

Agenda

Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

Thursday, 9 February 2023 at 5.00pm
In the Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Members to declare any interests and party whips in relation to matters to be discussed at the meeting.

3 Minutes 7 - 12

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022.

4 Additional Items of Business

To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.

5 Sandwell Development Plan 13 - 210

To consider and comment upon reports relating to the Sandwell Development Plan and responds to questions set out at Appendix D.



6	Friar Park Masterplan	211 - 274
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To consider and comment upon reports relating to the Friar Park Masterplan.

7	Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan	275 - 290
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To note and review the Boards Work programme 2022/ 23 and the Cabinet forward Plan.

Kim Bromley-Derry CBE DL
Managing Director Commissioner

Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

Distribution

Councillor Simms (Chair)

Councillors Taylor (Vice- Chair), Abrahams, Chambers, Fenton, Gavan, J
Giles, Z Hussain, Kaur, Owen, Rahman

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

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Minutes of Economy Skills Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

16 November 2022 at 5.00pm
in Committee Room 1 - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillors Taylor (Vice Chair), Chambers, Fenton, Z Hussain, J Giles, Kaur and Rahman.

Officers: Tony McGovern (Director of Regeneration and Growth), Andy Miller (Strategic Planning and Transport Manager), Rina Rahim (Towns Fund Programme Manager), Wayne Moore (Planning Assistant), Alex Goddard (Democratic Services Officer) and John Swann (Democratic Services Officer).

37/22 **Election of Chair**

In the absence of the Chair and Vice- Chair at this point in the meeting members were requested to elect a chair for the meeting.

Resolved that Councillor J Giles be elected to the Chair for this meeting.

38/22 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simms (Chair), Gavan and Owen.

39/22 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

40/22 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 are confirmed as a correct record.

41/22 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no urgent additional items of business to consider.

42/22 **Towns Fund Update**

Further to Minutes Nos. 31/21 (30 September 2022), 23/22 (10 March 2022) and 34/22 (14 July 2022), the Board received an update in relation to the **Towns Fund**.

All 16 projects in Sandwell had been approved by Government, with payments for 2022/23 having been received by the Council as the Accountable Body. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regularly received financial profiles and returns for this period were due to be signed off by the Section 151 Officer for submission by 16 December 2022.

The Towns Fund Project Manager outlined that the programme was time limited, running until March 2026. She further provided a summary of progress for the three towns in Sandwell that had been selected to benefit from the Towns Fund:-

- West Bromwich projects had progressed well, with works currently underway in the town centre (Urban Greening project) and construction to commence shortly at sites including the Sandwell Mechanical Engineering Centre.
- Smethwick Connected had delivered Phase 3 on time and on budget; with other Smethwick projects having incurred timescale slippages due to difficulties acquiring the sites.
- Rowley Regis projects had progressed successfully, with design works for Blackheath Bus Interchange having commenced in June 2022 and the estimated completion date for the Satellite Education Hub was May 2024.

From the comments and questions by members of the Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted:-

- The Towns Fund project had worked alongside the Asset Team, to identify sites that could benefit from Regeneration within timescales.
- Penalty clauses were contained within the contracts between the Council and external project applicants to safeguard the investment made by the Council. The Board requested a copy of these penalty clauses to be circulated.
- Slight delays had occurred in developing the Midland Met Learning Campus due to design issues, with the architect replaced in September 2022.
- Utilisation of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) typically would result in timescale slippage of longer than 12 months, but remained an option in certain circumstances to acquire sites.
- Smethwick Connected would provide an uninterrupted cycle path from Birmingham to Oldbury.

Members agreed that a future Towns Fund Update would be brought back to Scrutiny in due course.

Resolved that a Towns Fund Update be brought back to a future meeting of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board.

43/22 **Black Country Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan**

The Board received the Report on the **Black Country Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (BCLCWIP)** which was due to go out to public consultation.

The BCLCWIP had aimed to double the number of journeys made via bicycle by 2025, and following consultation and subject to Cabinet approval, was due to be published in Spring 2023.

The Board heard that the BCLCWIP would sit alongside the existing Sandwell Local CWIP (See Minute No. 18/19 (10 October 2019)) and the West Midlands regional plan, complementing existing cycle infrastructure, having the

intention for routes to be used for commuting purposes as well as for leisure cyclists.

Sandwell had one of the highest rates of non-car ownership nationwide, with 34% of households not having access to a car. The borough was also the sixth worst area for youth obesity. The draft proposals aimed to tackle this, with guidance received from Central Government that cycle routes were to be segregated from other road users to encourage their use.

There was a need to modernise cycle routes in Sandwell, with new routes having to be well-surfaced and illuminated, however it was accepted that wildlife was impacted by artificial light.

The following was noted in response to members' comments and questions:-

- Members may benefit from a site visit to the proposed cycle routes, in particular Sandwell Cycle Route – Friar Park to West Bromwich due to the proximity to Sandwell Valley Park.
- The RSPB and the Wildlife Trust were consulted on all routes through nature areas.
- Linking up cycle routes to the existing West Midlands Hire Bike scheme may increase usage.
- Exploration of how to enable bikes to be accessible to those with disabilities could promote inclusion.
- Long term planning needs included responsive maintenance, cleansing of cycle path surfaces and vegetation management.
- National Highways would only adopt a cycle route if built to appropriate standard and specification.
- Enforcement powers with regards to cycle lanes rested only with the Police at present.

(Councillors Taylor (Vice- Chair) and Fenton entered the meeting during consideration of this item)

(Councillors Z Hussain, Kaur and Rahman left the meeting during consideration of this item)

44/22

Cabinet Forward Plan and Work Programme

The Board noted its Work Programme for 2022/2023 and received the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Meeting ended at 6:26pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

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Report to Economy, Skills Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

9 February 2023

Subject:	Sandwell Local Plan – Update, Consultation on Issues & Options and Call for Sites exercise.
Director:	Director Regeneration & Growth Tony McGovern
Contact Officer:	Andy Miller – Strategic Planning & Transportation Manager andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board notes the updated position regarding preparation of a new Local Plan for Sandwell.
- 1.2 That the Board considers and responds to the questions set out in the Issues & Options document along with any other comments as appropriate.
- 1.3 That the Board notes the Call for Sites exercise currently open and comments as appropriate.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 It is a statutory requirement of every Local Planning Authority to have an up-to-date Local Plan. Government has previously expressed a desire to see full Local Plan coverage across England by December 2023, or as soon as is practical after that date.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 7th December 2022, Cabinet approved the Sandwell Development Plan Issues & Options document for public consultation for six weeks commencing 6th February 2023.



- 2.3 Cabinet also authorised the opening of a ‘Call for Sites’ exercise to run for the same period as the Issues & Options consultation.
- 2.4 Members’ views are sought on the matters set out in the Issues & Options documents and their responses to the questions are welcomed.
- 2.5 The views of the Board will be taken into account in preparing the Draft Local Plan prior to it being submitted to Cabinet for approval to consult later in the year.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people – the Local Plan helps to develop policies that will contribute to the delivery of facilities, services and opportunities for children and young people through the local plan process.
	People live well and age well - health and wellbeing is a key theme addressed throughout the documents of the Local Plan. It will promote healthy living and create opportunities for active lifestyles and healthy transport choices including walking, cycling and outdoor recreation.
	Strong resilient communities – the Local Plan will build in effective community involvement and will be important to local communities.
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods – the Local Plan will play an important part in delivering the spatial and land use aspects of the Council’s vision 2030, particularly as it relates to housing, employment, transport, environment and education goals.
	A strong and inclusive economy - the Local Plan will provide the regeneration framework for future investments and projects.
	A connected and accessible Sandwell - sustainability is a key theme addressed throughout the documents of the Local Plan. They will help to deliver sustainable, prosperous



	communities, an integrated transport network and reduce the need to travel by car.
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4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 It is a statutory requirement for every Local Planning Authority to have a current Local Plan; and to review these plans periodically to keep them up-to-date. In Sandwell the Local Plan consists of;

Tier 1 *Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)* prepared jointly with Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton. It was adopted in 2011 and runs to 2026

Tier 2 *Sandwell Site Allocations & Delivery Plan (the SAD)* which was adopted in 2012 and ran till 2021

West Bromwich Area Action Plan (WBAAP) which was adopted in 2012 and runs to 2026

There are two earlier AAPs covering Smethwick and Tipton, which technically are still relevant. These AAPs, however, were largely absorbed into the SAD on its adoption, and will be superseded fully by the new Sandwell Local Plan.

4.2 The Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) was adopted in 2011 and forms the upper tier of the Local Plan in Sandwell. Once adopted, the Black Country Plan (BCP) was intended to replace the BCCS, along with elements of the Sandwell Site Allocations & Delivery Plan (the SAD). The remainder of the SAD and the AAPs would have been replaced by a further Tier 2 document, which would have been known as the Sandwell Development Plan.

4.3 The decision to halt the Black Country Plan, together with the age and status of Sandwell's Tier 2 Plans (and associated documents), means that Sandwell needed to commence a full review of its Local Plan as a matter of urgency. This was approved by Cabinet on 16th November.



Housing and Employment land need in Sandwell

- 4.4 The BCP evidence base shows that, by 2039 (the intended horizon year for the BCP), Sandwell will have a need for 27,873 new homes and a minimum of 55ha of new employment land. The last edition of the Urban Capacity Study, which identifies the amount of land available for development, shows that Sandwell only has enough land to deliver around 9,500 new homes resulting in an un-met need of almost 19,000 homes.
- 4.5 Sandwell's housing need is the largest of the four Black Country councils, whilst its supply is the smallest. The table below sets this out;

Housing and Employment Land Shortfalls by BCLA (negative figure indicates surplus capacity against local need)

Local authority	Homes need	Homes supply	Homes Shortfall	Emp. land need (ha)	Emp. land supply (ha)	Emp. Shortfall (ha)
Dudley	11,989	13,235	-1,246	61-137	20	41-117
Sandwell	27,873	9,158	18,715	84-215	29	55-186
Walsall	16,568	13,344	3,224	138-193	164	-26-29
Wolverhampton	19,646	12,100	7,546	110-150	70	40-80

Figures based on supply and need set out in Reg18 Draft BCP and Urban Capacity Report Update. Employment land need is expressed as a range based on either a 'trend-based' or 'growth-based' scenario.

- 4.6 The ABCA decision to halt work on the BCP, and the subsequent need to prepare a comprehensive Sandwell Local Plan as an alternative, means that the end date for the new plan will be 15 years beyond the new projected adoption date and will run to two years beyond the intended end date of the BCP (i.e., to 2041). The housing and employment land need figures for the new Sandwell Local Plan will therefore need to reflect the later adoption date, so will differ from that used in the Black Country Plan (2039).



- 4.7 The housing need versus available land supply clearly results in Sandwell Council being unable to meet around two thirds of its need. The Local Plan will need to demonstrate that every potential site has been considered and all suitable sites allocated. Furthermore, any potential exporting of unmet need to other local authorities would have to be demonstrated through 'Duty to Cooperate' discussions. Evidence previously prepared for the BCP clearly shows that neighbouring authorities can, if willing, help meet this need through the Duty to Cooperate (outlined below).
- 4.8 Demonstrating how the plan seeks to meet Sandwell's housing need is likely to be the most important test of the plan's soundness at examination. It is considered that Sandwell could adequately demonstrate that the supply has been maximised and that the Duty to Cooperate has been adequately discharged, even if this does not result in any of the unmet need being exported to neighbouring authorities.

The Duty to Cooperate (DTC)

- 4.9 The 2011 Localism Act places a legal duty on local planning authorities in England, and other public bodies, to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters, including the agreed exporting of a proportion of one council's unmet housing need to other councils (where they have surplus housing supply over and above their own needs). It is not, however, a 'duty to agree'. Failure to comply with the duty will result in plans not being approved, but it is not a failure of the process should agreement with other councils not be forthcoming.
- 4.10 In effect, the duty was discharged as far as the Black Country LAs are concerned through the preparation of a joint Local Plan and through joint DTC conversations with other authorities. With the abandonment of the BCP, this is no longer the case. Sandwell will therefore need to hold DTC discussions with nearby local authorities and a number of other public bodies, such as WMCA /TfWM, National Highways etc.



4.11 As shown in the table at paragraph 4.5, both Walsall and Wolverhampton also have significant levels of unmet need, as does Birmingham City Council. An agreement on how surplus supply in adjacent areas is apportioned will form a crucial element of ongoing DTC discussions.

The Local Plan Process

4.12 The process for preparing a Local Plan consists of the following stages;

- *Evidence gathering* – underway and ongoing through to Submission stage.
- *Issues & Options Stage* – Effectively a scoping exercise giving residents, land owners and other interested parties and opportunity to comment on what the plan should address.
- *Call for Sites* – An opportunity for interested parties to suggest sites that could be included in the plan.
- *Draft Plan* – The first version of the Plan setting out proposed policies and identifying sites for specific purposes.
- *Submission Plan* – The final version of the Plan for submission to Government.
- *Examination in Public (EIP)* – An examination of the Plan held in public by an independent Planning Inspector. The Inspector can either find the Plan ‘sound’ so it can be adopted, recommend changes, or find it ‘unsound’ in which case it needs to be re-worked.
- *Adoption* – The council approves the Plan and it becomes policy and the basis for all planning decisions.

The timetable for preparation of the Sandwell Local Plan is;

7 th December 2022	Cabinet approval to consult on an Issues & Options paper and open a Call for Sites exercise
February - March 2022	Six-week Issues & Options consultation and Call for Sites
March – August 2023	Draft Plan preparation



September 2023	Cabinet approval to consult on Draft Plan
October - December 2023	Six-week Draft Plan consultation (Reg18)
January – June 2024	Consideration of representations and Submission Plan preparation
July 2024	Cabinet and Full Council approval to consult on Submission Plan (Reg19) and then submission to Secretary of State
September – October 2024	Six-week Submission Plan consultation (Reg19)
November 2024	Submit the Plan and representations to the Secretary of State
December 2024 – Summer 2025	Window for holding the Examination in Public (likely to be a 2-3-week hearing), followed by Inspector's report
Late 2025 /early 2026	Adoption at Full Council (assuming plan has been found 'sound')

Future Government Planning Policy

- 4.13 The last Queen's Speech included the 'Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill' (the LURB). The bill is now passing through the parliamentary process. It proposes significant changes to the planning system, with implications both for how a Local Plan is prepared and what it should cover. It also seeks to abolish the 'Duty to Cooperate', although as yet, there is no detail as to what is intended to replace it. In addition to the LURB, on 23rd December the Government published proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 4.14 Through the combination of the LURB and a modified NPPF, the Government intends to abolish mandatory housing targets, alter the methodology for calculating housing need and afford greater protection to the Green Belt, whilst retaining the ambition nationally to deliver 300,000 new homes per annum. LPAs will still be required to establish their local housing need, which would have to be justified at an Examination in Public. However, unmet housing need would no longer be considered an 'exceptional circumstance' that would warrant a review of the Green Belt and the allocation of land in it to provide additional housing capacity.



4.15 Both ministers and senior officials of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) have reiterated that LPAs should not pause Local Plan reviews to await the introduction of these changes but should continue under the current legislation and regulations to adopt up-to-date plans by December 2023, or as soon as is reasonably practical after that date. However, should the proposed changes to the NPPF come into effect prior to the LURB becoming law, these will have to be reflected in future stages of the Sandwell Local Plan as it progresses.

Issues & Options

4.16 The 16th November Cabinet decision was followed by a Cabinet approval on 7th December 2022 to enable the first stages of the Local Plan process to take place. These are the Issues & Options consultation and Call for Sites exercise.

4.17 The Issues & Options consultation is a scoping exercise that seeks to involve local people, businesses and other stakeholders in identifying what the new plan should address. It provides an initial opportunity for interested parties, the public and stakeholders to engage in the process, and to help inform the next stage of the plan.

4.18 The Issues & Options document sets out the context in which the plan is being prepared, and outlines the amounts of new development, such as housing and employment land, that is needed. It also seeks the views of the communities and stakeholders of Sandwell on what they think the key land use issues are for the borough.

4.19 It asks a series of questions about key topic areas and seeks feedback on how the following should be addressed;

- Links to wider Council objectives
- Tackling climate change
- Housing need
- Creating healthy communities



- Thriving towns
- Supporting the economy
- Employment needs
- Infrastructure needs
- Protecting and enhancing the environment

A list of the questions cross-referenced to the relevant sections of the Issues & Options document is contained at Appendix D.

- 4.20 An important point to note is that the Issues & Options document does not detail proposed policies, nor does it seek to allocate development sites. This would be done at the next stage of plan preparation, following consideration of the responses to this consultation.
- 4.21 The consultation responses will be reviewed in detail and used to inform the next iteration of the plan, particularly in helping to draft policies to address issues and topics identified by local people in relation to future land use and development.
- 4.22 Preparation of the Local Plan includes the carrying out of an integrated Sustainability Appraisal (see Appendix C) at each formal stage, and at later stages, an Equality Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment. The Local Plan will seek to ensure that sufficient homes, shops, employment land, along with social and recreational facilities, are planned and provided for to meet the needs of Sandwell during the period that the Plan covers (i.e. up to 2041). This will include meeting the needs of children and young people by seeking to provide sufficient facilities for them, as well as having a positive impact on future generations.
- 4.23 A consultation and engagement programme (attached at Appendix B) has been prepared for this stage of the plan's preparation. It will continue to be developed for later stages of the plan. A consultation database has been established, which will enable easier follow-up consultation to take place with all interested parties.
- 4.24 The key elements of the current consultation are;



- A Press release announcing the start of the consultation period - to raise awareness.
- Promotion through local media.
- Leaflet summarising key information - available at Libraries and other Council buildings, and online.
- Use of social media and a branded web page - to help engagement.

This variety of approaches will help to broaden the consultation catchment to help encourage more responses to the consultation.

4.25 The consultation material is displayed in the reception area at the Council House in Oldbury and officers are available to answer questions throughout the full six weeks of the consultation period. Information, leaflets etc. will also be available in libraries and other Council offices that are open to the public.

4.26 Future stages of public consultation on the draft plan itself will be arranged, which will each run for a minimum of six weeks and will include drop-in events across all six towns, enabling residents to view the proposals maps and discuss the Plan with officers.

Call for Sites

4.27 A key part of this stage of the plan's preparation is the 'Call for Sites'. This is an opportunity for anybody, including land owners and potential developers, to suggest sites to the Council that could either be developed, or used for specific purposes, such as the provision of Biodiversity Net Gain. The Council and other public bodies will also be expected to review their land assets to see if they can contribute towards meeting development need, through the release of sites /assets.

4.28 A previous 'Call for Sites' took place between July and September 2017, and again in August 2020, as part of the BCP preparation. Whilst it is likely that many sites will have been identified at that point, it is both appropriate and prudent to provide a further opportunity to ensure that no potential



sites are missed, and to make sure that landowners who agreed to reallocation at that time have not subsequently changed their minds.

- 4.29 The 'Call for Sites' exercise is running concurrently with the 'Issues & Options' consultation. Any sites put forward will be assessed and considered for inclusion in the Draft Plan.



5 Implications

Resources:	The resource implications of preparing the Sandwell Local plan were outlined in the cabinet report on 16 th November. This included the costs of preparing and consulting on the Issues & Options document and the Call for Sites. There are no additional resource implications arising from the course of action recommended in this report.
Legal and Governance:	<p>The process for the preparation of development plans is set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>In accordance with section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, every local planning authority must prepare planning policy documents and maintain the Local Development Scheme, specifying the documents that will be local development documents; their subject matter and area; and the timetable for their preparation and revision.</p> <p>There are three consultation periods that are statutory requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012; Issues and Options consultation (Regulation 18); Preferred Options /Draft Plan consultation (Regulation 18) and Publication/Pre-submission consultation (Regulation 19).</p>
Risk:	<p>The Council's corporate risk management strategy has been complied with, to identify and assess the risks associated with this decision/recommendation. The following should be noted;</p> <p>Failure to have a Local Plan that is based on sound evidence could result in the borough having insufficient land to meet the need for housing, employment and other land uses that are necessary to support the economic and environmental well-being</p>



	<p>of the area. It could also result in development taking place in inappropriate or harmful locations, leading to an inefficient use of resources, traffic congestion and other harm.</p> <p>Having an up-to-date Local Plan in place is also essential to defend the Council's position at planning appeals. In the event of the Council not having, or working towards, an up-to-date Local Plan, there is a risk of intervention from Central Government which may compromise the ability to take decisions locally.</p>
Equality:	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out for the Issues and Options document and further iterations will be completed at later stages of the plan's production. This ensures that any impacts likely to affect local communities / groups / individuals can be taken into account when decisions are made on the content and direction of the Local Plan.
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>Health and wellbeing is a key theme which will be addressed throughout the Local Plan. It will promote healthy living and create opportunities for active lifestyles and healthy transport choices including walking, cycling and outdoor recreation.</p> <p>Later stages of the plan will be accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment.</p>
Social Value:	The Local Plan will play an important part in delivering the spatial and land use aspects of the Council's vision 2030, particularly as it relates to housing, employment, transport, environment and education goals.
Climate Change:	The Local Plan will contain a suite of new policies designed to help Sandwell mitigate and adapt to the changing climate at a strategic and local level, in line with the Council's adopted Climate Change Strategy. It will ensure new development takes a proactive approach to climate change mitigation, adaptation and



	carbon reduction, and that development is resilient to climate change.
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6 Appendices

- Appendix A - Sandwell Development Plan Issues & Options Document.
- Appendix B - Draft Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
- Appendix C - Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Report.
- Appendix D - Summary of Issues & Options questions.

7. Background Papers

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
The Localism Act 2011
The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)
Report to Cabinet – 16:11:22
Sandwell Local Development Scheme (November 2022)
Report to Cabinet – 07:12:22





Delivering a thriving, growing and active Borough

SANDWELL LOCAL PLAN

Issues and Options Review

Public Consultation
6th February – 20th March 2023



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1. SANDWELL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Sandwell Council is starting the process of reviewing its current local plan. This currently consists of : -

- the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) (adopted 2011)
- the Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (SAD) (adopted 2012)
- the West Bromwich Area Action Plan (WBAAP) (adopted 2012)
- the Tipton Area Action Plan (adopted 2008)
- the Smethwick Area Action Plan (adopted 2008)

The Government requires all local councils to produce a long-term plan that sets out a vision for their area. It should identify where and how development should take place in the future. This document is known as a local plan.

1.1. What is a Local Plan?

A Local Plan shows how an area will develop in the future and provides policies that will guide decisions on whether planning applications are granted. Sandwell's new local plan (the Sandwell Local Plan or SLP) is intended to support high-quality development in the right locations to meet future needs whilst also protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

A local plan therefore sets out all the planning policies and proposals for an area. It addresses needs and opportunities in relation to housing and the economy, whilst ensuring that we have sufficient community facilities and infrastructure to support a growing population. It also contains policies to safeguard the natural and historic environment, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and achieve well-designed neighbourhoods.

1.2. Background to Review

The documents that make up the current Sandwell Local Plan, adopted in 2008 - 12, cover the period 2006 -2026. The new Local Plan must cover a minimum period of 15 years following adoption and should identify the scale of development and the key locations to meet this need during this plan period. The Council could decide to plan for a longer time frame if it considers it appropriate to do so. The timetable for production of the Local Plan sets out likely adoption of a new plan by 2025, and so based on this, the Local Plan will need to run until at least 2041.



1.3. The Review Process

The first part of this review process is to involve local people, businesses and other stakeholders in identifying what the new local plan should address, in a scoping exercise known as the **Issues and Options Review**. This is also known as the Issues and Options stage. Here, you tell us how you would want us to tackle the important land use and related matters that will affect the future of our borough. This doesn't just mean considering housing development, although the scale and location of future growth are important considerations. It also involves thinking about issues around the environment, jobs, centres, transport and infrastructure. Your answers will be considered alongside a detailed technical evidence base that we will put together and use to carry out further analysis of the main issues.

Together, this evidence-gathering and analysis will help to create a sound base for the new Sandwell Local Plan.

We want you and other interested stakeholders to get involved in providing comments and information so that the SLP can benefit from your local knowledge and lived experience of Sandwell.

In this document, we introduce various land use and planning-related issues that we think may be important in Sandwell. We would like to hear your views on these matters and have posed some questions along the way to help focus the discussion. Your responses to those questions will help us recognise what matters to local people.

The process of producing a local plan is summarised below.

1.4. Local Plan preparation

1. Gather evidence

The council conducts a range of detailed studies and considers everything a Local Plan needs, like how many new homes and jobs are needed and what supporting infrastructure is required.

2. Issues and options stage

The council considers the ways future development needs could be met and asks the public and other stakeholders to comment on these key issues as well

3. Draft Plan Consultation (Regulation 18)

The council reviews responses received following the Issues and Options stage and publishes a draft Local Plan for further public consideration and comment

4. Submission Plan Consultation (Regulation 19)

Comments made on the draft plan are then used to amend it further and prepare a revised version. The revised draft Local Plan is published for representations to be submitted on its 'soundness'¹.

5. Examination in public

The Secretary of State appoints an Independent Planning Inspector to examine the draft Local Plan in detail. Public hearing sessions are held during this stage.

6. Adopt the Local Plan

The Planning Inspector's final report recommends whether the council can adopt the plan. Once adopted, the Local Plan will be used to make decisions on all planning applications.

¹Soundness is a consideration of how robust, reliable and accurate a local plan is.

1.5. What is the purpose of this document?

This Issues and Options document is the first consultation stage in the local plan process. It provides an opportunity for you to get involved in developing our future local plan and to offer your thoughts and comments on how you think we should address some of the key issues that our borough faces.

1.6. Format of the Issues and Options document

This document identifies some of the borough's key issues under a series of specific topic areas. There are questions alongside each section, where you are invited to respond to the matters being raised. Some questions are specifically open-ended, and some set out potential alternative solutions (options) for you to consider and comment on. We very much encourage public input on whether there are any other options that could help to meet Sandwell's needs.

You are welcome to comment on every issue, or alternatively, to just focus on the ones that specifically interest you. A few of the questions raised relate to technical matters, but most do not, and we are interested in your comments on all the topics included.

Feedback will be collated and analysed to inform the next stage of the process, where Sandwell's new local plan will begin to take shape. There will be further opportunities to get involved at each stage and to comment on new policies and proposals as they emerge.

If there are any other issues around land use and development you think the new plan should include that we haven't covered, this is also your opportunity to bring these to our attention.

The Issues and Options consultation does not identify potential development sites or draft policy wording – these will follow once all the public responses have been considered. A draft SLP containing site allocations and new policies will be the subject of further public consultation later this year.



1.7. How you can submit your comments

Comments must be made in writing, electronically or by hand. You can submit your comments to us in several ways. Electronic responses are preferred but there is the opportunity for you to write to us if you prefer:

- **Online**

Complete the form online using the link on our website

https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200317/planning_policy/4990/sandwell_local_plan

- **By Email**

Download and complete the online version of the form and return it by email to us at Sandwell_LocalPlan@sandwell.gov.uk

- **In writing**

A small number of hard copies of the form will be made available at libraries, together with a copy of the document. Responses should be sent to:

**The Planning Policy Team,
Sandwell Council,
PO Box 2374,
OLDBURY
B69 3DE**

The closing date for responses is **5pm on 20th March 2023**. Any responses that are received after this time may not be considered.

1.8. What happens next?

This issues and options document is part of the local plan process. Your feedback will be collated and analysed to inform the next stage of the process, where Sandwell's new local plan will begin to take shape. There will be further opportunities for you to get involved at each stage and to comment on new policies and proposals as they emerge.

1.9. The Timeline for the Local Plan Review

The timescale for the production and eventual adoption of the new Sandwell Plan is set out below:

Date	Action
6th Feb – 20th March 2023	Six-week Issues and Options consultation and Call for Sites.
March – Aug 2023	Evidence refresh and Draft Plan preparation.
Oct - Dec 2023	Six-week Draft Plan consultation.
Jan – June 2024	Consideration of representations and Submission Plan preparation.
Sep – Oct 2024	Six-week Submission Plan consultation.
Nov 2024	Submit the Plan and representations to the Secretary of State.
Dec 2024 – Summer 2025	Window for holding the Examination in Public followed by Inspector's report
Late 2025 - early 2026	Adoption at Full Council

This is a tight timetable but will ensure the review of the Local Plan is delivered as soon as possible. The review process will inevitably be subject to outside forces, including any new national planning legislation that may be introduced, political activity at either a local or national level and other unforeseen circumstances. However, we will do our best to ensure the SLP meets this schedule.



1.10. The National Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) requires local councils to deliver sustainable development, which is summarised as development meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This requires balancing economic, social and environmental objectives, which should be delivered in complementary ways.

National policy also requires local planning authorities to prepare design guides or codes that reflect local character and design preferences, to set out expectations for development at an early stage. Design guides and codes can vary in their geographic coverage and their level of detail.

The Local Plan must consider the guidance set out by national government in the NPPF and other relevant policies and proposals. This means Sandwell's new local plan is required to effectively reflect these external requirements unless there is sufficient local evidence to demonstrate a different approach is justified.

The Government has published proposals for an update of the NPPF² (during December 2022), which is subject to public consultation until March 2023. Although proposed changes to the NPPF (including the introduction of National Development Management Policies) will not impact on this current Issues and Options procedure, it will become necessary for us to consider and reflect the changing legislation as we move through the local plan adoption process. As a result, the draft stage of the SLP and the subsequent publication version of the plan will incorporate the emerging requirements of the new NPPF.

1.11. The Sub-Regional Context

Prior to the publication of this Issues and Options document, Sandwell was closely involved in the production of a replacement for the original Black Country Core Strategy, in the form of the Black Country Plan, alongside the other three Black Country councils. Work on the production of the joint BCP officially ceased in October 2022.

Given the work that had already been undertaken on the plan, both in terms of evidence gathering and policy writing, and the fact that it had been through significant public consultation, we have decided that there is merit in retaining and adapting some of the policies for our new plan in Sandwell. The other Black Country councils are likely to be doing the same; including similar or shared policies on certain issues such as pollution, transport, nature networks and other more strategic aspects of land use will make it much easier to ensure those matters are dealt with in a more effective way across boundaries.

Sandwell's local plan will therefore include policies previously seen and consulted on in the BCP and will adapt those policies to make them more specific to our borough.

A list of the former BCP policies (several of which are very likely to be amended and reused in the SLP) is included at the end of this document (Appendix A).

The BCP policies will be incorporated into the draft SLP when it is published for public consultation. The SLP will also rely on some of the evidence gathered for it, where this remains relevant and up-to-date, and will respond to some of the issues raised by the public and others during the public consultation on the draft BCP (held during October – November 2021).

²<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy>

NOTE: *As the issues and options for the BCP policies have already been explored during various stages of public consultation, the policies they resulted in are not included in this initial consultation exercise. However, the BCP policies that are subsequently reused in the draft SLP will be subject to further public consultation at later stages of this plan's preparation.*

This Issues and Options document is intended: -

- to identify matters where Sandwell Council feels more specific consideration is needed in a Sandwell context; and
- to get the broad views of local communities / stakeholders on issues of importance to them.

1.12. The Local Context

The Sandwell Local Plan, once it is adopted, will help to deliver the Council's priorities across a range of policy areas through supporting sustainable development and appropriate land use.

Every local plan is required by current legislation to identify strategic priorities for the use of land in its area. This is often achieved in part through setting out a clear Vision describing what the authority wants to accomplish through its approach to land use and development and how and where it sees the borough progressing if those priorities are met.

The SLP's Vision will be guided by, and echo the priorities identified in other adopted Council strategies. This will ensure that land use decisions can reflect and support the delivery of council services and functions across the whole borough and in different areas of impact.

The Council will use the new SLP policies, and additional guidance based on those policies, to assess planning applications and guide its decisions on:

- the type of development needed in the borough;
- the standards that new development should meet;
- what it should look like – its design and appearance;
- what services and infrastructure are needed, and where;
- how residents will benefit from growth and development.

1.13. Links with the Corporate Plan

The main purpose of Sandwell Council's Corporate Plan 2021 - 2025³ is to support the delivery of a healthier, more successful future for the people of Sandwell. This will involve working closely with residents, businesses and other stakeholders to deliver improved opportunities in economic, social and environmental circumstances and protect and enhance people's life chances across the borough.

³https://intranet.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/13179/corporate_plan_2021-2025

The council's **Sandwell Vision 2030⁴** is as follows:

It's where we call home and where we're proud to belong - where we choose to bring up our families, where we feel safe and cared for, enjoying good health, rewarding work, feeling connected and valued in our neighbourhoods and communities, confident in the future, and benefiting fully from a revitalised West Midlands.

The Sandwell Vision 2030 also sets out ten ambitions for a successful Sandwell and what it will look like, all of which will have direct or indirect relevance to the aims of the new SLP. These are included in the Vision 2030 document, available to view on our website, but they are briefly set out below together with an explanation of the role the SLP will play in meeting them.



Ambition 1: Sandwell is a community where our families have high aspirations and where we pride ourselves on equality of opportunity and on our adaptability and resilience.

SLP relevance: promoting and supporting sustainable development that helps to meet local need / demand; provides for sufficient services and facilities in locations accessible to all in Sandwell's communities; delivers a healthy supply of land for economic growth and employment; deliver strong policy support to combating climate change adaptation and mitigation; protect and enhance the natural environment, nature conservation and open spaces; deliver opportunities for biodiversity net gain, landscaping and tree planting.



Ambition 2: Sandwell is a place where we live healthy lives and live them for longer, and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for.

SLP relevance: protecting, enhancing and making accessible land for sport, leisure and active and passive recreation; providing clear policy support for development aimed to deliver health and welfare infrastructure.



Ambition 3: Our workforce and young people are skilled and talented, geared up to respond to changing business needs and to win rewarding jobs in a growing economy.

SLP relevance: delivering a healthy supply of land for economic growth and employment.



⁴ <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/Vision2030>



Ambition 4: Our children benefit from the best start in life and a high-quality education throughout their school careers with outstanding support from their teachers and families.

SLP relevance: provides land and sites for sufficient services and facilities in locations accessible to all in Sandwell's communities including schools, colleges and opportunities for higher education.



Ambition 5: Our communities are built on mutual respect and taking care of each other, supported by all the agencies that ensure we feel safe and protected in our homes and local neighbourhoods.

SLP relevance: promotes the development and improvement of attractive, safe and accessible public realm, support services and community infrastructure as part of new development and project delivery.



Ambition 6: We have excellent and affordable public transport that connects us to all local centres and to jobs in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, the airport and the wider West Midlands.

SLP relevance: deliver a co-ordinated and strategic travel and transport network through Sandwell that links communities to opportunities both within and beyond its boundaries supported by appropriate planning policies and land use designations.



Ambition 7: We now have many new homes to meet a full range of housing needs in attractive neighbourhoods and close to key transport routes.

SLP relevance: delivering a healthy supply of land for the delivery of zero and low carbon housing across the borough and supporting the creation of additional affordable and sustainable communities.





Ambition 8: Our distinctive towns and neighbourhoods are successful centres of community life, leisure and entertainment where people increasingly choose to bring up their families.

SLP relevance: promoting and supporting sustainable development that helps to meet local need / demand; provides for sufficient services and facilities in locations accessible to all in Sandwell's communities.



Ambition 9: Sandwell has become a location of choice for industries of the future where the local economy and high performing companies continue to grow.

SLP relevance: delivering a healthy supply of land for economic growth and employment; supporting the delivery of sufficient high quality physical / digital infrastructure; deliver a co-ordinated and strategic travel and transport network through Sandwell; provides land and sites for sufficient educational services and facilities in locations accessible to all.



Ambition 10: Sandwell now has a national reputation for getting things done, where all local partners are focused on what really matters in people's lives and communities.

SLP relevance: up-to-date local plan backed by sound evidence and robust policies that enable planning permissions to be granted swiftly and in close co-operation with applicants, developers and local communities.



Sandwell.gov.uk

1.14. Vision for the SLP

The corporate Vision above sets out the overarching intention of Sandwell Council to deliver safe, healthy and sustainable growth and support communities across the borough. In terms of its land use aspirations, the SLP could also develop its own vision to help meet these ambitions and objectives, and some **suggested** wording is set out below:

In 2041, Sandwell is a thriving, growing and active Borough, leading the urban renaissance of the West Midlands conurbation.

Sandwell is at the forefront of tackling climate change, in its role as a hub for climate adaptation and mitigation technologies and industries. Its new buildings are clean and energy-efficient in their design, materials and operations, its old buildings are adapted to deliver low and zero carbon outputs. It sets the standard in both public and private sectors for embedding climate change awareness and sensitivity in all its actions, outcomes and decisions.

Notwithstanding its urban character, Sandwell's residents enjoy access to country and town parks, open spaces, green networks and corridors and increasing numbers of pocket parks, landscaping schemes and tree cover, as part of their everyday activities and leisure time. Sandwell's natural environment is valued for its own sake as well as for its contribution to the health and wellbeing of people living, working, learning in and enjoying the borough.

Sandwell continues to deliver sustained and sustainable economic growth and investment opportunities from its highly accessible location at the heart of the country. It provides high-quality goods and services from its powerful industrial base and levels of employment, wages and economic activity are high and rising.

Sandwell's residents enjoy longer and healthier lives than in previous decades, thanks to the increase in open spaces, the provision of services and facilities designed to promote active recreation and leisure, the improvement of and increased accessibility to healthcare infrastructure and the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices. They have access to well-performing schools, higher and further education provision at all levels and to continued opportunities for skills development and training.

There is a wide range of housing available to Sandwell residents, designed to support sustainable living and capable of adaptation to suit all sections of the community. Affordable, social and council houses are available to those who need them. New developments are located within attractively landscaped areas, with access to district and low-cost energy and heating projects, sustainable drainage designed to improve the local environment as well as provide reliable protection against flooding and run-off and all necessary services and facilities within walking distance or a short bus ride away.

Sandwell's town centres thrive by day and by night, with an expanded range of retail, leisure and socialising opportunities as well as acting as the foci for new residential developments, community activities and social enterprises.

1.15. Objectives

The following set of objectives has been drafted for the new Local Plan for public consultation. These are intended to help the achievement of the proposed vision for Sandwell and the delivery of sustainable growth. The objectives will form the framework for the SLP, and the policies and proposals of the Local Plan should all contribute to achieving them in a balanced way. This consultation seeks views on these suggested objectives at this stage – they are not fixed / agreed but are intended at this stage to prompt discussion and can be changed.

Objective 1 - Ensure new development takes a proactive approach to climate change mitigation, adaptation and carbon reduction, and that development is resilient to climate change

Objective 2 - Deliver sustainable development in locations where people can access jobs and services, delivering wider positive social and economic outcomes and protecting and enhancing local built and natural environments

Objective 3 - Address Sandwell's identified and wide-ranging housing needs by supporting the provision of high-quality new homes that are capable of being adapted to meet the future needs of occupiers, provide sufficient internal and external space and promote and support climate change adaptation and mitigation through good design and in the materials and techniques used for their construction.

Objective 4 - Support regeneration, business investment and job creation to maintain and grow a prosperous and resilient local and regional economy in ways that consider environmental and climate change factors

Objective 5 - Support Sandwell's towns and local centres as places for economic, residential and cultural activity with good access to services in ways that protect their heritage, character and identity

Objective 6 - Ensure communities in Sandwell are safe and resilient and social cohesion is promoted and enhanced

Objective 7 - Require new development to deliver a high standard of design reflecting local character and distinctiveness and that creates greener and safer places that people feel proud to live and work in.

Objective 8 - Ensure new development and open spaces support health and wellbeing for all, reduce health inequalities and encourage active and healthy lifestyles

Objective 9 - Protect and improve Sandwell's environment, including its natural landscapes, green infrastructure and biodiversity, as well as its rich historic built environment

Objective 10 - Encourage the effective and prudent use of previously developed land and natural resources, including the efficient use of land and buildings and the use of sustainable and climate-aware construction techniques within new developments, as well as providing for waste management and disposal

Objective 11 - Ensure development is supported by essential infrastructure and services and promotes safe movement and more sustainable modes of travel through promoting greener travel networks for walking, cycling and public transport

1) Questions – Vision and Objectives

What do you think are the main issues that the new SLP should address in Sandwell?

Please indicate which option you think should be used as the basis for preparing the SLP Vision:

☐ **Option A:** The Sandwell Vision 2030 should be used as the basis of preparing the Local Plan, bearing in mind that it will be for the Local Plan to establish a sustainable strategy for the scale and location for future growth and development.

☐ **Option B:** Create a new vision specifically for the Local Plan and the plan period it will cover along the lines of the suggested wording included above.

If you think the SLP should include a new Vision, (along the lines of the suggested wording above) do you think the Vision should cover any other issues?

Once you have had a look at the issues raised in this document, please let us know your thoughts on the following overall matters:

Are the topic areas and issues being covered the right ones for Sandwell?

Is there anything else we should be covering?

Do you have any thoughts on the evidence base needed to support the Local Plan Review?

Should the Sandwell Local Plan:

- ☐ promote higher levels of development to support economic growth; or
- ☐ plan for the minimum necessary to help meet the needs of our population?

Do you think the SLP should be valid until 2041 or should it run for longer?

If you think the Plan should run for longer, what would be your reason for this?

What are your thoughts on the draft objectives?

Do you think they are appropriate?

Are there any other objectives we should be including?

Do you disagree with them - if so, can you explain which ones and why?

The intention is to include certain draft policies from the Black Country Plan in the SLP, as described in the section headed “Sub-regional Context” above. This will enable us to take advantage of detailed evidence and policy work that has already been carried out, and to allow for some topics (e.g. air quality, climate change, the environment) to be addressed similarly to the other Black Country councils, who will also be reusing some of the BCP policies themselves.

2) Questions – Strategic Policies

Do you agree with the Council’s decision to incorporate some of the former BCP policies⁵ into the SLP, to benefit from the work already done on them and to make it potentially easier for the four Black Country councils to address certain wider-than-local matters in a joined-up manner?

If so: -

Are there any of the BCP policies listed in the appendix that you think the Council should definitely include?

Are there any of the BCP policies in the appendix that you think the Council does not need to include?



⁵Summarised in Appendix A to this document

2. TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

The issue of climate change is at the forefront of international, national and local environmental, ecological and political thinking. In March 2020 Sandwell Council declared a Climate Emergency. Council Members agreed that greenhouse gas emissions needed to be reduced to a level compatible with keeping global warming below 1.5C above pre-industrial levels. To achieve that, the Council committed to becoming carbon neutral in its own activities by 2030 and to seeing Sandwell become a carbon neutral borough by 2041. The emerging SLP will contain a suite of new policies designed to help Sandwell mitigate and adapt to the changing climate at a strategic level, in line with the Council's adopted Climate Change Strategy⁶.

One of the main ways of combatting climate change is through promoting decarbonisation. Decarbonisation is the term used to describe the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by utilising low and renewable sources (solar, wind etc.), thereby achieving a lower output of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The aim of decarbonising is to achieve something called 'Net Zero'. Net zero means that any carbon emissions created are balanced by taking the same amount out of the atmosphere. We will reach net zero when the amount of carbon emissions we add is no more than the amount taken away. This in turn helps to control global warming by ensuring that no extra carbon is released overall.

Net Zero will tolerate some emissions however, providing they are balanced out elsewhere. This allows for some industries to continue to operate where it would be difficult for them to reach zero emissions, such as aviation, with their emissions being offset by other sectors where it is easier to reduce emissions or find alternatives for energy consumption. In addition, carbon offset can be helped by industrial or natural processes that consume carbon, such as planting trees for example.

The Government's ambitious *Net Zero Strategy: Building Back Greener* (October 2021) proposes a decarbonised economy by 2050 and identifies various approaches and policies to achieve this

"... this strategy sets out our plans for reducing emissions from each sector of our economy, while hoovering up any remaining emissions with greenhouse gas removals – either natural, like trees, or technological, using carbon capture."

Building Back Greener Executive Summary (October 2021)⁷

The government's intentions for industry set out in the document include decarbonising it in line with net zero goals whilst simultaneously transforming industrial heartlands by attracting inward investment, future-proofing businesses, and securing high-wage, high-skill jobs. To achieve this will involve supporting industry to switch to cleaner fuels; helping it improve resource and energy efficiency; and through fair carbon pricing to drive the deep decarbonisation of industry.

Sandwell, with its wealth of experience in developing manufacturing and engineering solutions, is well-placed to deliver green and carbon reduction-supporting technologies that will help to meet these requirements and targets, which in turn will help revitalise local markets and employment activity.

Decarbonising the economy by deploying renewable energy and strengthening the grid, together with measures to protect communities and infrastructure from flood risk, also have the potential to impact on the landscape. Continued urban development, new or upgraded transport infrastructure, plans for woodland expansion and potential changes in the way open land is managed will all contribute.

Understanding what makes landscapes resilient is becoming increasingly important. Droughts, rising temperatures, floods and the spread of pests and diseases are already evident, affecting landscapes and species across the country.

⁶https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/31151/climate_change_strategy.pdf

⁷https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf

The SLP can help to achieve this by making sure its policies and proposals reflect local ambitions and opportunities for growth while delivering the level of carbon and energy savings the government is seeking. To facilitate this, Sandwell Council needs to hear from companies, businesses, educational providers and local people on how they see the future economy and their surroundings developing to fulfil this new role.

Some of the possible issues to be considered are set out below – this list is not meant to be complete and other issues relating to climate change, carbon capture and adaptation can be included where they could be delivered through a land use policy in the SLP.

These policies will not replace nor repeat anything in national planning guidance or legislation. The purpose is to identify if necessary those issues that are of more significance in Sandwell and to provide further guidance through local policies as required.

The Draft Black Country Plan contained several policies relating to climate change and carbon - climate change and carbon reduction in carbon and we intend to adapt and reuse those policies of relevance to Sandwell. The policies cover the following areas:

- Increasing efficiency and resilience
- Energy Infrastructure
- Managing Heat Risk
- Air Quality
- Flood Risk
- Sustainable drainage and surface water management (SuDS)
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and BREEAM Standards

Other policies in the BCP also address issues around greener transport infrastructure, such as electric charging points, improved access to public transport and the need to support and promote active travel initiatives, and these areas will also be reflected and addressed in the Sandwell local plan as necessary.



3) Questions – Climate Change

How should we address the climate crisis in the Local Plan Review – what should be our priority or priorities? The following are examples only and you are invited to identify as many other ways as you feel are necessary:

- Reducing the need to travel through promoting accessibility or traveling by more sustainable modes of transport than the car
- Promoting alternative and low-carbon means of travel
- Protecting open space
- Planting more trees
- Promoting climate change-focussed ways of building homes and businesses
- Requiring development to be carbon-neutral or low carbon
- Any other priorities

How else can new development reduce greenhouse gas emissions and respond to the climate crisis?

Should the new plan leave the issue of carbon reduction in new buildings to other relevant legislation rather than making its own provision – i.e., should the plan not include policies on carbon reduction but instead wait for emerging Building Regulations legislation to become law?

How would you feel about building extensions and alterations to your property that were more climate-change adapted and low carbon? For example;

- choosing a design that maintained a more constant indoor temperature during extremes of both heat and cold;
- using a heat pump instead of a normal central heating boiler;

- only using certain building materials developed to be that lower in carbon; or
- planting trees and other vegetation to shade parts of your property that would otherwise get too hot?

What potential sources of renewable energy should the Council be looking at supporting in its local plan policies – examples include, but are not limited to, the following: -

- heat pumps (ground, air, water)
- battery farms
- energy from waste
- solar photovoltaic panels / solar water heating
- energy from wind / water
- biomass crops
- other renewable sources

Heat networks (sometimes referred to as district heating) supply heat from a central source to consumers, via a network of pipes (usually underground) carrying hot water or steam. They can cover a large area or be more locally, supplying a development site or small cluster of buildings. Importantly, a heat network removes the need for individual boilers or electric heaters in every building. Ideally, the heat they use should be derived from a low carbon source - this could be from factories / industrial processes, biomass, heat from waste facilities, the ground, renewable sources such as solar or even from rivers.

As part of its own response to reducing carbon and cutting heating bills for residents, Sandwell Council is currently looking at detailed project development work for a potential heat network, located in West Bromwich with a possible extension to the Cape Hill area of Smethwick.

4) Questions – Heat Networks

Do you agree that Sandwell Council should support the development and delivery of heat networks as part of its own building proposals, to help deliver Net Zero?

Do you think the Council should require private sector and other developers to make provision for heat networks, particularly on larger sites?

Some landscapes tend to be more able to retain their key characteristics and qualities than others – they are more resilient to pressure and alteration from external sources. Such **resilient landscapes** can absorb a certain amount of change without losing what makes them distinctive and special. Less resilient landscapes can suffer disproportionately when changes do occur, sometimes setting off a cycle of decline and ultimately causing a loss of character.

Landscapes that are resilient often include areas where the natural layout or topography of the landscape helps make it visible (so people value it), where habitats are managed sympathetically, where there is variety in terms of tree species, cropping patterns, field boundaries and wider landscape features, and where land uses and activities work with nature, not against it.

Understanding a landscape's resilience can help manage the changes impacting upon it. It can also help maintain the character and diversity that are important to national and local identities and a sense of place.

5) Questions – Resilient Landscapes

How should we ensure new development is able to withstand climate change and provide a comfortable living and working environment for people?

What should be our priorities when considering new design and landscaping to help us cope with climate change?

Apart from not building on or near them, how should we protect the open spaces, parks, countryside and ecology of Sandwell?

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are a natural approach to managing drainage in and around properties and other developments. They work by slowing and holding back the excess surface water that runs off from a site and allowing natural processes to break down pollutants. SuDs include

- green roofs;
- permeable surfaces for footpaths and roads;
- infiltration trenches, filter drains and filter strips;
- swales (shallow drainage channels); and
- detention basins, purpose-built ponds and wetlands.

Given the highly built-up nature of Sandwell, and its topography, flooding is evident in several areas following heavy rain. The new local plan needs to address in more detail suitable means of controlling run-off. One option to deal with this would be to include a policy in the SLP on SuDS, which sets proposed run-off rates for development that achieve at a minimum a reduction equivalent to the current climate change ratio. The policy could also require land to be set aside on development sites to manage flooding and drainage, planted up to assist in absorbing excess water.

6) Questions – Sustainable Drainage

How should the Local Plan Review best manage flood risk whilst still achieving the growth that is needed to make Sandwell successful?

Do you think the SLP needs a policy to identify an acceptable rate of run-off for new developments, or is this covered in sufficient detail in the Black Country Local Standards for SuDS (BCP evidence base⁸)?

Do you think the SLP : -

- ☐ should include details of the type of SuDS that the Council would prefer to see delivered;
- ☐ should require SuDS schemes but leave details to developers to propose;
- ☐ should not require SuDS but allow for alternative drainage schemes to be implemented?

⁸Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, section 9

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND HOUSING PROVISION

Sandwell is a place of contrasts – a highly urbanised landscape with a rich history of heavy industry containing significant areas of open space, parks and canals, historic buildings and places and a growing number of young and ambitious communities. The aim of the SLP is to provide sufficient land and infrastructure to support the continued growth and regeneration of the borough's economy while at the same time protecting its valuable and sensitive open spaces, natural and historic landscapes and distinctive communities.

The borough is multi-centric, with seven main town centres and several smaller local centres serving the population. The development strategy will need to act as a framework within which each of these centres and their associated communities will sit, allowing development to spread around Sandwell into the locations best suited for it.

The SLP will have to deal with allocating **housing** sites across the borough and identifying sufficient housing sites to provide new houses to help meet current and future demand. It will also need to address how sites that come forward during the lifetime of the plan can be dealt with, in particular where they result from the loss of employment land.

