May/ongoing	1,3	Paul Cobbing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Sustainability Officer's Network and Identify opportunities for the group to support the work of the topic group and vice versa.</li> </ul>	By April 2010	1,3	Martin See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with other RDIN Topic Groups to improve sharing and development of evidence</li> </ul>	May/ongoing	1,3	Martin See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Sustainability West Midlands and seek representation on the Topic Group</li> </ul>	May	1,3	Martin See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Advantage West Midlands and seek representation on the Topic Group</li> </ul>	May	1,3	Martin See
<b>Provide a Single Point of Access to the Environmental Information about the West Midlands</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through the Observatory's RDIN engage with the "Evidence Community" in the Region to provide a focal point for the collection and communication environmental Intelligence.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	1,3	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate the evidence base collected as part of the PSA 28 environmental priorities work as a resource for regional policy making and make it available for the Region. Consider how this needs to be developed.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	1,3	Paul Cobbing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Log evidence resources into the Observatory's resource catalogue, make the evidence base accessible and ensure people know where to look for the information they need and know who to ask if it isn't there</li> </ul>	ongoing	4	Susana Flores / All
<b>Communicating the Work of the Environment Topic Group</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Group will post a monthly article "Observations" highlighting successes and outcomes from the Topic Group and other articles of interest</li> </ul>	from April 2010	3	Shelley Howard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The group will produce 2 e-bulletins each year, which will be a synopsis of relevant Observations posts</li> </ul>	Apr 10 / Oct 10	3	Susana Flores
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The chair will provide a quarterly report to the Observatory Partnership board</li> </ul>	Quarterly	n/a	Martin See

<b>Environment group Work Plan Actions</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>KPI</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair and up to two rotating representatives from the topic group attend two User Group meetings per year.</li> </ul>	Jun 10 Dec 10	n/a	Martin See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Topic Group will develop and deliver an annual seminar on an Environmental topic for the Regional Data &amp; Intelligence Network</li> </ul>	Dec 10	3	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress against the work programme will be reviewed at every meeting and outcomes recorded. The Work Programme as a whole will be reviewed on an annual basis.</li> </ul>	Quarterly	n/a	Martin See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership of the Group and roles within the Group will be reviewed annually</li> </ul>	Jun 10 Dec 10	n/a	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Group will seek feedback from the Partnership Board through the Board Ambassador at least once per year</li> </ul>	Aug 10 Feb 11	n/a	Martin See Dave Marr

## Full document information

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Creator	Rosie Paskins West Midlands Regional Observatory, Level 3, Millennium Point, Curzon Street, Birmingham, B4 7XG Tel. 0121 202 3254 Fax. 0121 202 3240 E-mail: rosie.paskins@wmro.org
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