There is still, despite the number of housing sites that have been identified and allocated, a shortfall in the numbers of houses that need to be built across the Black Country to meet identified needs. Sandwell itself has a housing need of approximately 30,300 new dwellings between 2021 and 2041 that will not all be delivered by the allocations that will be included in the plan, with an overall supply figure of around 9,492⁹. There will be several options for dealing with this, but the main issue remains the lack of available land suitable for housing.

We have a finite supply of land readily available for development and it may be that we cannot meet all our housing need within Sandwell itself. We can ask adjacent councils if they can let us effectively count some of their available housing towards our need in Sandwell, but many other local councils are in a similar position to us in not having sufficient land to meet their own development needs.

Another possible option is to increase the numbers of houses proposed for new housing sites – we can require developer to build to a higher density in areas where the local infrastructure will support this. For example, housing sites in town centres or close to good public transport links can usually accommodate higher housing numbers than in the suburbs or less-developed areas. The draft BCP suggested densities of

- 100+ dwellings per hectare on sites in strategic or main town centres;
- 45+ dwellings per hectare where sites were highly accessible (e.g. within a ten-minute walk to a GP surgery, local shops etc.); and
- 40+ dwellings per hectare for other locations.

Integrating land use and transport policies is integral in affecting the way people travel from their homes to places of work, education and to access goods and services. Mixed land uses, high density housing, giving priority to pedestrian and cycle paths as the main network for internal neighbourhood traffic, giving priority to public transport as the most important element of a sustainable personal transport system can reduce travel distances and enable active modes and other sustainable modes of transport to access goods and services, reducing private vehicle use, congestion and associated vehicle emissions.

⁹The need figure will change depending on the affordability ratio and the supply is as at 2021.

7) Questions – Future Development in Sandwell

What do you think are the main challenges we face in planning for housing and employment in Sandwell between now and 2041?

What are your views on the overall amount of new housing and employment that is needed in Sandwell?

What types of homes are needed in Sandwell?

Examples may include, but not be limited to:

- Detached or semi-detached family housing
- Bungalows
- Smaller houses such as maisonettes or terraced housing
- Higher density development such as flats and town houses
- Co-housing¹⁰
- Self- and custom-build homes

Where do you think this new housing should be built?

- ☐ On brownfield or underused land
- ☐ On previously undeveloped or greenfield sites
- ☐ On underused or derelict open space
- ☐ On the sites of older or derelict / vacant buildings, including areas of older housing, flats, factories or other unused buildings?

What sort of new development (homes, workplaces, shops, leisure facilities etc) do you think would help make Sandwell a better place to live by 2041?

¹⁰Cohousing communities are intentional communities, created and run by their residents. Each household has a self-contained, private home as well as shared community space. Residents come together to manage their community, share activities, and often eat together.

Where do you think it should be built?

Do you think there are any sorts of development that would make Sandwell a worse place to live by 2041?

What harm do you think that sort of development might do to Sandwell?

Do you think we should be asking for higher density developments in centres and on sites near public transport hubs / links?

- If so, do you think we should use the densities identified in the draft BCP (Policy HOU2) and set out above?
- Should we ask for higher densities than this?
- Should we ask for lower densities than this?

What do you think a sustainable urban land use and an unsustainable urban land use would be, from a transport point of view?

Tell us about some modern developments or buildings that you know and like. Why do you like them?

[Sandwell.gov.uk](https://www.sandwell.gov.uk)

Tell us about some modern developments or buildings that you know and don't like. Why don't you like them? How might they have been done better?

Which of the following issues are most important to you (they are not listed in any order)?

Please identify your priorities in order if you can, as this will help us address what is most important to Sandwell's residents and occupiers.

- ☐ Building affordable housing.
- ☐ Increasing the number of well-paid jobs in the area.
- ☐ Creating new green spaces and nature networks
- ☐ Protecting and improving existing green spaces and wildlife habitats.
- ☐ Attracting investment and new businesses to the area.
- ☐ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and tackling the climate crisis.
- ☐ Making it easier to travel by bus, tram, train, walking and cycling.
- ☐ Providing houses of a good size, with gardens and associated open spaces.
- ☐ Developing a well-designed and attractive built environment, with new buildings and areas that make a positive contribution to their surroundings.
- ☐ Maintaining a safe and welcoming environment that minimises the likelihood of crime / antisocial behaviour taking place.
- ☐ Promoting pleasant, clean and lively town centres that people want to visit and use.

Should there be a greater emphasis on: -

- allocating land for mixed-use development (where housing, employment / business development, community facilities etc. sit next to each other);
- allocating land for single end uses, such as just housing or just employment?

Do you have any other comments to make about what development options for housing, employment or other land uses you think we should consider as we draft the Sandwell Local Plan?

Additional small housing sites will become available after the Plan has been adopted and provision to deal with them will need to be made in the new plan. These developments, known as **housing windfall** sites, are expected to provide approximately 1920 homes across Sandwell between 2021 and 2041 and as a result the SLP will have a role in both allocating those sites that are known about when the SLP is being prepared and in dealing with similar sites that are not currently allocated but come forward subsequently.

Where sites are identified during the lifetime of the SLP, they will be dealt with like other planning applications, with reference to the appropriate strategic and local policies on sustainability, design, location, infrastructure and environment. In Sandwell, windfall sites are likely to arise where sites currently in employment use are vacated. In some cases, these sites will be retained for employment uses as they will be of strategic importance to the local economy. In other cases, the council will need to decide whether sites should remain in employment use or be redeveloped for housing or other uses.

8) Questions – Housing Windfall Sites

We think that a local windfall policy is needed to ensure that any proposals for residential development on sites that are not allocated are in the right place and do not have adverse impacts on current and neighbouring uses.

- **Do you agree?**
- **If so, what should it contain?**

Are there any specific local considerations that we should include when we are making decisions on windfall sites?

For example:

- **should development be allowed on current employment land?**

Sandwell is a highly **sustainable location** in many ways, given its history of industry and employment existing alongside residential areas and its good transport and road links. The SLP will seek to maintain those close relationships and networks by encouraging development to make the most of its surroundings and communities, and to provide sufficient opportunities for new and improved infrastructure such as schools, health and emergency services, open spaces and transport hubs.

9) Questions – Sustainable Locations

Should most new development:

- be concentrated in locations with the best levels of sustainable access to jobs, transport, services and facilities?
- be spread out between different towns and centres, to help support new growth and investment in those locations currently without a good supply of jobs, transport, services and facilities?

Are there any locations in Sandwell you think we should look at in particular to find land for new development?

What else can the SLP do to support the sustainability of local communities?

How can the SLP help to increase the number of journeys made on foot, bicycle and public transport by people who want to access services and facilities?

Masterplans are generally used to help guide development proposals for large or complex sites by showing how new development can be included in local areas. The Council has supported the production of masterplans for West Bromwich¹¹ and the Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor¹² that will be used to support the ongoing regeneration of the areas, and similar documents can be produced where they would help deliver high quality and comprehensive development.

The main issue for the SLP is whether there is a need for a policy about the production of masterplans and to set out the circumstances under which one would be required.

10) Questions – Masterplanning

What sort of development do you think would benefit from having a masterplan? e.g.

- housing developments over a certain number of dwellings;
- employment development over a certain area of floorspace / size of site;
- mixed use development (housing and other uses such as employment on the same site);
- regeneration schemes in centres?

Please identify what sort of schemes you think would benefit or whether you think they should all have masterplans.

Should there be a type / size of proposal that would automatically require a masterplan to be produced?

- If so, what would that be?

¹¹https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/32496/west_bromwich_masterplan

¹²[Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor Framework and Grove Lane Masterplan](#)

Sandwell Council is committed to delivering new development, places and environments that reflect the principles of **good design**. The National Planning Policy Framework states that, *‘The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve’*. Creating well-designed places and homes that are distinctive, well-connected, safe and attractive and that provide sufficient space for occupiers’ differing needs now and into the future is important; it will make people feel proud of the places where they live and work and help communities to thrive.

The National Design Guide is a comprehensive document that sets out the need for and role of good design in the built environment. It identifies and illustrates the Government’s priorities for well-designed places and forms part of the NPPF. Where councils do not have their own in-house design guidance, the national guidance should be used.

The National Design Guide¹³ should also be read in conjunction with the National Model Design Code¹⁴, which provides detailed information on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. The National Model Design Code states a Design Code is:

A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

The BCP proposed two policies¹⁵ relating to design, which supported the delivery of well-designed buildings and spaces that provided an attractive and accessible environment. They also considered climate change and required buildings and landscapes to be designed in ways that could help mitigate its impacts.

There are several documents already in use in Sandwell that help planning officers make decisions on applications with design implications. These include the Residential Design Guide (2014)¹⁶, the Community Safety¹⁷ and Cycling¹⁸ supplementary planning guidance documents (both 2004), area action plans for West Bromwich, Smethwick and Tipton and some neighbourhood and local guidance. Much of this work can be used to develop and inform any design guide / code and can also be either incorporated into the new local plan where needed or updated following adoption of the new plan.

Proposed changes to the status of supplementary guidance form part of the current consultation on national planning guidance; it is possible that such documents will be replaced in due course by “supplementary plans”, which will themselves be subject to public examinations. Otherwise, we can choose to incorporate aspects of the supplementary guidance into the new local plan at a later stage. In any case, many of these supplementary planning documents are now out of date and / or have been superseded by the delivery of development or by new legislation, while others could usefully be amalgamated as part of a more joined-up approach to topics such as sustainable travel or design.

Any new design code will be subject to public consultation as part of its adoption, and as such authorities will sometimes prepare and consult on them in tandem with the preparation of a local plan.

¹³<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

¹⁴<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>

¹⁵CSP4 - Achieving well-designed places; ENV10 - Design Quality

¹⁶Sandwell Residential Design Guide link

¹⁷Community Safety SPG

¹⁸Cycling SPG

We intend to adopt and use the Nationally Described Space Standards¹⁹, which deal with internal space within new dwellings and are suitable for application across all tenures. They set out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height. Using these standards ensures that new houses are built with sufficient internal space to allow for comfortable and healthy occupation.

11) Questions – Good Design

Do you think we should:

- ☐ provide a local design policy / design guidance specifically for Sandwell; or
- ☐ use the national code and guidance instead?

Instead of producing a new design code for Sandwell, should we review and update the existing guidance we already have instead?

We intend to reuse elements of the draft BCP design policies to support the local plan. Do you agree with this approach?

Do you agree with our intention to adopt the Nationally Described Space Standards for new houses?

If not, can you explain why?



¹⁹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>

Do you think we should:

- Incorporate current supplementary planning guidance into the draft Local Plan (with review and updates as necessary);
- Consider including some aspects of supplementary guidance in the SLP that can be used to shape policies and proposals;
- Retain supplementary planning guidance as separate documents under the SLP and undertake a programme of reviews and updates to them (accepting that this will also require separate examinations) at a later stage; or
- Use another approach?

Planning permission is required for any alteration that materially affects the external appearance or **design of shopfronts**, including canopies /awnings and some security measures. Many proposed shop signs will also require Advertisement Consent.

All new external **security shutters on shopfronts** need planning permission. However, use of toughened glass and internal grills would not normally require planning permission unless the building is 'listed' in which case 'Listed Building Consent' may be required.

The current SAD contains policies on both these matters, and it will be important for the SLP to offer continued guidance on aspects of town centre design to help ensure our shopping centres become and remain attractive and welcoming places to visit. It is intended to retain and update both policies in the SLP.

12) Questions – Shopfront Design

Do you agree with this approach?



4. OTHER HOUSING ISSUES

There is not much evidence of an interest in **self and custom-build housing** in Sandwell and it may be that we do not need a specific policy relating to the matter. However, this may change, and we may wish to produce further guidance on the matter in the future. Legislation requires us to keep a register of enquiries for self-build and interested parties can visit the Council's website to register their interest²⁰.

The provision of plots for self and custom-build housing projects can sometimes entail developers setting aside parcels for private individuals to purchase and develop alongside their own schemes. This can be achieved by including a policy in the local plan that requires developers to provide a percentage of plots for self-build on sites over a certain size – for example, requiring that 5% of plots on sites of over 100 dwellings be identified for self-build. The developers will provide access and services to the edge of the plots and the new plot owners will then take on the task of developing their houses.

13) Questions – Self- and Custom-Build Housing

Do you think Sandwell's new local plan should include a policy on self- and custom-build?

If you do, how do you think the Council should deal with issues around self-build proposals on commercial housing sites?

- ☐ A design policy requiring self-build homes to reflect the design elements of the site on which they are located (e.g. height, scale, mass, materials, type and design of features such as doors, windows, etc.?)
- ☐ Requiring developers to allocate sections of commercial housing sites where people undertaking self-build can have a freer hand in the design of their house?

Do you think self-build should be supported in another way in Sandwell (e.g. not provided on commercial housing development sites; subject to a different policy approach)?

²⁰https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200183/land_and_property/4164/self-build_and_custom_housebuilding_act_2015

SAD Policy H4 refers to the needs of people with **specific housing requirements**, including the elderly, the physically less able, people who require supported living opportunities and people with other mental or physical issues.

The Council feels it is important to keep a revised version of the current policy and to understand how it might be used to encourage the delivery of suitable housing without causing issues around viability for developers (e.g. by referring to the standards outlined in the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(2): Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings).

14) Questions – Specific Housing Requirements

Do you agree that the new SLP should contain a policy on housing suitable to meet the needs of people who have special needs or who require additional support?

What types of housing suitable to meet special needs do you think should be encouraged and delivered in Sandwell? E.g.

- bungalows;
- houses capable of easy adaptation for users of assistive technology such as wheelchairs;
- houses that can be easily altered as people age or their medical or physical condition changes;
- other types of dwellings.

The Council intends to incorporate the national minimum space standards for new housing as set out in the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(2): Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings²¹.

Do you agree with this approach?

²¹This requires houses to be designed and built to meet the requirements of people with differing needs, such as older people or people with a disability, and to be capable of being adapted for use where people's physical abilities change over time.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have specific accommodation requirements, including the need for both temporary and permanent sites with on-site services and utilities. Travelling showpeople also need access to large-scale storage provision for their equipment during the winter period when they are not on the road. The draft BCP included a policy intended to provide sufficient, appropriately designed and integrated sites to accommodate the needs of travelling communities over the plan period and it is our intention to revisit and adapt this policy as necessary to cover needs generated in Sandwell.

15) Questions – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Do you agree with the proposal to adapt the draft BCP policy on the needs of travelling communities for use in Sandwell?

Over the last few years the issue of the number and location of **Houses in Multiple Occupation**²² (HMOs) in Sandwell has risen in importance. A combination of changes to permitted development rights and the need to provide affordable accommodation for people on low incomes has led to an increase in the number of HMOs and in the numbers of related planning applications being determined by Planning Committee.

HMOs provide an additional and valuable source of lower-cost accommodation for sections of the community who cannot afford to purchase their own property or who do not qualify for other forms of social housing. They also provide for the needs of students and people commuting from elsewhere to work in Sandwell.

There is a perception however that HMOs lead to increases in anti-social behaviour, increased activity, parking problems, noise nuisance and more transient occupiers leading to a weakening of community coherence. As a result, applications often result in widespread objections from the public. However, in many cases there are no planning grounds for officers to recommend refusal, resulting in members either going against officer recommendations to refuse proposals (which in turn can lead to appeals against the decisions) or being left feeling that they have no powers to control the proposed use.

There is currently no reference to, or policy on, HMOs in either the Black Country Core Strategy or the SAD. Some national planning guidance is available, covering licensing and mandatory room sizes²³.

Having a policy on HMOs in the SLP will allow Sandwell to produce further supplementary planning guidance on them. This will set out what people need to consider when developing HMOs, thereby supporting both the council and landlords and hopefully reducing the likelihood of further planning appeals.

Other local authorities have addressed the issues around HMOs through adopting planning policies that include certain criteria against which proposals are assessed; typical examples of these include the following (from Brighton and Hove City Council's City Plan, part two of which was adopted in October 2022):

- HMO development will not be permitted where more than 10% of dwellings within a radius of 50 metres of the application site are already in HMO use; ...

²²<https://www.gov.uk/private-renting/houses-in-multiple-occupation>

²³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925269/HMOs_and_residential_property_licensing_reforms_guidance.pdf

[new HMOs are only permitted where]:

- fewer than 20% of dwellings in the wider neighbourhood area are already in use as HMOs;
- the proposal does not result in a non-HMO dwelling being sandwiched between two existing HMOs in a continuous frontage;
- the proposal does not lead to a continuous frontage of three or more HMOs;

as well as requirements relating to internal and external space standards and facilities.

Issues around space standards, parking and other design-related aspects can be dealt with through other policies in the SLP and / or by issuing guidance on them in a supplementary planning document.

16) Questions – Houses in Multiple Occupation

We think that the Sandwell Plan could have a policy on HMOs that seeks to define areas where HMOs would be inappropriate / discouraged, e.g. where there are already a number of existing HMOs.

- **Do you agree and if so what criteria do you think should be used to evidence why they are inappropriate?**
- **If you do not think a policy would be appropriate, can you explain why you think that?**
- **Are there any alternative options we might look to use instead of or alongside a planning policy for HMOs?**

We think that the policy could look to identify aspects of HMO provision that have the potential to adversely affect the amenities of adjoining or neighbouring properties (e.g. noise, overlooking, general disturbance, or impact on visual amenity) and provide criteria to manage those issues;

Do you agree and if so, what sort of realistic criteria should we be looking to include?

We think that the policy could introduce percentage thresholds and clustering criteria to ensure that HMOs are not concentrated in an area above a certain level and to control their numbers across a wider area;

Do you agree and if so what evidence is needed to identify and justify these criteria?

To enable us to further control changes of use to small HMOs, the Council will need to impose an Article 4 direction, which, once adopted, will make such changes of use subject to the planning application process.

☐

Do you agree with this approach?

☐

Do you disagree? If so, can you explain why?

Do you think the Council should:

- introduce a Sandwell-wide Article 4 Direction for HMOs (requires every proposal to develop an HMO to be subject to planning permission and will involve additional time and resources to manage)?
- do you think an Article 4 Direction should be imposed only on those parts of Sandwell where there are already a large number of HMOs and where there is evidence of the sorts of issues mentioned previously?

5. HEALTHY PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Sandwell is a borough with high levels of poor health and deprivation and a lower than average life expectancy. The people of Sandwell experience significant inequalities in health when compared to the rest of England. On average, they do not live for as long as people in other areas of England and spend more of their lives ill or disabled²⁴.

The Marmot Review of Health Inequalities showed that the largest influences on physical and mental health are the social determinants of health, for example, education, employment, social networks and housing²⁵. These aspects can be positively impacted by planning for the right development in the best locations, which is what the SLP will do.

There are various elements that can contribute to increasing physical activity in a healthy environment such as encouraging change in travel behaviour to active modes of travel, active design, access to green and blue spaces, allotments, safe places, clean air and a positive soundscape. In one study, people with good access to green spaces were 24% more likely to be active²⁶.

17) Questions –Development for Health

What do you think are the key public health issues facing Sandwell?

How should we plan for our ageing population?

Do we need to include specific development allocations such as sites for retirement facilities or assisted living?

Where should such allocations be located?

What should the plan contain that would help you change your travel habits to more active modes of travel (such as cycling and walking)?

²⁴<https://www.sandwelltrends.info/health-general-page/>²⁵Marmot, M (2010). *Fair Society, Healthy Lives, The Marmot Review*.

²⁶Natural England, Technical Information Note TIN055, "An estimate of the economic and health value and cost effectiveness of the expanded WHI scheme 2009", Natural England, 2009.

Community and social facilities are those aspects of a town or local centre that enable people to make the most of their local area. They provide those services and functions that allow people to interact with each other; they also deliver the facilities that make society run smoothly. Any successful and sustainable location or development will deliver and enhance these functions as part of their offer.

Community and social facilities can include (but not be limited to) the following: -

- a) health and social care facilities (e.g. GP surgeries, NHS walk-in centres, dentists);
- b) leisure and sports facilities;
- c) green infrastructure and heritage assets (e.g. parks, gardens, woodlands, playing fields, allotments, cemeteries);
- d) transport (e.g. footpaths, bridleways, cycleways, highways, public transport, railways, car parks);
- e) community centres / meeting halls;
- f) youth facilities;
- g) play facilities;
- h) library and information services;
- i) cultural facilities;
- j) places of worship;
- k) theatres, public art, heritage centres;
- l) public house;
- m) local shops;
- n) post offices;
- o) schools and other places of learning.

Making sure new development is located where there is access to these services and facilities will ensure that sustainable, vibrant and healthy communities can be created and supported. Where such facilities don't exist or are not sufficient to meet the needs of local communities, the SLP can help to identify what infrastructure might be required to do so.

Increasing the provision of, and accessibility to, sports fields and areas for **active recreation** will have a positive impact on the health and fitness of local communities, as well as supporting community interactions and participation in formal sports. We have recently completed a review of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy for Sandwell as part of the work undertaken for the BCP and so have a very clear understanding of the demand for, and supply of, facilities for sport.

Sport England's publication 'Active Design'²⁷ provides details, case studies and a framework describing how to incorporate active lifestyles and sport into cities, towns and villages. Sport England states that,

"Active Design wraps together the planning and considerations that should be made when designing the places and spaces we live in. It's about designing and adapting where we live to encourage activity in our everyday lives, making the active choice the easy choice".

18) Questions -Active Recreation

Should we require masterplans and new developments to refer to the Sport England Active Design Principles²⁸?

How best can we support the protection and enhancement of current sporting provision?



²⁷Sport England, "Active Design: Planning for health and wellbeing through sport and physical activity," Sport England, 2015.

²⁸<https://www.sportengland.org/news/active-design-guide>

One issue that has become apparent is the reuse of buildings for **community facilities and services**. In some cases, these new uses can attract large numbers of visitors and might generate significant additional traffic on often congested local roads, especially in residential areas. A possible solution may be to encourage community uses to occupy vacant premises in town centres, where increased activity can more easily be accommodated, not least by walking and cycling routes for short journeys and public transport networks and the availability of more accessible parking where deemed appropriate. Given the increase in vacant retail and other commercial buildings in town centres, this would also help to maintain the vitality and viability of centres by introducing additional visitors and activity.

19) Questions – Community Facilities and Services

Which community facilities and services do you think we need more of in Sandwell as a whole?

Setting aside health-related uses (surgeries, health centres, dentists etc.), schools and shops for a moment, are there any other public facilities and services you would like to see more of in Sandwell?

Is there a shortage of community facilities and services in your area?

- Which ones are lacking, in your view?

(If you can give us an idea of what part of Sandwell you are referring to, that would be helpful)

If you think your area needs more community facilities and services, how and where would you want to see these uses provided?

- We would be especially interested in locations where services can be easily accessed without people having to use a car.

Where new community facilities are proposed, such as churches, mosques, community centres and other uses generating additional footfall / car journeys, should the SLP require those uses to be sited in town centres in most cases?

If you disagree with this, can you explain why?



Green infrastructure is about more than just landscaping schemes, although it will also include amenity planting and layouts. Green infrastructure is essentially a network of multi-functional green space and other natural features that have benefits for the quality of life and environment of communities. These assets will support habitats and biodiversity as well as creating shelter, a focus and possibly a way of shaping plots, defining routes and building phases and can include parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, allotments, private gardens and green roofs and walls.

They will also assist in water absorption and improving air quality. Linked open spaces (overlooked by active frontages) of a variety of sizes, sense of enclosure and function should run through the scheme, to provide pleasant walkways, opportunities for exercise and outdoor public sitting areas. They will also help to create and sustain wildlife corridors. It will include proposals to use green assets such as hedgerows and trees as fully as possible.

Blue infrastructure refers to the planned handling of water and drainage on sites and the incorporation of existing water features such as rivers, canals and ponds into designs. This will usually be closely associated with green infrastructure and can include swales, drainage ditches, balancing ponds and other components of a sustainable drainage scheme, contributing to the absorption and slow release of surface water.

Sandwell has an unparalleled network of leisure waterways that are increasingly valued as corridors of biodiversity, passive or active recreation and sustainable transport. Towns Fund bids have prioritised significant investment in upgrading the infrastructure of canals and raising their profile to encourage usage, especially as canals are supported and loved by many. More could be made of canals and waterways where they adjoin proposed development sites and areas identified for recreational and leisure use. We intend to use the draft BCP policy relating to canals as a basis for further consideration of the role canals and waterways play in the environment of Sandwell, perhaps through the introduction of separate guidance.

20) Questions – Green and Blue Infrastructure

Should the SLP take a more positive approach to ensuring green and blue infrastructure and their benefits are maximised in new development?

- **Should new green / blue infrastructure always be required on sites?**
- **Should it be required even if it would mean losing the opportunity to provide more housing or employment development?**

If so, do you have any suggestions how this might be done?

The NPPF (revised July 2021) requires local authorities to plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, including **open space** (paragraph 93). In paragraph 98, it goes on to state,

Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision.

New housing developments will often include an element of open space, but to date no formal policy guidance has been available from Sandwell Council about exactly how much open space should be provided. A broad monitoring target of 4.42ha of accessible open space per 1,000 population has been established, but there is currently no formula for calculating open space provision to meet additional needs generated by new housing, or to maintain or improve existing supply.

As larger and more complex housing sites are brought forward within Sandwell, having a formal requirement for additional open space would allow the Council to maintain and, in some instances, improve the borough's supply of open and informal spaces.

Other authorities have produced policies and related planning guidance on the provision of open space on development sites and this is an issue to be considered in Sandwell. For example, policies elsewhere may state that development proposals should maintain and/or enhance the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and address any shortfalls in provision, when measured against locally derived standards; or development that increases demand for open space will be required to address this demand in line with the relevant planning policy.

There are questions around the viability of requiring housebuilders to give up land that might otherwise go for housing, and that will need to be considered when the Council decides how to take this issue forward.

There is also a need to consider whether we should be prepared to accept the loss of some current open spaces (for example, those areas that are of poor quality, low accessibility and minimal value to local communities and that would cost a disproportionate amount of money to upgrade), to provide development sites and help meet our housing need. In turn, releasing such sites for alternative development could protect more environmentally sensitive land from development pressure; we could also require the provision of replacement open spaces of a higher quality than previously to compensate as part of any new development. On the other hand, it is often the case that even land in poor condition can have value for local people and wildlife.

It may be that a combination of open space provision can be agreed, such as on-site provision where possible in the first instance, off-site provision or improvements to existing facilities in the immediate vicinity or as a last resort, a commuted financial contribution to be spent elsewhere on open space and recreation improvements.



The draft Black Country Plan included policies on open space and recreational provision and we intend to incorporate amended versions of those policies where they are relevant to Sandwell. They relate to the following areas:

- Open Space and Recreation
- Playing Fields and Sports Facilities

21) Questions – Open Space

How should new developments support the provision of high quality open space

Do you think development proposals, especially big housing schemes, should always include dedicated open space for recreation and leisure on site?

If not, can you explain why?

Do you think a combined approach (provision of open space on-site / new off-site provision / financial contributions for improvements to existing open space nearby) would be more appropriate?

Can you explain why?

What scale of housing site do you think should be required to contribute towards providing open space? For example, should we be asking for new open space on

- sites above ten houses in size
- sites above 20 houses in size
- sites above 40 houses in size?

Would you rather:

☐

see improvements to existing areas of open space in your area, or

☐

see new open spaces be created when development happens nearby?

Can you explain a bit more about why you think this?

What amount of open space should be provided? For example, should new open space be provided covering: -

☐

10%

☐

15%

☐

20%

☐

another percentage (please say how much) of the area of a housing site?

Should the amount of open space instead be calculated based on the number of bedrooms per property being provided?

- For example, developments delivering larger accommodation (properties with three, four or more bedrooms) should provide more open space than those for one or two bedroomed properties.

Should open space requirement be relaxed for types of housing that are less likely to generate high levels of active demand, such as accommodation for older people?

If large areas of open space are required, this might affect how many houses can be built on a site and / or the viability of development on the site – what is your view on that?

Should we:-

- ☐ consider releasing existing open space sites for development that are demonstrated to be of poor quality and low value and that have no significant environmental benefits?
- ☐ consider releasing existing open space sites for development that are demonstrated to be of poor quality and low value and that have no significant environmental benefits but only where replacement open space of a higher quality / quantity can be provided nearby?
- ☐ protect all current open space notwithstanding its condition or accessibility (on the basis that it has value in its own right and could be improved in future)?

What type of open space should be provided? For example, informal open space such as fields for walking, dog walking etc., playgrounds / play areas for children, formal parks, allotments etc.?

Would you like to see more allotments / opportunities for growing food in your community provided as part of housing developments or in the wider area?

Hot food takeaways and gambling establishments are legitimate and licensed / registered aspects of functioning communities and are not inappropriate in suitable places. Planning and planning policies do not assign moral weight to their operation or use, and they provide for the needs of people who patronise them with no related adverse impacts, for the most part.

However, these are also uses that, if over-concentrated in an area or located near other potentially sensitive uses, can cause a harmful effect on vitality and viability, character, function and amenity, and can also have negative impacts on people's health and wellbeing.

The onset of the COVID19 pandemic and its related lockdowns saw the Government relaxing the relevant legislation to allow pubs and restaurants to offer takeaways, to enable them to continue trading at a time when the hospitality sector was under great economic pressure. This relaxation was extended to March 2022 and there has so far been no further advice or guidance from the government on when it might be rescinded.

Betting shops and adult gaming centres can also have negative impacts, particularly where there are high concentrations of these uses in a location. This particularly relates to the impacts on retail areas and the impact upon personal health and wellbeing related to problem gambling.

Planning policies and supplementary planning documents (such as the Council's current SPD on hot food takeaways) can, where justified, seek to limit the proliferation of certain uses where evidence demonstrates this is appropriate (and where such uses require planning permission). This could include having regard to the impact of certain uses in proximity to locations where children and young people congregate such as schools, community centres and playgrounds, and the over-concentration of certain uses within a specified area.

22) Questions – Hot Food Takeaways and Gambling Establishments

Do you think the Council should look more closely at where businesses such as hot food takeaways and gambling establishments are located?

Do you have a view on where they should be allowed in relation to sensitive uses such as schools, etc.?

Do you think that the SLP should try to control / regulate hot food takeaways or not (bearing in mind that there is no legislation that allows councils to refuse planning permission for these uses solely on the basis that people find them undesirable)?

This could be addressed by having a policy that looked at:

- Clustering (only granting permission for a given number / percentage of similar uses within a certain radius, limiting the maximum number of consecutive takeaway food outlets, or capping the proportion of all retail space occupied by this use in an area)
- Location (refusing consent for new proposals within a given distance of a sensitive use e.g. schools, parks, leisure facilities including sport centres and youth clubs)
- The implementation of community infrastructure levies with funds allocated to obesity prevention initiatives;
- Mandatory sign-up to a healthy catering commitment scheme and requirements for submission of health impact assessments alongside planning applications.
- Impacts on the amenity of residential and other sensitive uses e.g. by creating excessive noise, litter, odours, traffic problems

Do you think that the SLP should try to control / regulate betting shops, adult gaming centres, amusement arcades, pawnbrokers, pay day loan shops and shisha bars (bearing in mind that there is no legislation that allows councils to refuse planning permission for these uses solely on the basis that some people find them undesirable)?

This could be addressed by having a policy that looked at:

- Clustering (as for hot food takeaways);
- Location relative to sensitive uses (as for hot food takeaways);
- Providing an active frontage creating a positive visual impact on the street scene;
- Impacts on local community and residential amenity.

6. THRIVING TOWNS

COVID-19 has had a profound effect on Sandwell's established centres, as patterns of shopping have changed radically and perhaps permanently in some cases. However, these changes were not wholly unexpected; the lockdown effectively sped up a transformation that was already happening in relation to the continuing rise in online shopping. The role of centres is increasingly moving away from their traditional primary functions. While there will clearly remain demand for in-person shopping and retail-related activities, centres will also need to provide additional draws / opportunities (such as for leisure, education, community uses and recreation) to offset the loss in shopping-related footfall and to help retain their vitality and viability. On the other hand, some centres in Sandwell, especially those that had been performing well before the pandemic, have recovered more quickly from the related downturn and in some cases have continued to perform more strongly than previously. In addition, smaller centres serving a local population and with a good range of shops and services have done well, as have larger supermarkets and discount stores.

Work was undertaken as part of the BCP evidence base on the current and future ability of the Black Country's main centres to provide and maintain retail capacity²⁹ across the area. In the context of the issues and challenges, and the findings of the capacity forecasts, the four Black Country authorities need to plan for less, not more retail floorspace over the next 5-10 years and beyond. Although retail will remain a key part of their overall offer - helping to generate trips, footfall and spend – there is a need for locally-derived policies and strategies to help promote greater flexibility and diversity, enabling these areas to respond more effectively and rapidly to future trends. This flexibility and diversity will, in turn, help to create more resilient, attractive and successful town centres. It will also help to strengthen their respective roles in the network and hierarchy of centres as places to live, work, shop, study, play and visit.

Councils have traditionally used land use frontage policies to try to shape and manage what types of commercial activity operates in different parts of town centres. For example, primary frontages (such as main / high streets) are the locations for most of the retail units in centres and maintain the sense of vitality of the centre by encouraging footfall. Financial and professional uses (such as banks, building societies, etc., traditionally with a lower reliance on passing trade / footfall for their businesses), restaurants, bars and other non-shop uses can then be directed to adjacent areas, where they will not disrupt the retail offer and will enjoy the benefits of co-location by being in proximity to similar uses and thus to a wider potential market for their services. This approach will need to change given the trends outlined above, so different uses are spread out through a centre rather than being grouped together, in particular where a night-time economy is developing and new opportunities for housing in centres is also explored.

Current SAD policy CEN1 promotes a frontage approach within such centres with a defined core, or which may have a core subsequently defined by an AAP or DPD, the retail function should be protected by restricting the number of non-retail uses. Outside the retail core a wider range of uses and a higher proportion of these will be encouraged. In centres where the core is not defined the policy states that it may be necessary to control non-retail uses to protect the retail function, vitality and viability of the centre.

The Government's changes to planning regulations means that a landowner no longer needs planning permission to change any shop to a restaurant or even to an office. However, control can still be exercised over other types of use / developments in centres, such as payday loan shops, betting shops and hot food takeaways, by using a frontages policy.

The Council will still have a role to play in the evolution of town centres. An attractive town centre that provides a range of unit types will be best placed to make a strong and lasting recovery in the future. The Council can also choose to promote, or discourage, the diversification of an entertainment or evening economy. Planning permission is still needed to make changes to the use or physical appearance of buildings in centres, and the licensing regime will still allow the Council to protect the living conditions of those who live within, or close to, town centres.

²⁹<https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/t2/p4/t2p4a/>

23) Questions – Retailing in Town Centres

What are the main issues you think our town centres and high streets are facing?

What can the SLP do to help them adapt to changing shopping trends – for example, by managing or promoting certain sorts of development within them?

Do you think more people should be encouraged to live in centres?

How can we identify sites in our town centres for future shopping, leisure and commercial / employment needs?

Do you know of any suitable sites or premises in your local area that you think could be developed to provide modern town centre uses?

Should Sandwell maintain a policy for controlling the balance of retail and non-retail uses in main town centre core frontages?

SAD Policy DM5 refers to the special consideration that will be given to any proposals that relate to sites at any of the **borough's gateways** – these are generally areas located around the borough boundary at high profile intersections and road junctions. Gateways set the effective standard for new visitors' experiences of coming into Sandwell and the current policy seeks to ensure that the best is made of these prominent locations and sites.

The current policy includes several principles around preserving and enhancing existing buildings and structures, reflecting the topography of the area and making sure new development is of a high design quality and uses good quality materials. It also supports the improvement of the wider area within which the gateway site sits.

24) Questions – Gateway Sites

Do we need to retain a policy referring to gateway sites?

If so, do we need to revise or update it in accordance with other potential policy areas of the SLP, such as those dealing with climate change mitigation or opportunities for increasing biodiversity and ecological value?



Sandwell has a hierarchy of **town and local centres** and benefits from their links with their local communities and beyond. The major centres and towns in Sandwell (excluding West Bromwich) serve their local communities and include: -

- Bearwood;
- Blackheath;
- Cape Hill;
- Cradley Heath;
- Great Bridge;
- Oldbury;
- Wednesbury.

To ensure each centre is given the right opportunities to develop and retain / improve its essential functions, it will be necessary to consider whether some or all of them need specific policies designed to support their roles. In addition, each town centre will need to have an identified boundary within which these specific policies apply.

Some suggestions have been received about potential changes to existing town centre boundaries. These are included below as examples only - we would welcome your thoughts on these and any other changes you may think appropriate:

- Oldbury – should the town centre boundary include the Oldbury Green Retail Park?
- Cradley Heath – should the boundary include the Lidl store on Lower High Street?
- Blackheath – should the boundary be extended across the ring road to include the Lidl store?
- Bearwood – should the boundary be amended to include St Marys Church, church hall and community hub (corner of Bearwood Road / St Mary's Road) and St Gregory's church on Three Shires Oak Road? Should the boundary also extend to include the 24/7 gym, Jet filling station and Majestic Wines on Hagley Road?

Appendix B sets out the current identified town centre boundaries for each of the centres.

25) Questions – Town Centres

Looking at the town centre boundary plans (Appendix B to this document), especially for the centre(s) you know best, do you think their current boundary:

- ☐ Is about right (all the main areas of the centre are included and there is no need to expand or reduce it)
- ☐ Is too big (i.e. the centre in reality is more tightly focussed around certain roads or areas and / or the current boundary covers places that aren't really in the town centre)
- ☐ Should be expanded (the town centre as you know and use it covers a wider area than shown and additional streets or locations could be included)?

Are there any additional centres that you think should be “upgraded” to a similar status as the major centres identified above, because of their degree of activity or size?

If so, which ones and why?

Thinking about the centre(s) you know best (maybe because you live in them or close by, or work in them), what do you think their good points are – for example, they have a safe and pleasant environment, a good range of shops and services, are attractive or contain historic buildings etc.?

- Please indicate which centres you are referring to
- What aspects would you want to see kept and made even more of, if possible?

Thinking about the centre(s) you know best (maybe because you live in them or close by, or work in them), what do you think their bad points are – for example, they have too many empty shops, they are poorly laid out, they are not easy to get to, there isn't suitable car parking etc?

- Please indicate which centres you are referring to
- What would you like to see done to improve them?

Do you think areas of denser residential development (e.g. flats above shops and office building conversions) in town centres should be located close to rail / metro links / public transport opportunities?

- Should the boundary of a town centre be altered to enable such changes to take place?



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7. WEST BROMWICH

West Bromwich is the largest centre in Sandwell and fulfils a strategic role within the wider Black Country in delivering opportunities for retailing, business and commercial activity, education, regeneration, housing and as part of a strategic transportation network.

Prior to the start of the local plan review, and to aid regeneration of the centre and stimulate a COVID-19 recovery, a masterplan for West Bromwich centre³⁰ was commissioned alongside the production by the Council of an Interim Planning Statement (IPS)³¹, with a final report endorsed by Cabinet on the 9th February 2022. It is hoped that the masterplan will act as a catalyst for on-going and new regeneration schemes for West Bromwich – unlocking further investment and opportunities to boost the town's future economic growth. The masterplan builds on the Towns Investment Plan for West Bromwich, which was drawn up by the council in response to the Government's Towns Fund programme.

The IPS will form the basis for future policies for West Bromwich and has been subject to public consultation during its preparation.

The priorities for West Bromwich are to reinvigorate the town centre; unlock land to aid regeneration; support good quality jobs and stimulate Covid-19 recovery by: -

- Repurposing vacant premises and sites in the strategic centre to provide community, education, healthcare provision, with additional residential use being a major contributor in attracting investment and promoting vitality of the centre.
- Seeking office development in sustainable locations within the centre.
- Transforming the town centre further through site assembly and development paving the way for new markets, education facilities and high-quality housing.

Key issues for West Bromwich include: -

- The loss of comparison retail shopping (i.e. clothes, shoes, electrical goods etc) to the internet.
- Increased levels of convenience (food) shopping now being undertaken online.
- The rise of limited-range food discounters (e.g. Aldi, Lidl).
- A greater than forecast demand for employment land, which has had an impact on the provision of vacant / brownfield land for housing in the borough. This is compounded by viability issues. In Sandwell there is now a substantial shortfall in the supply of new dwellings.
- In relation to the above, rather than the forecast surplus of employment land freeing up brownfield land for housing, there is now a deficit of employment land available for economic development and growth purposes.
- Permitted development rights have changed significantly in recent years; this has seen considerable numbers of new dwellings being created from the conversion of existing offices in the centre. This is likely to continue.
- Technological changes driven by people working from home has led to reduced demand for offices in centres, with levels of future demand now uncertain.

³⁰https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/32496/west_bromwich_masterplan

³¹https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/2798/west_bromwich_interim_planning_statement

- 'Knock-on' effects of reduced office occupancy on aspects of the service economy formerly dependent on high footfall in centres like West Bromwich.

These trends were accelerated by COVID-19 pandemic-related opening restrictions on non-essential retail and services.

26) Questions – West Bromwich

Thinking about West Bromwich Town Centre, do you think the issues listed above are the right ones for the Council to consider in the SLP?

Are there any additional issues in West Bromwich you think should be included for consideration?

Of the issues for West Bromwich listed above, which ones do you think the SLP should deal with first or more urgently? Please identify a "top three" if you can.

Why do you think the issues you have identified are the most urgent ones?



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As it is now clear that the levels of retail expenditure growth forecast previously in West Bromwich have not come forward, there is an excess of retail floorspace in the centre that will require repurposing. This has been reflected in the Masterplan in particular, but we are keen to understand whether you have any other thoughts on suitable uses.

27) Questions – West Bromwich Future Uses

What would you like to see vacant shops used for in West Bromwich? Please let us know what your preferred uses are in order, if you can.

- ☐ Retail (retain as shop units)
- ☐ Houses / residential accommodation
- ☐ Other employment uses e.g. offices, businesses, live / work etc.
- ☐ Public facilities / services e.g. educational uses, healthcare facilities, community hubs / meeting places etc.
- ☐ Leisure uses e.g. gyms, fitness and wellbeing studios, amusement arcades etc.
- ☐ Cafes / restaurants / entertainment venues
- ☐ Other uses (please let us know what these uses are, in your view)

What other sorts of development or activity do you think West Bromwich lacks?

If you don't visit West Bromwich often, or as often as you might previously have done, what would encourage / attract you to start going there again?

8. SUPPORTING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Building a strong, responsive and competitive economy is one of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF. This should be achieved by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right place at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity and by identifying and co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure.

In terms of job numbers, the three main employment sectors in Sandwell are retail and wholesale, manufacturing and health and social care. In terms of those sectors, where Sandwell plays a stronger or more disproportionate role within the wider economy than the national average, the highest contributors are manufacturing (+111% greater than the national average); electricity, gas and air conditioning (+100% greater); water supply and waste management (+71% greater); transportation and storage (+59% greater); and retail and wholesale (+40% greater)³².

The Plan will need to set out the amount of employment land that is required over the period up to 2041. The evidence base for the employment land policies consists of a two stage Economic Needs Assessment (EDNA) and the Black Country Employment Area Review (BEAR). The EDNA provides an objective assessment of the industrial land needs for the Black Country, based upon an independent assessment of the area's economic development needs.

The EDNA identifies a need for 205.4 hectares of employment land over the Plan period, and that Sandwell has a supply of 69.9 hectares, resulting in a shortfall of 135.5 hectares to 2040³³.

Key conclusions of the EDNA included: -

- a) The Black Country was hit hard by COVID-19 but is expected to recover strongly and has the capacity to deliver significant growth.
- b) Even pre-COVID, recent growth was achieved against a backdrop of a weak local skills base, low business start-up rates and low GVA per head in comparison with the West Midlands and UK averages.
- c) Economic development strategies including the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and Local Industrial Strategy seek to address these challenges to accelerate growth of the local economy.
- d) The Black Country employment land supply in 2020 was largely inherited from the Core Strategy and the existing SAD. The land supply is dominated by small sites.
- e) Going forward, attracting high growth knowledge-based industries in line with the SEP ambitions will require the provision of more prestigious sites and high-quality spaces with good connectivity and easy access to key transport hubs.
- f) The Black Country should look to accommodate a variety of business needs, including start-ups and smaller businesses. This means a mixed portfolio of sites will need to be made available, including large and small sites and spaces.
- g) It is imperative to protect the existing supply of land to meet future needs that will arise from a high growth driven economy.

³²Source – Business Growth Team, Sandwell MBC

³³The EDNA will be subject to a further review in 2023 and as a result employment land needs / delivery timescales may change.

Ensuring that an adequate supply of employment land is maintained throughout the plan period will be essential in enabling long term balanced growth to be sustained and is therefore a key challenge. To address the above issues, employment policies should address the following: -

- a) Allocate land for new development within Sandwell, to facilitate growth and diversification of the economy
- b) Accommodate a variety of business needs including high technology manufacturing and logistics sectors.
- c) Protect and enhance land and premises within existing employment areas where this provides for the needs of jobs and businesses.
- d) Recognise that some sites will become unsuitable for continued employment uses and to facilitate their redevelopment to alternative uses.
- e) Enable local communities to share the benefits of economic growth.

The Black Country Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) has identified a short fall between **employment land need** and supply up to 2040. This shortfall is based on the demand requirement taking into account potential losses of land and opportunities for windfall development associated with the development of vacant and underused land within existing employment areas.

Sandwell's '*Top 50 Fastest Growing Companies Index 2020*' report lists the 50 highest-growth companies in Sandwell, with all 50 of these companies having grown by more than 10% and the top 22 having grown by 20% - and having generated £2.2 billion in revenue. Ensuring companies such as these have premises to expand in within the Sandwell is critical to the area's economy – 44% are within the manufacturing sector and therefore rely upon employment land.

28) Questions – Employment Land Need

How do you think the shortfall in the supply of employment land should be addressed?

As stated in the 2022 EDNA the diversity of the economic sectors in the area and sectors of local strongholds of employment stability and strength e.g. manufacturing and wholesale/distribution as well as retail and health, need to be spatially accommodated in a way (and on sites) that both meets these sectors' current and future needs and ensures their sustained growth. New employment sectors are also emerging and their demand for employment land will also need to be met.

29) Questions – Sandwell's Economy

Do you think that a local Economic Development Strategy policy is still required for Sandwell?

If you do, what do you think it should cover?

Are there any sorts of new / emerging industries that we should be trying to attract into Sandwell?



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The primary focus for co-ordinated and sustained **regeneration** in Sandwell is in the Central Core Growth Area, which includes the key employment areas of the Borough. It will be the focus for the delivery of regeneration and renewal opportunities for employment.

The need for regeneration in Sandwell is at the heart of much of what the Council does, and it has delivered some innovative and important schemes already. The ongoing commitment to regeneration will continue across the Council as a whole, but the Issues and Options process gives us an opportunity to think about how else we might contribute to making Sandwell a better place to live, work and spend time.

Regeneration will include delivering new development / redevelopment in both industrial and residential areas. As part of these proposals, the Council will be looking at associated opportunities for delivering climate change mitigation and improving the physical environments that people occupy and use.

30) Questions – Regeneration

Do you think that the SLP needs a specific policy in relation to the regeneration of parts of Sandwell?

- **If so, what should the policy contain?**
- **Do you know of any areas in particular that should be included?**

Thinking about areas that need to be improved, what do you think would make Sandwell a more attractive prospect for potential homeowners, inward investment and new business occupiers?

- ☐ **Improved infrastructure (e.g. roads, drainage, accessibility to public transport)?**
- ☐ **Areas of mixed use (i.e. where housing and employment uses are situated next to or near each other, for example in town centres or industrial areas)?**
- ☐ **The inclusion of more open space and landscaping (e.g. pocket parks, tree planting, open space and informal sitting areas)?**
- ☐ **Anything else?**

Part of the borough's legacy of heavy industry is the **sub-division of large industrial sites and premises** that have been occupied / reused by several smaller firms, creating clusters of smaller businesses. This can mean that potential new occupiers with a need for large buildings are unable to set up in Sandwell because these big legacy sites are unavailable for single occupiers. We need to consider whether we should be supporting the change to smaller businesses across the borough or whether we should be identifying opportunities to maintain a stock of larger sites for single companies.

31) Questions – Demand for Employment Sites

Do you think we should focus on supporting the growth of existing smaller businesses and companies on sub-divided former industrial sites?

There is evidence of demand for large sites for new inward investment in Sandwell from big companies, but the sites available for new business tends to be smaller ones and very few large vacant sites are available.

Do you have any ideas or suggestions on how we might address this issue? Options might include (but not be limited to):-

- **Concentrating on attracting smaller businesses into Sandwell until larger sites become available through natural churn (where businesses move into / out of an area as they grow or change);**
- **Identifying existing larger areas of current employment activity and explore opportunities for improving their attractiveness to the market (e.g. through renewing and improving infrastructure such as parking and access, supporting the improvement of existing buildings and premises, introducing new or additional landscaping);**
- **Identifying opportunities as a Council to actively create sites for large companies or industrial occupiers (e.g. through the council using compulsory purchase powers / buying sites on the open market, or using land they own), even if that means displacing / relocating smaller companies to do so;**
- **Any other suggestion?**

In addition to areas/sites being safeguarded for employment uses, we need to decide whether some types of employment generating **non-industrial and warehousing uses**, such as childcare facilities and small-scale food and drink outlets, may be permitted where it can be demonstrated robustly that they support, maintain or enhance existing business and employment functions.

32) Questions – Non-conforming Employment Uses

Do you agree that these non-conforming employment uses should be addressed in the SLP?

IF so, do you think the SLP should contain a policy addressing what ancillary uses might be appropriate and in what locations (e.g. where there are no suitable facilities within a short walk or where the ancillary use is not one that needs to be in a town centre)?



The employment land policies contained in the draft BCP set out the **types of employment uses** that would be permitted in the areas/sites allocated as strategic or local employment land. These sites would be safeguarded for

- light industrial employment uses (the research and development of products or processes or any industrial process that could be carried out in a residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area);
- general industry; and
- storage and warehousing.

Sandwell's SLP intends to carry this protection forward by including many aspects of the proposed BCP employment policies and adapting them to meet Sandwell's purposes.

Local employment sites are those areas where development is supported primarily for new or smaller-scale employment activity. In some cases, housing or other non- ancillary, non-employment uses may be considered on these sites but only where there is robust evidence to demonstrate they are no longer required for employment purposes.

Recent revisions to the national legislation governing changes of use (when buildings can be reused for different types of residential, community, commercial or professional uses without needing planning permission) means that in some cases buildings currently in use for local employment (effectively the light industrial employment use described above) can be reused for things like gyms and shops without needing planning permission.

In the past local employment land in Sandwell has come under pressure from non-employment proposals, such as banqueting suites and other community uses. This has caused problems in some cases as the new uses have been proposed on sites adjacent to uses occupied by general employment uses. Having non-employment uses near heavy industry can cause problems for both sets of occupiers; the "agents of change" principle in the NPPF³⁴ now requires the incomer to ensure that their activities do not adversely impact on adjacent established uses. As an example, incoming industrial users on appropriate and allocated industrial sites adjacent to community or leisure activities would have to use additional resources to ensure their activities did not impact on places used for social events. This in turn could mean potential industrial and employment-generating uses avoiding such sites on viability grounds.

In some locations large-scale **commercial entertainment and community activities** may be appropriate, assuming the likelihood of sufficient parking being available, and events being held during evenings and weekends when areas of employment uses are likely to be less busy. However, these types of activities will generally be more properly located in town and local centres, with good accessibility by public transport; they should be subject to a robust sequential test if they are being proposed outside centres.

In addition, there are other larger-scale activities that are not classed as employment uses (although in some cases they may employ significant numbers of people), but which require large premises away from housing areas or other more sensitive uses. These might include wholesale catering, larger indoor recreational and leisure uses and dog day-care for example.

³⁴Paragraph 187

33. Questions – Alternative Uses in Industrial Areas

Do you agree that local employment estates / land / sites should be retained exclusively for local and small-scale employment uses?

Are there any circumstances where you feel non-employment uses would be appropriate in such areas?

If so, what sort of uses do you think would be appropriate?

- Housing?
- Non-industrial employment uses (e.g. gyms, vets, children's play spaces, dog day-care)?
- Community spaces?
- Banqueting suites and venues?
- Any other use?

Please identify which ones you think would be acceptable and why.



Where else do you think larger community and commercial activities like the examples given above should be located? The preference is for town centre locations in the first instance, as the most sustainable locations, but depending on circumstances this may not be achievable:

- In vacant units on business parks or industrial estates (this would mean the loss of those units to potential occupiers with larger workforces / more job opportunities)
- In large buildings elsewhere in Sandwell (potential for noise, fumes, disturbance etc. may be greater)
- On new development sites in purpose-built premises (costs may be prohibitive for operators)

How do we ensure that if such uses are allowed in employment locations, they do not proliferate / draw trade and activity away from town centres?

- Sequential test (e.g. clear demonstration that no suitable site can be found within an existing centre or be more sustainably located)?
- Proliferation considerations (e.g. no more than X number of similar venues within a set radius)?
- Both?
- Any other criteria?

We think an updated version of the SAD policy on **training and recruitment** will be sufficient. Reference to the Neighbourhood Employment and Skills Plan will need to be removed from an updated SLP policy as it no longer exists. This revised policy will be aligned to the Council's Social Value reference of social, environmental and economic elements and should include developments of over ten units or more of housing and /or 10,000 sqm of commercial floorspace in creating local jobs and providing opportunities for skills development.

34) Questions – Training and Recruitment

We intend to update the existing SAD policy on training and recruitment. Do you agree?

9. INDUSTRIAL LEGACY

The SAD previously contained several policies designed to deal with some of the legacy issues created by Sandwell's historic role as a centre of heavy industry and manufacturing. These policies addressed pollution, industrial safety, hazardous substances and ground conditions.

The policies themselves will be retained in the SLP as they remain relevant to the ongoing remediation and regeneration of Sandwell. However, this is an opportunity for the Council to ensure they are up to date and to include any additional topics that have arisen since 2011 that may need addressing.

The current policy headings are listed below: -

- i. Areas affected by Abandoned Limestone Mines
- ii. Zones Around Hazardous Installations
- iii. New Developments and Hazardous Substances
- iv. Pollution and Contamination Control
- v. Land Affected by Tipped Material Generating Landfill Gas
- vi. Land Affected by Contaminants, Ground Instability, Mining Legacy, Land of Unsatisfactory Load Bearing Capacity or Other Constraints

35) Questions – Industrial Legacy

Are you aware of any additional policy areas relating to Sandwell's industrial legacy that in your view should be addressed in a new land use policy?

If so, what are the main areas of concern for you, and if you can, how would you advise that the council should tackle them?

10. WASTE MANAGEMENT

The BCCS contained a strategic policy on **waste management** that identified several locations across the Black Country where new waste facilities could be developed. Managing waste in a responsible way is an important element of sustainable development and facing up to climate change. This can be achieved in various ways, including: -

- by addressing waste as a resource;
- through minimising waste;
- by managing unavoidable waste in ways that will minimise harmful effects; and
- by providing sufficient waste management capacity to meet current and future requirements of Sandwell.

The SAD contains a policy on the design of new waste management facilities (SAD EMP3) and dealt with more site-specific issues under the work undertaken on the regeneration corridors.

36) Questions – Strategic Waste Management

Do you think that a Strategic Waste policy is still required for Sandwell, to help identify suitable locations for new waste sites?

If you do, what do you think it should cover?



Sandwell.gov.uk

As part of the Black Country Waste Study 2020, a review of **waste management capacity and land availability** was undertaken within the context of the predominantly urban nature of the Black Country, which retains large areas of existing employment uses in adopted plans. However, an ongoing agenda of regeneration projects and initiatives designed to diversify employment, reverse population decline and improve the environment of the Black Country all imply greater challenges to the retention or provision of increasingly nonconforming uses (e.g. waste and recycling facilities and activities).

In most situations, development for housing and high-quality employment will always yield greater revenues than waste management and recovery use. Whilst viable development depends on the interplay of location, abnormal development costs, policy requirements and landowner expectations that can only be evaluated on a site-by-site bases, there are significant areas where land use has changed to housing development – and there is ample evidence of this being an ongoing trend through planning applications and promotions.

At a national level, areas of previously developed land saved for potential waste use are being lost to other forms of development and existing waste capacity is being threatened. This is likely to be a particular issue in the Black Country, where the waste sector is comparatively more important to the local economy than in England as a whole.

As waste facilities are an essential part of the total infrastructure of an area, it is not only important that they are appropriately located but also that policy protection is applied to areas suitable for waste uses, to help achieve the objectives of moving waste up the hierarchy and enabling communities to take responsibility for waste arising in their area.

37) Questions – Protection and Location of Waste Facilities

Do you agree that the SLP should contain a policy protecting Waste Sites from non-conforming development such as residential development?

Should employment areas be identified as suitable locations for the location of new waste facilities?

11. GREENER INFRASTRUCTURE

The SLP will need to provide clear guidance on the provision of suitable and sufficient **infrastructure** to support the regeneration and growth of Sandwell. Much of this infrastructure will need to be provided before or alongside new development and will need to be subject to viability considerations to ensure it does not make the development financially undeliverable.

The definition of infrastructure in this context is wide, including (but not limited to): -

- a) transportation and road-related improvements and projects;
- b) fast broadband;
- c) affordable housing;
- d) renewable energy;
- e) publicly accessible openspace;
- f) sustainable drainage;
- g) sport and recreational facilities;
- h) air quality mitigation measures;
- i) residential services (relating to access to employment, health services, fresh food retailing, and education services by sustainable transport means).

There will also be other requirements, such as crime prevention measures, and cross-boundary requirements, such as waste water management. Impacts on the environment can include loss of open space or wildlife habitat, which must be mitigated.

38) Questions – General Infrastructure

Are you aware of any other forms of infrastructure that you think may be required?

39) Questions – Transport Infrastructure

Are you aware of any locations where you think new or improved transport infrastructure may be required?

This may include public transport, cycle facilities, pedestrian upgrades or highway alterations.

[Sandwell.gov.uk](https://www.sandwell.gov.uk)

Sandwell's Walking and Cycling strategies combined with the three tiers of Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (West Midlands, Black Country and Sandwell) provide the framework for the continued development of a **greener travel network** of, mostly segregated, cycle routes and various pedestrian infrastructure improvements as part of core-walking zones.

Where appropriate, traffic cells or segments can greatly improve public transport penetration in town centres and increase the attractiveness of active modes of travel whilst reducing the negative impacts of motorised traffic. This provides local air quality improvements as well as contributing to carbon reduction targets.

Where possible, road space reallocation should be considered to provide priority for public transport pedestrians and cyclists, particularly on routes that form part of the approved cycle network and/or the core bus network. However, it is recognised that large parts of Sandwell's highway network are made up of relatively narrow, single-carriageway roads where the available road space is limited through competing demands for frontage access, on-street parking etc. Therefore, it is not always possible to reallocate road space for both public transport and cycling or for either in some cases.

40) Questions – Greener Travel Networks

Given the constraints imposed by Sandwell's current highway network, how do you think we should address the need to reduce congestion and encourage a change in travel behaviour towards sustainable and active modes of travel by:-

- prioritising public transport, ensuring sites have access to reliable public transport infrastructure which may require road space reallocation; or
- prioritising active travel (cycling and walking), ensuring sites have access to high quality and safe pedestrian and cycle links and infrastructure which may require road space reallocation; or
- a combination of the above; or
- Investigating opportunities for reallocating road space for all forms of sustainable transport where reasonable on a location by location basis with minimum impact to the current operation of the highway?



The need to improve air quality, address carbon emissions and reduce the dependency on the private car requires new development to have an even greater focus on choice of modes for access, including electric vehicle charging infrastructure, use of low emission vehicle technology and provision for cycles, micro-mobility and motorcycles. Smart mobility and mobility as a service should also be recognised for its role in supporting modal choice and **achieving safe access and addressing transport impacts**.

However, it is not only within the design and layout of developments that these issues can be addressed. The location of new development also has an influence on mode choice and the need to travel. Well located developments in highly accessible locations can provide greater opportunities for trips by public transport and active travel modes. Developments should provide direct access to public transport routes and the active travel network. The concept of 15-minute neighbourhoods³⁵, with residents being able to access almost all their day-to-day needs within a short walk or cycle trip, should also help guide both the nature and location of development.

Consideration should also be given to the movement of freight, goods and other courier services on Sandwell's roads when determining location of new development. The level of motor traffic on Sandwell's roads has increased, partly driven by the growing number of trucks, vans, mopeds, and bikes delivering groceries, parcels and food takeaway services to online shoppers' homes. There is a need to reduce the strain placed by e-commerce deliveries on Sandwell's roads by, for example, identifying sites for parcel lockers and incentivising more "Click and Collect" options in order to reduce the volume of home delivery vehicles on the roads.

In addition, maximising access to high speed broadband/digital infrastructure is required to enable smarter working for those who can do so, thus further reducing the need to travel.

41) Questions – Safe access and addressing transport impacts

Do you think we should explore the concept of 15-minute neighbourhoods in the SLP?

Should new developments focus on new innovative infrastructure and emerging technologies such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure, use of low emission vehicle technology and provision for cycles, micro-mobility and motorcycles as part of smart mobility and mobility as a service solutions (such as Mobility Hubs for example) in supporting modal choice?

³⁵<https://www.smarttransport.org.uk/insight-and-policy/latest-insight-and-policy/what-is-a-15-minute-neighbourhood>

The current local plan contains two policies relating to **communications and digital infrastructure**. Times have changed greatly since these policies were first proposed and the new SLP will need to update those policies to reflect the most up-to-date position

SAD policy TEL 1 refers to antennae and masts put up for telecommunications purposes.

We think that the applicants need to demonstrate that the installation is in full compliance with the requirements of the radio frequency (RF) public exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). We therefore propose that TEL 1 will be reviewed / updated to require that all prior approval and full planning applications must be accompanied by a declaration that the proposal, when operational, will meet the ICNIRP.

42) Questions – Communications and Digital Infrastructure

Do you agree with this approach?

SAD policy TEL2 refers to **telephone kiosks**. As times have changed and the type of equipment used for communication has evolved, we think that Policy TEL 2 needs to reflect these changes. Therefore, we propose to amend the policy so that it relates to Digital Infrastructure / Equipment – this includes Kiosks and Digital Interactive Finger Posts. This will enable siting and design to be controlled so that they do not detract from the visual amenities of the street scene.

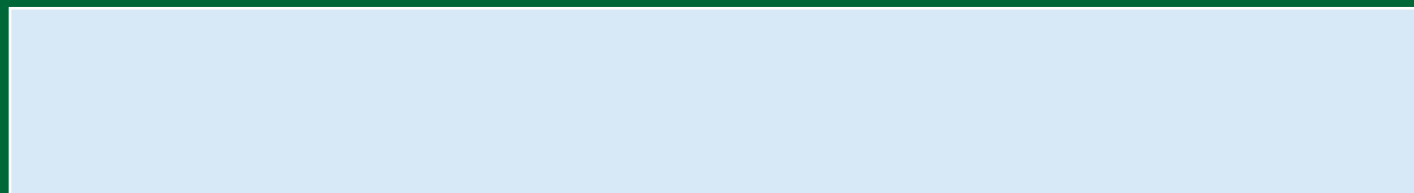
43) Questions – Telephone Kiosks

Do you agree with this approach?

Given the importance of **fast and reliable broadband** and associated digital infrastructure to all aspects of modern society, a new strategic policy is proposed, based on the draft policy produced for the BCP. Planning policy can play an important role in helping to address the key digital connectivity infrastructure needs of Sandwell. The draft policy sets out proposals for ensuring the provision of full fibre broadband connectivity is considered in all new major development proposals. It also sets out the approach for supporting and assessing 5G network infrastructure proposals (and any successor network infrastructure).

44) Questions – Broadband

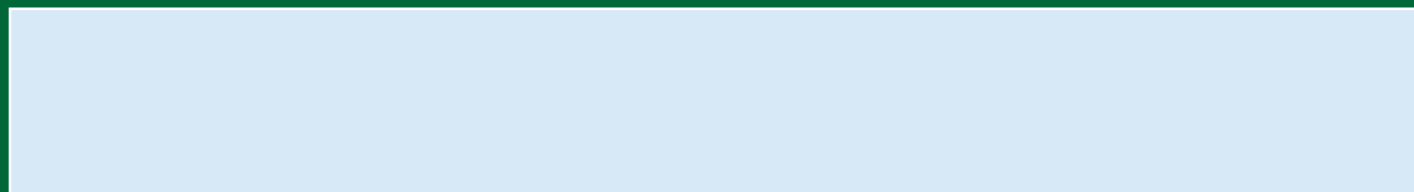
Do you agree with this approach?



The current SAD contains a specific policy on **taxis and private hire vehicles**, requiring the provision of taxi ranks where appropriate in new development and where uses generate large flows of visitors. It is proposed to retain and review / update this policy where town centre regeneration and development is proposed.

45) Questions – Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

Do you agree with this approach?




12. ENHANCING THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Despite its industrial heritage and highly urban nature, Sandwell is home to several significant areas of green and open space, a network of wildlife corridors and sites with significant ecological and environmental value and several historic and architecturally significant buildings and locations.

The draft Black Country Plan contained a suite of policies relating to the **natural environment**, many of which will be used to strengthen Sandwell's own approach to the conservation and improvement of the natural environment. The relevant policies cover the following areas (see also appendix A):

- Nature Conservation – ENV1
- Nature Recovery Network and Biodiversity Net Gain – ENV3
- Provision, retention and protection of trees, woodlands and hedgerows – ENV4
- Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness of the Black Country – ENV5
- Geodiversity and the Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark – ENV6
- Canals – ENV7

National planning and environmental policy sets out a requirement for all qualifying new development to provide a minimum of 10% **biodiversity net gain**. This means that where habitat or the natural environment is lost or adversely impacted by development, developers will have to provide as a minimum an additional 10% of replacement habitat on top of compensating for what was already there (e.g. if ten trees are felled on a site being developed, a minimum of 11 replacements will need to be planted). This compensatory habitat will be sought on the site being developed itself in the first instance, but where this cannot be achieved, the regulations allow for off-site habitat creation or enhancement somewhere nearby.

Only if this too cannot be delivered, and as a last resort, will developers be able to offer other types of compensation such as payments or contributions to habitat and ecological works beyond the immediate area (known as biodiversity credits). If developers cannot produce biodiversity net gain within Sandwell itself, we are considering whether we should seek a higher percentage of credits than 10%, to offset the lack of a direct contribution to Sandwell's biodiversity.

Local authorities can help identify offsite biodiversity opportunities to developers through pinpointing local opportunities / sites suitable for biodiversity habitat creation in line with their identified aims and objectives. Given the highly urban nature of Sandwell, it will not always be possible to provide replacement habitats on development sites themselves, so the Council may want to identify sites and projects beyond the immediate vicinity of the actual development in some cases, perhaps by identifying / allocating a potential "receptor" site or sites in the borough. These sites (if allocated) will be subject to prior assessment, provide for a suitable project that contributes to increasing biodiversity in Sandwell and form part of the Black Country Nature Recovery Network.

Having a Local Plan policy that links BNG to the delivery of local strategic priorities (such as those in the Nature Recovery Network strategy) will be helpful.

46) Questions – Biodiversity Net Gain

Do you think the SLP should contain a policy on retaining offsite biodiversity net gain in Sandwell?

If so, how do you think the Council should achieve this?

Please identify which of the following options you prefer; you can pick as many as you like or suggest something different.

- ☐ Identify privately-owned sites as receptors for BNG credits and allocate them in the SLP?
- ☐ Identify Council-owned sites as receptors for BNG credits and allocate them in the SLP?
- ☐ Support wider landscape-scale schemes such as the Natural England Purple Horizons project (restoring and connecting fragmented heathlands to create a mosaic of heathlands, wetlands, woodlands and grasslands between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park) that are nearby but not necessarily in Sandwell itself?
- ☐ A combination of private and public approaches?
- ☐ Something else (please specify)?

Are you the owner of any sites or land within Sandwell that you think may be suitable for allocation as a potential receptor site for biodiversity net gain (bearing in mind it would then be protected from further development or change for at least 30 years through a covenant agreement)?

If so, would you be willing to have your site allocated for this purpose in the SLP³⁶ (assuming it was considered suitable after an ecological assessment)?

³⁶Please refer to the current SLP Call for Sites consultation if you wish to advise us in more detail of any potentially suitable sites you own or are aware of.

Do you think we should explore a requirement for additional biodiversity net gain credits (e.g. more than 10% minimum) should developers be proposing to purchase them for schemes outside Sandwell?

Being in **green spaces** boosts various aspects of thinking, including attention, memory and creativity, in people both with and without depression³⁷, as well as producing positive improvements in physical and mental wellbeing.

All features of the outdoor environment contribute to environmental infrastructure, including natural and semi-natural habitats, parks and other open spaces, formal and informal recreation and sports facilities, historic buildings and landscapes, the public realm of spaces and streets, rivers, canals and drainage systems.

Policy EOS 1 of the SAD identified a green space hierarchy in Sandwell, intended to -

“... analyse existing provision of green /open space, to identify strengths and weaknesses in the provision, and to guide decisions about improvements, new and replacement provision, and development proposals which impact on the provision.”

The hierarchy identified types of green space, ranging from Regional / Sub Regional Green Space, such as Sandwell Valley and Strategic Open Space such as the Rowley Hills down to local formal and informal areas of open space, such as gardens, playgrounds and landscaped public spaces. We intend to revisit and reassess the hierarchy and its current accessibility standards as part of work on the new local plan.

47) Questions – Green Spaces

Do you agree with this approach?



³⁷<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/research/nature-how-connecting-nature-benefits-our-mental-health>

The **Rowley Hills** are a range of four hills – Turner’s Hill, Bury Hill, Portway Hill and Darby’s Hill – located within Sandwell (with a small part of them lying within Dudley). Together they form a ridge that divides the Black Country into two parts with distinctly differing topographic features. The ridge also coincides closely with the main watershed of England³⁸. Turner’s Hill at 271m (870ft) is the highest point, visible from most parts of the Black Country and is a distinctive landscape feature that can be seen from the adjacent motorway and railways.

Traditionally the Hills have been the location for both stone quarrying and coal mining but are now mostly used for informal recreation. The Hills have importance both for historic landscape reasons and for their value for nature conservation. Most of the Rowley Hills have either SLINC (Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation) or SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) designations. There is a Local Nature Reserve located on Portway Hill. The Rowley Hills also form an important part of the Black Country Global Geopark designation and contain sites of geological importance and interest.

The extent of the identified Rowley Hills area is around 135ha³⁹ (of which Turner’s Hill covers approximately 7.3ha, Portway Hill and Bury Hill together cover around 38ha and Darby’s Hill covers 4ha) and is encapsulated within the urban areas of Sandwell and Dudley.

Evidence suggests that there is pressure for additional development on the Rowley Hills. To date, the Council has been successful in preventing inappropriate development from occurring, which has been helped by SAD policy EOS3, formal recognition of the ecological and geological value of the area and through the adoption of the Rowley Hills District Plan in 1987. This sought to maintain and improve the area as open space for recreation and to protect the skyline from inappropriate and intrusive development.

The continued protection of the open and undeveloped nature of the Rowley Hills could also be achieved if the area (or parts of it) were to be designated as green belt or Local Green Space, as set out in the NPPF.

Green belts act as a buffer between towns, and between towns and the countryside. The green belt designation is a planning tool and the aim of green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. They are protected from inappropriate development by planning legislation and apart from some specified exceptions, new development is not permitted within them.

A Local Green Space designation allows communities to identify and protect green areas of importance to them through its specific allocation in a local plan; the designation allows for land to be protected along similar lines to the green belt provided it is: -

- “... a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.”⁴⁰*

While the area of the hills in total is significantly larger than many other areas of Local Green Space across the country, the Open Spaces Society advises that when considering the size of the proposed designation;

³⁸ The ridge forms part of the east/west watershed between the River Severn and the River Trent, with rainfall on the western side flowing into the Bristol Channel via the Severn, and rainfall on the eastern side draining into the North Sea via the Trent

³⁹ Identified via the Policies Map for the SAD

⁴⁰ Paragraph 102, NPPF (2021)

The criteria may differ between settlements depending on their physical size and population. The areas would normally be fairly self-contained with clearly-defined edges. Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate ...⁴¹.

Given the location of the Rowley Hills in relation to surrounding development and their extensive public use, value for nature and the environment and importance to the character and amenity of the area, we are keen to consider how they might be protected and their various functions supported.

48) Questions – The Rowley Hills

The Rowley Hills have been protected to date from development that might have affected its visual, historic and ecological amenity. They are subject to a variety of policies / allocations that have prevented most inappropriate development from taking place.

- Do you think the current level of protection is sufficient to continue safeguarding the distinctive character, environment and visual amenity of the Hills?
- Do you think the level of protection needs to be increased?
- Do you think there is scope for any residential or economic development in the area, assuming it did not have an impact on the Hills' ecology, historic character, geological importance⁴² or skyline?
- If so, what sort / level of development would be appropriate in your view and why?

Do you think the Rowley Hills should be allocated as Local Green Space in the SLP?

- Can you explain why you think it should be?
- If you disagree, can you explain why you think it doesn't need this designation?

Do you think the Rowley Hills should be designated as green belt?

- Can you explain why you think it should be?
- If you disagree, can you explain why you think it doesn't need this designation?

⁴¹<https://www.oss.org.uk/need-to-know-more/information-hub/local-green-space-designation/#information>

⁴² As identified on the Black Country Geopark website (<https://blackcountrygeopark.dudley.gov.uk/sites-to-see/the-rowley-hills/>) and where appropriate by specialist reports

Government policies refer to **heritage assets** as any building, monument, place, area or landscape that have heritage interest. Some heritage assets are formally designated under legislation for example, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas. Other assets have local importance but are not formally designated by legislation.

There are many pressures on heritage assets - to modernise or demolish historic buildings, change their uses, develop within heritage conservation areas and remove landscaping. Given the irreplaceable contribution heritage assets make, national guidance is clear that it is important that heritage assets and their settings are preserved or enhanced as a reminder of the history and evolution of the area.

Some heritage assets are specifically identified as being 'at risk' on Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk' Register. We will continue to pursue funding opportunities and work with landowners to secure improvements to these heritage assets wherever possible.

The NPPF defines **undesigned heritage assets** as follows:

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.

Local heritage assets that are not formally designated are currently being reviewed and will be set out in a **Local List**. We could seek to introduce specific policies and controls to prevent the loss of assets that contribute to the local identity of Sandwell. This could help to protect more unlisted heritage features. It may also help prevent some of these buildings being redeveloped for other uses. A Local List does not give the buildings on it the same level of protection as the national list of buildings of architectural or historic merit but does mean their importance can be taken into account as a material consideration when planning decisions are made that would impact on them.

Heritage assets are an irreplaceable part of the Borough's unique character and identity and must be considered when new **design in the historic environment** is being proposed. Heritage significance will be assessed according to interest as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Development affecting the significance of an asset may include, but is not limited to:

- the introduction of new structures /objects;
- alterations;
- complete or partial demolition;
- removal of buildings /features or parts thereof;
- development in the curtilage of an asset or demolition of assets within the curtilage of a structure;
- the introduction of signage or advertisements;
- changes of use (including the use of open spaces);

- subdivision or fragmentation;
- changes to landscaping;
- the removal of built or landscape features or parts thereof; or
- any other form of development which fails to conserve and enhance the asset or its setting.

Enhancement of a heritage asset can take many forms, including, but not limited to:

- restoration;
- repair;
- removal of inappropriate development;
- increasing access;
- increasing visibility;
- increasing the educational value;
- conversion to a more appropriate use; or
- enhancement of the asset's setting.

Only rarely will there be no opportunity for enhancement.

An issue that is becoming of increasing importance to the protection and retention of the character and amenity of heritage assets is that of climate change. Local authorities are having to balance their duty to enhance and protect the historic environment with their commitment to deliver climate change adaptation and mitigation, which in some cases may involve alterations and additions to historic buildings or changes to their settings or to historic landscapes.



49) Questions – Heritage Assets

Do we need to prepare a policy to support the adoption of a Sandwell Local List of buildings of historic / architectural merit?

Do we need to prepare a new policy to address the safeguarding of heritage assets when mitigating against and adapting to the climate change emergency?

Do we need to consider the introduction of special controls that prevent the demolition of non-designated, locally important heritage assets⁴³?

There are just over 200 **listed buildings**⁴⁴ in Sandwell. The National Heritage List for England is the official and up to date, register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England - listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields. Listing marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest, and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system, so that it can be protected for future generations. The older a building is, and the fewer the surviving examples of its kind, the more likely it is to be listed.

There are five designated parks and gardens (all listed at Grade II);

- Brunswick Park
- Dartmouth Park
- Great Barr Park
- Victoria Park
- Warley Park

⁴³An Article 4 direction – this can be used to withdraw permitted development rights where it is considered necessary to safeguard the special interest of local heritage assets.

⁴⁴<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/results/?searchType=NHLE+Simple&search=Sandwell>

Conservation Areas can be created where a local planning authority identifies an area of special architectural or historic interest, which warrants careful management to protect that interest. An area must be identified by the local authority as having a definite architectural quality, character or historic interest to merit designation. Research by the London School of Economics has found that people value living in conservation areas. This is evidenced by properties in conservation areas commanding higher prices and greater price appreciation, even after adjusting for location and other factors that affect prices⁴⁵.

There are currently nine conservation areas in Sandwell, mainly located in Sandwell's historic town centres. Many of the conservation areas have not been reviewed since they were originally designated.

Conservation area name	Last appraised
Windmill End	Never
High Street, Smethwick Town Centre	May 2004
Cape Hill Town Centre, Smethwick	Apr 2005
High Street and Crocketts Lane, Smethwick	Apr 2005
Galton Valley, Smethwick	Jun 2005
High Street, West Bromwich	Apr 2007
Factory Locks, Tipton	Jun 2008
Church Square, Oldbury	Jun 2009
Market Place, Wednesbury	Aug 2017

Within those areas, it is likely that some development will have taken place over time, such that the current adopted boundaries of the area may not be the most appropriate ones; for example, new development might mean that historic features have been newly identified, changed or lost and so the extent of the conservation area may need to change to reflect that.



⁴⁵<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/owning-historic-property/conservation-area/>

Wednesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone - one specific area identified on the Register is Wednesbury Town Centre Conservation Area. Sandwell Council have successfully applied for funding to create a Heritage Action Zone to improve the quality of the area and support heritage-led regeneration.

Heritage Action Zones are an initiative funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and administered through Historic England in partnership with local authorities, to create economic growth and improve quality of life in places that are rich in heritage and full of promise; unlocking their potential and making them more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists and investors.

To be eligible, the area needs to be a conservation area 'at risk'. Wednesbury Market Place conservation area was selected because of its many fine buildings and underlying high quality public realm.

50) Questions – Conservation Areas

Some of the conservation areas in Sandwell are in centres where there is or has been a lot of pressure for development and growth. As a result, any previous appraisals undertaken when they were first designated are likely to be out of date.

Other conservation areas are unlikely to have changed much since they were first adopted.

Do you think the Council should:-

- undertake a review of all conservation area whether they have been subject to any development pressure or not;
- undertake comprehensive appraisals of those conservation areas where there has been a significant amount of development or other physical changes (such as new infrastructure or changes to road layouts, etc.), to ensure the appraisals remain relevant and up to date for making decisions on planning applications;
- leave the current conservation area appraisals as they are and accept that the contribution the appraisals can make to the determination of planning applications and appeals will be limited?

Do you think the Council should also be exploring:-

- whether there are any new conservation areas that could be designated; or
- whether any current conservation areas no longer carry sufficient interest and importance to be retained as a conservation area?
- Do you know of any areas of historic interest in your local area that you think could be made into a conservation area?

Sandwell's **archaeological heritage** is a vital component of the historic environment, comprising many hundreds of sites, buildings and structures. All archaeological remains, whether structures, earthworks or buried deposits potentially hold the key to a better understanding of the borough's past. Sandwell has identified several areas of archaeological importance and therefore when new development is proposed within these areas an archaeological desk-based assessment should accompany the planning application. A record of all Sandwell's known archaeological sites is kept on the Historic Environment Record (HER), which is available to view by appointment.

Sandwell does not employ a borough archaeologist. The SAD contained a policy (SAD HE 5 - Archaeology & Development Proposals) that provided guidance on the requirements for developers dealing with sites where archaeological remains were anticipated to exist on sites and it is intended to revisit and revise this policy as required.

51) Questions – Archaeology

Do you agree with the proposal to update the existing SAD policy on archaeology?



The Black Country contains a wealth of geological history and assets, recognised by its recent designation as a **UNESCO Global Geopark**⁴⁶. A Global Geopark is a single, unified geographical area where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are located. It is an area of great geological significance, managed with three main objectives in mind:

- a) to protect the geological landscape and the nature within it;
- b) to educate visitors and local communities; and
- c) to promote sustainable development, including sustainable tourism.

The draft BCP proposed a new policy for the Black Country Geopark (Policy ENV6) and it is intended to include that policy in the SLP

52) Questions – Black Country Geopark

Do you agree with the proposal to include a policy on the Black Country Global Geopark?

Are you aware of any features of geological interest in your area that you want to bring to our attention?

⁴⁶<https://blackcountrygeopark.dudley.gov.uk/bcg/>

APPENDIX A – draft Black Country Plan policies - summary

BCP policy	Summary of policy contents
Policy CSP1 – Development Strategy	Provides the overarching spatial strategy for the Black Country, setting out the scale and distribution of new development for the Plan period.
Policy CSP2 – The Strategic Centres and Core Regeneration Areas	Sets out the strategic approach for the growth network, consisting of the Strategic Centres and Core Regeneration Areas, which is the primary focus for regeneration and infrastructure investment to support the delivery of regionally significant growth and promote wider benefits to Black Country communities.
Policy CSP3 – Towns and Neighbourhood Areas and the green belt	Sets the strategic approach for the Towns and Neighbourhood Areas and the Green Belt, essentially all development outside the centres and regeneration areas (CSP2).
Policy CSP4 - Achieving well-designed places	Supports the development of places and buildings providing a range of functions, tenures, facilities, and services, intended to support the needs of diverse local communities. Promotes high quality and sensitive design for spaces and buildings, reflecting the character of the area and its heritage
Policy CSP5 - Cultural Facilities and the Visitor Economy	Supports the protection, promotion and expansion of existing cultural facilities, visitor attractions and associated activities to ensure their role as key economic drivers stimulating and regenerating the local economy is supported and enhanced.
Policy GB1 – The Black Country Green Belt	Protects local green belt from inappropriate development unless very special circumstances apply.
Policy GB2 – Compensatory Improvements for Loss of Green Belt	Manages the protection of green belt where development takes place and compensatory improvements to remaining green belt is required.
Policy GB3 – Extensions and Replacement Buildings in the Green Belt	Sets out guidance on changes to existing buildings and uses in the green belt.
Policy DEL1 – Infrastructure Provision	Sets out how the BCA will secure infrastructure provision from future planned development. It also sets out the requirement for viability evidence where, in exceptional circumstances, proposals are unable to comply with the policies of the BCP.
Policy DEL2 – Balance between employment land and housing	Sets out the approach for assessing windfall employment and housing developments, ensuring they are in suitable and sustainable locations.
Policy DEL3 – Promotion of Fibre to the Premises and 5G Networks	Sets out proposals for ensuring the provision of full fibre broadband connectivity is considered in all new major development proposals. It also sets out the approach for supporting and assessing 5G Network infrastructure proposals.

BCP policy	Summary of policy contents
Policy HW1 – Health and Wellbeing	Provides a context for how health and wellbeing are influenced by planning and how to improve the health impacts of new developments and minimise negative impacts.
Policy HW2 – Healthcare Infrastructure	Sets out requirements for the provision of health infrastructure to serve the residents of new developments.
Policy HW3 – Health Impact Assessments (HIAs)	Provides for the individual Black Country Authorities to require Health Impact Assessments for development proposals, in line with locally determined criteria, to be set out in local development documents.
Policy HOU1 – Delivering Sustainable Housing Growth	Identifies the amount of housing needed across the Black Country until 2039 to meet predicted housing need.
Policy HOU2 – Housing Density, Type and Accessibility	Directs that the new homes delivered over the plan period are in places with good sustainable transport access to key residential services and include a mix of types and densities which are appropriate to their location and help to meet local needs.
Policy HOU3 – Delivering Affordable, Wheelchair Accessible and Self Build / Custom Build Housing	Directs that a sufficient proportion of new homes provided over the plan period should be affordable and wheelchair accessible, and enough plots should be provided to meet local demand for self-build and custom build housing.
Policy HOU4 – Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	Aims to provide sufficient, appropriately designed and integrated sites to accommodate the needs of travelling communities over the plan period.
Policy HOU5 – Education Facilities	Guidance on the provision of educational facilities, including that they can be accessed easily by sustainable forms of transport and meet the variety of needs for different age groups and educational needs.
Policy HOU6 – Houses in Multiple Occupation	Addresses issues around the provision of HMOs and sets out criteria to be met when planning applications are made for them.
Policy EMP1 – Providing for Economic Growth and Jobs	Seeks to ensure a sufficient quantum of development opportunities are provided to meet the demand for economic growth and support the diversification of the Black Country economy.
Policy EMP2 – Strategic Employment Areas	Provides for a sufficient stock of Strategic Employment Land suitable for a growing and diversified economy.
Policy EMP3 – Local Employment Areas	Makes provision for those types of industrial, logistics and commercial activities that do not need to be situated in Strategic Employment Areas and are not appropriate for town centres or residential locations.

BCP policy	Summary of policy contents
Policy EMP4 – Other Employment Sites	Provides a flexible policy framework to guide development proposals within older industrial areas where sites and premises may be suitable for redevelopment for a continued employment use, or to alternative uses such as housing.
Policy EMP5 – Improving Access to the Labour Market	Requires proposals for large-scale employment generating development to demonstrate that the new jobs are accessible to as many of the Black Country's residents as possible, especially those in the most deprived areas or priority groups.
Policy CEN1 – The Black Country Centres	Sets out the overall priorities and strategy for centres and defines the hierarchy of centres.
Policy CEN2 – Tier One: Strategic Centres	Identifies the four strategic centres of Brierley Hill, Walsall, West Bromwich, and Wolverhampton and sets out the approach and priorities for them in promoting appropriate levels of diversification and flexibility so that investment and regeneration can be maximised.
Policy CEN3 – Tier Two Centres	Supports the important local function provided by Tier Two Centres, particularly convenience retail provision, and their future diversification and regeneration of town centres.
Policy CEN4 – Tier Three Centres	Protects and supports the large network of centres that provide day-to-day convenience shopping and local service needs.
Policy CEN5 – Provision of Small-Scale Local Facilities	Applies to proposals for small-scale local facilities (centre uses and complementary uses including social infrastructure and community uses) not in a centre and intended to meet local community needs.
Policy CEN6 – Edge-of-Centre and Out-of-Centre Development	Sets out robust requirements that will ensure that investment in centres is maximised and significant adverse impacts are prevented by managing edge of centre and out of centre proposals over a certain size.
Policy TRAN1 - Priorities for the Development of the Transport Network	Sets out the strategic approach to delivering an integrated, modernised and sustainable transport network through providing sufficient land in accessible locations and identifying and protecting key transport networks.
Policy TRAN2 - Safeguarding the Development of the Key Route Network	Identifying capital improvements and management strategies to ensure the Key Route Network meets its function of serving the main strategic demand flows of people and freight across the Black Country.
Policy TRAN3 - Managing Transport Impacts of New Development	Requires planning proposals to identify and mitigate transport-related impacts.

BCP policy	Summary of policy contents
Policy TRAN4 - The Efficient Movement of Freight	Supports the movement of freight across the Black Country by sustainable modes of transport and through targeted network improvements and links with the rail network.
Policy TRAN5 - Creating Coherent Networks for Cycling and for Walking	Sets out the intention to develop a strategic cycling network across the Black Country using existing cycle routes and common cycle infrastructure; ensure locations are accessible to pedestrians and cyclists.
Policy TRAN6 - Influencing the Demand for Travel and Travel Choices	Identifies priorities for traffic management and travel choices, promoting sustainable transport and park and ride.
Policy TRAN7 - Parking Management	Sets out the requirements for the sustainable delivery and management of parking in centres and elsewhere.
Policy TRAN8 - Planning for Low Emission Vehicles	Supports the use of and infrastructure for low emission vehicles.
Policy ENV1 – Nature Conservation	Sets out the strategic framework for the protection and enhancement of nature conservation across the Black Country, relating to protected sites, species, habitats and geological features.
Policy ENV2 - Development Affecting Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	Sets out the need to protect special areas of conservation across the Black Country from adverse impacts caused by development.
Policy ENV3 – Nature Recovery Network and Biodiversity Net Gain	Sets out how development proposals will be required to consider the Nature Recovery Network Strategy and how biodiversity net gain would be secured.
Policy ENV4 – Provision, retention and protection of trees, woodlands and hedgerows	Supports and protects a sustainable, high-quality tree population and will aim to significantly increase tree cover across the area; supports the planting of replacement trees and the provision of additional trees where appropriate; supports the protection of hedgerows.
Policy ENV 5 - Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness of the Black Country	Aims to ensure that where historic character persists, and development is proposed, it should be conserved, and efforts made to ensure that the Black Country's historic environment is fully appreciated and enhanced in terms of its townscape, landscape and individual heritage assets.
Policy ENV6 - Geodiversity and the Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark	Sets out that new development should have regard to the conservation of geological features and should take opportunities to achieve gains for conservation through the form and design of development.
Policy ENV7 – Canals	Identifies the need to protect and enhance the canal network where possible and recognises its role in and opportunities for leisure, recreation, nature conservation, design and the historic environment.

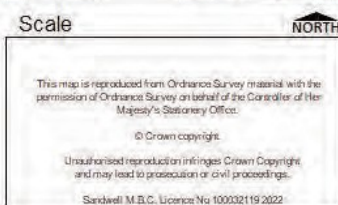
BCP policy	Summary of policy contents
Policy ENV8 – Open Space and Recreation	Recognises the role of open space in promoting good design, healthy communities, leisure and recreation, conservation and wildlife protection. Promotes the need for up to date open space standards.
Policy ENV9 – Playing Fields and Sports Facilities	Requires the retention of sports pitches and playing fields and their enhancement where possible; guides the delivery of compensatory provision should a facility be lost.
Policy ENV10 – Design Quality	Sets out the requirements for design across the Black Country, including incorporating national design standards, space standards, road safety and crime prevention principles; identifies the elements needed to produce high-quality design in the context of the Black Country.
Policy CC1 – Increasing efficiency and resilience	Sets out the principle of designing, constructing and using buildings to mitigate and adapt to climate change and promote the low / zero carbon approach.
Policy CC2 – Energy Infrastructure	Supports the provision of decentralised energy networks – district heating, linking new development to sources where available or making provision for when they might become available; onsite energy provision.
Policy CC3 – Managing Heat Risk	Minimising internal heat gain and tackling the urban heat island effect through appropriate materials, design and landscaping; e.g. energy-efficient design, shading, albedo, trees, green roofs / walls etc.
Policy CC4 – Air Quality	Promotes initiatives to improve air quality such as walking, cycling and electric changing points; promotes public transport; need to provide and protect open spaces and tree cover; minimise commuting. New development should be air quality neutral and indoor air quality should be considered.
Policy CC5 – Flood Risk	Requires the risk assessment of flooding for new development. Promotes the naturalisation of urban water courses, opening up culverts, protection of groundwater and prevention of downstream flooding.
Policy CC6 - Sustainable drainage and surface water management (SuDS)	Promotes the use of SuDS; proposals should include details of adoption, maintenance and management. Surface water flows should be reduced to equivalent greenfield runoff rates unless this is not viable.
Policy CC7 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and BREEAM Standards	Supports development using renewable or low carbon energy sources where the proposal accords with local and national guidance and wouldn't harm the local, natural and historic environment.

BCP policy	Summary of policy contents
Policy W1 – Waste Infrastructure – Future Requirements	Sets out the overall strategy and principles for waste management in the Black Country and the types of waste development that will support this; identifies how much new waste management capacity is required.
Policy W2 – Waste Sites	Seeks to safeguard and retain the capacity of existing waste facilities to maintain the existing waste management capacity and address the Black Country's resource and infrastructure needs.
Policy W3 – Preferred Areas for New Waste Facilities	Sets out the identification and delivery of new waste management facilities will make a significant contribution towards meeting new capacity requirements.
Policy W4 – Locational Considerations for New Waste Facilities	Promotes the direction of waste management facilities towards locations where they are likely to generate maximum benefits in terms of co-location, provide supporting infrastructure for other uses and minimise potential harmful effects on the environment and local communities.
Policy W5 – Resource Management and New Development	Sets out the need for managing material resources – including waste - in a responsible way as an important element of sustainable development.
Policy MIN1 - Mineral Production – Requirements	Identifies the requirements for production of aggregate minerals and industrial minerals over the plan period, having regard to national policy guidance, the likely demand, the constraints to working them, and the contribution from imports of them from other areas.
Policy MIN2 - Minerals Safeguarding	Sets out how the most important mineral resources in the Black Country, and sites that are expected to be producing, processing or transporting minerals and mineral products, will be protected from other types of development that could compromise their continued operation.
Policy MIN3 - Preferred Areas for New Mineral Development	Identifies the preferred areas for mineral extraction and other types of mineral development in the Black Country.
Policy MIN4 - Managing the Effects of Mineral Development	Sets out the requirements that planning applications for mineral working and minerals infrastructure will be expected to address.

APPENDIX B – Town Centre Boundaries



Bearwood Town Centre





Blackheath Town Centre

Scale

NORTH

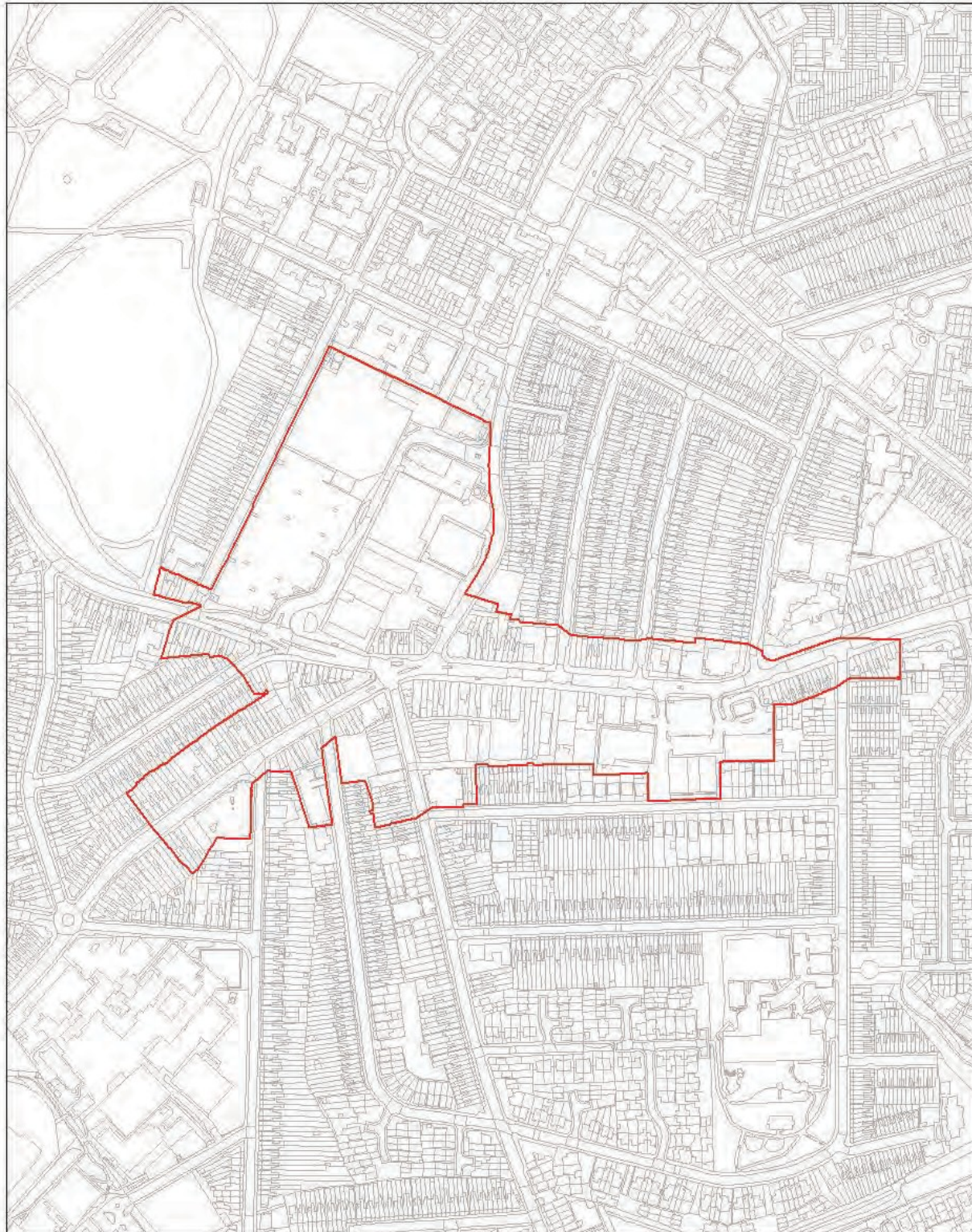
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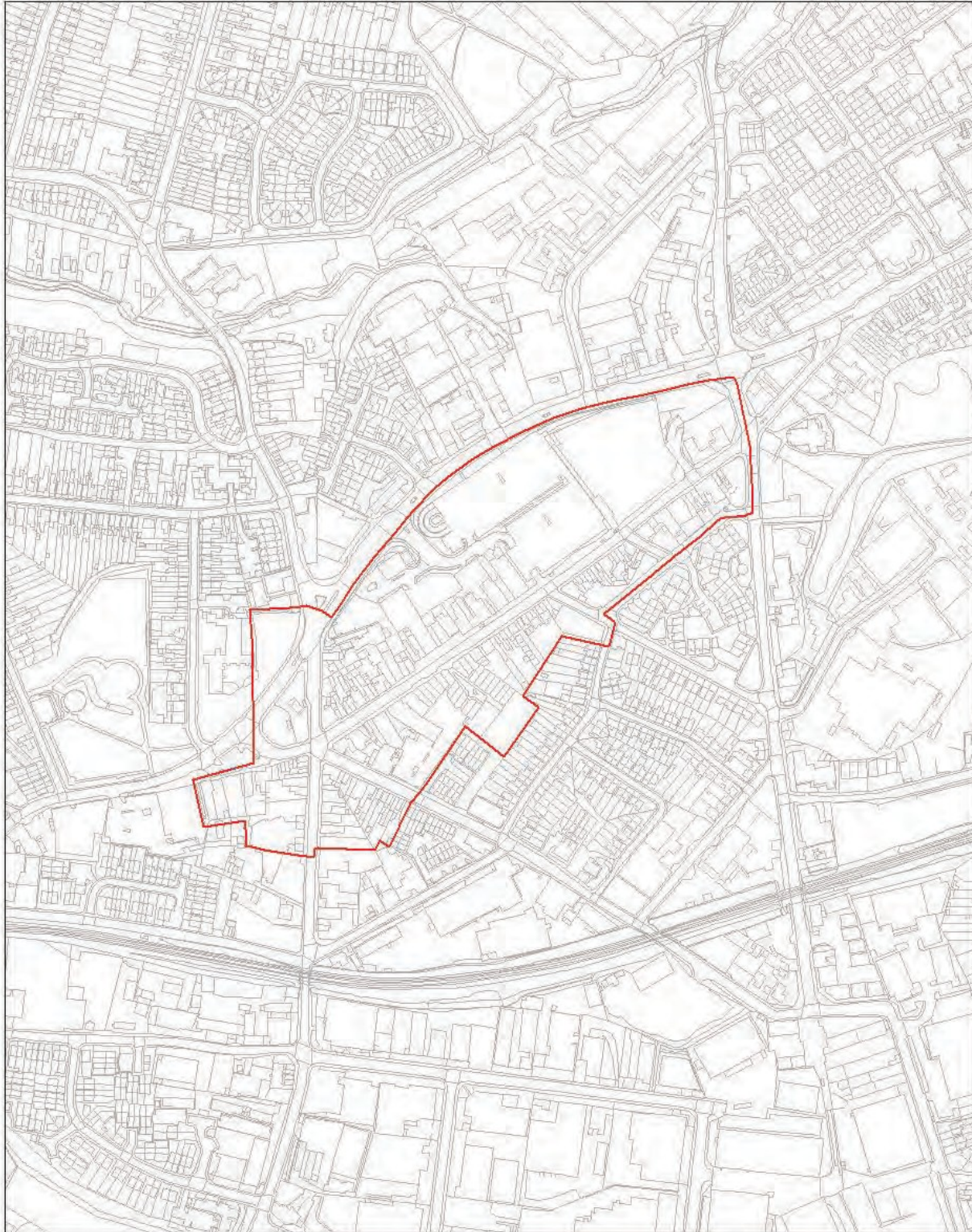
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Cradley Heath Town Centre

Scale

NORTH

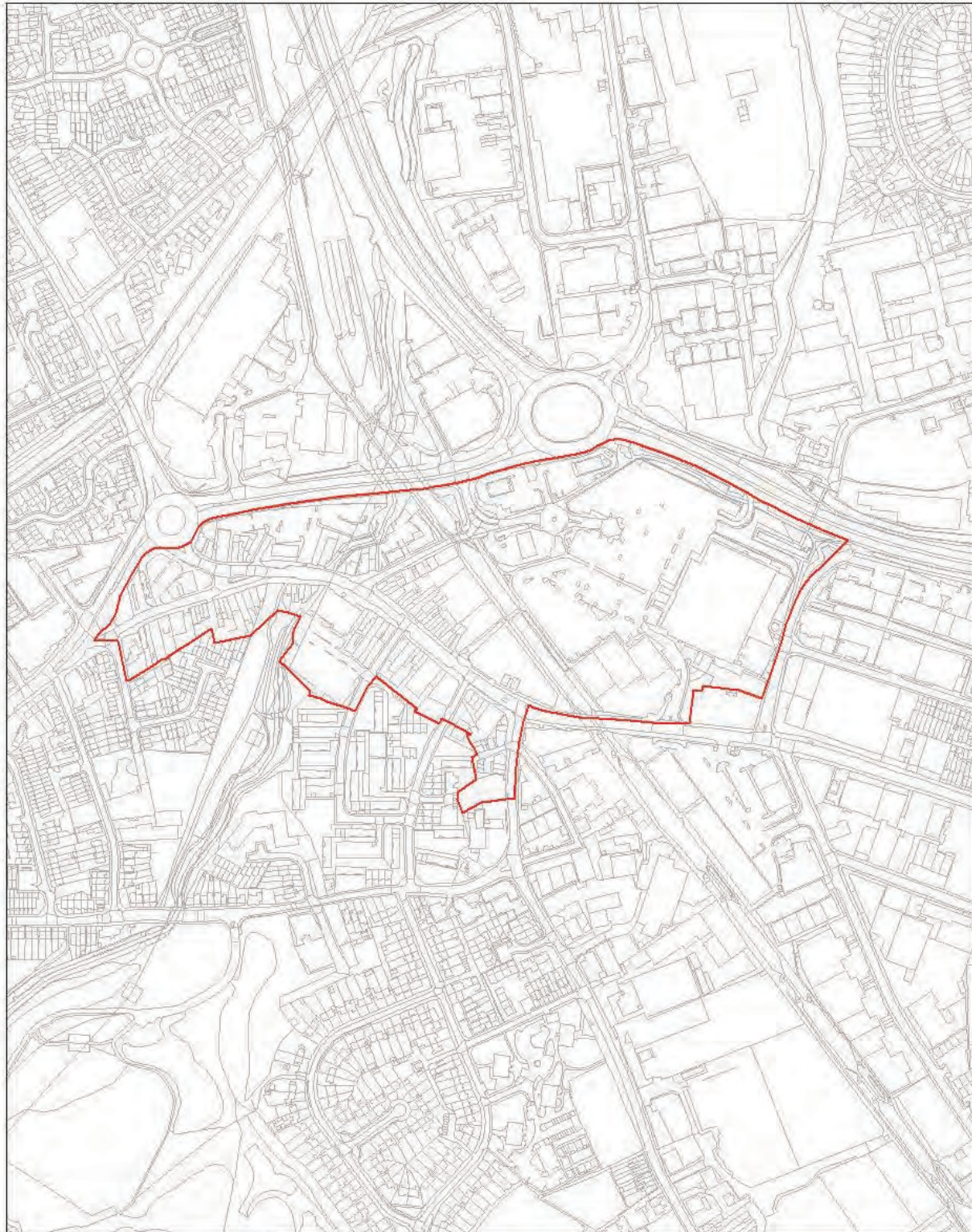
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Great Bridge Town Centre

Scale

NORTH

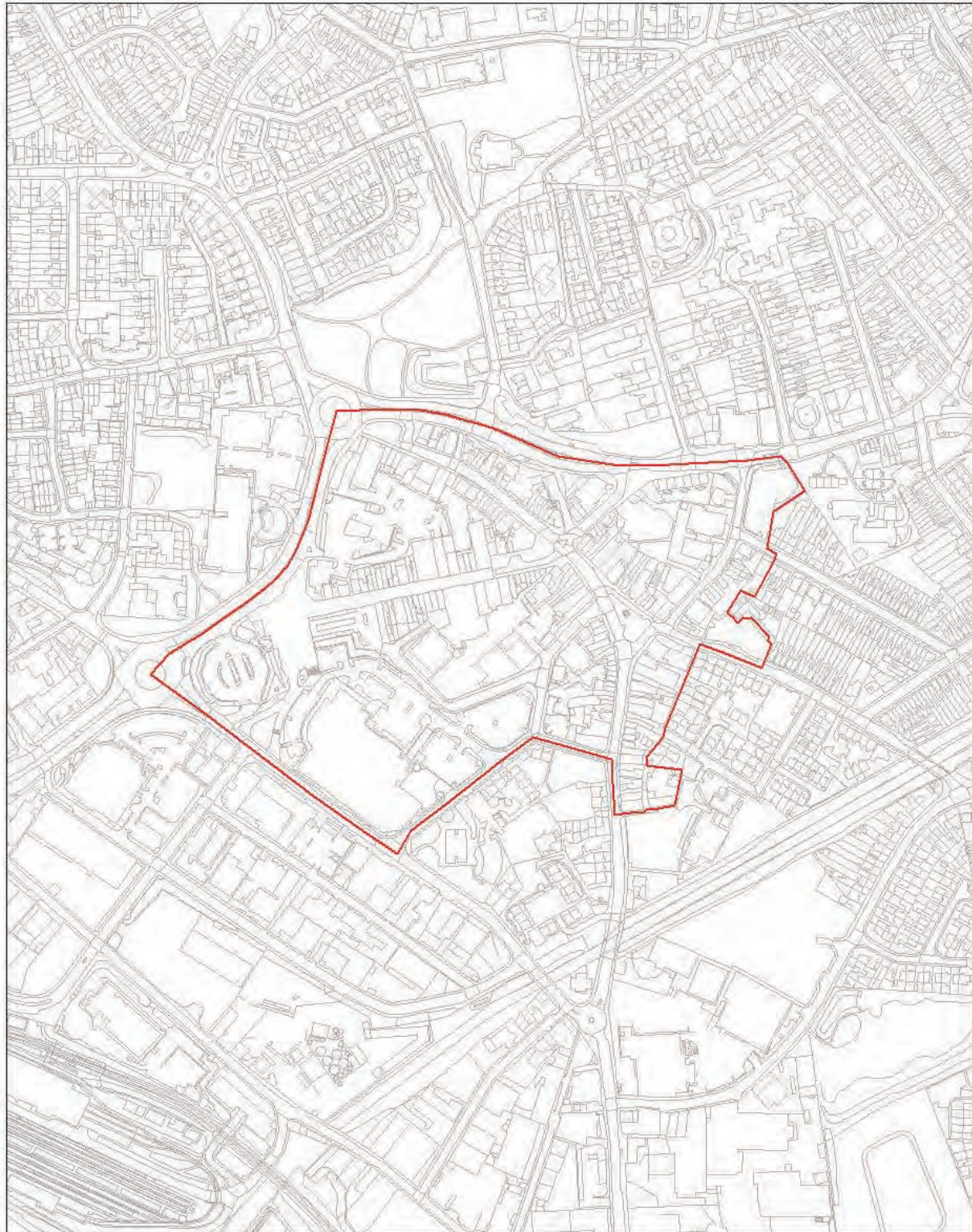
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Wednesbury Town Centre

Scale

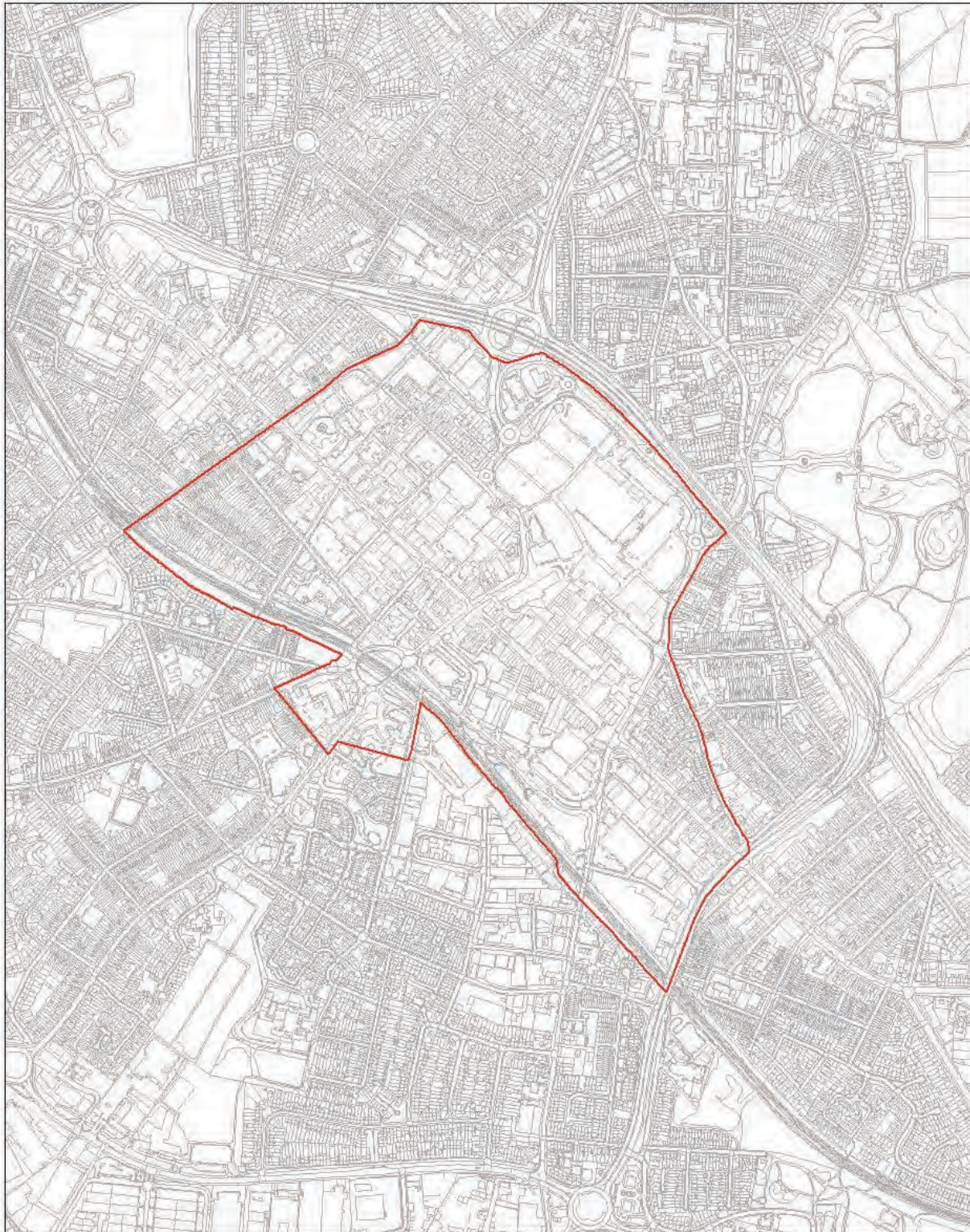
NORTH

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West Bromwich Town Centre

Scale

NORTH

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Sandwell Development Plan – Draft Consultation and Engagement Action Plan

Consultation Stage	Target Audience	Consultation Methods to be used	Who to Action	Timescale/Target Date
Issues & Options				
6 th February to 20 th March 2023				
Member briefings prior to Cabinet meeting	Elected Members	Member briefings on key elements of Issues & Option Plan and consultation	Planning Officers Comms Team	January
Members of Parliament briefings	Members of Parliament	Briefings on key elements of Issues & Option Plan and consultation	Planning Officers	January
West Midlands Mayor briefing	West Midlands Mayor	Briefing on key elements of Issues & Option Plan and consultation	Planning Officers	January
Update website, ready to go 'live' with Issues & Options consultation post Cabinet /Council decision	All stakeholder	Web content – to include Issues & Options Document and supporting information, online consultation details and summary documents and FAQs	Planning Officers Comms Team	Late January/early February
Public consultation launched Six weeks 6 th February to 20 th March. (indicative dates). Publish Issues & Options Consultation document, summary document and supporting documents, evidence base on website and roll out public communication's campaign	All stakeholders	Launch press release, plus 2-3 reminder releases	Planning Officers Comms Team	February
	Duty to Cooperate Bodies/Statutory Bodies	Email to Duty to Cooperate Bodies	Planning Officers	February
	Residents	Articles to be included in Sandwell Herald newspaper and Sandwell Social Media platforms - Digital/social media comms plan	Comms Team	February
	Businesses	Business engagement through business organisations and Sandwell Social Media platforms - Digital/social media comms plan	Planning Officers	February
	Land Owners	Letters and Sandwell Social Media platforms - Digital/social media comms plan	Planning Officers	February
	Internal Directorates	Email to Internal Directorates		
	ESTE Scrutiny Board	Presentation	Planning Officers	9 th March 2023
	Planning Committee	Presentation plus Q&A	Planning Officers	16 th February 2023
Press release /ebulletin to announce deadline for responses to Consultation	All Stakeholders	Press release /ebulletin to announce deadline for responses to Consultation Press and ebulletin Email to Members	Comms Team	13 th March
End of Consultation	All Stakeholders	Press release /ebulletin to announce end of consultation	Comms Team	
Call for Sites				
6 th February to 20 th March 2023				
Open Call for Sites – submit sites through the online map	Elected Members	Email to Members to inform them of the Call for Sites and whether they know of any sites within their wards they would like to put forward	Planning Officers Comms Team	6 th February
	Residents	Articles to be included in Sandwell Herald newspaper and Sandwell Social Media platforms - Digital/social media comms plan	Planning Officers Comms Team	6 th February
	Businesses	Business engagement through business organisations	Planning Officers	6 th February
	Land Owners	Letters and Sandwell Social Media platforms - Digital/social media comms plan	Planning Officers	6 th February
	Internal Directorates	Emails	Planning Officers	6 th February
Press release /ebulletin to announce deadline for responses to Consultation	All Stakeholders	Press and ebulletin Email to Members	Comms Team	13 th March
End of Consultation	All Stakeholders	Press release /ebulletin to announce deadline for responses to Consultation	Comms Team	20 th March
Post Issues & Options Consultation and Call for Sites				

Consultation Stage	Target Audience	Consultation Methods to be used	Who to Action	Timescale/Target Date
21st March to August 2023				
Press release /ebulletin to confirm closure for Consultation and next steps	All Stakeholders	Press release /ebulletin to confirm closure for Consultation and next steps and update website to confirm end of consultation	Planning Officers Comms Team	Late March/early April
Draft Plan				
October – December 2023				
Member briefings prior to Cabinet meetings and agendas being released	Elected Members	Briefings on key elements of Reg 18 Draft Plan and consultation	Planning Officers Comms Team	September
Member briefings/drop-in sessions as consultation rolls out	Elected Members	Member briefings on key elements of the Reg 18 Draft Plan and consultation	Planning Officers Comms Team	October
MP Briefings to be held	Members of Parliament	Briefings on key elements of Reg 18 Draft Plan and consultation	Planning Officers	October
West Midlands Mayor briefing	West Midlands Mayor	Briefings on key elements of Reg 18 Draft Plan and consultation	Planning Officers	October
Prior (10 days) before publication of the cabinet papers, press release to go out stating Reg 18 Draft Plan to be considered by Cabinet ahead of consultation. Followed by reactive press management	All Stakeholders	Press Release to be issued Reactive press management to be prepared.	Comms Team	October
Update website, ready to go 'live' with Plan consultation post Cabinet decision	All stakeholders	Web content – to include Draft Plan and supporting information, online consultation details and summary documents and FAQs	Planning Officers Comms Team	October
Public consultation launched Six weeks October to December. (indicative dates). Publish Publications Plan Consultation document, summary document and supporting documents, evidence base on website and roll out public communication's campaign	All Stakeholders inc Public Members MPs DtC/Statutory Consultees.	Launch press release, plus two to three releases Update Sandwell MBC website with details of consultation Articles to be included in Sandwell Herald newspaper and Sandwell Social Media platforms - Digital/social media comms plan Display Pop up exhibitions in vacant retail units in town centres (to be agreed with Shopping Centre owners) as well as key council buildings Details to be circulated on residents ebulletin Internal campaign - staff ebulletin Consultation events to be held in each of the six towns	Planning Officers Comms Team	October
Press release /ebulletin to announce deadline for responses to Consultation	All Stakeholders	Press and ebulletin Email to Members	Comms Team	December
Press release /ebulletin to announce deadline for responses to Consultation	All Stakeholders	Press and ebulletin Email to Members	Comms Team	December
Press release /ebulletin to confirm closure for Consultation and next steps	All Stakeholders	Press and ebulletin Email to Members Update Website to confirm end of consultation	Comms Team	December

Consultation Stage	Target Audience	Consultation Methods to be used	Who to Action	Timescale/Target Date
Post Draft Plan Consultation December 2023 – June 2024				
Feedback on process/next steps via website/media/ebulletins		ebulletin Email to Members Update Website	Planning Officers Comms Team	December/January
Submission Plan September – October 2024				
Member briefings prior to Cabinet meetings and agendas being released	Elected Members	Briefings on key elements of the Submission Pan	Planning Officers Comms Team	August/September
Member briefings/drop-in sessions as consultation rolls out	Elected Members	Member briefings on key elements of Submission Plan and consultation	Planning Officers Comms Team	September
MP Briefings to be held	Members of Parliament	Briefings on key elements of Submission Plan and consultation	Planning Officers	September
West Midlands Mayor briefing	West Midlands Mayor	Briefings on key elements of Submission Plan and consultation	Planning Officers	September
Prior (10 days) before publication of the cabinet papers, press release to go out stating Submission Plan to be considered by Cabinet ahead of consultation. Followed by reactive press management	All Stakeholders	Press Release to be issued Reactive press management to be prepared.	Comms Team	September
Update website, ready to go 'live' with Plan consultation post Cabinet decision	All stakeholders	Web content – to include Submission Plan and supporting information, online consultation details and summary documents and FAQs	Planning Officers Comms Team	September
Public consultation launched Six weeks September to October. (indicative dates). Publish Publications Plan Consultation document, summary document and supporting documents, evidence base on website and roll out public communication's campaign	All Stakeholders inc Public Members MPs DtC/Statutory Consultees.	Launch press release, plus two to three releases Update Sandwell MBC website with details of consultation Articles to be included in Sandwell Herald newspaper and Sandwell Social Media platforms - Digital/social media comms plan Display Pop up exhibitions in vacant retail units in town centres (to be agreed with Shopping Centre owners) as well as key council buildings Details to be circulated on residents ebulletin Internal campaign - staff ebulletin Consultation events to be held in each of the six towns	Planning Officers Comms Team	September
Press release /ebulletin to announce deadline for responses to Consultation	All Stakeholders	Press and ebulletin Email to Members	Comms Team	October
Press release /ebulletin to announce deadline for responses to Consultation	All Stakeholders	Press and ebulletin Email to Members	Comms Team	October
Press release /ebulletin to confirm closure for Consultation and next steps	All Stakeholders	Press and ebulletin Email to Members Update Website to confirm end of consultation	Comms Team	October/November

Consultation Stage	Target Audience	Consultation Methods to be used	Who to Action	Timescale/Target Date
Submission to Secretary of State				
November 2024				
To be determined				
Examination In Public				
December 2024 – Summer 2025				
To be determined				
Post EIP and Inspector’s Report				
Summer 2025 – Autumn 2025				
To be determined				
Adoption				
Late 2025 – Early 2026				
To be determined				

Sustainability Appraisal of the Sandwell Local Plan

Regulation 18: Issues and Options

January 2023



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LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

Page 135

Sustainability Appraisal of the Sandwell Local Plan

Regulation 18: Issues and Options

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Front Cover: Swan Pool, Sandwell Valley by Tony Hisgett (<https://tinyurl.com/73kpmd8h>)

About this report & notes for readers

Lepus Consulting Ltd (Lepus) has prepared this report for the use of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC). There are a number of limitations that should be borne in mind when considering the conclusions of this report. No party should alter or change this report without written permission from Lepus.

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This Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA Report is based on the best available information, including that provided to Lepus by SMBC and information that is publicly available. No attempt to verify these secondary data sources has been made and they have been assumed to be accurate as published. This report was prepared during January 2023 and is subject to and limited by the information available during this time. This report has been produced to assess the sustainability effects of the

Sandwell Local Plan and meets the requirements of the SEA Regulations. It is not intended to be a substitute for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Appropriate Assessment (AA).

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

A&E	Accident and Emergency
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
BCCS	Black Country Core Strategy
BCP	Black Country Plan
BMV	Best and most versatile
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CfS	Call for Sites
DBEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EDNA	Economic Development Needs Assessment
EU	European Union
FEMA	Functional Economic Market Area
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GI	Green Infrastructure
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GP	General Practitioner
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
NHS	National Health Service
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NO₂	Nitrogen Dioxide
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PDL	Previously developed land
PPP	Policies Plans and Programmes
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
RPG	Registered Park and Garden
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SAD	Site Allocation Document
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SLP	Sandwell Local Plan
SM	Scheduled Monument
SMBC	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPZ	Source Protection Zone
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage System

Executive Summary

About this report

- E1 Lepus Consulting is conducting an appraisal process for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) to help them prepare the Sandwell Local Plan (SLP). The appraisal process is known as Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and is prepared during a number of different stages to facilitate iteration between the Plan makers (SMBC) and the appraisal team (Lepus Consulting). The SA process seeks to provide high level environmental protection. The different stages of plan making are mostly accompanied by consultation with statutory bodies, other stakeholders and the public.
- E2 SA is the process of informing and influencing the preparation of a local plan to optimise its sustainability performance. SA considers the social, economic and environmental performance of the plan.
- E3 This report has been prepared and published following preparation of the SA Scoping Report in January 2023, which identified the scope and level of detail to be included in the SA process going forward, including setting out the SA Objectives, which are used to inform the assessment of the likely effects of the SLP at this and future stages of plan making.
- E4 This Regulation 18 SA Report accompanies the SLP Issues and Options Consultation document, which is a high-level document setting out the approach for the SLP process. This SA has been prepared to assess the proposed options for the Vision of the SLP, and the draft SLP Objectives, as presented in the SLP Issues and Options document.
- E5 The SLP Issues and Options document is intended to identify matters where SMBC feels more specific consideration is needed in a Sandwell context, and to get the broad views of local communities and stakeholders on issues of importance to them. It does not set out any policies, sites or reasonable alternatives for consideration and this stage.
- E6 In the future, the SA process will include assessments of further options (or 'reasonable alternatives') as identified by SMBC throughout the plan making process. The assessment of reasonable alternatives is an important requirement of the SEA Regulations.

Summary findings

- E7 Findings from the assessments are presented in a single-line matrix format. The high-level matrix is not a conclusive tool or model. Its main function is to identify at a strategic level whether or not the assessment requires a more detailed examination or whether satisfactory conclusions may be drawn from the high-level assessment without the need for further detailed analysis of a particular proposal.
- E8 At this stage, the assessment has focused on the SLP Vision and Objectives, which set out high-level aspirations for the emerging SLP.

SLP Vision

- E9 SMBC have proposed two options for the SLP Vision within the Issues and Options document; Option A refers to the application of the Sandwell Vision 2030 and accompanying 'ambitions' as set out in the Sandwell Corporate Plan¹ for the emerging SLP, whereas Option B presents new suggested wording for the SLP Vision.
- E10 Both Options A and B have similar aims to deliver safe, healthy and sustainable growth across Sandwell, and as such they both perform well against the SA Framework. Major positive, minor positive and negligible impacts have been identified across the SA Objectives.
- E11 The options perform similarly against the majority of SA Objectives. Both options provide strong aspirations for addressing inequalities, providing improved access to jobs, healthcare, education and local services, and seek to enhance public transport provision across the borough. The options also seek to provide high quality development to meet the needs of the local population, promote social cohesion and rejuvenate Sandwell's towns and centres.
- E12 Overall, Option B has been identified as the best performing of the two. The suggested wording provided under Option B sets out more detail and specificity relating to environmental protection and enhancement, with greater recognition of the benefits of green infrastructure, compared to Option A.
- E13 Furthermore, Option B provides stronger wording in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation, with reference to carbon reduction, awareness of climate change and more emphasis on active travel.

SLP Objectives

- E14 SMBC have drafted a set of 11 Objectives for the emerging SLP, which together are intended to help the achievement of the proposed vision for Sandwell, forming a framework for the delivery of sustainable growth. No alternative options for the SLP Objectives have been identified.
- E15 The draft SLP Objectives address a range of sustainability issues and seek to conserve and improve the natural and built environment of Sandwell. As such, the Objectives perform well against the SA Framework, with major positive, minor positive and negligible impacts have been identified across the SA Objectives.

¹ Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council 2021 – 2025. Big Plans for a Great Place: The Sandwell Plan. Available at: https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/29963/corporate_plan_-_big_plans_for_a_great_place_for_the_people_of_sandwell.pdf [Date accessed: 16/01/23]

- E16 The SLP Objectives include promotion of development to meet identified needs in sustainable locations which encourage public transport and active travel, as well as improved access to services and jobs, whilst making the best use of available land and helping to regenerate Sandwell's towns and centres.
- E17 The Objectives also seek to adopt a proactive approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation, through encouraging innovative design, carbon reduction measures and incorporation of green infrastructure. The importance of high-quality design and sufficient indoor and outdoor space are also emphasised, which would be expected to benefit health and wellbeing as well as ensuring that development is in keeping with, and where possible enhances, the local character and heritage.
- E18 The Objectives seek to promote the conservation and enhancement of Sandwell's natural environment, biodiversity, landscapes and rich historic environment, alongside providing the necessary growth and investment to support the needs of the growing population.

Recommendations

- E19 **Chapter 4** of this SA Report sets out a range of recommendations for SMBC to consider as the SLP is developed and refined, including recommendations to improve the SLP Vision and Objectives, as well as consideration of the identification, description and evaluation of reasonable alternatives which will be an important aspect of the SA process going forward.

Next steps

- E20 This Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA Report is subject to consultation with statutory consultees, stakeholders and the general public, alongside the SLP Issues and Options document, and the SA Scoping Report.
- E21 This report represents the latest stage of the SA process. The SA process will consider any comments on this report and use them to inform subsequent stages, where appropriate.
- E22 Once SMBC have reviewed Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation comments and have begun preparing the next version of the SLP (the Draft Plan), preparation of a second Regulation 18 SA Report will begin.
- E23 At the Regulation 19 stage, preparation of an Environmental Report will begin, also known as a full SA report. The Environmental Report will include all the legal requirements set out in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) are in the process of writing the Sandwell Local Plan (SLP). As part of this process, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is being undertaken that incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The purpose of SA/SEA is to help guide and influence the decision-making process for SMBC by identifying the likely sustainability effects of reasonable alternatives, options, and proposals.
- 1.1.2 The SLP is at an early stage of preparation, known as 'Issues and Options'. The purpose of this SA report is to assess the sustainable development implications of proposals presented in the Sandwell Local Plan Issues and Options Review consultation document. Subsequent stages of the local plan process will identify more detailed policies and site options.
- 1.1.3 Through the Issues and Options Consultation, the Council are seeking to involve local people, businesses and stakeholders in identifying what the emerging SLP should address. In addition to various questions which seek to gather views from consultees, the Issues and Options document identifies to options for the Vision and 11 draft Objectives for the SLP, which have been assessed in this SA report.
- 1.1.4 SA is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of local plans and spatial development strategies. The SA outputs throughout the plan making process will help SMBC to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging SLP, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.
- 1.1.5 This SA/SEA document follows on from the SA Scoping Report prepared in January 2023, which has been published for consultation with the statutory bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) alongside this Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA Report.

1.2 Sandwell Borough

- 1.2.1 Sandwell is a metropolitan borough covering approximately 8,556ha, with a population of 341,900 according to the Census (2021)². On average, Sandwell has a younger and more ethnically diverse population than the rest of the UK. Deprivation and inequalities are key issues for the local population.
- 1.2.2 Sandwell lies within the Black Country, which is a predominantly urban sub-region of the West Midlands. The sub-region also includes the boroughs of Dudley, Walsall and the City of Wolverhampton. The location of Sandwell is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

² Office for National Statistics (2022) How the population changed in Sandwell: Census 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E08000028/> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

- 1.2.3 The borough contains the strategic centre of West Bromwich, main towns including Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton and Wednesbury, and several smaller towns and settlements. Sandwell's towns are well connected through a network of strategic transport routes, with links to other regional and national centres via the M5 / M6 and rail corridors.
- 1.2.4 Industry and manufacturing form a key part of Sandwell's history, which continues in the local economy today. The borough also supports a range of parks and open spaces including the Rowley Hills and Sandwell Valley. Sandwell Valley forms Sandwell's only extent of Green Belt land.

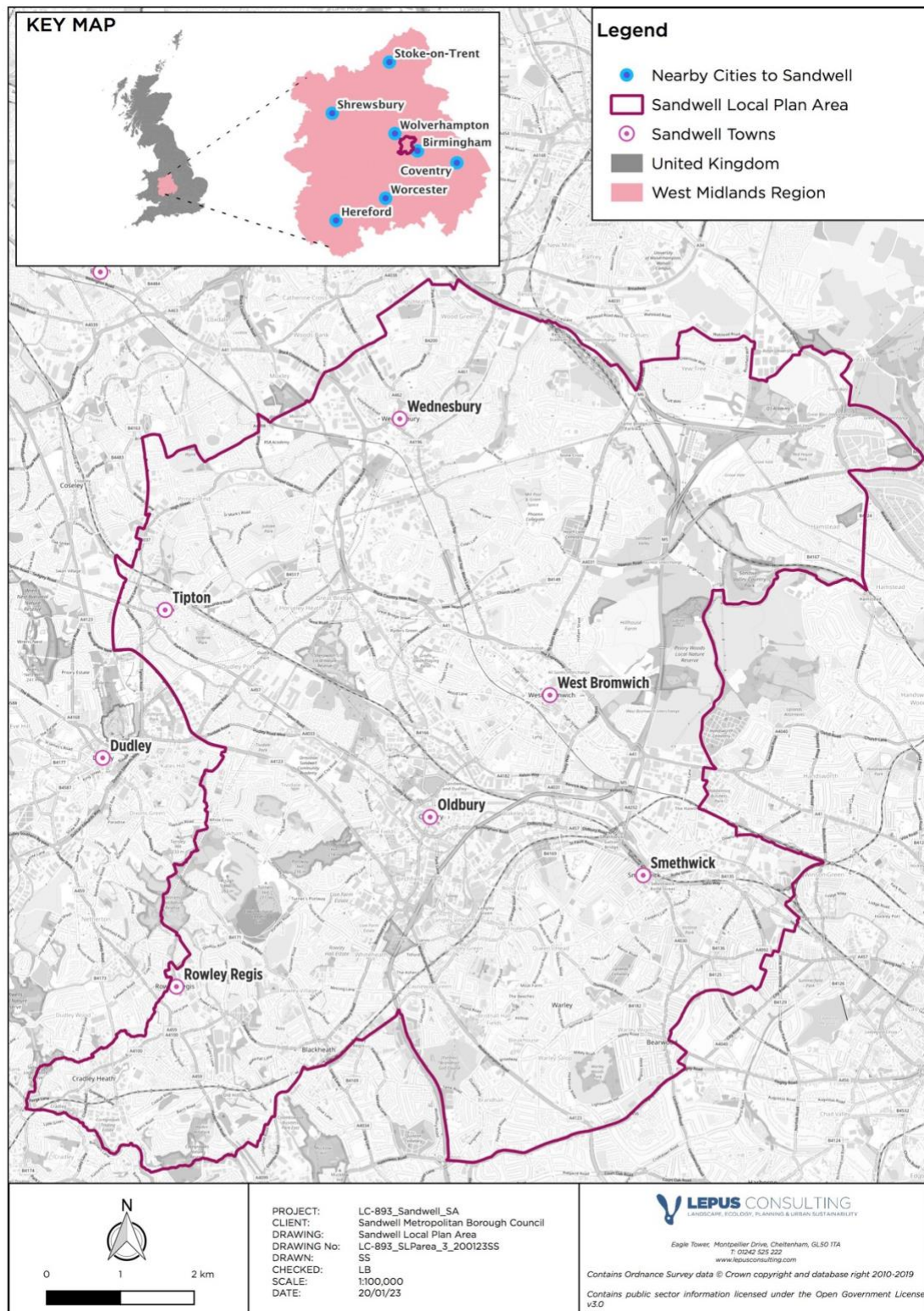


Figure 1.1: Sandwell administrative boundary

1.3 The Sandwell Local Plan

- 1.3.1 The SLP will include the overall strategy for development in Sandwell Metropolitan Borough for the plan period (expected to be until 2041), including a vision for the future, relevant objectives, site allocations and policies.
- 1.3.2 The SLP is being prepared by SMBC, after work ceased on the preparation of the Black Country Plan (BCP) in autumn 2022. The SLP will seek to incorporate strategic policies, adapted from those presented in the draft BCP, to ensure that the SLP provides appropriate guidance at both the strategic and locally specific levels.
- 1.3.3 Once adopted, the SLP will form part of the statutory development plan for the borough covering a minimum of 15 years, replacing and updating the currently adopted Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)³, Sandwell Site Allocation and Delivery Development Plan Document (SAD)⁴, and various Area Action Plans which cover the period from 2006 to 2026.
- 1.3.4 The SLP Issues and Options document has been prepared by SMBC and is being consulted on alongside this Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA Report, whereby the public will be asked to give their views on the topics and issues the new plan should cover as it progresses.

1.4 Duty to Cooperate

- 1.4.1 The Duty to Cooperate (DtC) was created in the Localism Act 2011⁵ and amends the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of local plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.
- 1.4.2 A DtC Statement will be prepared, which will demonstrate how SMBC has fulfilled this duty through the plan making process. It is intended to draft and agree Statements of Common Ground with relevant authorities and bodies on key DtC issues at the Publication stage.

1.5 Integrated approach to SA and SEA

- 1.5.1 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both obligations using a single appraisal process.

³ Black Country Authorities (2011) Black Country Core Strategy. Available at: <https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/t1/p2/> [Date accessed: 04/01/23]

⁴ Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (2012) Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document. Available at: https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200275/planning_and_buildings/676/site_allocations_and_delivery_development_plan_document [Date accessed: 04/01/23]

⁵ Localism Act 2011. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

- 1.5.2 The European Union Directive 2001/42/EC⁶ (SEA Directive) applies to a wide range of public plans and programmes on land use, energy, waste, agriculture, transport and more (see Article 3(2) of the Directive for other plan or programme types). The objective of the SEA procedure can be summarised as follows:
- 1.5.3 *"the objective of this Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development"*.
- 1.5.4 The SEA Directive has been transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004⁷ (SEA Regulations). Under the requirements of the SEA Directive and SEA Regulations, specific types of plans that set the framework for the future development consent of projects must be subject to an environmental assessment. Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the Local Plan to be subject to SEA throughout its preparation.
- 1.5.5 SA is a UK-specific procedure used to appraise the impacts and effects of development plans. It is a legal requirement as specified by S19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004⁸ and should be an appraisal of the economic, social and environmental sustainability of development plans. The present statutory requirement for SA lies in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012⁹. SA is a systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed plans or programmes to ensure environmental issues are fully integrated and addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making.
- 1.5.6 Public consultation is an important aspect of the integrated SA/SEA process.

1.6 Best Practice Guidance

- 1.6.1 Government policy recommends that both SA and SEA are undertaken under a single sustainability appraisal process, which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations. The approach for carrying out an integrated SA and SEA is based on best practice guidance, including the following:

⁶ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

⁷ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

⁸ Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

⁹ The Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents/made> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

- European Commission (2004) Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the assessment of the effects of certain plan and programmes on the environment¹⁰.
- Office of Deputy Prime Minister (2005) A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive¹¹.
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹².
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹³.
- Royal Town Planning Institute (2018) Strategic Environmental Assessment, Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of SEA/SA for land use plans¹⁴.

1.7 Sustainability Appraisal

1.7.1 This document is a component of the SA of the SLP. It provides an assessment of the emerging SLP Vision and Objectives, as per Stage B of **Figure 1.2**, according to PPG on SA¹⁵.

¹⁰ European Commission (2004) Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the assessment of the effects of certain plan and programmes on the environment. Available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923_sea_guidance.pdf [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

¹¹ Office of Deputy Prime Minister (2005) A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguides_ea.pdf [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

¹² MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

¹³ DLUHC & MHCLG (2021) Planning practice guidance. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

¹⁴ Royal Town Planning Institute (2018) Strategic Environmental Assessment, Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of SEA/SA for land use plans. Available at: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1822/sea-sapracticeadvicefull2018c.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

¹⁵ DLUHC & MHCLG (2020) Guidance: Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]



Figure 1.2: Sustainability appraisal process

1.8 The SA process so far

1.8.1 **Table 1.1** below presents a timeline of stages of the SLP and SA process so far. To date, this represents Stages A and B of **Figure 1.2**.

Table 1.1: *The SLP and SA process so far*

Date	SLP Stage	Sustainability Appraisal
January 2023	Plan making commences.	SA Scoping Report The Scoping Report identifies the scope and level of detail to be included in the SA.
February – March 2023	Issues and Options (Regulation 18) Consultation In the Issues and Options document, the Council considers the ways in which future development needs could be met and asks the public and other stakeholders to comment on these key issues for the borough.	Regulation 18: Issues and Options SA Report This report presents an assessment of the SLP Vision and Objectives presented in the consultation document, and makes recommendations for the emerging SLP.

1.9 Scoping Report

1.9.1 In order to identify the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SA process, an SA Scoping Report¹⁶ was prepared in January 2023.

1.9.2 The SA Scoping Report represents Stage A of the SA process (see **Figure 1.2**), and presents information in relation to:

- Identifying other relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives;
- Collecting baseline information;
- Identifying sustainability problems and key issues;
- Preparing the SA Framework; and
- Consultation arrangements on the scope of SA with the consultation bodies.

1.9.3 The Scoping report will be consulted on between 6th February and 20th March 2023, alongside this Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA, with the statutory bodies comprising Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency. Comments received during the consultation will inform the preparation of future SA outputs.

1.9.4 This Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA Report does not replicate baseline and contextual information set out in the SA Scoping Report.

1.9.5 Following the consultation, comments received on the SA Scoping Report and this Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA Report will be carefully considered and used to inform subsequent SA outputs in the SA process. Further consultations and opportunities to comment on the emerging SLP and accompanying SA outputs will occur at each plan making stage.

¹⁶ Lepus Consulting (2023) Sustainability Appraisal of the Sandwell Local Plan: Scoping Report

1.10 Signposting for this report

1.10.1 This Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA Report sets out an assessment of the draft Vision and Objectives of the emerging SLP, as set out in the Sandwell Local Plan Issues and Options Review consultation document prepared by SMBC.

1.10.2 The contents of this SA Report, including the appendix which provides essential contextual information to the main body of the report, are listed below:

- **Chapter 1** (this chapter) sets out the purpose, context and introduction to the SLP and the accompanying SA process.
- **Chapter 2** sets out the assessment methodology and scope of the appraisal.
- **Chapter 3** presents the assessment of the draft Vision and Objectives of the SLP.
- **Chapter 4** sets out a range of recommendations for SMBC to consider as they develop the policies, options and proposals for the emerging SLP.
- **Appendix A** presents the SA Framework.

2 Assessment methodology and scope of appraisal

2.1 Assessment of the SLP Issues and Options

2.1.1 Each of the elements of the SLP appraised in this report have been assessed for their likely impacts on each SA Objective of the SA Framework. The SA Framework, which is presented in its entirety in **Appendix A**, is comprised of 14 SA Objectives. **Table 2.1** summarises the SA Objectives and their relevance to the SEA themes.

Table 2.1: Summary of SA Objectives

	SA Objectives	Relevance to SEA Regulations – Schedule 2
1	Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	Cultural heritage
2	Landscape: Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place	Landscape and cultural heritage
3	Biodiversity, flora, fauna and geodiversity: Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.	Biodiversity, flora and fauna
4	Climate change mitigation: Minimise Sandwell's contribution to climate change.	Climatic factors
5	Climate change adaptation: Plan for the anticipated levels of climate change.	Climatic factors, soil, water
6	Natural resources: Protect and conserve natural resources.	Soil, water and material assets
7	Pollution: Reduce air, soil, water and noise pollution	Air, water, soil and human health
8	Waste: Reduce waste generation and disposal and achieve the sustainable management of waste.	Population and material assets
9	Transport and accessibility: Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.	Climatic factors and material assets
10	Housing: Provide affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for all.	Population
11	Equality: Reduce poverty, crime and social deprivation and secure economic inclusion.	Population and human health
12	Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and wellbeing.	Population and human health
13	Economy: Develop a dynamic, diverse and knowledge-based economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.	Population and material assets
14	Education, skills and training: Raise educational attainment and develop and maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness.	Population

- 2.1.2 The SA Framework is comprised of SA Objectives and decision-making criteria. Acting as yardsticks of sustainability performance, the SA Objectives are designed to represent the topics identified in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations¹⁷. Including the SEA topics in the SA Objectives helps to ensure that all environmental criteria of the SEA Regulations are represented. Consequently, the SA Objectives reflect all subject areas to ensure that the assessment process is transparent, robust and thorough.
- 2.1.3 It is important to note that the order of SA Objectives in the SA Framework does not infer prioritisation. The SA Objectives are at a strategic level and can potentially be open-ended. In order to focus each objective, decision-making criteria are presented in the SA Framework to be used during the appraisal of policies and sites.
- 2.1.4 The purpose of this document is to provide an appraisal of the proposed SLP Vision and Objectives. At this stage of the plan making process, SMBC have identified two options for the SLP Vision, but have not identified any further reasonable alternatives or options for assessment. Reasonable alternatives will be assessed in subsequent stages of the SA process, in line with Regulation 12 of the SEA Regulations¹⁸:
- 2.1.5 *"Where an environmental assessment is required by any provision of Part 2 of these Regulations, the responsible authority shall prepare, or secure the preparation of, an environmental report ... [which] shall identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme".*
- 2.1.6 Where applicable, this document also provides information in relation to the likely characteristics of effects, as per the SEA Regulations (see **Box 2.1**). Subsequent stages of the SLP process and accompanying SA process are likely to involve further identification, description and evaluation of reasonable alternatives, including information on the likely characteristics of effects.

¹⁷ Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations identifies the likely significant effects on the environment, including "issues such as (a) biodiversity, (b) population, (c) human health, (d) fauna, (e) flora, (f) soil, (g) water, (h) air, (i) climatic factors, (j) material assets, (k) cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, (l) landscape and (m) the interrelationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (l)."

¹⁸ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

Box 2.1: Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations¹⁹

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Schedule 1 of SEA Regulations)

The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:

- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- the cumulative nature of the effects;
- the transboundary nature of the effects;
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
 - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;
 - intensive land-use; and
- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.

2.2 Impact assessment and determination of significance

2.2.1 Significance of effect is a combination of impact sensitivity and magnitude. Impact sensitivity can be expressed in relative terms, based on the principle that the more sensitive the resource, the greater the magnitude of the change, and as compared with the do-nothing scenario, the greater will be the significance of effect.

2.3 Sensitivity

2.3.1 Sensitivity is measured through consideration of how the receiving environment will be impacted by a plan proposal. This includes assessment of the value and vulnerability of the receiving environment, whether environmental quality standards will be exceeded, and for example, if impacts will affect designated areas or landscapes.

2.3.2 A guide to the range of scales that will be used in determining impact sensitivity is presented in **Table 2.2**. For most receptors, sensitivity increases with geographic scale.

¹⁹ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made> [Date accessed: 03/01/23]

Table 2.2: Impact sensitivity

Scale	Typical criteria
International/ national	Designations that have an international aspect or consideration of transboundary effects beyond national boundaries. This applies to effects and designations/receptors that have a national or international dimension.
Regional	This includes the regional and sub-regional scale, including county-wide level and regional areas.
Local	This is the district and neighbourhood scale.

2.4 Magnitude

2.4.1 Magnitude relates to the degree of change the receptor will experience, including the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact. Impact magnitude has been determined based on the susceptibility of a receptor to the type of change that will arise, as well as the value of the affected receptor (see **Table 2.3**).

Table 2.3: Impact magnitude

Impact magnitude	Typical criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely total loss of or major alteration to the receptor in question; Provision of a new receptor/feature; or The impact is permanent and frequent.
Medium	Partial loss/alteration/improvement to one or more key features; or The impact is one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent and short-term; Frequent and reversible; Long-term (and frequent) and reversible; Long-term and occasional; or Permanent and occasional.
Low	Minor loss/alteration/improvement to one or more key features of the receptor; or The impact is one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reversible and short-term; Reversible and occasional; or Short-term and occasional.

2.5 Significant effects

2.5.1 In this SA Report, a single value from **Table 2.4** has been allocated to each SA Objective for each aspect of the SLP that has been assessed. Justification for the classification of the impact for each SA Objective is presented in an accompanying narrative assessment text for the SLP Vision and Objectives. This approach will be used in the assessment of all aspects of the SLP including all reasonable alternatives and options that will be assessed through the SA process going forward.

- 2.5.2 The assessment of impacts and subsequent evaluation of significant effects is in accordance with Schedule 2 (6) of the SEA Regulations, where feasible, which states that the effects should include: “*short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, cumulative and synergistic effects*”.

Table 2.4: Guide to assessing significant effects

Significance	Definition (not necessarily exhaustive)
Major Negative --	<p>The size, nature and location of a development proposal would be likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanently degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of a quality receptor, such as a feature of international, national or regional importance; • Cause a very high-quality receptor to be permanently diminished; • Be unable to be entirely mitigated; • Be discordant with the existing setting; and/or • Contribute to a cumulative significant effect.
Minor Negative -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size, nature and location of development proposals would be likely to: • Not quite fit into the existing location or with existing receptor qualities; and/or • Affect undesignated yet recognised local receptors.
Negligible 0	Either no impacts are anticipated, or any impacts are anticipated to be negligible.
Uncertain +/-	It is entirely uncertain whether impacts would be positive or adverse.
Minor Positive +	<p>The size, nature and location of a development proposal would be likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve undesignated yet recognised receptor qualities at the local scale; • Fit into, or with, the existing location and existing receptor qualities; and/or • Enable the restoration of valued characteristic features.
Major Positive ++	<p>The size, nature and location of a development proposal would be likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance and redefine the location in a positive manner, making a contribution at a national or international scale; • Restore valued receptors which were degraded through previous uses; and/or • Improve one or more key elements/features/characteristics of a receptor with recognised quality such as a specific international, national or regional designation.

- 2.5.3 When selecting a single value to best represent the sustainability performance, and to understand the significance of effects of an option in terms of the relevant SA Objective, the precautionary principle²⁰ has been used. This is a worst-case scenario approach. If a positive effect is identified in relation to one criterion within the SA Framework (see the decision-making criteria of the SA Framework in **Appendix A**) and a negative effect is identified in relation to another criterion within the same SA Objective, the overall impact has been assigned as negative for that objective. It is therefore essential to appreciate that the impacts are indicative summarily and that the accompanying assessment text provides a fuller explanation of the sustainability performance of the option or proposal being considered.

²⁰ The European Commission describes the precautionary principle as follows: “If a preliminary scientific evaluation shows that there are reasonable grounds for concern that a particular activity might lead to damaging effects on the environment,

- 2.5.4 The assessment considers, on a strategic basis, the degree to which a location can accommodate change without adverse effects on valued or important receptors (identified in the baseline).
- 2.5.5 The level of effect has been categorised as negligible, minor or major. The nature of the significant effect can be either positive or negative depending on the type of development and the design and mitigation measures proposed.
- 2.5.6 In this Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA Report, the proposed SLP Vision and each draft SLP Objective have been assessed for their likely significant effect against each SA Objective in the SA Framework, as per **Table 3.4**. Likely impacts are not intended to be summed.

2.6 Limitations of predicting effects

- 2.6.1 SA/SEA is a tool for predicting potential significant effects. Predicting effects relies on an evidence-based approach and incorporates expert judgement. It is often not possible to state with absolute certainty whether effects will occur, as many impacts are influenced by a range of factors such as the design and the success of mitigation measures.
- 2.6.2 The assessments in this report are based on the best available information, including that provided to Lepus by the Council and information that is publicly available. Every attempt has been made to predict effects as accurately as possible.
- 2.6.3 SA operates at a strategic level which uses available secondary data for the relevant SA Objective. Throughout the SA process, all identified reasonable alternatives, options and proposals will be assessed in the same way using the same method. Sometimes, in the absence of more detailed information, forecasting the potential impacts can require making reasonable assumptions based on the best available data and trends. However, all options must be assessed in the same way and any introduction of site-based detail should be made clear in the SA report as the new data could potentially introduce bias and skew the findings of the assessment process.
- 2.6.4 All data used is secondary data obtained from the Council or freely available on the Internet.

2.7 Methodology for assessment of SLP Vision and Objectives

- 2.7.1 The appraisal of the SLP Vision options and draft SLP Objectives, as presented in the Issues and Options document, aims to assess their likely significant effects, based on the criteria set out in the SEA Regulations (see **Box 2.1**).
- 2.7.2 **Table 2.5** sets out a guide to how likely impacts have been determined in the assessment of options within this report.

or on human, animal or plant health, which would be inconsistent with protection normally afforded to these within the European Community, the Precautionary Principle is triggered”.

Table 2.5: *Presenting likely impacts*

Likely Impact	Description	Impact Symbol
Major Positive Impact	The proposed SLP Vision / Objective contributes to the achievement of the SA Objective to a significant extent.	++
Minor Positive Impact	The proposed SLP Vision / Objective contributes to the achievement of the SA Objective to some extent.	+
Negligible / Neutral Impact	The proposed SLP Vision / Objective has no effect or an insignificant effect on the achievement of the SA Objective.	0
Uncertain Impact	The proposed SLP Vision / Objective has an uncertain relationship with the SA Objective or insufficient information is available for an appraisal to be made.	+/-
Minor Negative Impact	The proposed SLP Vision / Objective prevents the achievement of the SA Objective to some extent.	-
Major Negative Impact	The proposed SLP Vision / Objective prevents the achievement of the SA Objective to a significant extent.	--

2.7.3 The appraisal commentary provided should be read alongside the identified impact symbols, as it is often difficult to distill the wide-ranging effects into one overall impact.

2.7.4 The appraisal should be read alongside the local context and baseline information set out in the SA Scoping Report.

3 Assessment of the SLP Vision and Objectives

3.1 Preface

- 3.1.1 Local plans should set out a clear vision for the local authority area, which is positive and aspirational but also deliverable. Stemming from the vision, a series of objectives should be established which set out how key issues for the area will be dealt with.
- 3.1.2 Together, the vision and objectives of a local plan should be clear, realistic, locally distinctive and spatial in planning terms, and be based on a sound understanding of the form and function of the plan area²¹.
- 3.1.3 The following assessments seek to evaluate the extent to which the proposed draft objectives and options for the vision for the emerging SLP accord with the SA Framework and will help to guide sustainable development.
- 3.1.4 Recommendations to improve the SLP Vision and Objectives are set out in **Chapter 4**.

3.2 SLP Vision

- 3.2.1 SMBC have proposed two options for the SLP Vision within the Issues and Options document:
- **Option A:** The Sandwell Vision 2030 should be used as the basis of preparing the Local Plan, bearing in mind that it will be for the Local Plan to establish a sustainable strategy for the scale and location for future growth and development.
 - **Option B:** Create a new vision specifically for the Local Plan and the plan period it will cover along the lines of the suggested wording.
- 3.2.2 Option A refers to the application of the Sandwell Vision 2030 and accompanying 'ambitions' as set out in the Sandwell Corporate Plan²² for the emerging SLP. The Sandwell Vision 2030 and ten ambitions are presented in **Box 3.1**.
- 3.2.3 Alternatively, in Option B, SMBC have presented suggested wording for a new Vision for the emerging SLP, with the aim of delivering safe, healthy and sustainable growth across the borough. The suggested wording of the SLP Vision is presented in **Box 3.2**.

²¹ PAS (2014) Good Plan Making Guide, Principle 1: Define a locally relevant spatial vision and objectives for the area. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/entire-guide-4c0.pdf> [Date accessed: 18/01/23]

²² Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council 2021 – 2025. Big Plans for a Great Place: The Sandwell Plan. Available at: https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/29963/corporate_plan_-_big_plans_for_a_great_place_for_the_people_of_sandwell.pdf [Date accessed: 16/01/23]

Box 3.1: OPTION A – Sandwell Vision 2030, extracted from the Sandwell Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025²³

In 2030, Sandwell is a thriving, optimistic and resilient community.

It's where we call home and where we're proud to belong - where we choose to bring up our families, where we feel safe and cared for, enjoying good health, rewarding work, feeling connected and valued in our neighbourhoods and communities, confident in the future, and benefiting fully from a revitalised West Midlands.

Ambition 1: Sandwell is a community where our families have high aspirations and where we pride ourselves on equality of opportunity and on our adaptability and resilience.

Ambition 2: Sandwell is a place where we live healthy lives and live them for longer, and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for.

Ambition 3: Our workforce and young people are skilled and talented, geared up to respond to changing business needs and to win rewarding jobs in a growing economy.

Ambition 4: Our children benefit from the best start in life and a high-quality education throughout their school careers with outstanding support from their teachers and families.

Ambition 5: Our communities are built on mutual respect and taking care of each other, supported by all the agencies that ensure we feel safe and protected in our homes and local neighbourhoods.

Ambition 6: We have excellent and affordable public transport that connects us to all local centres and to jobs in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, the airport and the wider West Midlands.

Ambition 7: We now have many new homes to meet a full range of housing needs in attractive neighbourhoods and close to key transport routes.

Ambition 8: Our distinctive towns and neighbourhoods are successful centres of community life, leisure and entertainment where people increasingly choose to bring up their families.

Ambition 9: Sandwell has become a location of choice for industries of the future where the local economy and high performing companies continue to grow.

Ambition 10: Sandwell now has a national reputation for getting things done, where all local partners are focused on what really matters in people's lives and communities.

Box 3.2: OPTION B – Suggested Vision for the SLP, extracted from the SLP Issues and Options document

In 2041, Sandwell is a thriving, growing and active Borough, leading the urban renaissance of the West Midlands conurbation.

Sandwell is at the forefront of tackling climate change, in its role as a hub for climate adaptation and mitigation technologies and industries. Its new buildings are clean and energy efficient in their design, materials and operations, its old buildings are adapted to deliver low and zero carbon outputs. It sets the standard in both public and private sectors for embedding climate change awareness and sensitivity in all its actions, outcomes and decisions.

Notwithstanding its urban character, Sandwell's residents enjoy access to country and town parks, open spaces, green networks and corridors and increasing numbers of pocket parks, landscaping schemes and tree cover, as part of their everyday activities and leisure time. Sandwell's natural environment is valued for its own sake as well as for its contribution to the health and wellbeing of people living, working, learning in and enjoying the borough.

Sandwell continues to deliver sustained and sustainable economic growth and investment opportunities from its highly accessible location at the heart of the country. It provides high-quality goods and services from its powerful industrial base and levels of employment, wages and economic activity are high and rising.

Sandwell's residents enjoy longer and healthier lives than in previous decades, thanks to the increase in open spaces, the provision of services and facilities designed to promote active recreation and leisure, the improvement of and increased accessibility to healthcare infrastructure and the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices. They have access to well-performing schools, higher and further education provision at all levels and

²³ Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council 2021 – 2025. Big Plans for a Great Place: The Sandwell Plan. Available at: https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/29963/corporate_plan_-_big_plans_for_a_great_place_for_the_people_of_sandwell.pdf [Date accessed: 16/01/23]

Box 3.2: OPTION B – Suggested Vision for the SLP, extracted from the SLP Issues and Options document

to continued opportunities for skills development and training.

There is a wide range of housing available to Sandwell residents, designed to support sustainable living and capable of adaptation to suit all sections of the community. Affordable, social and council houses are available to those who need them. New developments are located within attractively landscaped areas, with access to district and low-cost energy and heating projects, sustainable drainage designed to improve the local environment as well as provide reliable protection against flooding and run-off and all necessary services and facilities within walking distance or a short bus ride away.

Sandwell's town centres thrive by day and by night, with an expanded range of retail, leisure and socialising opportunities as well as acting as the foci for new residential developments, community activities and social enterprises.

- 3.2.4 The proposed options for the SLP Vision have been assessed for their likely sustainability impacts, a summary of which is presented in **Table 3.1**. Explanations and reasonings behind each overall 'score' are set out in the following assessment narrative.

Table 3.1: Impact matrix of options for the SLP Vision

	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14
Vision	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	CC Mitigation	CC Adaptation	Natural Resources	Pollution	Waste	Transport	Housing	Equality	Health	Economy	Education
Option A: Vision 2030	0	++	0	+	+	+	+	0	++	++	++	++	++	++
Option B: SLP Vision	+	++	+	++	++	+	+	0	++	++	++	++	++	++

Option A: Vision 2030

- 3.2.5 The Sandwell Vision 2030 sets out the aim for Sandwell to be a safe, resilient and healthy borough where the needs of the local population are met, whilst ensuring that future generations are equipped with the skills they need to support sustainable growth.
- 3.2.6 A key focus of the Vision is on health and wellbeing. Under Option A, Sandwell's residents would have good access to healthcare and leisure facilities. The Vision also aims to ensure that health inequalities are addressed, through meeting the needs of vulnerable people, providing a range of appropriate housing, and seeking to increase life expectancy. A major positive impact on health would be expected (SA Objective 12).
- 3.2.7 Option A would help to ensure that the residents of Sandwell have equal opportunities to access work and education. Ambition 3 seeks to develop a highly skilled workforce, and Ambition 4 promotes high quality education. Ambition 9 focuses on promoting innovative industries and boosting the economy. Together, these ambitions would be likely to lead to a major positive impact on the economy and education (SA Objectives 13 and 14).
- 3.2.8 The emphasis on equal opportunities, access to local services and jobs, and promotion of healthy, safe and resilient communities would be likely to lead to a major positive impact on equality (SA Objective 11).

- 3.2.9 The Sandwell Vision 2030 promotes a high standard of public transport that is affordable and provides good connections to local centres as well as employment opportunities further afield. The Vision also states under Ambition 7 that residential growth would be focused close to key transport routes, which would help to reduce journey times, and potentially reduce the need to travel. A major positive impact on transport (SA Objective 9) would be expected with potential for a minor positive impact on climate change mitigation (SA Objective 4) and pollution (SA Objective 7) owing to the associated reduction in transport-related GHG emissions.
- 3.2.10 The Vision promotes "*adaptability and resilience*" within Ambition 1, which could potentially include protection and enhancement of Sandwell's natural resources to ensure that the borough is prepared to deal with the effects of climate change, as well as supporting resilient communities. This may lead to benefits regarding flood resilience, carbon storage and other ecosystem services associated with a resilient natural environment, although these features are not mentioned specifically. A minor positive impact could be achieved with respect to climate change adaptation (SA Objective 5) and natural resources (SA Objective 6).
- 3.2.11 Option A promotes local distinctiveness, which would help to strengthen sense of place. Under Ambition 7, the Vision also promotes attractive neighbourhoods, which may help to encourage the conservation and enhancement of green infrastructure (GI). A more attractive public realm could potentially lead to more walkable neighbourhoods and community interaction, with benefits to the vibrancy of the local area. Improvements to the character and quality of townscapes and landscapes would also be likely. Therefore, a major positive impact on landscape (SA Objective 2) would be expected.
- 3.2.12 The Vision presented under Option A does not directly reference cultural heritage, biodiversity, waste or recycling, and as such, a negligible impact is identified for SA Objectives 1, 3 and 8.

Option B: Suggested wording for SLP

- 3.2.13 The proposed Vision for Sandwell in 2041 within Option B sets out the aspiration to support growth and regeneration for the borough, meeting the needs of the local population and addressing key issues, whilst conserving the natural environment.
- 3.2.14 The Vision seeks to develop Sandwell's role as an industrial hub for the West Midlands by driving climate change adaptation and mitigation technologies, to ensure that the borough plays a key role in tackling climate change whilst striving for economic growth. Sustainable and energy efficient design and construction techniques, and exploration of alternative and low-carbon technologies would also be supported. A major positive impact could be achieved regarding climate change mitigation (SA Objective 4). Through encouraging sustainable economic growth and investment, alongside regeneration and revitalisation of Sandwell's towns, a major positive impact on the economy (SA Objective 13) would also be likely.

- 3.2.15 The Vision encourages the delivery of new developments that are carefully planned to take the effects of climate change into account, including incorporation of sustainable drainage techniques, flood mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as access to district and low-cost energy and heating projects. Recognising the multi-functional benefits of GI, Option B promotes the conservation and enhancement of parks, open spaces, green networks and tree coverage within Sandwell. GI can play a key role in helping urban areas adapt to the effects of climate change, for example through providing protection from extreme weather events, and helping to alleviate the 'urban heat island' effect. Together, these measures would be likely to lead to a major positive impact on climate change adaptation (SA Objective 5).
- 3.2.16 Through encouraging the conservation and enhancement of GI and Sandwell's natural environment, the Vision would be likely to lead to a minor positive impact on biodiversity and natural resources (SA Objectives 3 and 6), through potentially helping to increase the coverage and connectivity of ecological networks and the ecosystem services they provide.
- 3.2.17 Additionally, the emphasis on providing access to a variety of parks and open spaces for new developments would be likely to lead to positive effects on human health. Access to a range of open and green spaces is known to be beneficial for both mental and physical wellbeing, by providing areas for recreation, exercise and reflection. Well designed and attractive neighbourhoods which incorporate GI are likely to encourage people to live more active lifestyles. Furthermore, the Vision promotes the improvement of and increased accessibility to healthcare infrastructure, which would be likely to help address health inequalities. Overall, Option B could lead to a major positive impact on health (SA Objective 12).
- 3.2.18 Pocket parks and other open spaces within urban areas can also provide valuable spaces for community involvement and help to encourage social cohesion. More cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods would contribute towards improved quality of life and strengthen the sense of local identity. Alongside the proposed improvement of employment and training opportunities, and improved access to amenities, this would be likely to lead to a major positive impact on equality (SA Objective 11).
- 3.2.19 Town centres are proposed to be the focus for new residential and community growth, where existing services are concentrated and there is most potential for new provision. The Vision would help to ensure that residents, workers and visitors within the borough have access to a range of facilities to meet their needs as well as opportunities for leisure and entertainment. In addition to helping revitalise Sandwell's town centres and high streets, this would see benefits to transport and accessibility, through reducing the need to travel and promoting more sustainable travel including walkable neighbourhoods and improved public transport. A major positive impact on transport could be achieved (SA Objective 9), with potential for a minor positive impact on pollution (SA Objective 7) owing to the associated reduction in transport-related emissions.

- 3.2.20 Through rejuvenating townscapes, promoting landscape schemes and increasing the quantity and quality of open spaces and GI, the Vision would be likely to lead to an improvement in the local landscape and townscape character. In combination with the promotion of community facilities, the Vision could potentially help to strengthen sense of place and local identity, with a major positive impact on landscape overall (SA Objective 2).
- 3.2.21 Secondary minor positive effects could occur in relation to the historic environment (SA Objective 1), through seeking to create thriving town centres, as well as the reference to adapting historic buildings to deliver low and zero carbon outputs.
- 3.2.22 Option B seeks to ensure the provision of a range of housing types to meet the diverse needs of the population, including accessible and adaptable homes, affordable homes, and social housing. As such, a major positive impact on housing provision would be likely (SA Objective 10).
- 3.2.23 The Vision seeks to improve access to schools and training opportunities and improve educational attainment. Access to higher and further education provision is also highlighted. Together, these provisions would help to encourage more diversity in opportunities including for life-long learning and support the provision of an appropriately skilled workforce. A major positive impact on education would be likely (SA Objective 14).
- 3.2.24 The Vision presented under Option B does not directly reference waste or recycling, and as such, a negligible impact is identified for SA Objective 8.

Evaluation of options for SLP Vision

- 3.2.25 Whilst both options for the Vision of the SLP perform well against the SA Framework, Option B performs better overall as shown in **Table 3.1**. The suggested wording provided under Option B sets out more detail and specificity relating to environmental protection and enhancement, acknowledging the different valuable aspects of Sandwell's natural environment and with greater recognition of the benefits of GI, compared to Option A.
- 3.2.26 Furthermore, Option B provides stronger wording in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation, with reference to carbon reduction, energy efficiency, awareness of climate change and more emphasis on active travel and GI.

3.3 SLP Objectives

3.3.1 SMBC have drafted a set of 11 Objectives for the emerging SLP, which together are intended to help the achievement of the proposed vision for Sandwell, forming a framework for the delivery of sustainable growth. No alternative options for the SLP Objectives have been identified. The draft SLP Objectives are presented in **Box 3.3**.

Box 3.3: Draft Objectives for the SLP, extracted from the SLP Issues and Options document

1. Ensure new development takes a proactive approach to climate change mitigation, adaptation and carbon reduction, and that development is resilient to climate change.
2. Deliver sustainable development in locations where people can access jobs and services, delivering wider positive social and economic outcomes and protecting and enhancing local built and natural environments.
3. Address Sandwell's identified and wide-ranging housing needs by supporting the provision of high-quality new homes that are capable of being adapted to meet the future needs of occupiers, provide sufficient internal and external space and promote and support climate change adaptation and mitigation through good design and in the materials and techniques used for their construction.
4. Support regeneration, business investment and job creation to maintain and grow a prosperous and resilient local and regional economy in ways that consider environmental and climate change factors.
5. Support Sandwell's towns and local centres as places for economic, residential and cultural activity with good access to services in ways that protect their heritage, character and identity.
6. Ensure communities in Sandwell are safe and resilient and social cohesion is promoted and enhanced.
7. Require new development to deliver a high standard of design reflecting local character and distinctiveness and that creates greener and safer places that people feel proud to live and work in.
8. Ensure new development and open spaces support health and wellbeing for all, reduce health inequalities and encourage active and healthy lifestyles.
9. Protect and improve Sandwell's environment, including its natural landscapes, green infrastructure and biodiversity, as well as its rich historic built environment.
10. Encourage the effective and prudent use of previously developed land and natural resources, including the efficient use of land and buildings and the use of sustainable and climate-aware construction techniques within new developments, as well as providing for waste management and disposal.
11. Ensure development is supported by essential infrastructure and services and promotes safe movement and more sustainable modes of travel through promoting greener travel networks for walking, cycling and public transport.

3.3.2 Each draft SLP Objective has been assessed for its likely sustainability impacts, a summary of which is presented in **Table 3.2**. Explanations and reasonings behind each overall 'score' are set out in the following assessment narrative.

Table 3.2: Impact matrix of the 11 draft SLP Objectives

	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14
SLP Objective	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Biodiversity	CC Mitigation	CC Adaptation	Natural Resources	Pollution	Waste	Transport	Housing	Equality	Health	Economy	Education
1	0	0	0	++	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	+	+	0	+	0	0	+	0	++	0	+	++	++	++

SLP Objective	SA1 Cultural Heritage	SA2 Landscape	SA3 Biodiversity	SA4 CC Mitigation	SA5 CC Adaptation	SA6 Natural Resources	SA7 Pollution	SA8 Waste	SA9 Transport	SA10 Housing	SA11 Equality	SA12 Health	SA13 Economy	SA14 Education
3	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	++	+	+	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	++	0
5	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	++	+
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	+	0	0
7	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	++	++	0	0
9	++	++	++	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	+	0	+	0	++	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	0
11	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	++	0	+	+	+	+

3.3.3 SLP Objective 1 promotes the future proofing of new development to the effects of climate change and supports reducing GHGs. By embedding these principles into the SLP objectives, this demonstrates SMBC's commitment to reducing Sandwell's contributions towards the causes of climate change. A major positive impact on climate change mitigation and adaptation could be achieved (SA Objectives 4 and 5).

3.3.4 SLP Objective 2 seeks to locate development in areas with good accessibility to local services. This is likely to include healthcare facilities, employment opportunities and schools, with major positive impacts anticipated for health, the economy and education (SA Objectives 12, 13 and 14). Through directing growth to accessible locations, the SLP Objective would be likely to reduce the need to travel, resulting in a major positive impact on transport (SA Objective 9) and potentially leading to a minor positive impact on climate change mitigation and air pollution by reducing associated emissions (SA Objectives 4 and 7). By promoting good access for all, a minor positive impact would also be expected for equality (SA Objective 11). SLP Objective 2 also seeks to ensure the protection and enhancement of both the built and natural environment of the local area, with potential secondary minor positive benefits in relation to cultural heritage and landscape (SA Objectives 1 and 2).

- 3.3.5 SLP Objective 3 seeks to address the diverse housing needs for the growing population in Sandwell, with a likely major positive impact on housing provision (SA Objective 10). By providing high quality housing to meet identified needs, including adaptable homes for those with specialist requirements and homes with sufficient internal and external space, this objective would also be expected to lead to a minor positive impact on equality and health (SA Objectives 11 and 12). SLP Objective 3 also supports the incorporation of sustainable construction materials and techniques, with a minor positive benefit likely for climate change adaptation and mitigation (SA Objectives 4 and 5).
- 3.3.6 SLP Objective 4 supports economic growth within Sandwell, to increase the provision of jobs and boost the prosperity of the local economy. Through seeking to maintain a resilient economy and encourage new businesses and regeneration within the SLP area, a major positive impact on the economy would be likely (SA Objective 13). Through increasing the number and variety of jobs in the area, this SLP Objective would be likely to lead to a minor positive impact on access to employment opportunities, with benefits to equality (SA Objective 11).
- 3.3.7 SLP Objective 5 seeks to develop the role of Sandwell's towns and centres as hubs of economic, residential and cultural activities, whilst ensuring the landscape and historic character and identity of the local area are protected. Investing in Sandwell's centres and supporting appropriate growth would be likely to help promote urban regeneration and improve the vibrancy of town centres, with a major positive impact on the local economy (SA Objective 13) and a minor positive impact on landscapes, townscapes and cultural heritage (SA Objectives 1 and 2). Through supporting residential growth in areas with good access to services, potentially including community facilities, healthcare and schools, SLP Objective 5 could also lead to a minor positive impact on transport, housing, equality, health and education (SA Objectives 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14).
- 3.3.8 SLP Objective 6 aims to strengthen Sandwell's communities and improve social cohesion. This is likely to lead to a greater sense of identity for local residents and promote more vibrant communities where people from all backgrounds can feel valued and safe. Therefore, a major positive impact on equality (SA Objective 11) could be achieved, with a secondary minor positive impact on wellbeing (SA Objective 12).
- 3.3.9 SLP Objective 7 promotes high quality design for new development that is in keeping with the local character of the area. Good design that is planned carefully to consider its surroundings would be likely to strengthen local distinctiveness and sense of place. A major positive impact would be likely in terms of the local landscape and townscape character (SA Objective 2). A minor positive impact could also occur in relation to cultural heritage (SA Objective 1), where historic landscapes and buildings form a key part of the local character. Furthermore, through seeking to create a high standard of design with greener and safer neighbourhoods, SLP Objective 7 would also be expected to secure benefits in terms of equality and wellbeing of local residents (SA Objectives 11 and 12).

- 3.3.10 SLP Objective 8 recognises the importance of open spaces and carefully planned new development which aims to improve the quality of life for all Sandwell's residents. Through seeking to address health inequalities and improve access to open spaces, with potential to provide outdoor space for exercise and leisure, a major positive impact would be likely in terms of equality (SA Objective 11) and health and wellbeing (SA Objective 12). Providing high quality developments with sufficient open space could also lead to benefits for housing provision (SA Objective 10). The focus on encouraging active and healthy lifestyles could potentially also lead to improvements to the active travel network, with a minor positive impact on transport anticipated (SA Objective 9).
- 3.3.11 SLP Objective 9 aims to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment of Sandwell. Natural environments include designated habitats, landscapes and GI. By protecting and enhancing natural features including habitats and ecological networks, a major positive impact on biodiversity would be likely (SA Objective 3). GI provides a range of ecosystem services, including helping urban areas to adapt to climate change, for example through providing protection from extreme weather events, and helping to alleviate the 'urban heat island' effect. As such, conserving and enhancing GI would be expected to lead to a minor positive impact on climate change adaptation and natural resources (SA Objectives 5 and 6). By conserving and enhancing built environments, benefits could also be seen through SLP Objective 9 in terms of enhancing the quality and character of local landscapes and townscapes, and in particular Sandwell's historic environment including cultural heritage designations and locally important features. A major positive impact on landscape and cultural heritage would be expected (SA Objectives 2 and 3).
- 3.3.12 SLP Objective 10 promotes an efficient use of land and seeks to ensure that the SLP focuses development on previously developed land where appropriate, in accordance with the NPPF. A major positive impact on natural resources (SA Objective 6) could be achieved. SLP Objective 10 is likely to also encourage appropriate re-use or intensification of under-utilised land, which may help to stimulate urban regeneration, with potential minor positive benefits to townscapes and the economy (SA Objectives 2 and 13). Benefits for pollution (SA Objective 7), waste (SA Objective 8) and climate change mitigation (SA Objective 4) could also be achieved, through the potential for remediation of contaminated brownfield land for development as well as the intention to support sustainable waste management and construction techniques.

- 3.3.13 SLP Objective 11 seeks to ensure that new development proposed through the SLP is supported by essential infrastructure and services, with a particular focus on transport infrastructure. The SLP Objective supports green travel networks which encourage walking, cycling and public transport, which would be likely to facilitate a modal shift away from private car use. A major positive impact on transport and accessibility would be likely (SA Objective 9), with a minor positive impact on climate change mitigation (SA Objective 4) and pollution (SA Objective 7) owing to the associated reduction in transport-related emissions including GHGs. By encouraging active travel, SLP Objective 11 could also lead to benefits in terms of health and wellbeing (SA Objective 12). By providing essential infrastructure, this is expected to ensure provision of appropriate connections to utilities such as water and sewerage, with a minor positive effect likely for natural resources and waste (SA Objectives 6 and 8). Benefits could also be secured in terms of access to social infrastructure such as community facilities, healthcare, jobs and schools, with minor positive impacts anticipated (SA Objectives 11, 12, 13 and 14).

4 Recommendations

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The SLP Issues and Options document is intended to identify matters where SMBC feels more specific consideration is needed in a Sandwell context, and to get the broad views of local communities and stakeholders on issues of importance to them. It does not set out any policies, sites or reasonable alternatives for consideration and this stage.
- 4.1.2 With this in mind, this chapter of the SA sets out a range of recommendations for SMBC to consider as the SLP continues to be developed and refined, including consideration of the identification, description and evaluation of reasonable alternatives which will be an important aspect of the SA process going forward.
- 4.1.3 **Section 4.2** sets out some recommendations for enhancement of the SLP Vision and Objectives, following on from the assessments presented in **Chapter 3**.
- 4.1.4 **Section 4.3** and **Table 4.1** presents a range of recommendations and commentary on the issues and questions as presented in the SLP Issues and Options document, including recommendations for SMBC to consider in the development of policies for the SLP.

4.2 Recommendations for the SLP Vision and Objectives

- 4.2.1 As set out in **Chapter 3**, the Vision options and the draft Objectives perform well when considered against the SA Framework, with major positive, minor positive or negligible impacts identified across all SA Objectives. However, the following recommendations have been identified to further improve the sustainability of the Vision and Objectives for the SLP:

- The SLP Vision and Objectives could be enhanced through incorporating stronger reference to the importance of conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage and the historic environment, such as seeking opportunities for heritage-led regeneration.
- The SLP Vision and Objectives could be strengthened through including wording to promote nature recovery and delivering measurable net gains in biodiversity alongside residential and economic growth.
- The SLP Vision would benefit from stronger reference to the importance of active travel networks in encouraging healthy lifestyles and addressing climate change and air quality impacts associated with road transport.
- The SLP Vision does not directly reference waste or recycling, although waste management is referred to within SLP Objective 10. Wording could be incorporated to recognise the role that the SLP can play in helping to minimise waste generation and promoting the recycling or re-use of materials during construction and occupation of development.
- Although the conservation of natural environments and importance of GI are highlighted through the SLP Vision and Objectives, it is suggested that wording could be included to recognise the importance of conserving and

improving air and water quality for both human and ecosystem health. Air pollution in particular is a key issue for Sandwell.

4.3 General recommendations for the SLP

- 4.3.1 **Table 4.1** sets out commentary and a range of recommendations for SMBC to consider in the preparation of the SLP, in accordance with the topics and questions as set out in the SLP Issues and Options document.
- 4.3.2 This includes suggestions for policy provisions, supporting evidence, as well as general points for consideration. The recommendations set out are not exhaustive; further recommendations will be made throughout the SA process to help inform the SLP in its preparation.

Table 4.1: SA commentary and recommendations for the SLP Issues and Options

SLP Issues and Options Topics	SLP Issues and Options Questions	SA Commentary and Recommendations
Tackling climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Climate change ◇ Heat networks ◇ Resilient landscapes ◇ Sustainable drainage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible, the SLP should seek to promote and encourage the generation and use of renewable and low-carbon energy and associated infrastructure. SMBC should provide a positive strategy to achieve this, whilst also ensuring that any adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts, of potential energy schemes are addressed. • Different approaches to heat decarbonisation and the removal of gas boilers (as advocated under the Future Homes Standard²⁴), should be promoted through the SLP including consideration of district heating network connections and / or heat pumps. Opportunities to promote Passivhaus buildings²⁵ should be considered. • The SLP should incorporate measures to avoid overheating in homes, particularly in urban and higher density developments. • Consideration should be given to retrofitting of existing building stock, including energy efficiency upgrades to historic buildings. • The SLP should work towards ensuring that all new residential and commercial developments support the move to zero carbon. • The effects of regional climate change projections (e.g. Met Office UKCP projections²⁶) on cross cutting themes such as flood risk, biodiversity, air quality, landscape, heritage and mobilisation of contaminants should be taken into consideration in terms of the inter-relationship of effects and the requirement to assess climate change adaptability of developments. • As part of additional supporting evidence for the SLP, SMBC could consider commissioning a climate change study and calculating / reporting on GHG emissions in greater detail. This could include use of the Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool²⁷. More detailed carbon footprint data for the plan area would enable the SA process to evaluate changes to carbon emissions as a consequence of the plan in terms of (a) evolution of the baseline without the plan, and (b) effect on climate change through increased or decreased emissions, with the plan.

²⁴ Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings> [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

²⁵ Passivhaus Trust. Available at: <https://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/> [Date accessed: 25/01/23]

²⁶ Met Office UK Climate Projections (UKCP). Available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp> [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

²⁷ Local Partnerships (2023) Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool and Waste Emissions Calculator. Available at: <https://localpartnerships.org.uk/greenhouse-gas-accounting-tool/> [Date accessed: 25/01/23]

SLP Issues and Options Topics	SLP Issues and Options Questions	SA Commentary and Recommendations
Development strategy and housing provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Future development in Sandwell ◇ Housing windfall sites ◇ Sustainable locations ◇ Masterplanning ◇ Good design ◇ Shopfront design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable alternatives should be identified which can be evaluated in the SA process, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Options for the quantity of development to be delivered through the SLP. This can include consideration of overall dwelling numbers, employment floorspace and / or retail provision. ○ Spatial options to consider how the overall level of housing / employment floorspace will be distributed across the area. This can include different models for growth or follow specific thematic priorities. ○ Development sites, informed by the Call for Sites and strategic reviews of housing and employment land availability. • The SLP should support the efficient use of land, seeking appropriate opportunities to remediate degraded or contaminated land, and allocate new development on under-utilised or vacant land. • High density development can play a role in making the best use of available land, particularly in highly urbanised authorities. However, such developments will require careful co-ordination and planning to ensure that potential adverse effects are identified and avoided, for example on townscape character, capacity of local services and transport networks, loss of open spaces, urban heat island effects and 'canyoning' resulting from changing wind patterns. • The SLP should ensure development proposals are constructed in accordance with appropriate design guides and codes, including the 'Design: process and tools'²⁸ government guidance. Implementing locally specific guidance is recommended to support local distinctiveness and tailor the approach to reflect local priorities. • In considering design aspirations, the principles of the 2020 'Building Better, Building Beautiful' report²⁹ should be embraced. There are three pillars to the approach advocated in this report: <i>"ask for beauty, refuse ugliness and promote stewardship"</i>.
Other housing issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Self- and custom-build housing ◇ Specific housing requirements ◇ Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople ◇ Houses in multiple occupation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self- and custom-build housing should be encouraged through the SLP to meet local demands, providing opportunities for design innovation and originality; however, the SLP should also ensure that housing projects are permitted only where they respect the setting and character of the local area. • The SLP should ensure housing provision of different types, including accommodation for Gypsies, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople, reflects the latest evidenced needs and demands of the local population. Wherever possible, and at the earliest opportunity, Gypsy and Traveller communities should be consulted with to identify key issues that can be addressed.

²⁸ DLUHC & MHCLG (2019) Guidance. Design: process and tools. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design> [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

²⁹ MHCLG (2020) Living with Beauty: Promoting health, well-being and sustainable growth: The report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861832/Living_with_beauty_BBBBC_report.pdf [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

SLP Issues and Options Topics	SLP Issues and Options Questions	SA Commentary and Recommendations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SLP policies should ensure proposed sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople seek to provide suitable access to local services, healthcare and schools to facilitate sustainable development and integration with the community. This could include measures such as developing travel plans to improve public transport connections. The layout and design of new sites should be carefully considered with reference to good practice guidance³⁰. The SLP should ensure development proposals provide adequate indoor space in line with, or wherever possible beyond, the requirements set out in the technical housing standards³¹. Residential development proposals should incorporate functional private or communal open space, including green space.
Healthy people and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development for health Active recreation Community facilities and services Green and blue infrastructure Open space Hot food takeaways and gambling establishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wherever possible and deliverable, the SLP should seek to increase the quality and quantity of green and blue infrastructure within Sandwell to provide multi-functional benefits including improved carbon storage, urban cooling, natural flood resilience/flood water storage, opportunities for food production, and provide a more attractive public realm to encourage active travel. This could include cross consideration of the 'Building with Nature' standards³² or similar schemes. Developers, residents, landowners and managers of open spaces should be encouraged to adopt a cooperative approach that connects buildings, gardens and public spaces to create a vibrant and diverse network of interconnected species and habitats. Such a network would enhance the quality of life for local residents as well providing benefits to flora and fauna in the Sandwell area. Improving connectivity of active travel routes should be a priority, owing to the severance of many routes due to the landscape / townscape being dominated by the highway networks discouraging use. SMBC should help to establish better management and maintenance of green spaces and support local involvement, where possible through SLP policies, to reduce anti-social behaviour which may discourage use of open spaces by the local community. SLP policies should ensure development proposals take into consideration the findings of the latest relevant Playing Pitch or Sports Strategies.

³⁰ Communities and Local Government (2008) Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11439/designinggypsiesites.pdf [Date accessed: 25/01/23]

³¹ MHCLG (2015) Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard____Final_Web_version.pdf [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

³² Building With Nature. Available at: <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/> [Date accessed: 25/01/23]

SLP Issues and Options Topics	SLP Issues and Options Questions	SA Commentary and Recommendations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting out criteria to help manage and regulate the number and location of hot food takeaways would help to ensure that adverse impacts on the vitality, amenity and character of Sandwell's centres are avoided, whilst also helping to promote healthier lifestyles. Ensure the provision of local services and community facilities where there is an identified need in the local area. Where appropriate, consider the option for community ownership of some facilities and services. The SLP should recognise the health implications of air pollution and embed the priorities of the Air Quality Action Plan³³ into planning policies seeking to improve air quality. The SLP should strive to minimise the exposure of residents, and particularly vulnerable groups, to existing sources of air pollution through careful consideration of the location, design and configuration of new developments and particularly those close to roads³⁴.
Thriving towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Retailing in town centres ◊ Gateway sites ◊ Town centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SLP policies should encourage active frontages within town centres and high streets. Improvements to GI coverage within urban areas should also be encouraged, such as through seeking opportunities to design GI into frontages or implement public realm landscaping schemes. This would provide opportunities to improve the quality, character and appearance of built form, promoting a strong sense of place and encouraging visitors. Residential uses in town centres such as above retail areas should be promoted where appropriate, to help reduce the quantity of new land required to meet housing demands and make more efficient use of space. This would also help to ensure that residential development is situated in closer proximity to existing services and facilities to meet day to day needs, reducing the need to travel. Encouraging a varied retail offering and diverse usage in town centres, including residential developments, would be expected to have benefits for sustainability in terms of accessibility to shops, services and jobs, as well as benefits to economic stimulation and regeneration where an increased footfall could positively affect the local economy and employment.

³³ Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (2020) Air Quality Action Plan 2020-2025. Available at: https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/30801/aqap_2020-2025 [Date accessed: 04/01/23]

³⁴ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2017) Air pollution: outdoor air quality and health. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng70/chapter/recommendations> [Date accessed: 25/01/23]

SLP Issues and Options Topics	SLP Issues and Options Questions	SA Commentary and Recommendations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development proposals for town centres should carefully consider up to date information and trends regarding the local and regional demand for different types of floorspace, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, the increase in online shopping and changed perception of town centres³⁵³⁶. The SLP should ensure development proposals, particularly in dense areas such as town centres, promote a safe and accessible neighbourhood, helping to reduce crime and the fear of crime. Consider supporting the use of the 'Secured by Design'³⁷ scheme in relation to crime prevention.
West Bromwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Bromwich West Bromwich future uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SLP should set out a clear role and strategy for West Bromwich as the largest centre in Sandwell, cross-referencing to the masterplan for West Bromwich centre³⁸ and Interim Planning Statement (IPS)³⁹.
Supporting a sustainable economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment land need Sandwell's economy Regeneration Demand for employment sites Non-conforming employment uses Alternative uses in industrial areas Training and recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration strategies should address issues associated with urbanisation, including resilience to climate change. The SLP should promote innovative re-use of existing building stocks, including developments which would improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings and take into account their embodied carbon value when considering their retention and re-use, versus their replacement. SMBC should refer to Historic England's guidance on keeping historic buildings in good repair⁴⁰. Changing land uses can help to rejuvenate and modernise landscapes and townscapes and should be supported so long as the design, layout and architecture embraces the existing public realm especially when this includes iconic post-industrial landmarks and distinctive buildings. The SLP policies should recognise the value and significance of heritage assets and their settings and seek to protect and enhance these where possible.

³⁵ Local Government Association (2021) The Future of High Streets and Town Centres: Trends Analysis/. Available at:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/The%20future%20of%20high%20streets%20and%20town%20centres%20-%20trends%20analysis.pdf> [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

³⁶ DLUHC & MHCLG (2021) Build Back Better High Streets. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-high-streets> [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

³⁷ Secured by Design. Available at: <https://www.securedbydesign.com/> [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

³⁸ Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (2021) West Bromwich Town Centre Masterplan. Available at: https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/32496/west_bromwich_masterplan [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

³⁹ Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (2022) West Bromwich Interim Planning Statement. Available at: https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/2798/west_bromwich_interim_planning_statement [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

⁴⁰ Historic England (2023) Stopping the Rot: A guide to enforcement action to save historic buildings. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/stoppingtherot/> [Date accessed: 25/01/23]

SLP Issues and Options Topics	SLP Issues and Options Questions	SA Commentary and Recommendations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities should be explored in the SLP policies to achieve smart economic growth. This could be encouraged through the use of technology and innovative ways of working to increase productivity without damaging people's quality of life or the environment. Ensure development proposals for employment-led use cumulatively meet the identified employment needs of the Plan area. This should be in accordance with the latest Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA), and subsequent reviews.
Industrial legacy	◇ Industrial legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst it is important that an efficient use of land is promoted and that the SLP supports urban regeneration, the SLP should also ensure development proposals on contaminated land are only permitted where it can be demonstrated that the contamination can be effectively managed or remediated so that it is appropriate for the proposed use. SLP policies should seek to ensure development proposals are designed in order to avoid any significant adverse impacts from pollution, including cumulative impacts, on human health and wellbeing, biodiversity, the effective operation of neighbouring land uses and the water environment.
Waste management	◇ Strategic waste management ◇ Protection and location of waste facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SLP should take into account the findings of the Black Country Waste Study⁴¹ and other relevant evidence base documents to ensure that waste management and recovery facilities are appropriately located, and will facilitate moving waste up the hierarchy to enable communities to take more responsibility for waste arising in their areas. Waste strategies and policies will need to take into account predicted increases in waste as well as the need to manage potentially more diverse waste outputs associated with a range of industrial, commercial and technological growth promoted through the SLP and nationally. The SLP policies should require development proposals to demonstrate measures taken to minimise waste generation during construction. To improve efficiency of waste management during occupation of development, proposals should be encouraged to integrate well-designated waste storage space to facilitate effective waste storage, recycling and composting.
Greener infrastructure	◇ General infrastructure ◇ Transport infrastructure ◇ Greener travel networks ◇ Safe access and addressing transport impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant modal shift is required to support more sustainable modes of travel. The SLP should seek opportunities to promote cycling, walking and public transport through consideration of transport infrastructure including the potential for reallocation of road space. Development patterns and layouts should be designed to prioritise access on foot, bicycle and public transport, rather than by car, as advocated

⁴¹ Wood (2020) Black Country Waste Study – Review of the Evidence Base for Waste to support Preparation of the Black Country Plan Revised Final Report. Available at: https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/media/15811/black-country-waste-study-final-report_redacted.pdf [Date accessed: 11/01/23]

SLP Issues and Options Topics	SLP Issues and Options Questions	SA Commentary and Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Communications and digital infrastructure ◇ Telephone kiosks ◇ Broadband ◇ Taxis and private hire vehicles 	<p>in Sport England's Active Design guidance⁴². SMBC should consider the recommendations for walkable neighbourhoods as advocated in Sustrans guidance⁴³, and incorporate the findings of the Black Country accessibility modelling exercise carried out as part of the draft BCP evidence base⁴⁴, to help inform the most sustainable locations for new development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SLP should take into consideration the findings and aims of the emerging Local Transport Plan for the West Midlands. • Where new active travel links are to be provided, these should be well designed so vulnerable groups can travel in confidence; this could include consideration of lighting schemes, overlooking and appropriate vegetation to avoid concealed spaces. Opportunities should be sought to accompany new links with shared spaces such as parks and play areas, with consideration of the potential to conserve or enhance wildlife corridors alongside this. The creation of safe walkable routes is especially important for children to encourage walking to school. • Planning policies should recognise the multi-functional benefits of GI including for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, urban cooling / shading and carbon storage and seek to incorporate GI features alongside 'grey infrastructure' wherever possible. • Electric vehicle charging networks should be supported including improved distribution and quantity of charging points and public transport options across the SLP area, recognising the crucial role that local authorities play in enabling the transition to electric vehicles⁴⁵. • The SLP should support opportunities for more sustainable and less road-based movement of freight and logistics to help relieve congestion and air quality impacts, including rail and waterways as well as embracing new technologies.

⁴² Sport England (2015) Active Design Guidance: Planning for health and wellbeing through sport and physical activity. Available at: <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design#activedesign-19603> [Date accessed: 23/01/23]

⁴³ Sustrans (2022) Walkable neighbourhoods: Building in the right places to reduce car dependency. Available at: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/research/all-themes/all/walkable-neighbourhoods-building-in-the-right-places-to-reduce-car-dependency> [Date accessed: 25/01/23]

⁴⁴ Access Time by Walking or Public Transport to Key Residential Services, page 25, Black Country Plan Site Assessment Report: Assessment and Selection Methodology and Results. Available at: <https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/t2/p4/t2p4/> [Date accessed: 30/01/23]

⁴⁵ Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (2022) On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grants-for-local-authorities-to-provide-residential-on-street-chargepoints/grants-to-provide-residential-on-street-chargepoints-for-plug-in-electric-vehicles-guidance-for-local-authorities> [Date accessed: 25/01/23]

SLP Issues and Options Topics	SLP Issues and Options Questions	SA Commentary and Recommendations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to increase the provision and coverage of high-speed broadband should be encouraged, including fibre to new housing. This would help to ensure new homes support opportunities for home working and learning whilst also contributing towards a reduced need to travel.
Enhancing the natural and built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Biodiversity net gain ◇ Green spaces ◇ The Rowley Hills ◇ Heritage assets ◇ Conservation areas ◇ Archaeology ◇ Black Country Geopark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SLP should seek opportunities to improve the resilience of the ecological network through increased quantity of habitat and enhanced connectivity, based on an evidenced landscape-scale approach. This could include preparation of an ecological network map or cross referencing to the evidence provided in the emerging Black Country Nature Recovery Network⁴⁶. To supplement emerging SLP policies regarding GI, SMBC could consider commissioning a GI Strategy, with potential to incorporate the principles of Natural England's emerging GI Framework⁴⁷. SMBC should consider using policy tools to set out the quantitative and qualitative requirements for informal / natural green space / GI in new developments, for example, using Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard⁴⁸. The findings and recommendations of the emerging HRA of the SLP should be taken into account and incorporated into the SLP policies. The SLP should acknowledge links to biodiversity assets beyond the plan area, including hydrological connections and the potential for likely significant effects on the Severn and Humber estuaries and the species they support. Mandatory 10% BNG is expected to come into force for Town and Country Planning Act developments in November 2023, although the SLP could strive to achieve higher BNG targets, for example in strategic developments. SMBC could consider implementing an Environmental Net Gain policy which would require developers to deliver a wider range of environmental benefits than BNG alone, such as for air quality and flood risk management^{49 50}.

⁴⁶ Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust: Nature Recovery Network. Available at: <https://www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/NatureRecoveryNetwork> [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

⁴⁷ Natural England (2023) Introduction to the Green Infrastructure Framework – Principles and Standards for England. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx> [Date accessed: 30/01/23]

⁴⁸ Natural England (2003) Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/65021> [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

⁴⁹ DEFRA (2019) Natural Capital Committee advice to government on net environmental gain. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-capital-committee-advice-to-government-on-net-environmental-gain> [Date accessed: 30/01/23]

⁵⁰ National Infrastructure Commission (2021) Natural Capital and Environmental Net Gain: A discussion paper. Available at: <https://nic.org.uk/studies-reports/natural-capital-environmental-net-gain/#:~:text=Environmental%20net%20gain%20is%20the,to%20the%20pre%2Ddevelopment%20baseline.&text=Biodiversity%20net%20gain%20is%20a,for%20achieving%20environmental%20net%20gain.> [Date accessed: 25/01/23]

SLP Issues and Options Topics	SLP Issues and Options Questions	SA Commentary and Recommendations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SLP should promote the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, ensuring that policies seek opportunities to enhance public understanding and enjoyment of heritage assets and locally important historic features. The SLP should strive to protect and enhance the special qualities of locally important landscapes and remaining areas of open space, including the Rowley Hills and Sandwell Valley. SLP policies should support development in accordance with the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment⁵¹ and Green Belt Study⁵² prepared for the former BCP, or any future updates. Development proposals should aim to protect areas identified as tranquil. An example method for identifying tranquillity includes 'Mapping Tranquillity'⁵³. The Black Country Geopark provides an opportunity to promote tourism. Where tourism offerings are created or enhanced, the SLP policies should ensure that these are accessible for visitors and commit to enhancing conservation efforts and GI alongside tourism / economic benefits.

⁵¹ LUC (2019) Black Country Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. Available at: https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/media/13883/black-country-lsa-front-end-report-final-lr_redacted.pdf [Date accessed: 10/01/23]

⁵² LUC (2019) Black Country Green Belt Study. Available at: https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/media/13882/bcgb-0919-black-country-gb-stage-1-and-2-plus-app1-final-reduced_redacted.pdf [Date accessed: 10/01/23]

⁵³ CPRE (2005) Mapping Tranquillity. Available at: <https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/mapping-tranquillity/> [Date accessed: 20/01/23]

5 Conclusions and next steps

5.1 Consultation on the Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA Report

5.1.1 This Regulation 18 Issues and Options SA Report will be published by SMBC for consultation between 6th February and 20th March 2023.

5.1.2 All responses to this consultation exercise should be made in writing, either via the SMBC website <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/sandwelllocalplan> or sent to:

The Planning Policy Team,
Sandwell Council,
PO Box 2374,
Oldbury,
B69 3DE

Email: Sandwell_LocalPlan@sandwell.gov.uk

5.1.3 This report represents the latest stage of the SA process. Any comments received on this report during the consultation will be considered and used to inform subsequent stages of the SA process, where appropriate.

5.1.4 Further consultations and opportunities to comment on the emerging SLP and accompanying SA outputs will occur at each plan making stage.

5.2 Next steps

5.2.1 Reasonable alternatives will be identified by SMBC and assessed through the SA process to enable options for the emerging SLP to be explored. This is likely to include options for the development strategy, policies, and development sites. In this way, the SA can provide a coherent 'story' of the SLP's evolution and choice of options by assessing reasonable alternatives prepared throughout the plan making process.

5.2.2 The assessment of options or reasonable alternatives is an important requirement of the SEA Regulations, which requires the Environmental Report to include *"an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information"*.

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Appendix A – SA Framework

#	SA Objective	Relevant SEA Regulations topics	Decision making criteria: Will the option / proposal...	Indicators (this list is not exhaustive)
1	Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural heritage 	a) conserve features of architectural or historic interest and, where necessary, encourage their conservation and renewal? b) conserve or enhance archaeological sites/remains? c) conserve or enhance the setting of cultural heritage assets? d) improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and condition of historic assets on the Heritage at Risk register. Developments with potential to adversely affect cultural heritage designations or areas of historic value in the SLP area. Statutory and non-statutory sites in the Historic Environment Record (HER) and identified in the HLC.
2	Landscape: Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Cultural heritage 	a) safeguard and enhance the character of the landscape and local distinctiveness and identity? b) protect and enhance visual amenity, including light and noise pollution? c) reuse degraded landscapes/townscapes? d) compromise the purpose of the Green Belt e.g. will it lead to coalescence of settlements and/or urban sprawl?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tranquillity rating of area. Re-use of brownfield land and/or derelict buildings. Developments with potential to alter existing landscape or townscape character. Developments in the Green Belt which contradict with the findings of the Green Belt Study. Developments in areas identified as being of 'moderate' or 'moderate-high' sensitivity in the Landscape Sensitivity Study.
3	Biodiversity, flora, fauna and geodiversity: Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Flora Fauna 	a) maintain and enhance features and assets of nature conservation value including biodiversity and geodiversity? b) support positive management of local sites (SLINCs and SINCS) designated for nature conservation and geodiversity value? c) contribute towards wider GI networks and promote habitat connectivity? d) deliver biodiversity net gain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and diversity of protected species present in the area. Quality and extent of priority habitats (habitats of principle importance). Area and condition of sites designated for biological and geological interest. Provision and connectivity of GI.

#	SA Objective	Relevant SEA Regulations topics	Decision making criteria: Will the option / proposal...	Indicators (this list is not exhaustive)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of biodiversity net gain provided in new developments measured using the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric.
4	Climate change mitigation: Minimise Sandwell's contribution to climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climatic factors 	a) help to reduce the per capita carbon footprint of Sandwell? b) encourage renewable energy generation or use of energy from renewable or low-carbon sources? c) promote sustainable construction principles? d) help to reduce reliance on private car use?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon emissions from domestic / industrial / commercial sources. Percentage of energy in the area generated from renewable sources. Proximity to, and frequency of, public transport links. Distance to local services and amenities.
5	Climate change adaptation: Plan for the anticipated levels of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climatic factors Soil Water 	a) avoid development in areas at high risk of flooding and seek to reduce flood risk? b) increase the coverage and connectivity of GI? c) promote use of technologies and techniques to adapt to the impacts of climate change? d) ensure that new development is resilient to the effects of extreme weather events?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of properties at risk of flooding. Area of new greenspace created per capita. Area and connectivity of GI. Implementation of adaptive techniques, such as SuDS and passive heating/cooling.
6	Natural resources: Protect and conserve natural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil Water Material assets 	a) utilise previously developed, degraded and under-used land? b) lead to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land? c) lead to the loss or sterilisation of mineral resources, or affect mineral working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-use of previously developed or brownfield land. Area of potential BMV agricultural land lost to development. Development within groundwater SPZs. Proposed Mineral Safeguarding Area(s).
7	Pollution: Reduce air, soil, water and noise pollution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air Water Soil Human health 	a) improve air quality and avoid generating further air pollution? b) conserve soil quality or help to remediate land affected by ground contamination? c) conserve and improve water quality? d) help to reduce noise pollution and protect sensitive receptors from existing ambient noise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of exceedances in NO₂, PM₁₀ or PM_{2.5} annual mean objectives within Sandwell AQMA. Development with potential to generate a significant increase in road traffic emissions or other air pollutants. Area of contaminated land remediated.

#	SA Objective	Relevant SEA Regulations topics	Decision making criteria: Will the option / proposal...	Indicators (this list is not exhaustive)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to watercourses or groundwater receptors. Ecological and chemical status of waterbodies within the SLP area and downstream. Percentage change in pollution incidents.
8	Waste: Reduce waste generation and disposal and achieve the sustainable management of waste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population Material assets 	a) encourage recycling, re-use and composting of waste? b) minimise and where possible eliminate generation of waste, during both construction and occupation of development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and capacity of waste management facilities. Rate of recycling and composting. Management of local authority collected waste.
9	Transport and accessibility: Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climatic factors Population Material assets 	a) reduce the need to travel and/or reduce travel time? b) provide adequate means of access by a range of sustainable transport modes (i.e. walking, cycling, and public transport)? c) support a modal shift away from private car use?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity and connectivity of walking and cycling links. Proximity to public transport links including bus services, metro and rail. Frequency of bus services. Provision or expansion of public transport and active travel infrastructure. Distance / travel times to place of work, local amenities and key services.
10	Housing: Provide affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population 	a) provide a mix of good-quality housing, including homes that are suitable for first-time buyers? b) provide housing suitable for the growing elderly population? c) provide decent, affordable, and accessible homes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varied housing mix. Percentage of dwellings delivered as affordable housing. Number of extra care homes. Provision of pitches and plots for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
11	Equality: Reduce poverty, crime and social deprivation and secure economic inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population Human health 	a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment? b) reduce crime and the fear of crime?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Level of qualifications e.g. number. of people with NVQ2. Rates of crime.

#	SA Objective	Relevant SEA Regulations topics	Decision making criteria: Will the option / proposal...	Indicators (this list is not exhaustive)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) create safe neighbourhoods and support community cohesion? d) advance equality of opportunity? e) help to achieve life-long learning and increase learning participation and adult education? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of and access to community facilities including libraries and local centres. • Provision of accessible and adaptable homes to meet the needs of the population.
12	Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human health • Population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) improve sustainable access for all to health, leisure and recreational facilities? b) improve and enhance Sandwell's GI network? c) improve road safety? d) consider the needs of Sandwell's growing elderly population? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel time by active travel and/or public transport to healthcare facilities and services. • Provision and accessibility of open greenspace and GI. • Accessibility to sports facilities e.g. football pitches, playing fields, tennis courts and leisure centres.
13	Economy: Develop a dynamic, diverse and knowledge-based economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population • Material assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) improve sustainable access to employment opportunities? b) encourage business start-ups in the SLP area? c) protect and enhance the vitality and viability of existing employment and retail areas? d) protect and create jobs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity and sustainable accessibility to employment opportunities. • Number of residents working within Sandwell, and rates of unemployment. • Number of new business start-ups as a result of the development. • Total amount of employment land. • Number of vacant units in strategic centres.
14	Education, skills and training: Raise educational attainment and develop and maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) improve sustainable access for all to education and training opportunities? b) encourage a diversity of education and training opportunities? c) Support the provision of an appropriately skilled workforce? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to education and training, particularly primary schools and secondary schools. • Provision of new education and training facilities and opportunities. • Accessibility of education and training facilities by public transport. • Capacity of local schools to meet demand from new development.

Habitats Regulations Assessments

Sustainability Appraisals

Strategic Environmental Assessments

Landscape Character Assessments

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments

Green Belt Reviews

Expert Witness

Ecological Impact Assessments

Habitat and Ecology Surveys



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APPENDIX D – Issues & Options Summary of Questions

1. Questions – Vision and Objectives

	Page No.
What do you think are the main issues that the new SLP should address in Sandwell?	12
<p>Please indicate which option you think should be used as the basis for preparing the SLP Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option A: The Sandwell Vision 2030 should be used as the basis of preparing the Local Plan, bearing in mind that it will be for the Local Plan to establish a sustainable strategy for the scale and location for future growth and development. Option B: Create a new vision specifically for the Local Plan and the plan period it will cover along the lines of the suggested wording included above. 	
If you think the SLP should include a new Vision (along the lines of the suggested wording above), do you think the Vision should cover any other issues?	
<p>Once you have had a look at the issues raised in this document, please let us know your thoughts on the following overall matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the topic areas and issues being covered the rights ones for Sandwell? Is there anything else we should be covering? Do you have any thoughts on the evidence base needed to support the Local Plan Review? 	13
<p>Should the Sandwell Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote higher levels of development to support economic growth; or plan for the minimum necessary to help meet the needs of our population? 	
<p>Do you think the SLP should be valid until 2041 or should it run for longer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you think the Plan should run for longer, what would be your reason for this? 	
<p>What are your thoughts on the draft objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think they are appropriate? Are there any other objectives we should be including? Do you disagree with them - if so, can you explain which ones and why? 	

2) Questions – Strategic Policies

	Page No.
<p>Do you agree with the Council's decision to incorporate some of the former BCP policies¹ into the SLP, to benefit from the work already done on them and to make it potentially easier for the four Black Country councils to address certain wider-than-local matters in a joined-up manner?</p> <p>If so: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any of the BCP policies listed in the appendix that you think the Council should definitely include? 	13

¹ Summarised in Appendix A to this document

	Page No.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any of the BCP policies in the appendix that you think the Council does not need to include? 	

3) Questions – Climate Change

	Page No.
<p>How should we address the climate crisis in the Local Plan Review – what should be our priority or priorities?</p> <p>The following are examples only and you are invited to identify as many other ways as you feel are necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reducing the need to travel through promoting accessibility or traveling by more sustainable modes of transport than the car ○ Promoting alternative and low-carbon means of travel ○ Protecting open space ○ Planting more trees ○ Promoting climate change-focussed ways of building homes and businesses ○ Requiring development to be carbon-neutral or low carbon ○ Any other priorities 	15
How else can new development reduce greenhouse gas emissions and respond to the climate crisis?	
Should the new plan leave the issue of carbon reduction in new buildings to other relevant legislation rather than making its own provision – i.e., should the plan <u>not</u> include policies on carbon reduction but instead wait for emerging Building Regulations legislation to become law?	
<p>How would you feel about building extensions and alterations to your property that were more climate-change adapted and low carbon? For example;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ choosing a design that maintained a more constant indoor temperature during extremes of both heat and cold; ○ using a heat pump instead of a normal central heating boiler; ○ only using certain building materials developed to be lower in carbon; or ○ planting trees and other vegetation to shade parts of your property that would otherwise get too hot? 	16
<p>What potential sources of renewable energy should the Council be looking at supporting in its local plan policies – examples include, but are not limited to, the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ heat pumps (ground, air, water) ○ battery farms ○ energy from waste ○ solar photovoltaic panels / solar water heating ○ energy from wind / water ○ biomass crops 	

○ other renewable sources	
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4) Questions - Heat Networks

	Page No.
Do you agree that Sandwell Council should support the development and delivery of heat networks as part of its own building proposals, to help deliver Net Zero construction?	16
Do you think the Council should require private sector and other developers to make provision for heat networks, particularly on larger sites?	

5) Questions - Resilient Landscapes

	Page No.
How should we ensure new development is able to withstand climate change and provide a comfortable living and working environment for people?	17
What should be our priorities when considering new design and landscaping to help us cope with climate change?	
Apart from not building on or near them, how should we protect the open spaces, parks, countryside and ecology of Sandwell?	

6) Questions – Sustainable Drainage

	Page No.
How should the Local Plan Review best manage flood risk whilst still achieving the growth that is needed to make Sandwell successful?	17
Do you think the SLP needs a policy to identify an acceptable rate of run-off for new developments, or is this covered in sufficient detail in the Black Country Local Standards for SuDS (BCP evidence base ²)?	18
Do you think the SLP: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ should include details of the type of SuDS that the Council would prefer to see delivered; ○ should require SuDS schemes but leave details to developers to propose; ○ should not require SuDS but allow for alternative drainage schemes to be implemented? 	

7) Questions – Future Development in Sandwell

	Page No.
What do you think are the main challenges we face in planning for housing and employment in Sandwell between now and 2041?	19

² [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, section 9](#)

What are your views on the overall amount of new housing and employment that is needed in Sandwell?	20
<p>What <u>types</u> of homes are needed in Sandwell?</p> <p>Examples may include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Detached or semi-detached family housing ○ Bungalows ○ Smaller houses such as maisonettes or terraced housing ○ Higher density development such as flats and town houses ○ Co-housing³ ○ Self- and custom-build homes 	
<p>Where do you think this new housing should be built?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On brownfield or underused land ○ On previously undeveloped or greenfield sites ○ On underused or derelict open space ○ On the sites of older or derelict / vacant buildings, including areas of older housing, flats, factories or other unused buildings? 	
<p>What sort of new development (homes, workplaces, shops, leisure facilities etc) do you think would help make Sandwell a <u>better</u> place to live by 2041?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where do you think it should be built? 	
<p>Do you think there are any sorts of new development that would make Sandwell a <u>worse</u> place to live by 2041?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What harm do you think that sort of development might do to Sandwell? 	
<p>Do you think we should be asking for higher density developments in centres and on sites near public transport hubs / links?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, do you think we should use the densities identified in the draft BCP (Policy HOU2) and set out above? ○ Should we ask for higher densities than this? ○ Should we ask for lower densities than this? 	
What do you think a sustainable urban land use and an unsustainable urban land use would be, from a transport point of view?	21
<p>Tell us about some modern developments or buildings that you know and <u>like</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you like them? 	
<p>Tell us about some modern developments or buildings that you know and <u>don't like</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why don't you like them? ○ How might they have been done better? 	
Which of the following issues are most important to you (they are not listed in any order)?	

³ Cohousing communities are intentional communities, created and run by their residents. Each household has a self-contained, private home as well as shared community space. Residents come together to manage their community, share activities, and often eat together.

<p>Please identify your preferred options in order if you can, as this will help us address what is most important to Sandwell's occupants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Building affordable housing. ii. Increasing the number of well-paid jobs in the area. iii. Creating new green spaces and nature networks iv. Protecting and improving existing green spaces and wildlife habitats. v. Attracting investment and new businesses to the area. vi. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and tackling the climate crisis. vii. Making it easier to travel by bus, tram, train, walking and cycling. viii. Providing houses of a good size, with gardens and associated open spaces. ix. Developing a well-designed and attractive built environment, with new buildings and areas that make a positive contribution to their surroundings. x. Maintaining a safe and welcoming environment that minimises the likelihood of crime / antisocial behaviour taking place. xi. Promoting pleasant, clean and lively town centres that people want to visit and use. 	
<p>Should there be a greater emphasis on: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ allocating land for mixed-use development (where housing, employment / business development, community facilities etc. sit next to each other); ○ allocating land for single end uses, such as just housing or just employment? 	
<p>Do you have any other comments to make about what development options for housing, employment or other land uses you think we should consider as we draft the Sandwell Local Plan?</p>	

8) Questions – Housing Windfall Sites

	Page No.
<p>We think that a local windfall policy is needed to ensure that any proposals for residential development on sites that are not allocated are in the right place and do not have adverse impacts on current and neighbouring uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you agree? ○ If so, what should it contain? 	22
<p>Are there any specific local considerations that we should include when we are making decisions on windfall sites?</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ should housing development be allowed on current employment land? 	

9) Questions – Sustainable Locations

	Page No.
Should most new development:	22

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ be concentrated in locations with the best levels of sustainable access to jobs, transport, services and facilities? ○ be spread out between different towns and centres, to help support new growth and investment in those locations currently without a good supply of jobs, transport, services and facilities? 	
Are there any locations in Sandwell you think we should look at in particular to find land for new development?	
What else can the SLP do to support the sustainability of local communities?	
How can the SLP help to increase the number of journeys made on foot, bicycle and public transport by people who want to access services and facilities?	23

10) Questions – Masterplanning

	Page No.
<p>What sort of development do you think would benefit from having a masterplan? e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ housing developments over a certain number of dwellings; ○ employment development over a certain area of floorspace / size of site; ○ mixed use development (housing and other uses such as employment on the same site); ○ regeneration schemes in centres? <p>Please identify what sort of schemes you think would benefit or whether you think they should all have masterplans.</p>	23
<p>Should there be a type / size of proposal that would automatically require a masterplan to be produced?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, what would that be? 	

11) Questions – Good Design

	Page No.
<p>Do you think we should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provide a local design policy / design guidance specifically for Sandwell; or ○ use the national code and guidance instead? 	24
Instead of producing a new design code for Sandwell, should we review and update the existing guidance we already have instead?	
We intend to reuse elements of the draft BCP design policies to support the local plan. Do you agree with this approach?	25
<p>Do you agree with our intention to adopt the Nationally Described Space Standards for new houses?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, can you explain why? 	
<p>Do you think we should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incorporate current supplementary planning guidance into the draft Local Plan (with review and updates as necessary); 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider including some aspects of supplementary guidance in the SLP that can be used to shape policies and proposals; ○ Retain supplementary planning guidance as separate documents under the SLP and undertake a programme of reviews and updates to them (accepting that this will also require separate examinations) at a later stage; or ○ Use another approach? 	
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12) Question - Shopfront Design

	Page No.
Do you agree with this approach?	25

13) Questions – Self- and Custom-Build Housing

	Page No.
Do you think Sandwell's new local plan should include a policy on self- and custom-build?	26
<p>If you do, how do you think the Council should deal with issues around self-build proposals on commercial housing sites?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A design policy requiring self-build homes to reflect the design elements of the site on which they are located (e.g. height, scale, mass, materials, type and design of features such as doors, windows, etc.?) ○ Requiring developers to allocate sections of commercial housing sites where people undertaking self-build can have a freer hand in the design of their house? 	
Do you think self-build should be supported in another way in Sandwell (e.g. not provided on commercial housing development sites; subject to a different policy approach)?	

14) Questions – Specific Housing Requirements

	Page No.
Do you agree that the new SLP should contain a policy on housing suitable to meet the needs of people who have special needs or who require additional support?	26
<p>What types of housing suitable to meet special needs do you think should be encouraged and delivered in Sandwell? E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ bungalows; ○ houses capable of easy adaptation for users of assistive technology such as wheelchairs; ○ houses that can be easily altered as people age or their medical or physical condition changes; ○ other types of dwellings. 	

The Council intends to incorporate the national minimum space standards for new housing as set out in the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(2): Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings ⁴ .	27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you agree with this approach? 	

15) Question – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

	Page No.
Do you agree with the proposal to adapt the draft BCP policy on the needs of travelling communities for use in Sandwell?	27

16) Questions – Houses in Multiple Occupation

	Page No.
<p>We think that the Sandwell Plan could have a policy on HMOs that seeks to define areas where HMOs would be inappropriate / discouraged, e.g. where there are already a number of existing HMOs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you agree and if so what criteria do you think should be used to evidence why they are inappropriate? If you do not think a policy would be appropriate, can you explain why you think that? Are there any alternative options we might look to use instead of or alongside a planning policy for HMOs? 	28
<p>We think that the policy could look to identify aspects of HMO provision that have the potential to adversely affect the amenities of adjoining or neighbouring properties (e.g. noise, overlooking, general disturbance, or impact on visual amenity) and provide criteria to manage those issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you agree and if so, what sort of realistic criteria should we be looking to include? 	
<p>We think that the policy could introduce percentage thresholds and clustering criteria to ensure that HMOs are not concentrated in an area above a certain level and to control their numbers across a wider area;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you agree and if so what evidence is needed to identify and justify these criteria? 	
<p>To enable us to further control changes of use to small HMOs, the Council will need to impose an Article 4 direction, which, once adopted, will make such changes of use subject to the planning application process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you agree with this approach? Do you disagree? If so, can you explain why? 	29
<p>Do you think the Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce a Sandwell-wide Article 4 Direction for HMOs (requires every proposal to develop an HMO to be subject to planning permission and will involve additional time and resources to manage)? 	

⁴ This requires houses to be designed and built to meet the requirements of people with differing needs, such as older people or people with a disability, and to be capable of being adapted for use where people's physical abilities change over time.

○ impose an Article 4 Direction only on those parts of Sandwell where there are already a large number of HMOs and where there is robust evidence of the sorts of issues mentioned previously?	
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17) Questions – Development for Health

	Page No.
What do you think are the key public health issues facing Sandwell?	30
How should we plan for our ageing population?	
Do we need to include specific development allocations such as sites for retirement facilities or assisted living?	
Where should such allocations be located?	
What should the plan contain that would help you change your travel habits to more active modes of travel (such as cycling and walking)?	

18) Question – Active Recreation

	Page No.
Should we require masterplans and new developments to refer to the Sport England Active Design Principles ⁵ ?	31
How best can we support the protection and enhancement of current sporting provision?	

19) Questions – Community Facilities and Services

	Page No.
Which community facilities and services do you think we need more of in Sandwell as a whole?	32
Setting aside health-related uses (surgeries, health centres, dentists etc.), schools and shops for a moment, are there <u>any other</u> public facilities and services you would like to see more of in Sandwell?	
Is there a shortage of community facilities and services in your area? ○ Which ones are lacking, in your view? (If you can give us an idea of what part of Sandwell you are referring to, that would be helpful)	
If you think your area needs more community facilities and services, how and where would you want to see these uses provided? ○ We would be especially interested in locations where services can be easily accessed without people having to use a car.	
Where new community facilities are proposed, such as churches, mosques, community centres and other uses generating additional footfall / car journeys, should the SLP require those uses to be sited in town centres in most cases?	

⁵ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/active-design-guide>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you disagree with this, can you explain why? 	
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20) Questions – Green and Blue Infrastructure

	Page No.
<p>Should the SLP take a more positive approach to ensuring green and blue infrastructure and their benefits are maximised in new development?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Should new green / blue infrastructure always be required on sites? ○ Should it be required even if it would mean losing the opportunity to provide more housing or employment development? 	33
If so, do you have any suggestions how this might be done?	

21) Questions – Open Space

	Page No.
How should new developments support the provision of high quality open space?	34
<p>Do you think development proposals, especially big housing schemes, should always include dedicated open space for recreation and leisure on site?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, can you explain why? 	
<p>Do you think a combined approach (provision of open space on-site / new off-site provision / financial contributions for improvements to existing open space nearby) would be more appropriate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you explain why? 	
<p>What scale of housing site do you think should be required to contribute towards providing open space? For example, should we be asking for new open space on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ sites above ten houses in size ○ sites above 20 houses in size ○ sites above 40 houses in size? 	
<p>Would you rather:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ see improvements to existing areas of open space in your area, or ○ see new open spaces be created when development happens nearby? <p>Can you explain a bit more about why you think this?</p>	
<p>What amount of open space should be provided? For example, should new open space be provided covering: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10% ○ 15% ○ 20% ○ another percentage (please say how much) <p>of the area of a housing site?</p>	

Should the amount of open space instead be calculated based on the number of bedrooms per property being provided?	35
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, developments delivering larger accommodation (properties with three, four or more bedrooms) should provide more open space than those for one or two bedroomed properties. 	
Should open space requirement be relaxed for types of housing that are less likely to generate high levels of active demand, such as accommodation for older people?	
If large areas of open space are required, this might affect how many houses can be built on a site and / or the viability of development on the site – what is your view on that?	
Should we: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider releasing existing open space sites for development that are demonstrated to be of poor quality and low value and that have no significant environmental benefits? consider releasing existing open space sites for development that are demonstrated to be of poor quality and low value and that have no significant environmental benefits but only where replacement open space of a higher quality / quantity can be provided nearby? protect all current open space notwithstanding its condition or accessibility (on the basis that it has value in its own right and could be improved in future)? 	
What type of open space should be provided? For example, informal open space such as fields for walking, dog walking etc., playgrounds / play areas for children, formal parks, allotments etc.?	
Would you like to see more allotments / opportunities for growing food in your community provided as part of housing developments or in the wider area?	

22) Questions – Hot Food Takeaways and Gambling Establishments

	Page No.
Do you think the Council should look more closely at where businesses such as hot food takeaways and gambling establishments are located?	36
Do you have a view on where they should be allowed in relation to sensitive uses such as schools, etc.?	
Do you think that the SLP should try to control / regulate hot food takeaways or not (bearing in mind that there is no legislation that allows councils to refuse planning permission for these uses solely on the basis that people find them undesirable)?	
<p>This could be addressed by having a policy that looked at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clustering (only granting permission for a given number / percentage of similar uses within a certain radius, limiting the maximum number of consecutive takeaway food outlets, or capping the proportion of all retail space occupied by this use in an area) Location (refusing consent for new proposals within a given distance of a sensitive use e.g. schools, parks, leisure facilities including sport centres and youth clubs) The implementation of community infrastructure levies with funds allocated to obesity prevention initiatives; Mandatory sign-up to a healthy catering commitment scheme and requirements for submission of health impact assessments alongside planning applications. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impacts on the amenity of residential and other sensitive uses e.g. by creating excessive noise, litter, odours, traffic problems 	
<p>Do you think that the SLP should try to control / regulate betting shops, adult gaming centres, amusement arcades, pawnbrokers, pay day loan shops and shisha bars (bearing in mind that there is no legislation that allows councils to refuse planning permission for these uses solely on the basis that some people find them undesirable)?</p> <p>This could be addressed by having a policy that looked at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clustering (as for hot food takeaways); ○ Location relative to sensitive uses (as for hot food takeaways); ○ Providing an active frontage creating a positive visual impact on the street scene; ○ Impacts on local community and residential amenity. 	36 / 37

23) Questions – Retailing in Town Centres

	Page No.
What are the main issues you think our town centres and high streets are facing?	39
What can the SLP do to help them adapt to changing shopping trends – for example, by managing or promoting certain sorts of development within them?	
Do you think more people should be encouraged to live in centres?	
How can we identify sites in our town centres for future shopping, leisure and commercial / employment needs?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you know of any suitable sites or premises in your local area that you think could be developed to provide modern town centre uses? 	
Should Sandwell maintain a policy for controlling the balance of retail and non-retail uses in main town centre core frontages?	

24) Question – Gateway Sites

	Page No.
Do we need to retain a policy referring to gateway sites?	39
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, do we need to revise or update it in accordance with other potential policy areas of the SLP, such as those dealing with climate change mitigation or opportunities for increasing biodiversity and ecological value? 	

25) Questions – Town Centres

	Page No.
Looking at the town centre boundary plans (Appendix B to this document), especially for the centre(s) you know best, do you think their current boundary:	40
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is about right (all the main areas of the centre are included and there is no need to expand or reduce it) 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is too big (i.e. the centre in reality is more tightly focussed around certain roads or areas and / or the current boundary covers places that aren't really in the town centre) ○ Should be expanded (the town centre as you know and use it covers a wider area than shown and additional streets or locations could be included)? 	
<p>Are there any additional centres that you think should be "upgraded" to a similar status as the major centres identified above, because of their degree of activity or size?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, which ones and why? 	
<p>Thinking about the centre(s) you know best (maybe because you live in them or close by, or work in them), what do you think their good points are – for example, they have a safe and pleasant environment, a good range of shops and services, are attractive or contain historic buildings etc.?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please indicate which centres you are referring to ○ What aspects would you want to see kept and made even more of, if possible? 	
<p>Thinking about the centre(s) you know best (maybe because you live in them or close by, or work in them), what do you think their bad points are – for example, they have too many empty shops, they are poorly laid out, they are not easy to get to, there isn't suitable car parking etc?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please indicate which centres you are referring to ○ What would you like to see done to improve them? 	41
<p>Do you think areas of denser residential development (e.g. flats above shops and office building conversions) in town centres should be located close to rail / metro links / public transport opportunities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Should the boundary of a town centre be altered to enable such changes to take place? 	

26) Questions – West Bromwich

	Page No.
<p>Thinking about West Bromwich Town Centre, do you think the issues listed above are the right ones for the Council to consider in the SLP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any additional issues in West Bromwich you think should be included for consideration? 	43
<p>Of the issues for West Bromwich listed above, which ones do you think the SLP should deal with first or more urgently? Please identify a "top three" if you can.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you think the issues you have identified are the most urgent ones? 	

27) Questions – West Bromwich Future Uses

	Page No.
<p>What would you like to see vacant shops used for in West Bromwich? Please let us know what your preferred uses are in order, if you can.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retail (retain as shop units) ○ Houses / residential accommodation 	43

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Other employment uses e.g. offices, businesses, live / work units etc. ○ Public facilities / services e.g. educational uses, healthcare facilities, community hubs / meeting places etc. ○ Leisure uses e.g. gyms, fitness and wellbeing studios, amusement arcades etc. ○ Cafes / restaurants / entertainment venues ○ Other uses (please let us know what these uses are, in your view) 	
What other sorts of development or activity do you think West Bromwich lacks?	
If you don't visit West Bromwich often, or as often as you might previously have done, what would encourage / attract you to start going there again?	

28) Questions – Employment Land Need

	Page No.
How do you think the shortfall in the supply of employment land should be addressed?	45

29) Questions – Sandwell's Economy

	Page No.
Do you think that a local Economic Development Strategy policy is still required for Sandwell?	45
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you do, what do you think it should cover? 	
Are there any sorts of new / emerging industries that we should be trying to attract into Sandwell?	

30) Question – Regeneration

	Page No.
Do you think that the SLP needs a specific policy in relation to the regeneration of parts of Sandwell?	46
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, what should the policy contain? ○ Do you know of any areas in particular that should be included? 	
Thinking about areas that need to be improved, what do you think would make Sandwell a more attractive prospect for potential homeowners, inward investment and new business occupiers?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved infrastructure (e.g. roads, drainage, accessibility to public transport)? ○ Areas of mixed use (i.e. where housing and employment uses are situated next to or near each other, for example in town centres or industrial areas)? ○ The inclusion of more open space and landscaping (e.g. pocket parks, tree planting, open space and informal sitting areas)? ○ Anything else? 	

31) Question – Demand for employment sites

	Page No.
Do you think we should focus on supporting the growth of existing smaller businesses and companies on sub-divided former industrial sites?	46
There is evidence of demand for large sites for new inward investment in Sandwell from big companies, but the sites available for new business tends to be smaller ones and very few large vacant sites are available.	
<p>Do you have any ideas or suggestions on how we might address this issue? Options might include (but not be limited to): -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concentrating on attracting smaller businesses into Sandwell until larger sites become available through natural churn (where businesses move into / out of an area as they grow or change); ○ Identifying existing larger areas of current employment activity and explore opportunities for improving their attractiveness to the market (e.g. through renewing and improving infrastructure such as parking and access, supporting the improvement of existing buildings and premises, introducing new or additional landscaping); ○ Identifying opportunities as a Council to actively create sites for large companies or industrial occupiers (e.g. through the council using compulsory purchase powers / buying sites on the open market, or using land they own), even if that means displacing / relocating smaller companies to do so; ○ Any other suggestion? 	

32) Questions – Non-conforming Employment Uses

	Page No.
Do you agree that these non-conforming employment uses should be addressed in the SLP?	47
If so, do you think the SLP should contain a policy addressing what ancillary uses might be appropriate and in what locations (e.g. where there are no suitable facilities within a short walk or where the ancillary use is not one that needs to be in a town centre)?	

33) Questions – Alternative Uses in Industrial Areas

	Page No.
Do you agree that local employment estates / land / sites should be retained exclusively for local and small-scale employment uses?	48
Are there any circumstances where you feel non-employment uses would be appropriate in such areas?	
<p>If so, what sort of uses do you think would be appropriate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Housing? ○ Non-industrial employment uses (e.g. gyms, vets, children's play spaces, dog day-care)? ○ Community spaces? ○ Banqueting suites and venues? ○ Any other use? <p>Please identify which ones you think would be acceptable and why.</p>	

Where else do you think larger community and commercial activities like the examples given above should be located? The preference is for town centre locations in the first instance, as the most sustainable locations, but depending on circumstances this may not be achievable:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In vacant units on business parks or industrial estates (this would mean the loss of those units to potential occupiers with larger workforces / more job opportunities) ○ In large buildings elsewhere in Sandwell (potential for noise, fumes, disturbance etc. may be greater) ○ On new development sites in purpose-built premises (costs may be prohibitive for operators) 	
How do we ensure that <u>if</u> such uses are allowed in employment locations, they do not proliferate / draw trade and activity away from town centres?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sequential test (e.g. clear demonstration that no suitable site can be found within an existing centre or be more sustainably located)? ○ Proliferation considerations (e.g. no more than X number of similar venues within a set radius)? ○ Both? ○ Any other criteria? 	

34) Question – Training and Recruitment

	Page No.
We intend to update the existing SAD policy on training and recruitment. Do you agree?	49

35) Questions – Industrial Legacy

	Page No.
Are you aware of any additional policy areas relating to Sandwell's industrial legacy that in your view should be addressed in a new land use policy?	50
If so, what are the main areas of concern for you, and if you can, how would you advise that the council should tackle them?	

36) Question – Strategic Waste Management

	Page No.
Do you think that a Strategic Waste policy is still required for Sandwell, to help identify suitable locations for new waste sites?	51
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you do, what do you think it should cover? 	

37) Question – Protection and Location of Waste Facilities

	Page No.
Do you agree that the SLP should contain a policy protecting Waste Sites from non-conforming development such as residential development?	51

Should employment areas be identified as suitable locations for the location of new waste facilities?	52
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38) Question – General Infrastructure

	Page No.
Are you aware of any other forms of infrastructure that you think may be required?	53

39) Question – Transport Infrastructure

	Page No.
Are you aware of any locations where you think new or improved transport infrastructure may be required?	53
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This may include public transport, cycle facilities, pedestrian upgrades or highway alterations. 	

40) Question – Greener Travel Networks

	Page No.
Given the constraints imposed by Sandwell's current highway network, how do you think we should address the need to reduce congestion and encourage a change in travel behaviour towards sustainable and active modes of travel by: -	54
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ prioritising public transport, ensuring sites have access to reliable public transport infrastructure which may require road space reallocation; or ○ prioritising active travel (cycling and walking), ensuring sites have access to high quality and safe pedestrian and cycle links and infrastructure which may require road space reallocation; or ○ a combination of the above; or ○ investigating opportunities for reallocating road space for all forms of sustainable transport where reasonable on a location by location basis with minimum impact to the current operation of the highway? 	

41) Question – safe access and addressing transport impacts

	Page No.
Do you think we should explore the concept of 15-minute neighbourhoods in the SLP?	55
Should new developments focus on new innovative infrastructure and emerging technologies such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure, use of low emission vehicle technology and provision for cycles, micro-mobility and motorcycles as part of smart mobility and mobility as a service solution (such as Mobility Hubs for example) in supporting modal choice?	

42) Question – Communications and Digital Infrastructure

	Page No.
Do you agree with this approach?	55

43) Question – Telephone Kiosks

	Page No.
Do you agree with this approach?	55

44) Question – Broadband

	Page No.
Do you agree with this approach?	55

45) Question – Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

	Page No.
Do you agree with this approach?	56

46) Questions – Biodiversity Net Gain

	Page No.
Do you think the SLP should contain a policy on retaining offsite biodiversity net gain in Sandwell?	57
<p>If so, how do you think the Council should achieve this?</p> <p>Please identify which of the following options you prefer; you can pick as many as you like or suggest something different.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify privately-owned sites as receptors for BNG credits and allocate them in the SLP? ii. Identify Council-owned sites as receptors for BNG credits and allocate them in the SLP? iii. Support wider landscape-scale schemes such as the Natural England Purple Horizons project (restoring and connecting fragmented heathlands to create a mosaic of heathlands, wetlands, woodlands and grasslands between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park) that are nearby but not necessarily in Sandwell itself? iv. A combination of private and public approaches? v. Something else (please specify)? 	57 / 58
<p>Are you the owner of any sites or land within Sandwell that you think may be suitable for allocation as a potential receptor site for biodiversity net gain (bearing in mind it would then be protected from further development or change for at least 30 years, through a covenant agreement)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, would you be willing to have your site allocated for this purpose in the SLP⁶ (assuming it was considered suitable after an ecological assessment)? 	58
Do you think we should explore a requirement for additional biodiversity net gain credits (e.g. more than 10% minimum) should developers be proposing to purchase them for schemes outside Sandwell?	

⁶ Please refer to the current SLP Call for Sites consultation if you wish to advise us in more detail of any potentially suitable sites you own or are aware of.

47) Question – Green spaces

	Page No.
Do you agree with this proposal?	59

48) Questions - The Rowley Hills

	Page No.
<p>The Rowley Hills have been protected to date from development that might have affected its visual, historic and ecological amenity. They are subject to a variety of policies / allocations that have prevented most inappropriate development from taking place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you think the current level of protection is sufficient to continue safeguarding the distinctive character, environment and visual amenity of the Hills? ○ Do you think the level of protection needs to be increased? ○ Do you think there is scope for any residential or economic development in the area, assuming it did not have an impact on the Hills' ecology, historic character, geological importance⁷ or skyline? ○ If so, what sort / level of development would be appropriate in your view and why? 	60
<p>Do you think the Rowley Hills should be allocated as Local Green Space in the SLP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you explain why you think it should be? ○ If you disagree, can you explain why you think it doesn't need this designation? 	
<p>Do you think the Rowley Hills should be designated as green belt?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you explain why you think it should be? ○ If you disagree, can you explain why you think it doesn't need this designation? 	

49) Questions – Heritage Assets

	Page No.
Do we need to prepare a policy to support the adoption of a Sandwell Local List of buildings of historic / architectural merit?	62
Do we need to prepare a new policy to address the safeguarding of heritage assets when mitigating against and adapting to the climate change emergency?	
Do we need to consider the introduction of special controls that prevent the demolition of non-designated, locally important heritage assets ⁸ ?	

50) Questions - Conservation Areas

Page No.

⁷ As identified on the Black Country Geopark website (<https://blackcountrygeopark.dudley.gov.uk/sites-to-see/the-rowley-hills/>) and where appropriate by specialist reports

⁸ An Article 4 direction – this can be used to withdraw permitted development rights where it is considered necessary to safeguard the special interest of local heritage assets.

<p>Some of the conservation areas in Sandwell are in centres where there is or has been a lot of pressure for development and growth. As a result, any previous appraisals (undertaken when they were first designated) are likely to be out of date.</p> <p>Other conservation areas are unlikely to have changed much since they were first adopted.</p> <p>Do you think the Council should: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ undertake a review of all conservation areas whether they have been subject to any development pressure or not; ○ undertake comprehensive appraisals of those conservation areas where there has been a significant amount of development or other physical changes (such as new infrastructure or changes to road layouts, etc.), to ensure the appraisals remain relevant and up to date for use in making decisions on planning applications; ○ leave the current conservation area appraisals as they are and accept that the contribution the appraisals can make to the determination of planning applications and appeals will be limited? 	64
<p>Do you think the Council should also be exploring: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ whether there are any new conservation areas that could be designated; or ○ whether any current conservation areas no longer carry sufficient interest and importance to be retained as a conservation area? ○ Do you know of any areas of historic interest in your local area that you think could be made into a conservation area? 	

51) Question – Archaeology

	Page No.
Do you agree with the proposal to update the existing SAD policy on archaeology?	64

52) Questions – Black Country Geopark

	Page No.
Do you agree with the proposal to include a policy on the Black Country Global Geopark?	65
Are you aware of any features of geological interest in your area that you want to bring to our attention?	

Report to Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

9 February 2023

Subject:	Friar Park Urban Village
Director:	Director Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern
Contact Officer:	Tammy Stokes – Service Manager, Spatial Planning and Growth. Tammy_Stokes@sandwell.gov.uk



1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the attached report, in particular, the outcomes of the public consultation and the amendments made to the Friar Park Masterplan in response.




2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 To ensure adequate scrutiny has been given the outcomes of the public consultation and the amendments made to the draft masterplan.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people The masterplan includes an area for a possible expansion to the Millennium Centre. This would help support additional services to support children and young people in Friar Park.
	People live well and age well The masterplan proposes a net increase in publicly accessible open space providing areas for people to walk and spend time outside.



	<p>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods</p> <p>The masterplan sets out the approach to delivering high-quality homes that integrate in to the existing Friar Park area.</p>
	<p>A strong and inclusive economy</p> <p>The regeneration of the site will bring a vacant and underused site back in to active economic use.</p>
	<p>A connected and accessible Sandwell</p> <p>The masterplan sets out how the site connects to existing services such a rail and bus provision and how sustainable travel solutions could be incorporated in to the site.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Background

- 4.2 The Friar Park site (Friar Park Urban Village project) is approximately 26 hectares in size, in the north of Sandwell, close to its border with Walsall. It is in dual ownership with the Council owning approximately 14 hectares and the other 12 hectares (approximately) owned by WMCA.
- 4.3 The site is allocated for residential use in planning policy (Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document). The site is also largely designated as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC).
- 4.4 SLINCS are designations applied to sites that are considered locally important in relation to their ecological or geological value. These sites do not meet the criteria to be considered Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) but are still important in the locality. Unlike, SINC, SLINCS have no statutory protection other than that provided in planning policy. Development of a SLINC is permissible subject to the strategic benefits of the scheme (such as the strategic need for housing) outweighing the loss of the SLINC and subject to appropriate mitigation measures being provided. It is proposed to work with the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust (BBCWT) to determine the appropriate mitigation and the BBCWT were consulted on the draft Friar Park masterplan.
- 4.5 The Friar Park site is currently the largest residential development opportunity in the borough and the indicative masterplan suggest that



c.630 homes could be achieved on the site as well as significant areas of landscaping and open space. A number of technical reports have been commissioned to inform the masterplan and ensure the proposals within it reflect technical requirements – these include;

- Initial air quality assessment
- Phase 1 habitat survey and arboriculture assessment
- Ground condition report
- Initial noise assessment
- Baseline transport report
- Flood risk and drainage strategy
- Utility reports

4.7 The annual housing delivery target (based on local housing need) in Sandwell is c.1467 new dwellings per annum. The c.630 units on the Friar Park site would make a significant contribution to those targets although delivery would be over a number of years. A minimum of 25% of the new homes would be affordable in accordance with planning policy.

4.8 Friar Park is an area with high levels of deprivation and the Friar Park Urban Village Scheme represents a significant opportunity for SMBC to deliver high-quality, affordable and efficient homes (up to modern building regulation standards as a minimum) that would have a transformational impact on the area.

4.9 The site is highly constrained and suffers not only from the low levels of land values shared across other areas of Sandwell, but also acutely suffers from high levels of land remediation required to bring forward development. Primarily this is a result of the former uses of the site which included a Severn Trent sewage works. Costs to accommodate these works are significant.

4.10 The Masterplan Consultation

4.11 Delegated Authority to undertake community consultation on the Friar Park Masterplan was sought from the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth on 27th October 2022. A briefing note was provided to the Chair of ESTE Scrutiny Board on 25th October 2022.

4.12 The consultation methods were as follows;



- Key Stakeholder Meeting – 2nd November 2022
- 6 weeks public consultation commencing 7th November 2022 and ending 16th December 2022.
- A dedicated Friar Park web-site showcasing the masterplan and consultation with an electronic feedback form.
- 2 drop-in sessions at the Millennium Centre in Friar Park to enable residents to discuss proposals with officers – Friday 25th and Saturday 26th November 2022.

4.13 The public consultation period was advertised via Sandwell Council Facebook, letter drops to all residents in the Friar Park ward plus residents living on the nearby Navigation Lane development (on the opposite side of the Walsall Road), and by press release.

4.14 The Key Stakeholder Meeting was attended by 9 people; 3 Sandwell MBC Councillors, 3 members of the Wednesbury Action Group, 2 representatives from the Millennium Centre (Local Community Centre), plus a representative from the Friar Park Allotment Association.

4.15 The two- week community consultation resulted in 57 responses. 38 responses were via the feedback form on the website, 10 were via hard copy feedback forms, 8 were via email, and one via letter.

4.16 The number of responses is considered low given the methods used to publicise the consultation period.

4.17 **The Masterplan Consultation Outcomes**

4.18 The draft consultation outcome report is appended at Appendix A. It shows the results of the consultation on a question by question basis. It also reproduces all comments captured on forms submitted by the local community – however where these comments could identify the individual submitting them Officers has redacted this information.

4.19 The consultation showed that 50% of respondents (24 people) agreed with the draft masterplan, with a further 25% (12 people) not sure, and 25% (12 people) not supportive.

4.20 63% of respondents supported or strongly supported the landscape proposals in the masterplan with a further 16% opposed or strongly



opposed – the remainder of respondents were either neutral (10%) or didn't respond to that question (4%).

- 4.21 In response to the question, how supportive are you of the approach to the location of houses and character areas, 46% of respondents supported or strongly supported the proposals, with 31% either opposed or strongly opposed. A further 19% were neutral and 4% did not respond.
- 4.22 52% of respondents agreed with the masterplans approach to pedestrian and cycle access, 21% disagreed, a further 23% were not sure, and 4% did not answer. 52% of people agreed with the road layout and access points, 21% disagreed, 23% were not sure, and 4% did not respond.
- 4.23 Some of the key themes that can be drawn from the comments received in the consultation and key stakeholder meeting include;
- Concerns about the development leading to more ASB in the area.
 - Concerns that the Millennium Centre is already too small to meet existing community needs.
 - Some residents wanted to see higher levels of affordable housing provision (above the minimum 25% set in the Masterplan) that was locally let whilst others felt that Friar Park has too much affordable housing provision already. Overall the balance of comments was towards providing higher levels of affordable homes.
 - Concerns that the existing school and GP provision is insufficient to meet demands and that additional residential properties would exacerbate the issue.
 - There was a mixed view on the open space with some residents asking for even more open space and less housing, and others feeling that the open space would be a magnet for anti-social behaviour and housing should be maximised. There was support from local community groups (Scouts, Millennium Centre, Allotments Association) to the open space strategy.
 - Sustainable drainage solutions (swales), enhancing biodiversity, and ensuring sustainable travel solutions in the design of the scheme was raised (cycle parking and electric car infrastructure).
 - There were also several comments about specific impacts on existing homes such as access arrangements/ privacy concerns/ need for boundary treatment to prevent ASB to existing areas.



- Some concerns were raised about noise, dust, and pollution from the sites situation close to the motorway and adjacent to the railway.
- Some concerns were raised about the impact of additional traffic on the highway network and the impact of construction traffic.
- Several comments were supportive of the scheme and felt the scheme provided an opportunity to improve the area.
- There were some comments that did not support the scheme and requests that the site is left as it is and that the scheme is too costly.

4.24 Response to concerns and the Proposed Changes to the Draft Masterplan

4.25 In terms of local facilities and the impact on schools, once planning permission has been granted for residential development, Education will build the additional housing into their projections for future school places. For a housing development of circa 630 properties, Government guidance indicates that approximately 230 school aged children may reside in the new housing. Current school population trends and projections for the forthcoming years indicate that the local area will see an overall reduction in the number of school places required from existing housing, which will provide sufficient capacity for any new families that move into the area. Therefore, it is not considered that the scheme will have an adverse impact on school provision.

4.26 In terms of GP and dentistry provision, the Black Country Integrated Care Board (BCICB), (previously Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commission Group (CCG)) has been consulted on the proposals. There are currently ten GP surgeries and five dentistry practices within two kilometres of the proposed site, the nearest being the Tame Valley Medical Centre on Friar Park Road and Crankhall Lane Dental Practice and The Village Medical Centre. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has confirmed that there is scope to expand other existing facilities in the catchment area and there is not a requirement to provide a new facility as part of the development. Additional capacity would be funded either via a commuted sum secured through s.106 planning agreement or, if the scheme is proven unviable, would be funded from the NHS directly.



- 4.27 The masterplan is in the process of being amended to address the concerns raised by residents wherever reasonably practical. It will provide the option of additional space for an extension to the Millennium Centre. Further work will be required on determining the costs of any extension and the funding mechanism for any extension.
- 4.28 The masterplan will reflect some of the specific concerns raised by residents directly impacted on by the proposed scheme. These changes will include; an additional private access to allow residents in Kent Road to continue to access their properties as they do now, reorientation of some plots where residents raised concerns over proximity and overlooking, and the removal of an additional access between the existing play area on Friar Park Road and existing residential area of Manifold Way where concerns were raised about ASB.
- 4.29 The masterplan wording is being strengthened to provide more emphasis around the need to ensure the final design of the scheme gives full consideration to ASB particularly by restricting access to the open space by dirt bikes and considering appropriate locations for CCTV.
- 4.30 The masterplan is being amended to positively encourage sustainable development, EV charging points, and sustainable travel measures. Following consultation with TfWM the masterplan has also been amended to include the potential for buses to be routed through the new development.
- 4.31 The design code within the masterplan is being strengthened ensure each character area within the masterplan is clearly defined and a high-quality design-led development can be achieved.
- 4.32 Some matters raised in the public consultation will not be addressed in the Masterplan as these require detailed discussions with the end-developer and/ or are influenced by viability considerations that are not yet fully understood at this masterplan stage. These include;
- Issues around construction traffic and mitigation.
 - The provision of more than the minimum 25% affordable housing set out in planning policy.
 - The tenure of the affordable housing.



5 Implications

Resources:	There are no financial implications from adopting/ approving the masterplan.
Legal and Governance:	None
Risk:	None
Equality:	No identified negative impacts on equality/ protected characteristics from bringing the Friar Park site forward for redevelopment.
Health and Wellbeing:	The masterplan provides a net increase in publicly accessible open space and increases opportunities for outside activity.
Social Value:	It will be a requirement of any end developer to meet the council's social value requirements and officers will work with the end developer to confirm outcomes such as employment and apprentices.
Climate Change:	The masterplan sets out the need for developers to bring forward a development which is sustainable. It also highlights the need for sustainable travel and EV charging points.

6 Appendices

Consultation outcome report

7. Background Papers

Draft Masterplan for Friar Park available via;

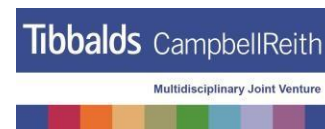
<https://www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk/phase-2-consultation/the-masterplan-proposals/>



Friar Park Urban Village

Phase 2 Consultation Report

January 2023



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1. Introduction

Phase 2 Consultation for Friar Park Urban Village was to present the draft masterplan for the site to the community and key stakeholders.

The consultation focused on updating the community on how the proposals have developed since the first stage of consultation in 2021 and how key aspirations identified through feedback have been addressed in the draft masterplan.

The consultation began on the 7th November 2022 and closed at 9am on the 19th December 2022. Feedback received during the consultation phase will to help to shape the final masterplan for Friar Park Urban Village.

2. Consultation Promotion and Launch

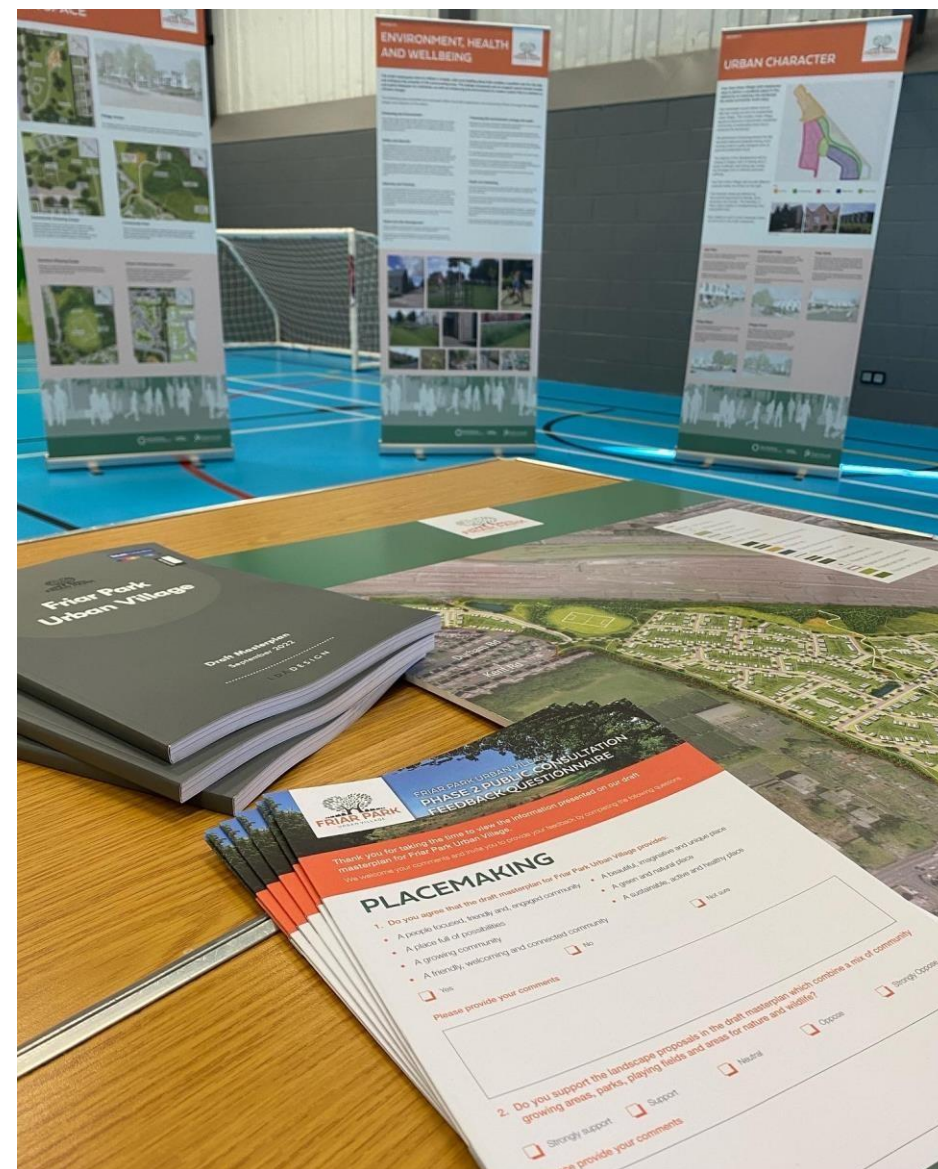
To ensure that the local community and key stakeholders were informed of the consultation period, local promotion and advertising was carried out prior to the consultation start and throughout the consultation through a variety of channels.

ACTIVITY	DATE	APPENDIX
Stakeholder Engagement Event, Wednesbury Town Hall	2 nd November	1
Email update to stakeholder database and website subscribers notifying of consultation launch	4 th November	2
Newsletter distributed to all addresses in the Friar Park ward	7 th – 9 th November	3
Website updated to include full details of proposals and feedback form	7 th November	4
Launch Emailer – to stakeholder database and website subscribers	7 th November	5
Posters – distributed to local venues	w/c	6
Sandwell Chronicle advert	18 th November	6
Express and Star press advert	21 st November	7
Express and Star digital adverts	From 17 th November	8
Birmingham Mail press advert	21 st November	9
Press Release – covered by Express and Star online	7 th November	10
Social media – Sandwell Council and West Midlands Combined Authority – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Next Door	From 7 th November	11
Public Information Day reminder emailer – to stakeholder database and website subscribers	22 nd November	12
Consultation close reminder email – to stakeholder database and website subscribers	12 th December	13

3. Consultation Materials

The consultation materials made available at Phase 2 included a project website (Appendix 3), a draft masterplan document (Appendix 13), a feedback form (Appendix 14) and information boards (Appendix 15) which were displayed at the Public Information Days.

All information presented was replicated across all channels and made available at the information days with clear details on next steps and how to respond to the consultation.



4. Public Information Days

Two Public Information Days were held at the Friar Park Millennium Centre, which neighbours the project site, to consult on the proposed development.

As well as presenting information on the proposed development of Friar Park Urban Village, the information days were an opportunity for the project team to meet with the local community, talk through the plans and listen to their views and concerns.

Attendees were invited to view the information displayed on the boards, talk to the project experts supporting at the events and newsletters and feedback forms were available to take away.

41 people attended the event across the two days, as shown in the below table.

DATE	ATTENDEES
Friday 25 th November 12 – 4pm	16
Saturday 26 th November 10am – 2pm	25

Notable attendees that attending the information days included:

- Friar Park ward Councillor Simon Hackett
- Cabinet member Councillor Peter Hughes



5. Responding to the Consultation

Key stakeholders and the local community were encouraged to provide their views on the information presented and to share local knowledge that could help inform the masterplan development.

A feedback form was provided on the website and printed copies were made available at the information events and at the Friar Park Millennium Centre throughout the duration of the consultation. The deadline for responses was 9am 19th December 2022.

Response methods were as below:

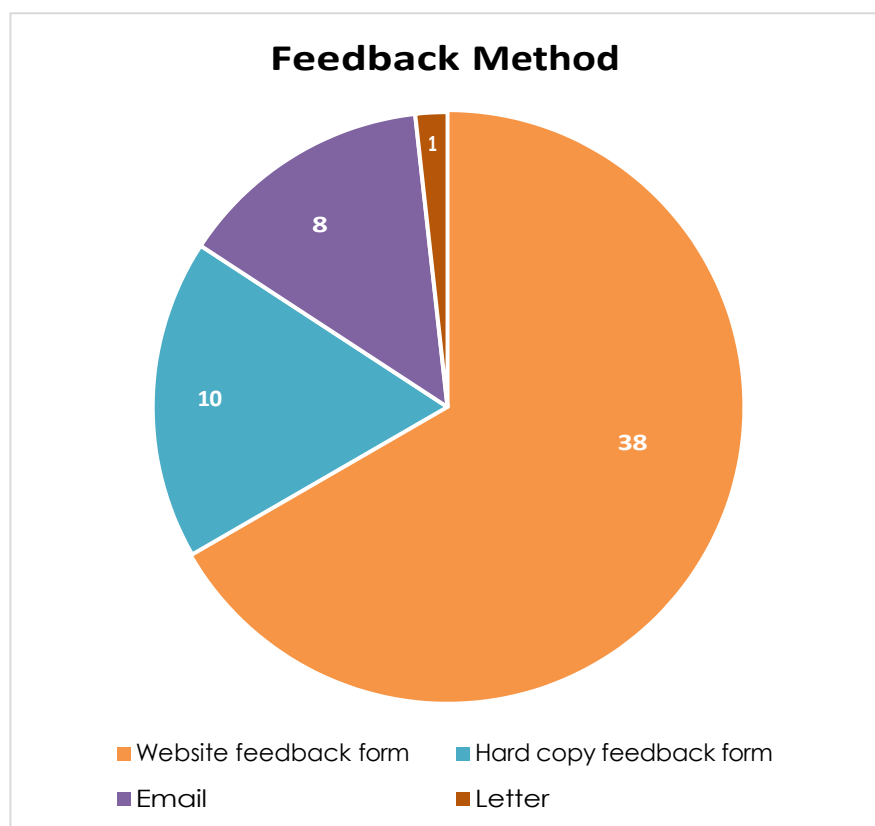
- Completing the feedback form on the website www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk
- Posting the feedback form to FREEPOST Friar Park Urban Village
- Emailing comments to hello@friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk

This information on how to respond to the consultation was provided on the website, in emails to website subscribers and the stakeholder database and within the newsletter distributed at the start of the consultation to the Friar Park ward as well as made available at the information days.

6. Feedback Summary

Throughout Phase 2 Consultation 57 responses were received from individuals and organisations. The following information provides a breakdown of the feedback received throughout the consultation period.

Please note for some of the quantitative data not all responders answered every question on the feedback form.



Respondee Type

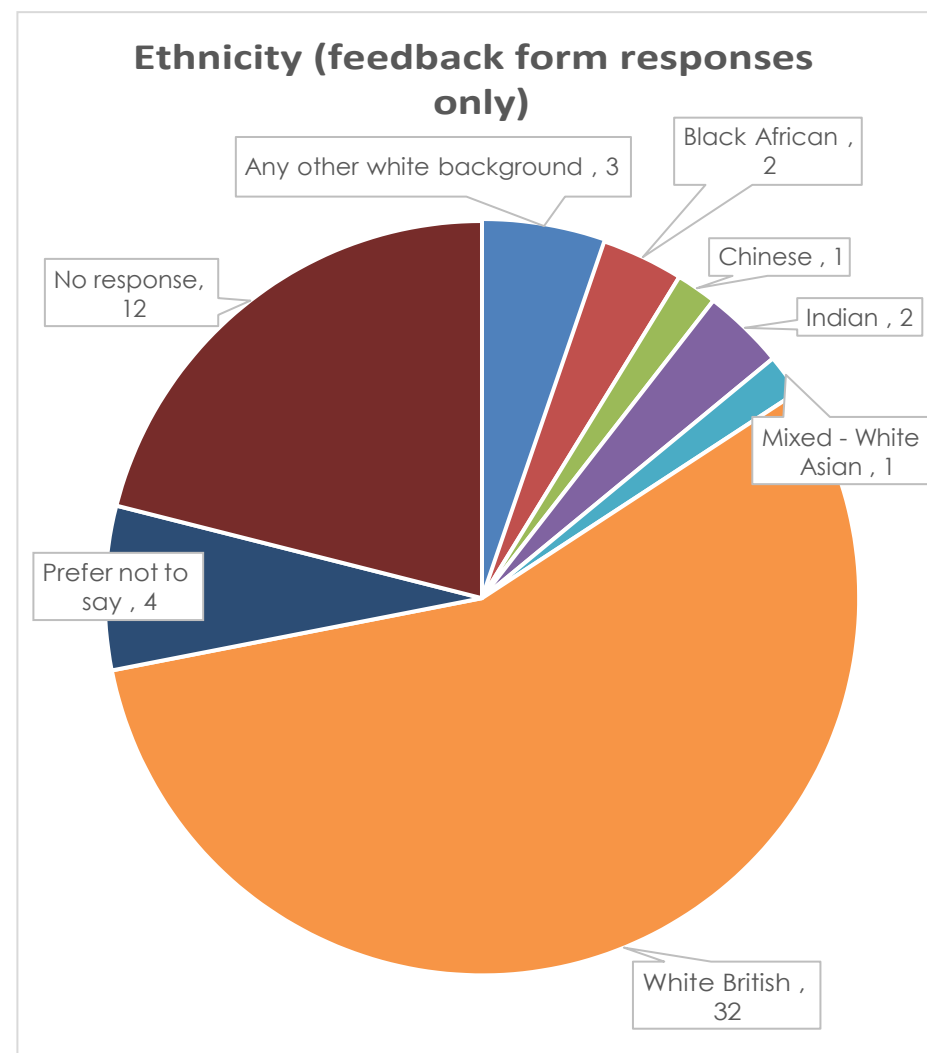
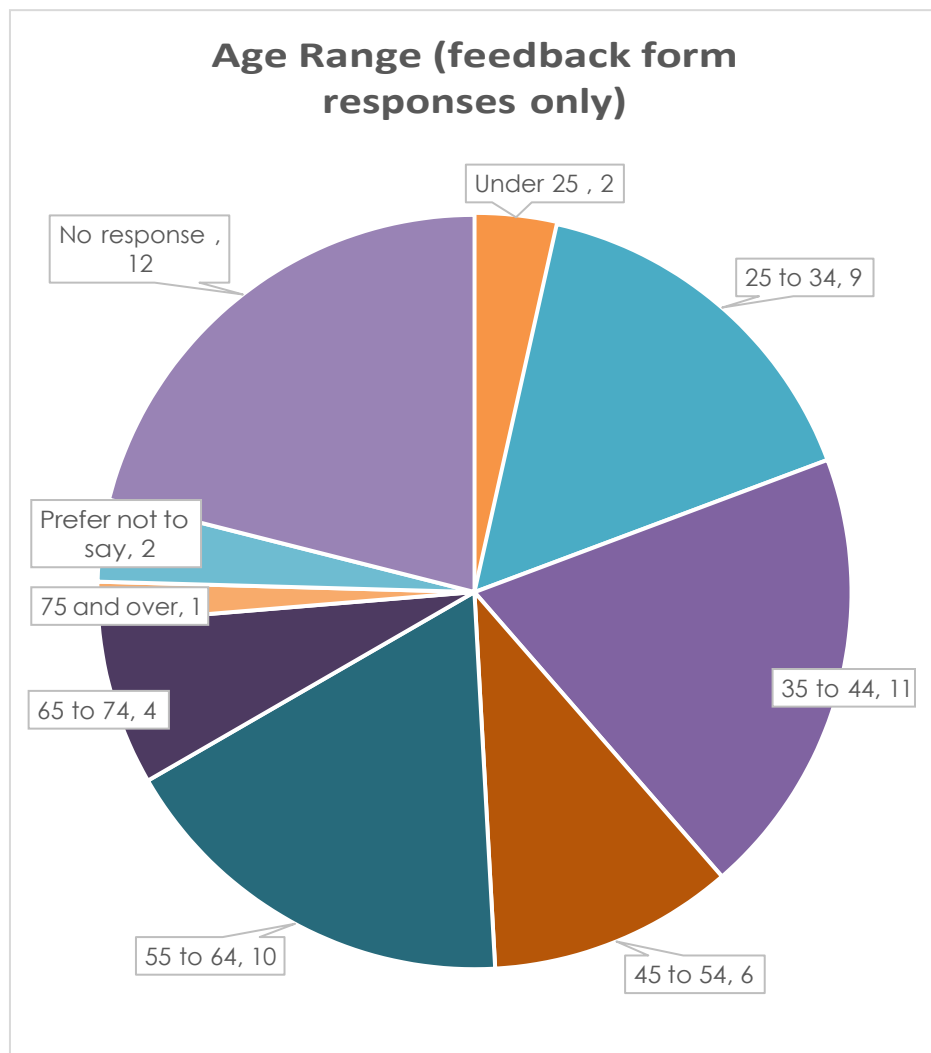
Local resident	36
Elected member	1
Work locally	1
Organisation	11
No information given	8

Elected members

- Councillor Simon Hackett

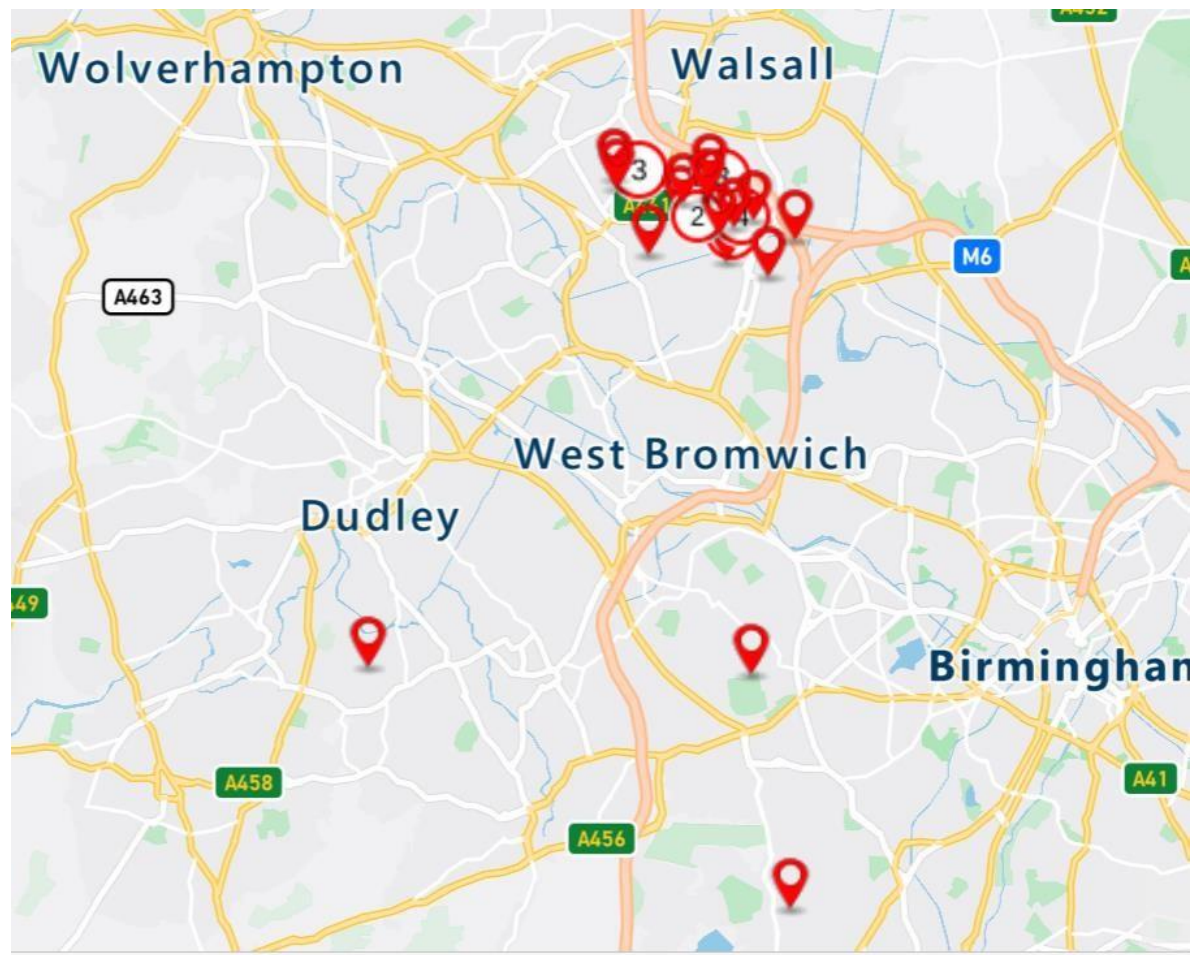
Organisation

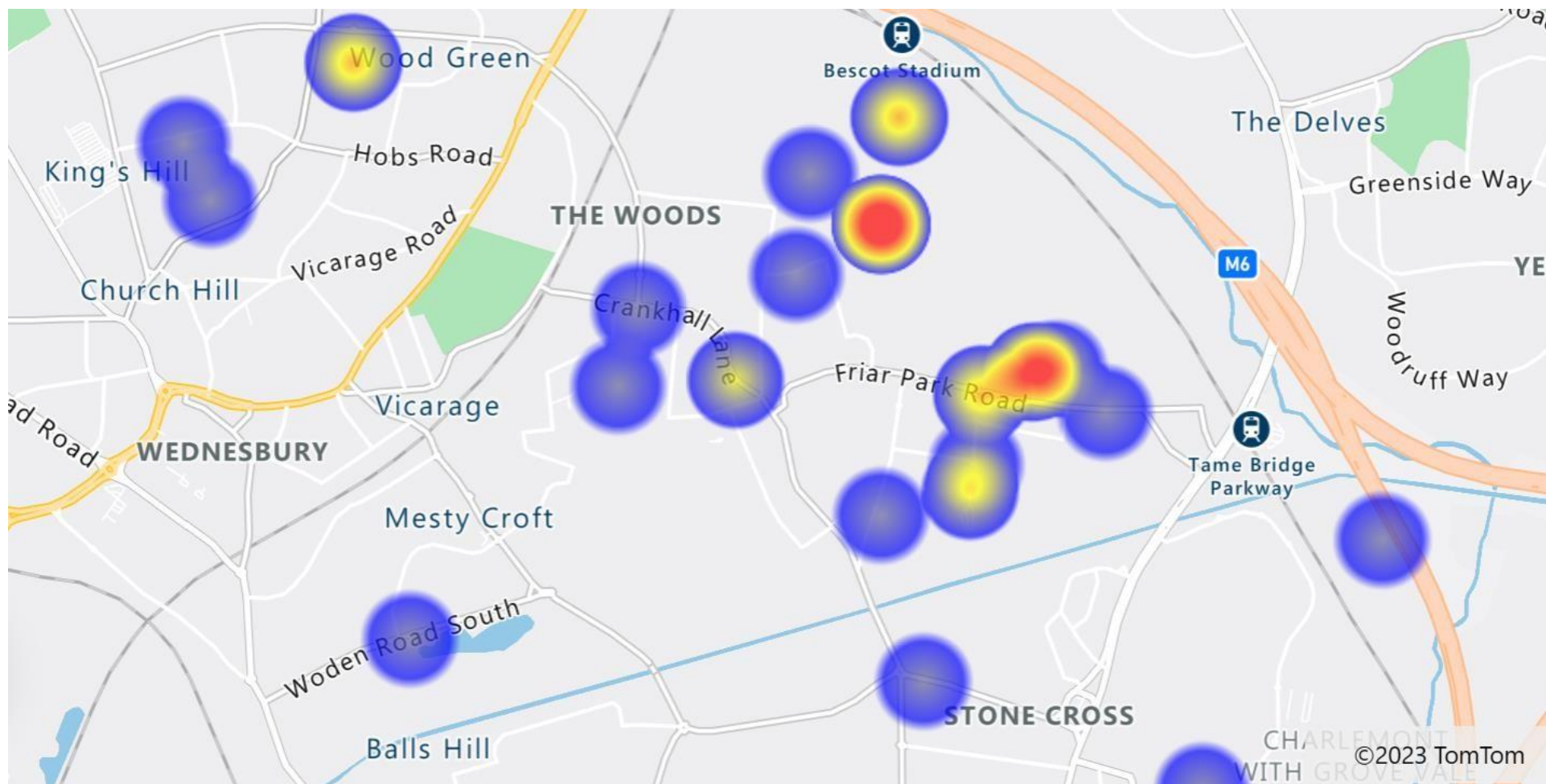
- Pre-school (name not given)
- 617 Sandwell Air Scouts
- Friar Park Millennium Centre
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Cycling UK
- Network Rail
- West Bromwich North Libraries
- Wednesbury Action Group
- SMBCs internal climate change team



Postcode Areas

No response / not given	x 14	WS10 0GA
WS10 0GD	x 4	WS10 0GB
WS10	x 3	WS10 0GF
WS10 0SN	x 3	WS10 0HW
WS10 0SP	x 3	WS10 0HX
WS10 0EB	X 2	WS10 0JR
WS10 0JF	x 2	WS10 0QF
WS10 0JS	x 2	WS10 0RQ
W10 0SF	x 2	WS10 0SD
B29		WS10 0ST
B67 5LP		WS10 0SY
B71 3BY		WS10 0TL
B71 3JT		WS10 9NF
B71 3QS		WS10 JRO
DY2 0ER		WV1 1HG
WS10 0DP		WV1 1HG



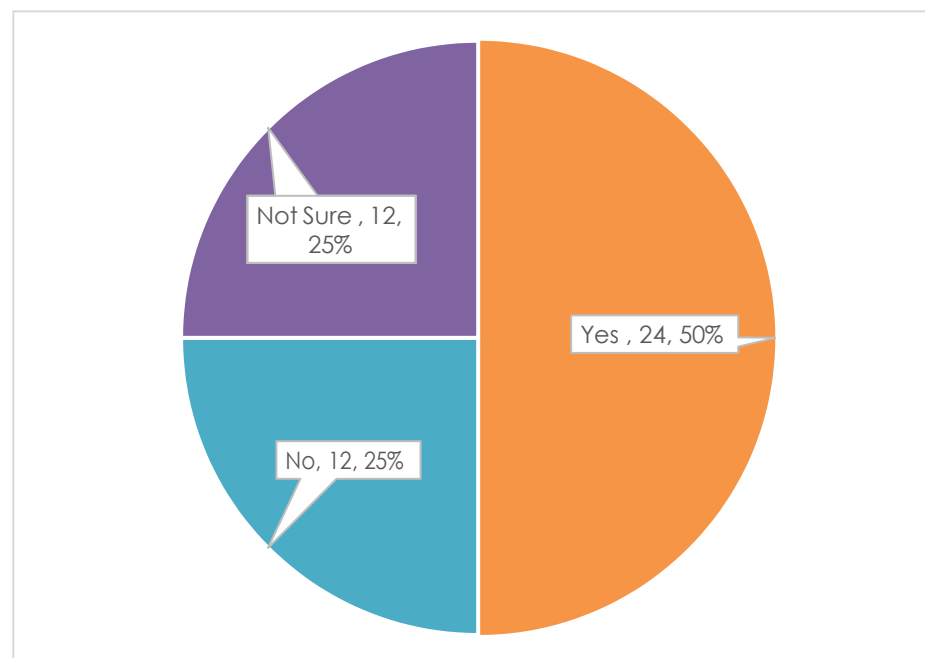


7. Feedback Form Responses

Placemaking

1. Do you agree that the draft masterplan for Friar Park Urban Village provides:

- A people focused, friendly and, engaged community
- A place full of possibilities
- A growing community
- A friendly, welcoming and connected community
- A beautiful, imaginative and unique place
- A green and natural place
- A sustainable, active and healthy place?



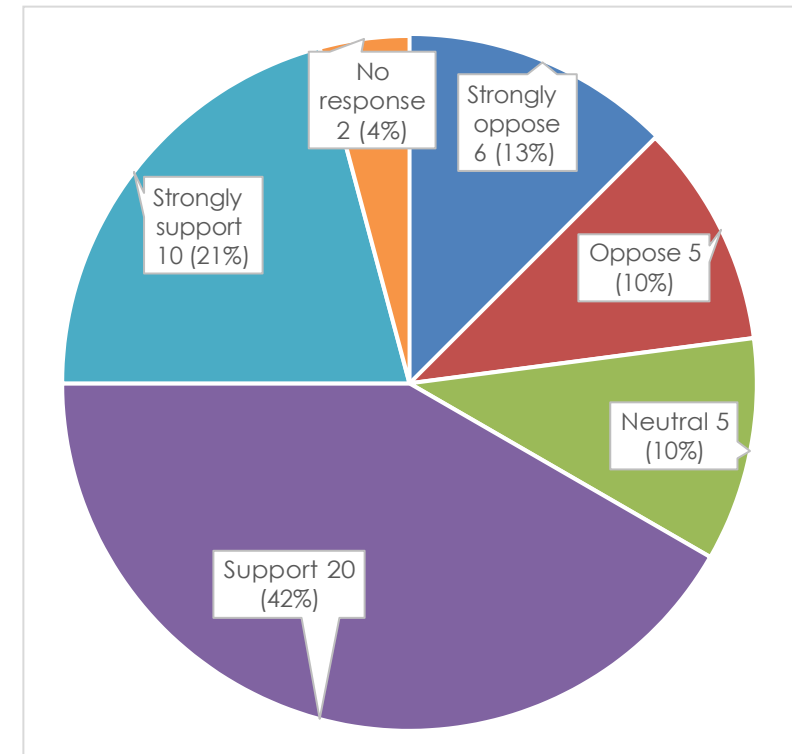
Supporting comments

- Positive comments on:
 - Overall proposals **(x6)**
 - Provision of housing **(x2)**
 - Benefits for the community **(x2)**
 - Better connectivity / travel options **(x2)**
 - Use of brown land
 - Remedying the contamination
 - Addition of more green spaces to area
 - Building houses near the Millennium Centre
 - See the opportunity and recognition that it will take a lot of work
- Concerns around:
 - School provision for extra homes **(x4)**
 - Loss of greenery, large open space area and wildlife area / pollution buffer between M6 and housing **(x3)**
 - New road next to St Peters Croft will reduce privacy where they already suffer from anti-social behaviour and fly tipping **(x3)**
 - Capacity of doctors / leisure facilities **(x3)**
 - Impact on Friar Park Millennium Centre and capacity **(x2)**
 - Too many homes and not enough green space **(x2)**
 - Loss of areas for walking
 - Removal of playing fields
 - Keep area for community and sentimental reminder of how the area used to be
 - Impact on own property (access to garage by Black Path)
 - Art installations and community growing beds provide an opportunity for antisocial behaviour
- Housing vision is dated and does not address crime, climate or changing trends
- Value of existing homes and impact to mortgages / cost of living crisis
- Housing by Sussex Avenue and Kent Road are too close
- Dated drainage systems being used (shown in images) – *“surface water drainage should be kept at surface level to help with treatment, management, education and bio diversity. The current solution proposes what looks like a “pipe to pond bomb” solution”*
- Proximity of new housing to railway (pollution and noise)
- Not enough social housing
- Do not want a new access road from Kent Road
- Requirement for a minimum of 25% affordable housing allocated through lettings plan
- Would like secure bike parking
- Enabling local residents to have first choice on buying / renting new properties
- Would like a new building for the 617 Air Scouts who use the area (Millennium Centre won't be big enough)
- Ensure any green space or play areas are separate and enough trees are planted to ensure there is no noise pollution
- Prefer for Woods estate to be cut off from new estate / Friar Park
- Build something that creates jobs
- Suggestion to replace farm with working farm and educational resource

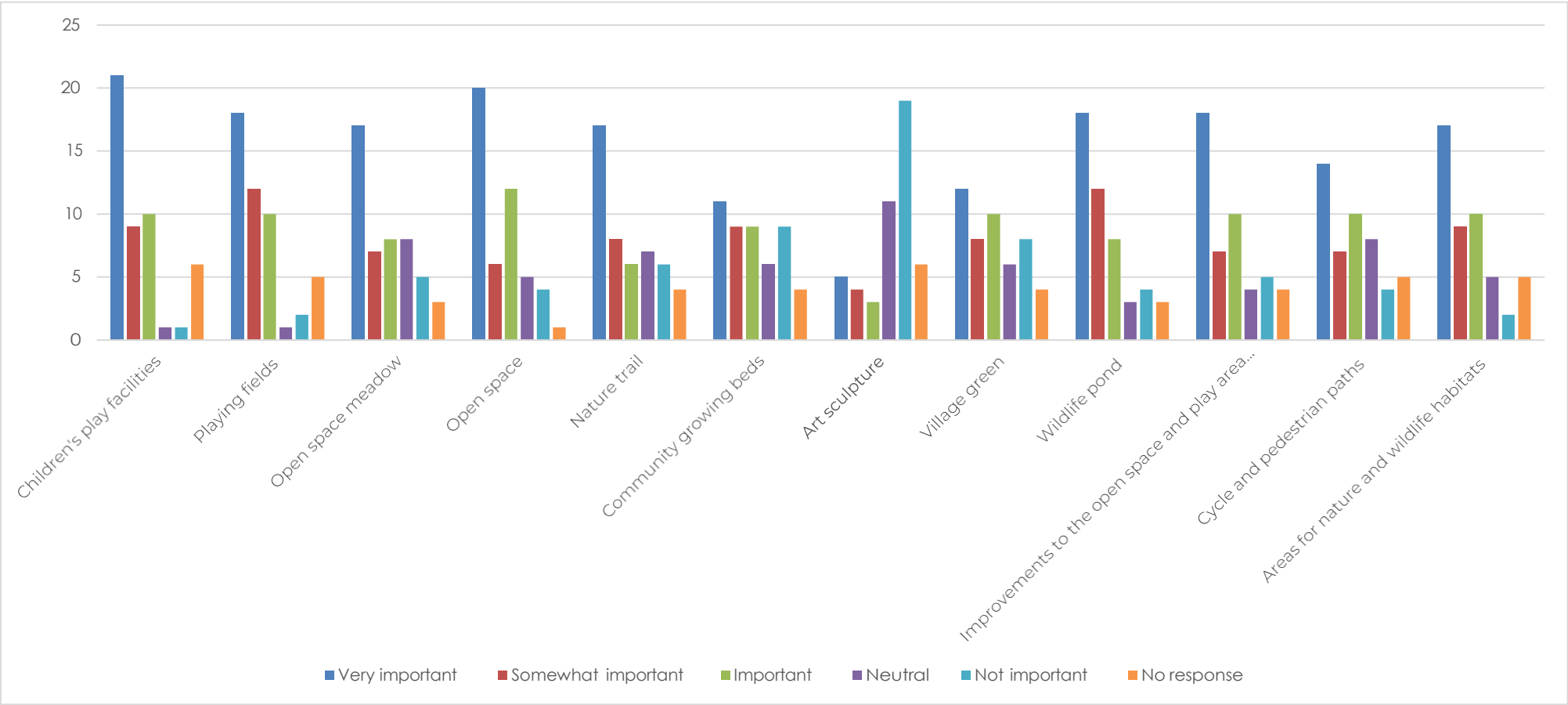
2. Do you support the landscape proposals in the draft masterplan which combine a mix of community growing areas, parks, playing fields and areas for nature and wildlife?

Supporting comments

- Positive comments on:
 - Draft masterplan proposals **(x3)**
 - Importance to provide green space / play areas / nature trails **(x2)**
 - Will increase value of area
 - Mixed use space
 - Supplies the housing required
- Concerns around:
 - Displacement of wildlife and provision of space for new wildlife habitats (hedgehog runs, bat roosts, bird boxes) and educating the local community of these **(x5)**
 - Anti-social behaviour
 - General concerns / existing issue **(x3)**
 - CCTV needed
 - Policing required
 - Specifically, around the pond suggestion of CCTV
 - Preference for homes to back onto St Peters Croft
 - Concern for women and children – well-lit streets required
 - Vandalism of any new play equipment
 - Ratio of housing to green spaces / play areas not adequate and not spread into the development enough **(x3)**
 - Friar Park Millennium Centre needs to be bigger to support new residents **(x2)**
 - Not enough schools to support the new housing
 - Considering the residents that already live there
 - Removal of too much existing open space
 - Not enough open space for dog walking
 - Removal of existing trees that provide privacy (property facing the Friar Park Road park)
 - Affordable housing being near existing properties and devaluing them
- Request for higher walled boundaries where existing properties meet new development **(x2)**
- New homes should be shielded from motorway
- Request to move road off Friar Park Road, near the park, further away to shield houses near St Peters Croft and retain greenery
- Understand that many houses are required but outline importance of green spaces too
- Request to ensure that the playground is fully upgraded to support new and existing communities
- Landscape must support mental wellbeing
- Proposals should extend the existing woodland that used to be a bluebell wood



3. The following table lists some the different proposals featured in the draft masterplan. Please indicate how important these are to you.



4. Is there anything you think we have missed from the previous proposals detailed?

- Nothing missing / well thought out (x5)
 - Local shops (x3)
 - Would prefer no change to the existing space (x2)
 - Schools (x2)
 - Connectivity
 - Improved pathway to Bescot Stadium
 - Dedicated motorcycle route with club membership to provide legal alternatives for youths
 - No new road wanted near existing housing estate
 - Consideration to increase in traffic
 - Need to consider access to the M6 – roads already back up (Woods estate and Woden Road East)
 - Friar Park Millennium Centre
 - Extension / support for Friar Park Millennium Centre
 - Ensure Millennium Centre links well to new and existing community
 - Open spaces by the Millennium Centre
 - Outdoor gym
 - Play equipment
 - Amenities for youths
 - Clubhouse
 - Secure bike parking
 - Electric car charging infrastructure
 - Manifold Way estate
- Do not want affordable housing backing onto estate
 - Request to move the park away from St Peters Croft and have segregation from the road, footpath and play area due to anti-social behaviour
 - Preference for large houses and gardens to back onto houses around St Peters Croft to remove ability for people to jump over walls into gardens
 - Request to leave north playing field, currently used daily for dog walking and children playing / football
 - Reduction in quantity of housing proposed
 - Protecting existing residents' views is important
 - Attention needs to be paid to reduce the existing and escalation in (due to new properties) anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fly-tipping
 - Community zones
 - Provision for sustainable energy
 - Car free zones
 - Bigger buffer zone (up to 50%) of trees to reduce pollution and noise from M6 and to protect wildlife
 - Doctors
 - Don't overfill with green spaces that need to be maintained
 - Existing surface water routing turned into planted swale to enhance biodiversity
 - Ping pong tables

5. What activities would you use the open spaces for? For example, dog walking, exercise etc.

- Exercise / sports / outdoor activities– general **(x14)**
- Dog walking **(x13)**
- Walking **(x10)**
- Mental wellness / relaxation **(x6)**
- Children playing **(x4)**
- Jogging **(x4)**
- Watching wildlife / enjoying nature **(x3)**
- Cycling **(x2)**
- Nature trails for children and youth clubs **(x2)**
- Playing football **(x2)**
- Community connection / activities **(x2)**
- No use **(x2)**
- Using play park
- Children / youth clubs looking after the gardens
- Exercise classes / boot camp
- Community events
- Socialising
- Educational opportunities in biodiversity, carbon capture and water management

6. To reduce anti-social behaviour and crime, the draft masterplan contains different proposals. These include ensuring all common areas are overlooked by houses, appropriate lighting, low level dense planting, and restricting vehicular access where necessary. What else could be done?

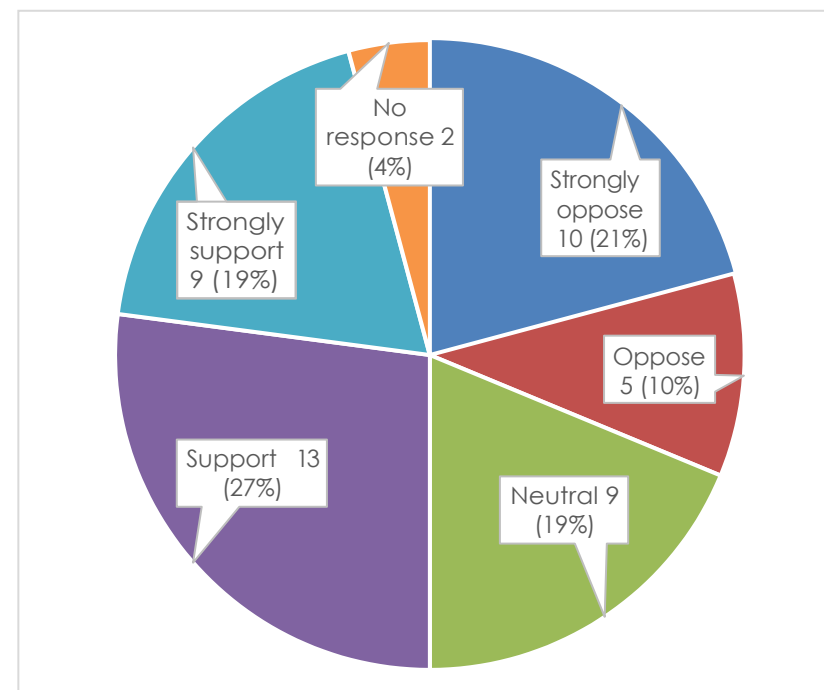
- CCTV – general (x9)
- Nothing will stop this behaviour (x4)
- Commitment from the police to support the area (x3)
- Removal of access road by the play park / St Peters Croft (x3)
- Encouragement of a Neighbourhood Watch in the area (x2)
- Ensure high boundary walls to stop people jumping over (x2)
- Restrict access and make open spaces less attractive for dirt bikes (x2)
- CCTV – recording access routes
- CCTV - in communal areas
- CCTV – in areas of low density
- Enhancing the Friar Park Millennium Centre to provide children / young people and adults somewhere to go
- Low level fencing to remove 'rabbit-runs'
- Alarms on homes
- Activities for young people to use and enjoy
- Ensuring distance and privacy maintained around existing housing
- Use of strong walls and fencing that doesn't break / damage easily
- 10mph speed zone
- Speed humps
- No things around that can be stolen
- Grow bushes/bramble and hedges next to wall perimeter rather than trees (trees can be climbed and roots can cause issues)
- Increased lighting
- More trees
- Consider separate dedicated areas for young children and older children
- Removal of places that provide opportunities for anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fly-tipping – such as the art installation and communal planting areas
- Minimise street connectivity
- Minimise mixes of tenure
- Create integrated semi-public and semi-private space

Housing

7. How supportive are you of the approach in the draft masterplan to the location of houses and character areas?

Supporting comments:

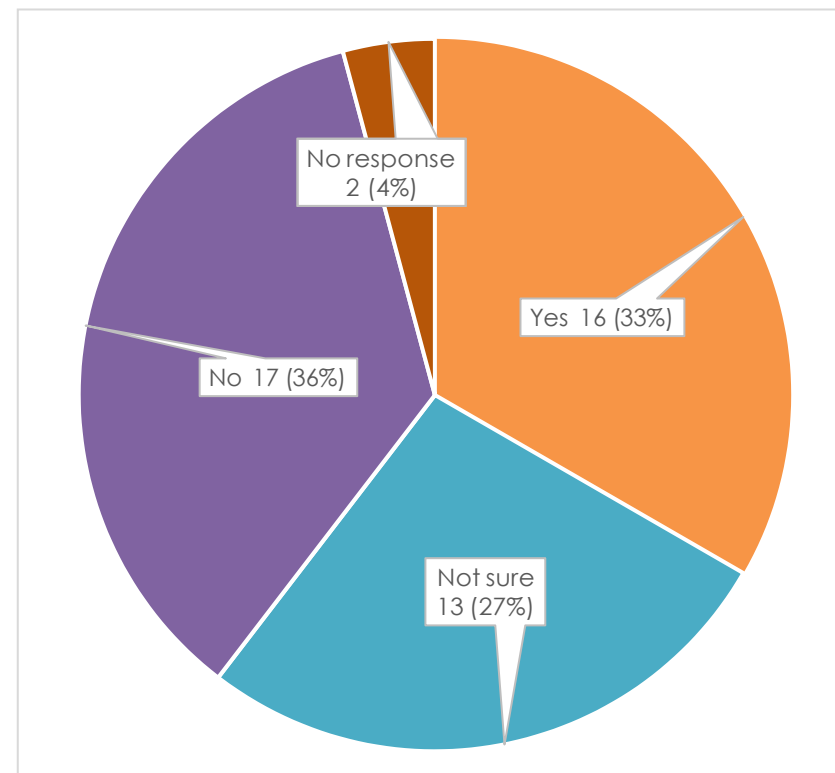
- Positive comments on:
 - General support
 - Strongly support subject to remediation
 - Supportive provided privacy, security and peacefulness is maintained
 - Agree new homes should be built but plans around Manifold Way estate need to be readdressed
 - Happy with low density housing and playing field being retained near Kent Road
- Concerns around:
 - Too many houses proposed (**x2**)
 - Not maximising on opportunity to provide better approach to housing provision and community building
 - Proximity of road / path next to housing on Manifold Way estate – reducing privacy and security and increasing car pollution
 - Too close to existing properties
 - It will provide too many opportunities for anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fly tipping
 - Removal of open views and un-overlooked properties for housing on Kent Road
 - Reduction in privacy and security generally
 - Loss of open space behind property allowing easy access and increasing opportunities for break-ins and property being overlooked
 - Decrease in property value (loss of open space behind)
- Fewer council tenants preferred
- Request for access to garage not to be affected (off of the Black Path)
- No housing wanted on green land behind Kent Road and Sussex Avenue
- House at bottom of garden is too close (Sussex Avenue)



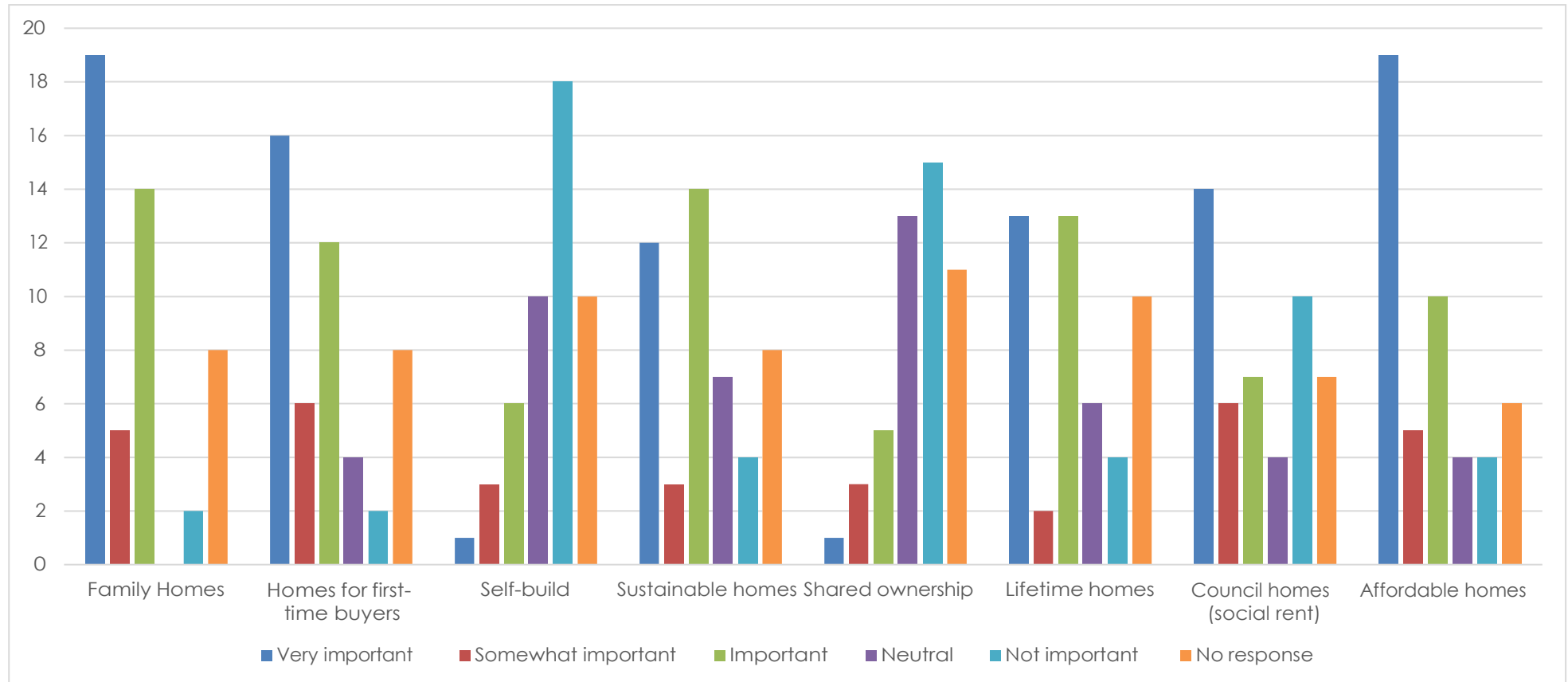
8. Do you agree with the proposed 25% affordable housing provision?

Supporting comments:

- Higher provision needed / too many on waiting lists **(x6)**
- 50% should be affordable housing **(x4)**
- At least 25% affordable housing **(x3)**
- Concern that multiple houses will be purchased for private rentals **(x2)**
- Affordable should mean affordable for this community – not allowing rich outsiders to purchase **(x2)**
- At least 25% needs to be council housing, separate to affordable to buy
- Affordable housing should match the style and character of other housing
- Friar Park currently provides affordable housing with all homes now available to buy
- Concerns around affordable housing and associations with anti-social behaviour
- Concerns that affordable housing is sometimes not well looked after and can devalue an area
- Preference for the site to be 100% council housing but not managed by private landlords and management agencies who do not vet tenants
- Need more working-class tenants to improve community, reduce crime and increase house values
- Affordable housing allows lower income earners onto property ladder
- Needs to be more social housing
- Job provision should go hand in hand with affordable housing provision
- Suggestion of reduced rent rates for 5-10 years to allow those struggling to afford a place to get somewhere at a sensible price for a short while perhaps with the option to purchase at market value after.



9. What type of homes are important to you? Please could you indicate how important each type/tenure of housing is to you?



Supporting comments:

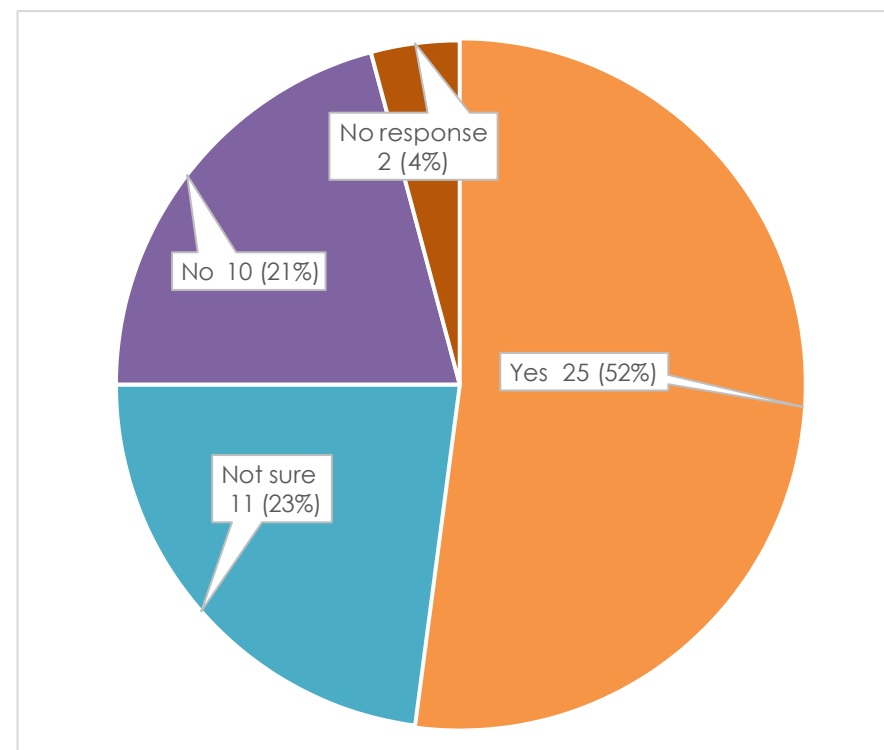
- Social rent/ affordable homes could be in floored block or apartments
- At least 25% council homes let to local community through a local lettings policy
- Council rental preferred to private landlords
- Desire to see bold design
- Would like to see bungalows, particularly on field behind Sussex Avenue to retain privacy and peace
- Preference for family homes and first-time buyers' homes, not council or affordable homes close to existing residents due to potential increase in anti-social behaviour
- High quality homes preferred by Kent Road to retain working class community
- Already experience a high crime rate due to council homes off Friar Park Road
- Proposals continue the current 'broken housing system' and don't adequately support missed tenure opportunities
- Concern around private ownership resulting in rented properties
- Preference not to have council tenants

Access and Movement

10. The draft masterplan provides pedestrian and cycle access through the neighbourhood. Do you agree with the approach taken?

Supporting comments:

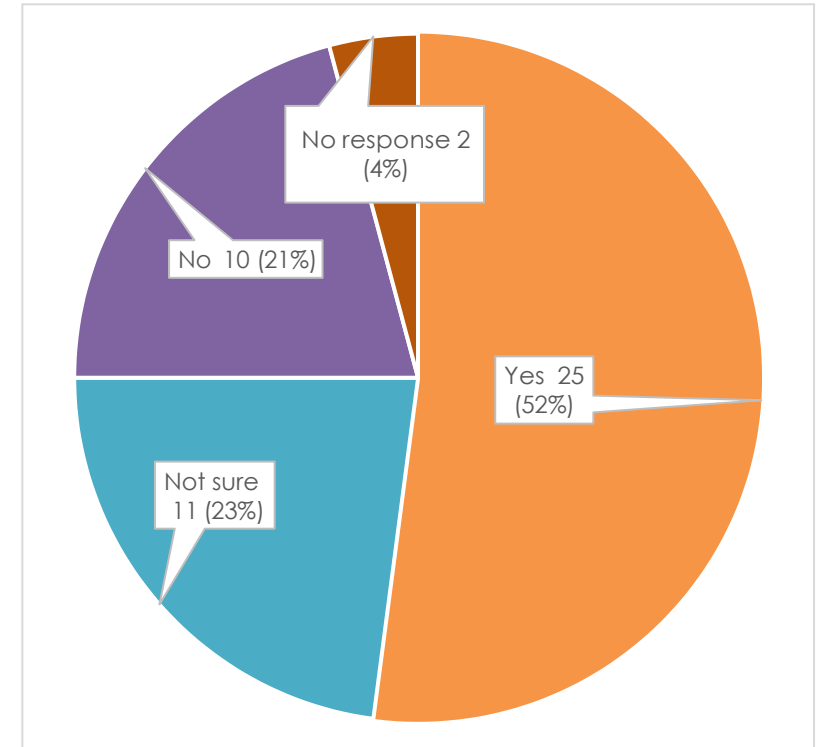
- Provided it is secure and motorbike free (x3)
- The roads on the Wood estate are not designed for the level of traffic the development will bring (x2)
- Do not want pedestrian footpath or road in front of property that will affect privacy and increase anti-social behaviour (St Peters Croft) (x2)
- Generally positive about proposals
- Access to be retained to garage on Kent Road / Black Path
- Positive provided there are no hot spots for anti-social behaviour
- Positive provided there are sufficient running / cycling tracks
- The proposed access off Friar Park Road / by the park will increase opportunities for anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fly-tipping



10. Do you agree with the proposed road layout and location of access points within the draft masterplan?

Supporting comments:

- Roads will not cope with extra traffic (x2)
- Generally supportive of proposals
- Access behind the motorway and railway could be improved
- Access from Kent Road is not wanted
- More speed restrictions needed
- Will increase traffic levels on Friar Park Road
- Access by park / off Friar Park Road needs to be moved away from Sta Peters Croft to support privacy / security and minimis increase in traffic and noise 4
- Some distance is required between existing and new development
- To many roads and connectivity – feels like a car driven proposal
- Plans include few accesses which mean it its easier to police and reduce 'boy racer' activity
- Prefer not to have connecting roads
- Improvements to Friar Park Road are required, current is not sufficient and leads to a build-up of pollution. Suggestion of curving the road in and out of the eastern side to reduce visibility and therefore speed
- Existing parking for the area is not sufficient



12. Overall, what do you like and dislike about the draft masterplan? Please tell us why.

Likes:

- Green spaces (x4)
- Childrens play facilities for both new and existing communities (x2)
- Mix of housing types (x2)
- Use of an unused area (x2)
 - provided wildlife is looked after
- Improvement on the initial proposals
- Overall layout
- Landscape proposals
- Constraints have been well addressed
- Community areas
- Great for families

Dislikes:

- Loss of green space (x3)
- 25% council housing at least, should aim to go higher (x2)
- No public amenities proposed (x2)
- Increased opportunities for anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fly-tipping (x2)
- Existing infrastructure not sufficient for new houses (x2)
- Not enough capacity at existing GP surgeries (x2)
- Too many homes proposed (x2)
- General negativity towards proposals
- No shops proposed
- Lack of open space for dog walking near the Millennium Centre
- Friar Park Road park needs to be moved – easy access off the road where anti-social behaviour occurs and young children cannot use it
- Road next to St Peters Croft off of Friar Park Road – will affect privacy, security and increase opportunities for anti-social behaviour
- Request for new higher wall and bushes/hedges/bramble built right next to the wall (not trees, as the roots can cause issues to us and the kids may climb the trees) near St Peters Croft.
- Concern about proximity of houses to existing property
- Nature and play areas are pushed to the outskirts – further away for existing residents
- Increased flood risk
- Lack of community aspects to bring people together

- Existing homes should not be overlooked by new properties
- Not enough capacity at existing schools
- Increased pollution due to increased traffic
- Jobs are needed over housing
- Improvements needed to control surface water run off
- Square design of some of the properties
- Friar Park Millennium Centre seems to have been forgotten

Other comments:

- Public commitment to the school and doctor places needed
- Make sure all residents in Sandy Lane are ok during construction
- Allay peoples' health and public health concerns
- Consider the people who have lived in the area for many years and want a reminder of how the area used to be
- Affordable housing should be the same style as the rest of the housing on the development
- Friar Park Road access will currently have parked cars either side and could be dangerous. (Guidance often allows you to assume you can see through cars etc but in reality, with vans and tinted windows it can be dangerous)

13. Please add any further comments you have on the proposals for Friar Park Urban Village here.

- Concern around ability of existing schools to cope with addition of new residents (x5)
 - Highlighted early years provision
- Concern around ability of existing doctors to cope with addition of new residents (x3)
- Support for Friar Park Millennium Centre improvements meaning more community activities / groups / businesses and still be able to cater for existing residents (x2)
- Loss of access to garage off of Kent Road / Black Path – request to confirm in writing that this will not happen
- Question where children will go if the houses are built and if there is enough space for increase in children
- Improvements needed for open space / park area near Millennium Centre so people have an outside enclosed safe place to go
- Support Millennium Centre to create sensory garden for people with different disabilities
- Talk to existing shops about maximising opportunities with the new development
- Provide jobs and apprenticeship opportunities for community including young people
- Use the Millennium Centre to link the new urban village into Friar Park
- Better road network required to support new development – area already suffers from traffic issues - Woods Estate and on weekends, weekday mornings and weekday late afternoons, the traffic congestion is that bad (due to the Gallagher retail park schools and on Sunday's, Bescot market)
- Loss of privacy and security for houses on St Peters Croft (near Friar Park Road park)
- Three storey buildings are not wanted
- Housing style should blend in with existing neighbourhood
- Prefer no access from Kent Road – already congested, would be used as a rat run and would cause safety issues for people walking to park
- Concern around theft – already an existing issue
- Concern around anti-social behaviour – more security such as CCTV required
- Request to rebuild wall around St Peters Croft higher and sturdier to give us more privacy and shrubbery/hedges/bramble to be planted next to it
- Building a lot homes is not the answer to improving and modernising the area – a lesser number with more nature play areas for all (children and elderly) should be proposed
- The field behind Sussex Avenue is not brownfield it has never had industry on it its always been farmland
- More community consultation should be held directly with the direct neighbours of the site
- Money should be put to something more useful
- Hope that the development goes ahead as the area needs rejuvenation
- Concern around lack of amenities
- Require better shops

8. Other Responses

Responses provided via email or letter.

Housing

- Opportunity to improve on the standard of new builds and provide homes that reduce energy bills, improve the cost of living, reduce remand on fossil fuels, and help us reach our carbon emissions.
- Environmental accreditations would be a positive
- Solar panels should be included
- Divides between homes should include native hedges to support biodiversity
- EC charging points should be included with each home.
- Concern around who will be the landlords of social properties and whether the rates will be affordable and regulated.

Placemaking

- Recycling bins and general waste bins in communal areas
- Preference for no road or path, or high buildings adjacent to St Peters Croft to protect existing residents privacy and security where they already suffer from anti-social behavior
- Friar Park Millennium Centre – their objective is to support in reducing anti-social behaviour, vandalism, crime, loneliness, isolation and help with mental health and wellbeing. The centre is already stretched and there is concern around how they will cope with supporting residents of 630 new homes. The development could support them with expansions of the centre and improvement of the external area.
- Funding enquiry for a permanent library rather than temporary currently within Friar Park Millennium Centre [Sandwell Council - Wednesbury, West Bromwich North Libraries]
- Health - existing residents can not get GP appointments (not enough surgeries) and residents are having to attend A&E for treatment often waiting in excess of four hours.
- Schools and nurseries – are at a premium with many children having to travel out of the area. An additional 630 homes will exacerbate the situation.
- Concern around extra strain on local drainage and avoidance of more localised flooding and low water pressures.
- Bescot depot is a busy 24/7 operation and an important strategic site for the rail industry. It is anticipated that demand at the depot will continue in the future and possibly become even busier as West Midlands Trains have proposals to use part of the site for stabling. With any new neighbours being introduced very close to the running lines and the depot itself, consideration of noise (particularly at night) and vibration from the depot should be a key factor to any planning considerations.
- Security at the depot is also of importance and trespassing and vandalism have been issues at this site in the past.

Environment

- "Nature areas" are actually planted for nature and managed as such. For example, all native species, and areas of grass are left for wildflower meadows, only cut once a year after flowers have seeded.
- Room for more trees than currently shown.
- Proposals include lots of opportunities for green initiatives for climate change and biodiversity
- Hedgehog highways should be incorporated into gardens
- Who would pay for the remediation of the historic contamination on the land – will this fall to Sandwell Council (ultimately the residents).
- Concern remediation of land will release contamination into the atmosphere and lorries carrying contaminated waste through the area.
- Pollution from M6 affecting local residents. Asked to confirm health statistics with L McNally who has previously confirmed that residents whose homes are next to the M6 have high mortality rate from heart disease, bronchial related illnesses and cancer all attributed to the pollution.

Access and Movement

- The new housing development may trigger the need for upgrading Bescot Stadium and Tame Bridge Parkway station facilities to cater for increased demand. Traffic congestion assessments will need to ensure traffic is reduced as much as possible and to review the integration of all transport modes. The Masterplan includes Network Rail leasehold land to the South Eastern corner adjacent to Sandy Lane which is intended for operational access use and therefore early engagement will be required with Network Rail. [Network Rail]
- Bus services – services to Friar Park, The Woods Estate have been seriously reduced over the past 12 months plus. There are also no bus services serving Tiffany Green.

9. Summary

Overall, the responses to the proposals were supportive with many positive comments on the draft masterplan. All quantitative responses were majority supportive; 50% agreed that the plans address the vision for the site and 42% support the landscape proposals. Comments provided are constructive, meaning that the masterplan has an opportunity to reflect these and demonstrate to the community that this is a purposeful process.

This second stage of consultation highlighted numerous concerns that were also raised in the first stage. Many associated with the wider community infrastructure and existing anti-social behaviour issues, demonstrating that there are other factors that should be considered alongside the development of Friar Park Urban Village.

There were fewer responses to this second stage of consultation, (a reduction from 81 to 57) which may demonstrate that people are generally happy with the proposals and therefore less inclined to engage with the process. Feedback in the majority has been from direct neighbours. The presentation of the draft masterplan has raised specific concerns in relation to people's properties and impact the development might have directly on them.

A very emotive issue which was heavily raised is existing anti-social behaviour issues, including theft, vandalism, litter dropping and fly-tipping and speeding around the area. There is concern that nothing the development could provide will help to alleviate these issues and the issue is more ingrained within the area. However, some specific requests were raised that individuals felt may offer them more privacy and security. Attention should be paid to the suggestions to minimise anti-social behaviour within the area and explored wherever possible, including outside of the actual development of the site. This delivers against the vision of the development, not just providing new homes, but creating a friendly, welcoming and connected community and will require support and ongoing engagement.

As before there is a very strong feeling that infrastructure to support the community needs to be addressed. This includes a need for shops as well as schools and doctors which people feel are already over-subscribed and residents from an additional 630 homes will add to this issue.

The Millennium Centre is a very strong community feature and opportunities to embed this into the new development alongside linking the two communities should be maximised. The team at the centre are very supportive of the development but are concerned about how they will support a possible 630 additional families. Within their response they have provided suggestions of how the centre could be improved / expanded to support the community. They also state that they are highlighting this on behalf of

residents have difficulty in speaking out, reading, and writing and a feeling of not being listened to. Many other responses also highlighted support for the Millennium Centre.

There is strong feeling around the loss of the existing open space and the site just being filled with properties. Any new spaces should be high quality, actually useable for the things people want them for, so that it is deemed a suitable replacement for the reduction in the volume of space that people use for dog walking and playing.

The below table includes extracted topics or issues raised by organisations/groups or from existing residents that could be addressed in the draft masterplan, or should be considered within the wider placemaking vision, going beyond just building a housing estate, but supporting a changing community. Particularly the specific requests highlighted by existing residents, this will demonstrate that they are being listened to. Where requests cannot be accommodated the reasoning behind decisions should be explained to these stakeholders. There are some highlighted suggested actions alongside some of these which would support with building relationships with the community.

Area	Topic Raised
Railway and associated stations	<p>Network Rail response - Bescot depot is a busy 24/7 operation and an important strategic site for the rail industry. It is anticipated that demand at the depot will continue in the future and possibly become even busier as West Midlands Trains have proposals to use part of the site for stabling. With any new neighbours being introduced very close to the running lines and the depot itself, consideration of noise (particularly at night) and vibration from the depot should be a key factor to any planning considerations.</p> <p>Security at the depot important, trespassing and vandalism have been issues at this site in the past.</p> <p>The Masterplan includes Network Rail leasehold land to the South Eastern corner adjacent to Sandy Lane which is intended for operational access use and therefore early engagement will be required with Network Rail. [Action] <i>continue engagement with Network Rail.</i></p>
Community	<p>Friar Park Millennium Centre – support expansion and improvements so they can accommodate existing and new residents. Creation of things like a sensory garden have been suggested. Suggest further engagement with the centre to determine requirements and what could be delivered. [Action] <i>continue engagement with Friar Park Millennium Centre.</i></p> <p>Library service – Sandwell Council questioning capacity for funding a permanent library.</p> <p>617 Sandwell Air Scouts - support over 50 young people and would like for the group to have their own building/base. The group is too big to operate from the Millennium Centre and definitely wouldn't be able to support children from the new build will miss out.</p>

	Wednesbury Action Group – full response supplied with many questions raised within it. [Action] Suggest that this is responded to.
Existing resident specific	Resident A– concern that access to garage (off of the Black Path) will be blocked. [Action] Requested confirmation in writing that this will not happen.
	Resident B– live next to where the path is proposed. The resident already suffers from anti-social behaviour – children jumping the wall, stones and empty alcohol bottles thrown in garden. Concerned that the proposals will make this worse allowing easier access.
	Requested that the wall is rebuilt higher and more solid (metal) that people can't jump over from either direction. Also requested that houses should be single storey and not high flats as the land is already high next to these properties.
	1 Resident C - live next to where the road off Friar Park Road is proposed. The residents already suffer from anti-social behaviour.
	Resident D – request to move the park and path further away and increase greenery / distance between housing and new estate to reduce opportunity for anti-social behaviour.
	Resident E – the house on the masterplan is at the bottom of their garden. Feel that this is too close, privacy and direct sunlight will be impacted by the proposed house. Request to move further away and/or be a bungalow.
	Manifold Way estate fencing – many comments that this is broken, damaged all around the edge where it meets the open field. Lots of requests that this is rebuilt bigger and stronger to help prevent anti-social behaviour.
	The proposed houses by Kent Rd and Sussex Avenue are to close and potential to overlook existing gardens and remove all privacy.

Friar Park Urban Village still provides the opportunity to demonstrate forward thinking in the way that it is designed, uses new technologies and has people at the heart of its development. Through some small changes to the masterplan many concerns would be addressed and provide peace of mind. The balance between the build of new houses and the repurposing/reduction of open space needs to be carefully managed. There needs to be a realistic view of how the space might be used and consideration how any negative behaviours can be minimised, so the spaces are used for their intended purpose and people feel safe in their community. Utilising and supporting the Millennium Centre is also a key aspect of the development.

Overall people are positive and would welcome the development provided that it blends with the existing community, supports a reduction in anti-social behaviour and continues to provide useable open spaces. Ongoing engagement with communities is also important to continue to build good relationships.

10. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Stakeholder Engagement Event, Wednesbury Town Hall, 2nd November 2022

Area	Topic Raised
Development	Best proposal the council has ever come up with.
Security	Lighting of paths will be critical to ensure safety, existing issues along the 'Black Path' of security.
Security	ASB and assaults are taking place on the site at present – so removing those issues would be welcomed through re-development.
Green Space	200+ on waiting list for allotments in the area – high demand for allotments so growing spaces would be welcomed.
Security	Can changing rooms be considered for the Kent Road Playing Fields to add to the sports opportunities how would these be managed / maintained and by who? Could they be an ASB issue?
Transport	Existing issues of speeding along Friar Park Road, will this be mitigated against in the new development.
Housing Provision	Supportive of 25% affordable housing. Councillor Hackett stated a desire that these should be council houses. Other stakeholders said more than 25% should be provided (50%) and that they should be for local people only
Amenities	Should be shop provision within the site due to the number of new residents – the area needs a new shop.
Green Space	How will the green space be protected?
Security	The previous BMX track on Millennium Avenue was popular – could be something integrated into the bund area – but would need to be properly managed as could be used by scramblers.
Drainage	Is drainage being looked at on the Kent Road Open Space as it floods quite a lot.
Green Space	Potential for the local scout group to use the open space, play areas and natural habitats.
Amenities	Need to improve/protect Millennium Centre as a resource – the library was mentioned. Holiday activities take place at the Millennium Centre-new development may make capacity tight and push existing users out.
Drainage	Attenuation ponds could be a good feature visually and from a sustainability point of view
Housing Provision	Solar PV should be encouraged on the homes.
Environment	Issues of dust from stone crushing on sidings
Environment	Issues of poor air quality in the area, stakeholders suggested that this had resulted in residents poor health. The need to ensure a representative from public health was present at consultation event was discussed.
Security	Potential safety issues of children accessing the railway line by climbing new trees
Jobs	Need for local jobs through apprenticeships
Amenities	Need for a school. The need to ensure a representative from Education at consultation event was discussed.
Amenities	Concern over GP capacity/provision. Difficult to get appointments as stands. The need to get a CCG rep at consultation event was discussed.

Environment	If trees are to be removed they need to be replaced with established mature trees especially on Friar Park Road frontage which are attractive for existing residents to look out on to.
Transport	The number 65 bus service is proposed to be stopped which is considered a life line by some residents, TWFM needs to know about the existing need but also these proposals where need will therefore increase.
Transport	Impact of construction traffic on Sandy Lane-will there be time/route restrictions?
Transport	Impact of existing HGVs from sidings including noise/vibration issues and ASB from drivers to units proposed to SE of site.
Transport	Impact of railway on development in terms of existing operations and proposals for further development.

Appendix 2 – Notice of consultation email update



West Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Council are proposing an exciting new development currently known as Friar Park Urban Village.

The proposed development presents an exciting opportunity for regeneration in the area. It would provide a mix of high-quality homes and open spaces, with new pedestrian, cycle and transport links to the surrounding areas. The site covers approximately 27 hectares (67 acres) making it one of the largest brownfield development sites in the region.

Since the first phase of public consultation in 2021, significant work has been undertaken to progress a Masterplan that sets out how the site could be brought forward in a way that not only provides much needed new homes but also provides new green spaces and facilities for existing residents in Friar Park.

Our second phase of public consultation starts on 7th November and ends on 19th December 2022. During this time, we will be seeking your views on the draft masterplan for the site, to see that it responds to the local community's expectations.

To help shape the development, we are running a public consultation to present our draft plans and invite feedback from the local community. As part of this, we are holding drop-in information events for you to attend, view the proposals and speak to experts about the project.

Phase 2 Public Information Days

Friday 25th November 12 – 4pm
Saturday 26th November 10am – 2pm

The information days are being held at:
Friar Park Millennium Centre, Friar Park Road, Wednesbury WS10 0JS

Further information will be available on our [website](#) from the 7th November 2022.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
 You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

Appendix 3 – Consultation launch newsletter



FRIAR PARK URBAN VILLAGE PHASE 2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION LAUNCHED

West Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council are working together to deliver a new residential community in Friar Park, currently known as Friar Park Urban Village.

Our second phase of public consultation starts on 7th November and ends on 19th December 2022. During this time, we are seeking your views on the draft masterplan for the site to ensure that it responds to the local community's expectations.

The development is a key opportunity to regenerate a contaminated brownfield site in Sandwell. The site is circa 27 hectares (67 acres) in area, representing one of the largest brownfield sites in the region. It has the capacity to deliver around 630 homes, of which 25% will be affordable homes.

Since the first phase of public consultation in 2021, significant work has been undertaken to progress a masterplan that sets out how the site could be brought forward in a way that not only provides much needed new homes but also provides new green spaces and facilities for existing residents in Friar Park.

During this consultation, we invite you to review the information presented for the regeneration of the site, and provide your feedback.

View full details of our proposals on our website and provide your feedback
www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk

Visit our drop-in public information days to find out more and speak to project experts

Friar Park Millennium Centre, Friar Park Road, Wednesbury WS10 0JS
Friday 25th November 12-4pm
Saturday 26th November 10-2pm





This newsletter provides an overview of how our plans have developed. You can view full details of our plans on our website and at our public information days.

How we have developed our plans

During phase 1 consultation we presented our early ideas for the site, based on our research and surveys to date, and the feedback received from key stakeholders. The consultation provided valuable feedback on our initial plans. Since then we have undertaken further technical work, including a full intrusive site investigation, and incorporated the phase 1 consultation feedback to develop the draft masterplan.

What you said and how we have considered this feedback

Your feedback has been important for the development of our plans. Below outlines the key aspirations identified for Friar Park Urban Village and how we have addressed this in our phase 2 proposals.

What is important to you	How we have considered this within our proposals
To protect and enhance the existing strong sense of community	Friar Park will deliver new homes that complement and integrate with the existing community. It will transform a brownfield site, which is currently overgrown and contaminated, into a community asset to benefit both new and existing residents. This consultation enables existing residents in Friar Park to shape these proposals and ensure that it is an extension of, and benefit to, the existing community.
To resolve anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues and reduce issues such as fly tipping	The site has been designed with reduction of crime and ASB at the heart of it, including increased natural surveillance between spaces, dense planting for security, and restricting access at key points, making opportunities for fly-tipping and ASB significantly more difficult.
To provide a mix of housing for lifelong homes	Friar Park Urban Village will set a new benchmark for quality, sustainable homes in Sandwell where people will want to live long and healthy lives. A comprehensive mix of housing types will ensure that the area is accessible and attractive to all the residents of Sandwell and will allow people to better choose a home that suits their individual needs.
To provide attractive and accessible open space and places for the family	The proposals will deliver a net increase in accessible, high-quality green space for both new and existing residents whilst also remediating highly contaminated land which, left untreated, poses a potential future risk to public health. These improved and varied green spaces will support people to live healthy and active lives.
To protect and enhance the existing wildlife on the site	The site currently consists of a former sewage works and the surrounding land is contaminated. Whilst some wildlife does exist on the site, the improved quality of the replacement habitats will attract a much wider variety of nature and wildlife to the area. Furthermore, comprehensive ecological studies will ensure the protection of any wildlife currently on the site.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FRIAR PARK URBAN VILLAGE?

- Redevelopment of a brownfield site
- Treatment of historic land contamination
- 630 new homes including around 157 affordable homes
- Over 10 hectares of open space including a community park, playing fields and a village green
- Over 1,000 new trees and a new nature area to promote biodiversity
- New pedestrian and cycle links to connect the new community
- Creation of jobs during construction and increased local spend through using local supply chains

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This six-week public consultation ends at 5pm on Monday 19th December. Following this we will carefully review and consider all feedback received throughout the consultation to inform the final masterplan.

The final masterplan for the site will provide planning and design guidance that will be used as part of the process to secure a development partner. The masterplan will provide direction to prospective developers on what can be accommodated and what the West Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and the local community expect to see delivered through the regeneration of the site.

Indicative Timeline



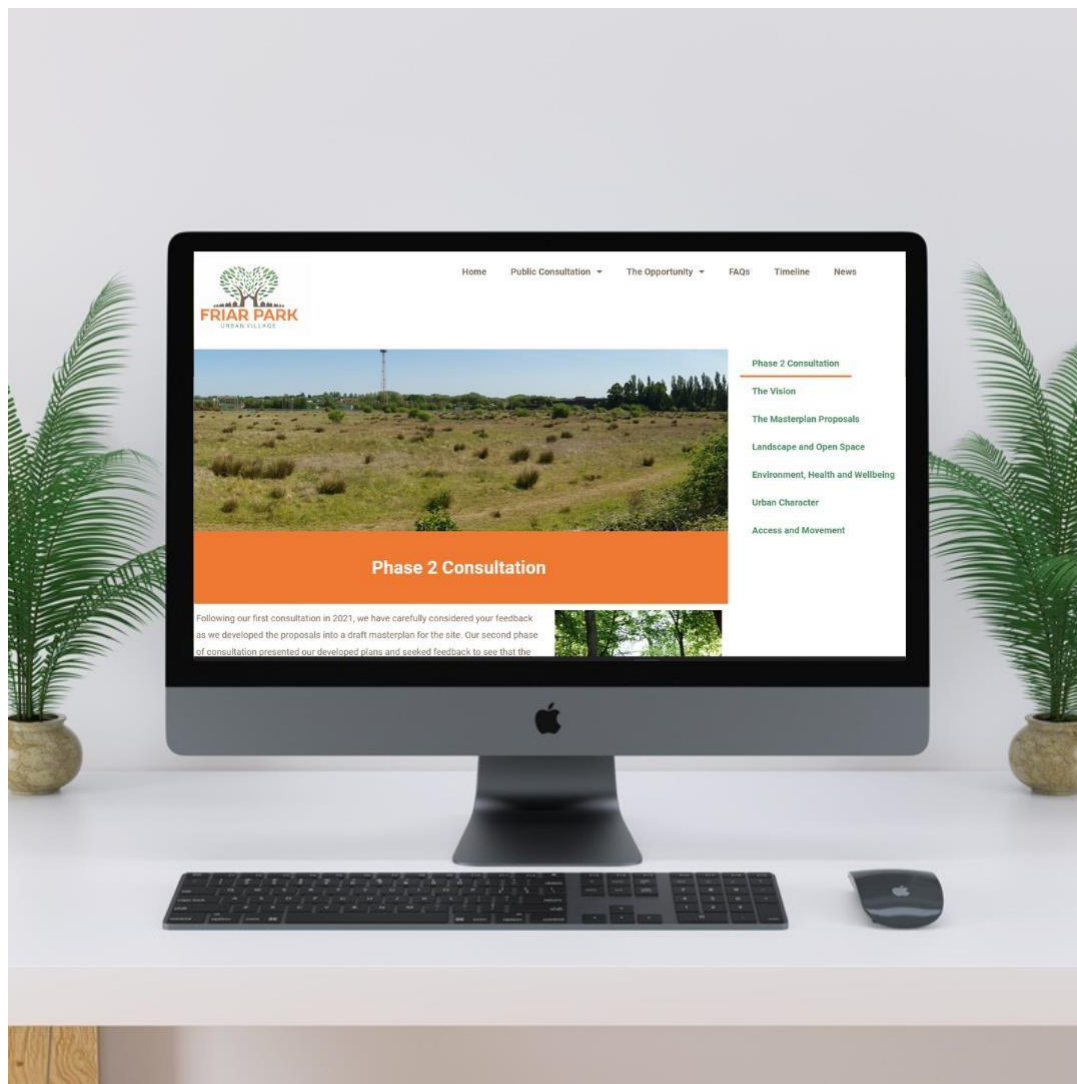
Have Your Say

You can provide your feedback by:

- Completing the feedback form on the website www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk
- Posting a feedback form to FREEPOST Friar Park Urban Village (no stamp or further address details are required)
- You can collect feedback forms at our events or from the Friar Park Millennium Centre (Friar Park Road) throughout the consultation phase.

The closing date for comments is 5pm Monday 19th December 2022. We look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix 4 - Website



Friar Park Urban Village Phase 2 Consultation Report

Urban Character

Friar Park Urban Village draft masterplan aims to deliver a wonderful place to live, defined by an inspiring new landscape the whole community could enjoy.

The masterplan would deliver around 630 new homes as part of a sustainable urban village. This modern urban village aspires to become a benchmark residential community, a sustainable place that is embraced by landscape.

The distribution of housing across the site has been balanced towards having more housing close to public transport links to promote sustainable travel.

The majority of the development will be 2 storey in height, with 2.5 storey and 3 storey buildings used along key routes, key frontages and to defined landmark buildings.



Have your say on our initial thoughts and plans for Friar Park Urban Village

Thank you for taking the time to view the information presented on our draft masterplan for Friar Park Urban Village.

We welcome your comments and invite you to provide your feedback by completing the following questions.

To skip questions, click the orange down arrow presented on each question.

If you have any difficulty completing this survey, please get in touch with the project team on hello@friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk or 0800 0588 161.

Start

press Enter ↵

Appendix 5 - Consultation Launch Email Update



Phase 2 Consultation launches today

West Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council are working together to deliver a new residential community in Friar Park, currently known as Friar Park Urban Village.

The development is a key opportunity to regenerate a contaminated brownfield site in Sandwell. The site is circa 27 hectares (67 acres) in area, representing one of the largest brownfield sites in the region and has the capacity to deliver around 630 homes, of which 25% will be affordable homes.

We are pleased to launch our second phase of public consultation which ends at 9am on Monday 19th December 2022. During this time, we are seeking your views on the draft masterplan for the site to see that it responds to the local community's expectations.

Phase 2 Public Information Days

Please visit us at our drop-in information events to find out more about the proposals and speak to our experts.

Friday 25th November 12 – 4pm
Saturday 26th November 10am – 2pm

The information days are being held at:
 Friar Park Millennium Centre, Friar Park Road, Wednesbury WS10 0JS

New homes and enhanced open space for the area

During our Phase 1 Consultation we presented our early ideas for the site, based on our research and surveys to date, and the feedback received from key stakeholders.

The consultation provided valuable feedback on our initial plans. Since then, we have undertaken further technical work, including a full intrusive site investigation, and incorporated the phase 1 feedback to develop the draft masterplan.

What benefits could Friar Park Urban Village bring?

- Around 630 new homes including around 157 new affordable homes
- A community park
- Nature areas
- New pedestrian and cycle routes
- Playing fields
- A village green



Visit our [website](#) to view the information being presented for Phase 2 Consultation and to provide your feedback.

Understanding the views and opinions of the local community and other stakeholders is important to us. It will enable us to create a development that meets the needs of existing and future residents. We want to create a place that integrates with, and helps to enhance, the environment and surrounding communities.

Have Your Say

We welcome any views and questions throughout the consultation to help shape the development of our plans. You can provide your feedback by:

- Completing the feedback form on the website www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk
- Sending a feedback form to us at FREEPOST Friar Park Urban Village (no stamp or further address details are required). You can collect these from our events and at the Friar Park Millennium Centre.

The closing date for comments is **9am Monday 19th November 2022.**

We look forward to hearing from you.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
 You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

Appendix 6 – Consultation Events Poster



FRIAR PARK URBAN VILLAGE
Phase 2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION - HAVE YOUR SAY

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Since the first public consultation in 2021, significant work has been undertaken to progress a draft masterplan that sets out how the site could be brought forward in a way that not only provides much needed new homes but also provides new green spaces and facilities for existing residents in Friar Park.

This second phase of public consultation ends at 9am on Monday 19th December 2022. During this time, we are seeking your views on the draft masterplan for the site to ensure that it responds to the local community's expectations.

We invite you to review the information presented for the regeneration of the site and provide your feedback.

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www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk

We look forward to meeting you.
Visit our website for further information on the project and to register for email updates.

0800 0588 161 | hello@friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk
FREEPOST Friar Park Urban Village
No stamp or further address details required.
www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk

West Midlands Combined Authority | Building the Future | Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Appendix 7 – Sandwell Chronicle and Express & Star adverts



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THE ŠKODA
AUTUMN SUV EVENT

11 - 30 NOVEMBER

0% APR* with Solutions PCP on
KAMIG, KAROQ and KODIAQ



*Standard rate of charge applies. View our website for further information on the project and to register for email updates.

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Helping good cause is on festive menu

DANIEL WALTON
daniel.walton@expressandstar.co.uk

A centre for the blind is kicking off the festive season with its popular community lunch events. The Beacon Centre for the Blind, on Whitechapel Road, Dudley, will once again open the doors to the public for its annual Christmas lunch get-together.

The night-time charity will be serving the three-course menu, along with festive-themed live entertainment, before rounding the evening off with hot drinks and mince pies.

Victoria Wilson, Beacon's executive support manager, said: "We are enjoy



Sarah Downey and Victoria Wilson



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14 NEWS
CHRONICLE WEEK | THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2022

Fireworks sold illegally

Sandwell Council's Trading Standards, working with West Midlands Police, carried out an undercover test purchasing operation for fireworks as part of the town's campaign.

The test involved a 16-year-old volunteer who attempted to buy fireworks at six shops. Five of the six shops sold fireworks to the teenager and each had been issued with a warning and reminder of the seriousness of the offence and the consequences of any further breach. This could include a criminal prosecution with a fine of up to £5,000 and/or up to six months in prison.

Sandwell Council's cabinet member for communities Catherine Dancy MBE said: "Fireworks are a popular part of the festive season but it is important that they are sold and used safely."

Concerns raised over buildings



The Birmingham Midlands Institute is on the 'at-risk' register

More than a dozen buildings across the region have been added to a list of those being potentially lost forever - with the same number being removed from it.

Historic England revealed 13 buildings have been placed in jeopardy in the annual Heritage at Risk Register for 2022 and 13 others safeguarded. Sites added to the register - at risk - include the 16th-century Church of St Nicholas in North and Middle Lane, and the Church of St John the Baptist in Walsingham.

Lucy Broom, from Historic England, said: "It is central to Historic England's mission that we work with local authorities to protect the built heritage of the nation and ensure that the buildings and places that we have inherited from previous generations are protected for future generations."

Meanwhile, Historic England announced a total of 13 buildings have been added to the 'at-risk' register. Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register plays a vital role in our mission to protect and preserve our rich heritage across the country.

Church Christmas fair

Bargain buys are on offer at an Oldbury church Christmas fair this weekend. From 1 to 3.30pm on Saturday, Heritage cables will also be on sale, as well as a jerry every year stall and a raffle. The stall will be available.

Appendix 8 – Express & Star digital advert

expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/sandwell/

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PHASE 2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION
- HAVE YOUR SAY
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Visit our drop-in public information days to find out more and speak to project experts.

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Appendix 9 – Birmingham Mail advert



FRIAR PARK URBAN VILLAGE
PHASE 2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION - HAVE YOUR SAY

West Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council are working together to deliver a new residential community in Friar Park, currently known as Friar Park Urban Village.

Since the first public consultation in 2021, significant work has been undertaken to progress a draft masterplan that sets out how the site could be brought forward in a way that not only provides much needed new homes but also provides new green spaces and facilities for existing residents in Friar Park.

This second phase of public consultation ends at 9am on Monday 19th December 2022. During this time, we are seeking your views on the draft masterplan for the site to ensure that it responds to the local community's expectations.

We invite you to review the information presented for the regeneration of the site and provide your feedback.

Visit our drop-in public information days to find out more and speak to project experts
Friar Park Millennium Centre, Friar Park Road, Wednesbury WS10 0JS
Friday 25th November 12-4pm
Saturday 26th November 10-2pm

View full details of our proposals on our website and provide your feedback
www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk

We look forward to meeting you.

Visit our website for further information on the project and to register for email updates.

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FREEPOST Friar Park Urban Village
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www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk



www.birminghamlive.co.uk MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2022 BIRMINGHAM MAIL 9

Police 'sorry' for failings which led to murder of mum and daughter

News



Raneem Oudeh and Khadija Saleem were both murdered

STAFF REPORTER

WEST Midlands Police has admitted they should have done more to protect a murdered mum and daughter after a coroner found force failings contributed to their deaths.

Raneem Oudeh repeatedly called 999 begging for help after being attacked by crazed ex-husband Jarbas Tartin.

The 22-year-old was stabbed to death outside her family's Solihull home. Her mum Khadija Saleem, 43, was also killed to death by Tartin, 22, who was later jailed for life for the killings in 2018.

Assistant Chief Constable Andy Hill issued an apology to the victims' family, after a coroner blamed the police for 'multiple failings' in the murders. In a lengthy statement he admits the force could have done more to protect Raneem from the horrific campaign of domestic violence she endured prior to her death.

The inquest into the pair's deaths heard how multiple calls were made to police asking for help. In 999 calls Raneem can be heard asking for help from her ex-husband, who was subject to a non-molestation order, to be arrested.

However, help never came, and in calls, force call handlers told Raneem the danger appears to have passed and officers will contact her the following day. In a final, chilling call she is told officers will call her, though not necessarily see her, the next morning when they start work.

There follows a shriek as Tartin launched his final fatal attack. The

Killer Jarbas Tartin

call operator asks, 'what happened?'

Assistant Chief Constable Andy Hill today said: "The murders of Raneem Oudeh and her mother Khadija Saleem in 2018 are among the most shocking and appalling crimes in our region in recent years.

"On behalf of West Midlands Police, I would like to apologise to Raneem and Khadija's family - we should have done more. Their dignity throughout the inquest has been humbling.

"More could have been done to protect Raneem from the campaign of domestic violence that she suffered in the months leading up to her death at the hands of the man who would go on to kill her and her mother.

"The events leading up to this case that lessons can be learned and to give the families the answers they deserve.

"It is clear that we should have done more to join-up the incidents of abuse that were being reported to us so that the officers considering Raneem's case had a full picture of the ordeal that Raneem was enduring at the hands of Jarbas Tartin.

"The seriousness and pattern of abuse should have been better recognised, the risk posed by Mr Tartin should have been better assessed and the crimes that were being committed should have been better identified and investigated, with action taken against Mr Tartin.

"We should have done more to safeguard Raneem, by considering appropriate interventions such as a domestic violence protection order or a referral to the Sanctuary Scheme, which could have made her home a safer place.

"We are continually striving to improve our response to domestic abuse. A number of key changes have already been made since the murders of Raneem and Khadija, including increasing the number of staff specifically investigating domestic abuse offences and the creation of a new team to review investigations.

"The statement added: "A scrutiny panel has also been formed to review decisions and give their independent professional assessment. More training has been provided to frontline officers to help them better understand key concepts of domestic abuse. We recognise, however, that more needs to be done. We will continue to learn from the tragic events at the heart of this inquest.

"Of course, none of this will undo the devastation that the murders of Raneem and Khadija caused to their family.

"Above all, our thoughts are with them today and again I offer our apologies."

FRIAR PARK URBAN VILLAGE
PHASE 2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION - HAVE YOUR SAY

West Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council are working together to deliver a new residential community in Friar Park, currently known as Friar Park Urban Village.

Since the first public consultation in 2021, significant work has been undertaken to progress a draft masterplan that sets out how the site could be brought forward in a way that not only provides much needed new homes but also provides new green spaces and facilities for existing residents in Friar Park.

This second phase of public consultation ends at 9am on Monday 19th December 2022. During this time, we are seeking your views on the draft masterplan for the site to ensure that it responds to the local community's expectations.

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Appendix 10 – Press release and Express and Star coverage

PRESS RELEASE
For 7th November 2022

Phase 2 public consultation launches for regeneration of major brownfield site in the West Midlands

The public are being invited to have their say on the regeneration of one of the largest brownfield sites in the region.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) are working with West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to bring forward a long-standing, allocated housing site in Wednesbury, now referred to as Friar Park Urban Village.

The regeneration scheme will transform this 27-hectare (67 acre) site - most of which is underused and contaminated - into a community asset which should benefit both new and existing residents.

Initial proposals were first put to the public in 2021 and their feedback proved invaluable to the development of the plans. Since then, significant work has been undertaken in drawing up a draft masterplan. This exciting plan sets out how the site could provide much-needed, new homes alongside new high-quality, green spaces and facilities that respond to the local community's needs and expectations.

The draft masterplan proposes around 630 high-quality, new homes, to complement and integrate with the existing community. At least 25% of these new properties will be classed as affordable/social housing.

Phase 2 of the consultation launches today (Monday, November 7th) and runs for six weeks. Feedback given during this consultation will help shape the final masterplan. This will help to form the vision for the future development of Friar Park Urban Village. It will also provide development and design guidance for developers so they can deliver solutions that fully support the aspirations for the site.

Cllr Mike Bird, the WMCA's portfolio holder for housing and land and leader of Walsall Council, said: "This is one of the biggest redevelopment sites in the region, but it has sat empty for more than 30 years with no developer willing to take it on.

"Yet, by working closely with Sandwell Council and by using the money we have secured from Government for the WMCA's nationally-leading, 'brownfield first' regeneration programme, we have been able to finally unlock this site to provide new homes and jobs for local people and reduce pressure to build in the green belt.

“The public gave us some valuable feedback when we put the initial plans to them last year and their feedback helped shape this draft masterplan. But we are determined that the final scheme meets all the needs and aspirations of the local community and I would urge everyone with an interest to have their say in this latest consultation.”

Cllr Peter Hughes, Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Growth, said: “This joint venture project with West Midlands Combined Authority is an important opportunity to regenerate a contaminated brownfield site and deliver much-needed new homes and wider improvements for people in Friar Park.

“Our draft masterplan sets out exciting proposals in response to calls by local residents and businesses, who have told us they would like to see new investment in the area. The proposed redevelopment will deliver hundreds of high-quality homes, at least a quarter of which will be affordable, new accessible open spaces and improved community facilities, and create a positive environment to attract new residents into the area.”

Both the WMCA and SMBC believe the development presents exciting opportunities for the community, providing an attractively designed, sustainable, and healthy new urban village.

The draft masterplan offers a landscape-led vision to create high-quality, green spaces throughout, including more than 1,000 (net) new trees, nature areas and other open spaces that include measures to safeguard biodiversity.

The development is also focused on providing spaces that people can use such as children’s play areas, a village green, playing fields and community growing areas. New pedestrian, cycle and transport links throughout the site would connect the new community and a new linear park with the surrounding area.

As part of the Phase 2 Consultation, the public are invited to attend drop-in public information events to view the proposals and speak to experts about the project.

The events will be held at the Friar Park Millennium Centre, Friar Park Road, Wednesbury WS10 0JS on:

- **Friday 25th November:** 12 – 4pm
- **Saturday 26th November:** 10am – 2pm

The public can also take part by:

- Viewing information and providing feedback on the website www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk
- Collecting and dropping off a feedback form to Friar Park Millennium Centre on Friar Park Road
- Sending questions and comments via:
 - Email to hello@friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk
 - Post to **FREEPOST Friar Park Urban Village** (no stamp or further address details are required)

The closing date for comments is 9am 19th December 2022.

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Long-standing Wednesbury brownfield site earmarked for 'urban village'

By [Thomas Parkes](#) | [Wednesbury](#) | [Property](#) | Published: Dec 28, 2022 | [3 Comments](#)

Various parcels of brownfield land across the West Midlands are under the spotlight for development – with work under way to build more and more homes.



The site in Wednesbury

And while some remain under wraps due to commercial reasons, one major site which could become homes is situated off Friar Park Road in Wednesbury.

A second phase of a consultation was launched during November and early

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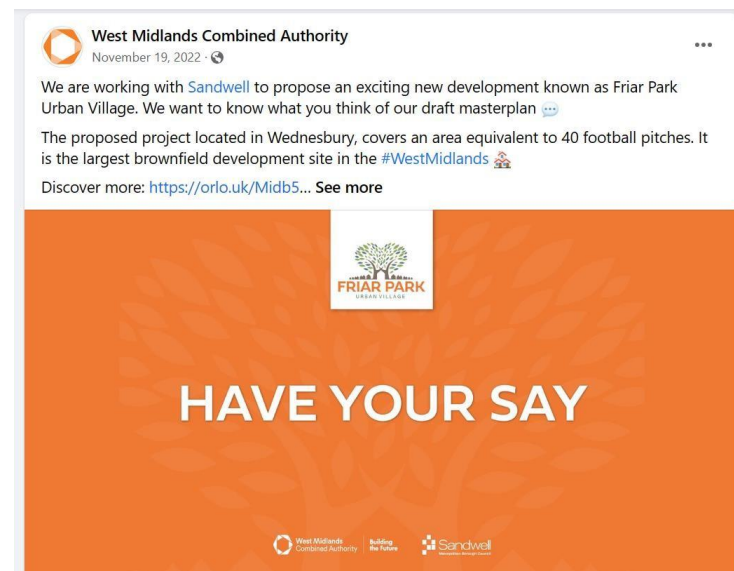
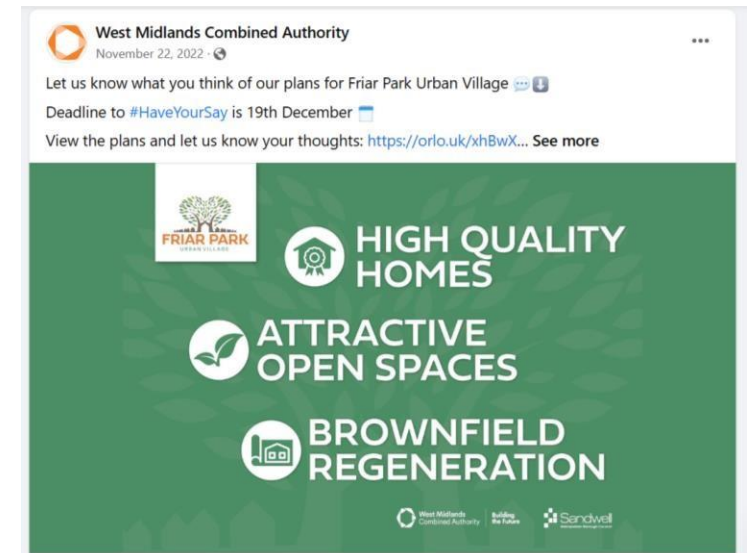
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Appendix 11 – Social media





Appendix 12 – Consultation event reminder email



Friar Park Urban Village public information events take place this week

West Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council are working together to deliver a new residential community in Friar Park, currently known as Friar Park Urban Village.

The development is a key opportunity to regenerate a contaminated brownfield site in Sandwell which has the capacity to deliver around 630 homes, of which 25% will be affordable homes.

Our public information days take place this week and we invite you to attend to find out more about the draft masterplan proposals and to speak to our project experts.

Phase 2 Public Information Days

Friday 25th November 12 – 4pm
Saturday 26th November 10am – 2pm

The information days are being held at:
Friar Park Millennium Centre, Friar Park Road, Wednesbury WS10 0JS

New homes and enhanced open space for the area

During our Phase 1 Consultation we presented our early ideas for the site, based on our research and surveys to date, and the feedback received from key stakeholders.

The consultation provided valuable feedback on our initial plans. Since then, we have undertaken further technical work, including a full intrusive site investigation, and incorporated the phase 1 feedback to develop the draft masterplan.

What benefits could Friar Park Urban Village bring?

- Around 630 new homes including around 157 new affordable homes
- A community park
- Nature areas
- New pedestrian and cycle routes
- Areas for play
- A village green



Visit our [website](https://www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk) to view the information being presented for Phase 2 Consultation and to provide your feedback.

Understanding the views and opinions of the local community and other stakeholders is important to us. It will enable us to create a development that meets the needs of existing and future residents. We want to create a place that integrates with, and helps to enhance, the environment and surrounding communities.

Have Your Say

We welcome any views and questions throughout the consultation to help shape the development of our plans. You can provide your feedback by:

- Completing the feedback form on the website www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk
- Sending a feedback form to us at FREEPOST Friar Park Urban Village (no stamp or further address details are required). You can collect these from our events and at the Friar Park Millennium Centre.

The closing date for comments is **9am Monday 19th November 2022**.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix 13 – Consultation close reminder email



Friar Park Urban Village consultation closes on 19th December

Our Phase 2 Consultation launched on 7th November 2022. This consultation presents the draft masterplan which sets out a vision for the future development of Friar Park Urban Village. It provides inspiration for the design of a high-quality place to create an exciting, forward thinking new development.

Understanding your views and opinions is important to us. It will enable us to create a development that meets the needs of existing and future residents. We are seeking your views on the [draft masterplan](#) to see that it responds to the local community's needs and expectations.

There is just one week remaining until this consultation phase closes on **19th December at 9am**. We would like to hear your views on our plans for the development and how we might be able to improve them further before we finalise the masterplan.

Visit our [website](#) to view the Phase 2 Consultation proposals and to provide your feedback.



Have Your Say

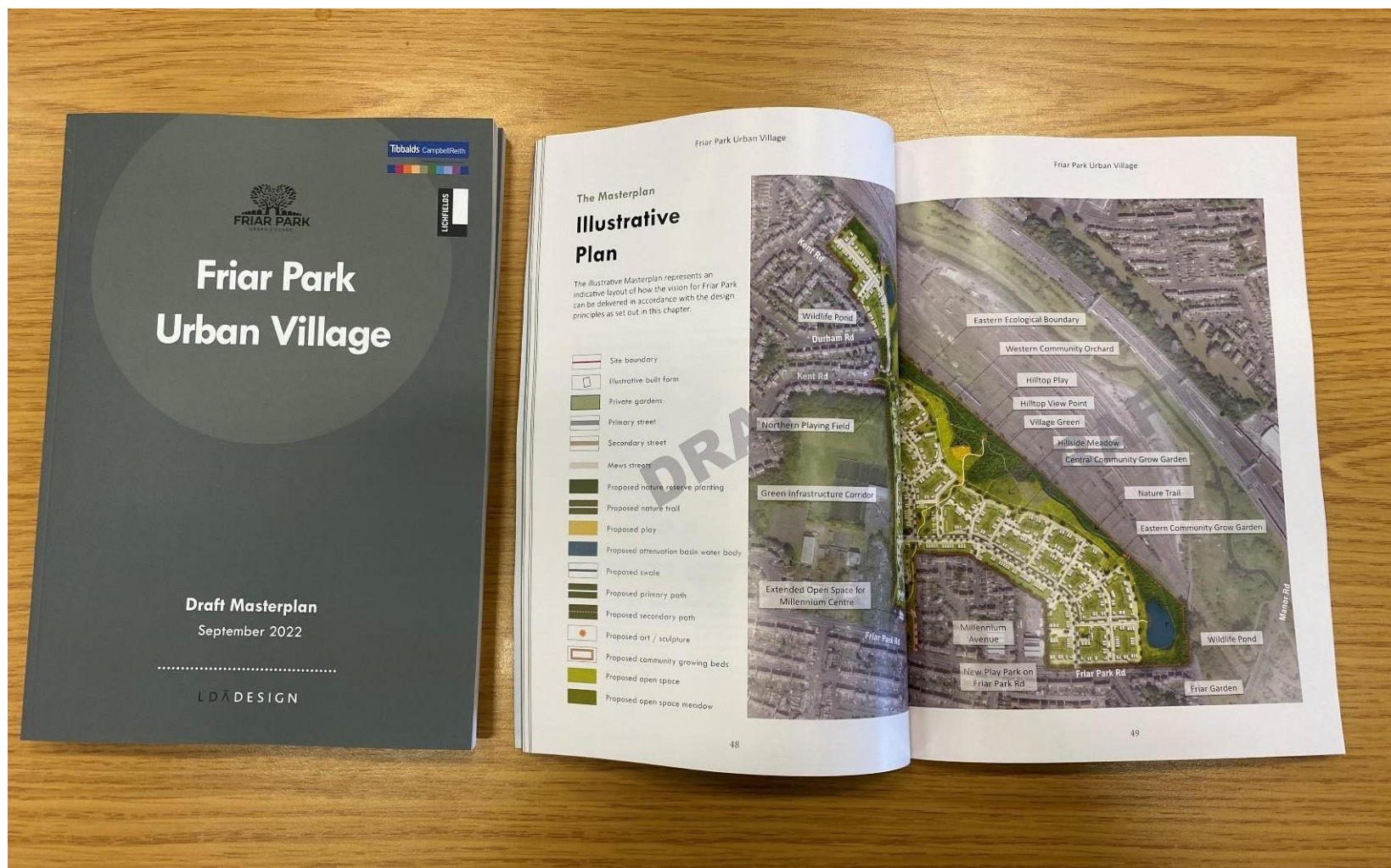
We welcome any views and questions throughout the consultation to help shape the development of our plans. You can provide your feedback by:

- Completing the feedback form on the website www.friarparkurbanvillage.co.uk
- Sending a feedback form to us at **FREEPOST Friar Park Urban Village** (no stamp or further address details are required). You can collect these from the Friar Park Millennium Centre.

The closing date for comments is **9am Monday 19th November 2022**.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix 14 – Draft Masterplan



Appendix 15 – Feedback form



Appendix 16 – Public Information Day display boards



BOARD 1

WELCOME



West Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Council are working together to deliver a new residential community, currently known as Friar Park Urban Village. We are seeking your views on the site, and its surrounding area, to help us make plans that respond to the local community's hopes and aspirations.



The proposed development presents an exciting opportunity for regeneration in the area. It could provide a mix of high quality homes and open spaces, along with new pedestrian, cycle and transport links to the surrounding area. The site covers approximately 27 hectares (67 acres) making it one of the largest brownfield development sites in the region.

During this second consultation phase, we are seeking your views on the draft masterplan for the site to see that it responds to the local community's expectations.

New Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council are developing a masterplan which sets out a vision for the future development of Friar Park Urban Village. The draft masterplan provides development and design guidance for a development once approved, enabling them to provide additional fully supported regeneration for the area.

- What benefits could the development bring to Friar Park?**
- Around 630 new homes, including around 147 new affordable homes
 - A community park
 - Nature reserve
 - New pedestrian and cycle routes
 - Playing fields
 - A village green
 - Over 10 hectares of open space



BOARD 2

THE OPPORTUNITY



The site has had several uses in the past. This has included farmland, a railway, a hospital, a factory and a sewage works. More recently parts of the site have been used for housing. As a result of the past uses, part of the site is now vacant and has remained relatively empty for a number of years.

The Black Country Core Strategy 2011 requires Sandwell, together with the other Black Country Authorities to provide at least 6500 new homes by 2026. This is to provide homes for a growing population and ensure the provision of affordable housing.

New Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Council have a 'Brownfield Land' policy which supports the reuse of previously developed land (brown as brownfield land). This policy reflects where new homes are planned, and this site at Friar Park has been identified for housing by Sandwell Council for a number of years in the Local Plan. It is one of the largest brownfield sites available for housing in the region and an exciting opportunity for new homes to be delivered in Sandwell where they are needed.

The development of the site is a key opportunity to deliver positive change in the area. The proposed will attract 'Start-up City Principles' into the design, providing a mix of housing, community and provides a beautiful location for much needed new homes in the area. We want to make a vibrant new neighbourhood with high quality and suitable open spaces. To create a place people will be proud to call home.



The Friar Park Urban Village Design Principles



- A place to deliver a mix of housing types, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of the local community.
- A place to deliver a mix of housing types, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of the local community.
- A place to deliver a mix of housing types, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of the local community.
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- A place to deliver a mix of housing types, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of the local community.



BOARD 3

KEY CONSIDERATIONS



There are a number of challenges we are considering in the initial development of our plans.

The site is located in Friar Park in the suburbs of Wolverhampton. It is currently accessed from Friar Park Road and Park Road, and the Black Country Parkway is accessed immediately to the north-west. Major Road and Park Road are the main roads serving the site. The site is currently a mix of open land and some existing buildings.

A large area of the site was previously used as a sewage treatment plant, as well as for landfill and other industrial uses. This means that there is contamination below the ground which will need to be removed before development can take place. Part of the site is also within an area of historic coal and ceramic mine workings. The land is now made up of grass and some trees, and there are some historic buildings in the north.

There are some existing trees and hedgerows on the site which provide habitat for local wildlife to be considered. The north-western part of the site, next to the rail siding, is also allocated as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) in the Local Plan.

The use of the site includes Friar Park and an area of playing fields behind the Millstream Centre and is a popular location for dog walks during the day.



Noise

A baseline noise assessment has been used to inform the layout for the site and identify any additional measures that may be needed to reduce noise impacts on the new homes.

Further and more detailed assessments would be undertaken following agreement of a developer. This would include a Noise and Vibration Management Plan which would describe the ways in which noise and vibration from construction would be kept to a minimum.

A baseline air quality assessment has been completed to assess the potential air quality impacts on the development. The proposed development has been designed to reduce the impact from the main air pollution sources (M6 motorway and other A-roads) and to provide a good level of air quality for the site.



BOARD 4

KEY CONSIDERATIONS



Along with challenges, the site presents many opportunities which have informed our initial thoughts for the site.

As well as new homes, the proposed development provides the opportunity to address factors which have resulted in the closure of some of the site and which are potentially harmful to the environment. Gradually it will result in the treatment of contamination resulting from the former industrial uses. Any former mine workings damaged will also be treated as necessary before any development.

The development is also an opportunity to enhance the natural environment, improving habitats and bringing greater biodiversity to the area. The site will be accessible to all and there is an opportunity to create attractive public spaces for the enjoyment of the wider Friar Park community. Part of these spaces will be set aside for play and activities, encouraging healthy outdoor lifestyles and well-being.

Finally, the new development will be designed to connect with the existing neighbourhood by providing new well-designed and safe pedestrian and cycle routes. Together with community spaces and activity areas, they will help to bring greater integration and clarity to the area.



Land Remediation

Ground investigation has been completed and the results used to inform the layout for the site and identify any additional measures that may be needed to reduce noise impacts on the new homes.

Further and more detailed assessments would be undertaken following agreement of a developer. This would include a Noise and Vibration Management Plan which would describe the ways in which noise and vibration from construction would be kept to a minimum.

A baseline air quality assessment has been completed to assess the potential air quality impacts on the development. The proposed development has been designed to reduce the impact from the main air pollution sources (M6 motorway and other A-roads) and to provide a good level of air quality for the site.



LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE



Village Green

The Village Green is the community space at the heart of the community. The design of the green is central to the overall design of the site. It is a place where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors. The green is designed to be a place where the community can enjoy the outdoors and where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors.

Community Greening Areas

Along the edges of the community park, there are several areas where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors. These areas are designed to be places where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors.

Community Park

The community park will be a place where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors. It will be a place where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors.

Northern Playing Fields

The playing fields are a place where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors. They are designed to be places where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors.

Green Infrastructure Corridors

Green infrastructure corridors are a place where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors. They are designed to be places where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors.



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ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Enhancing the Environment

The draft masterplan aims to deliver a livable, safe and healthy place that creates a positive use for the site and enhances the amenity of the surrounding area. The design proposals aim to support good mental health and active lifestyles for residents, as well as enhancing the environment to create a place that is resilient to climate change.

Protecting the environment, energy and water

The draft masterplan aims to deliver a livable, safe and healthy place that creates a positive use for the site and enhances the amenity of the surrounding area. The design proposals aim to support good mental health and active lifestyles for residents, as well as enhancing the environment to create a place that is resilient to climate change.

Health and Wellbeing

The draft masterplan aims to deliver a livable, safe and healthy place that creates a positive use for the site and enhances the amenity of the surrounding area. The design proposals aim to support good mental health and active lifestyles for residents, as well as enhancing the environment to create a place that is resilient to climate change.

Waste and Site Management

The draft masterplan aims to deliver a livable, safe and healthy place that creates a positive use for the site and enhances the amenity of the surrounding area. The design proposals aim to support good mental health and active lifestyles for residents, as well as enhancing the environment to create a place that is resilient to climate change.



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URBAN CHARACTER



Kent Park

The Kent Park area is a place where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors. It is designed to be a place where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors.

Landscape Edge

The landscape edge is a place where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors. It is designed to be a place where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors.

Village Green

The Village Green is the community space at the heart of the community. The design of the green is central to the overall design of the site. It is a place where the community can come together and enjoy the outdoors.



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ACCESS AND TRANSPORT



Walking and cycling

The draft masterplan aims to deliver a livable, safe and healthy place that creates a positive use for the site and enhances the amenity of the surrounding area. The design proposals aim to support good mental health and active lifestyles for residents, as well as enhancing the environment to create a place that is resilient to climate change.



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WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



Thank you for taking the time to view the information presented on our draft masterplan for Friar Park Urban Village.

We welcome your views on our proposals to help shape the final masterplan.

The closing date for your comments is 19th December 2022.

Indicative Project Timeline

- Jan - June 2021: Draft masterplan and consultation
- May - June 2021: Phase 1 Public Consultation
- Nov - Dec 2021: Phase 2 Public Consultation
- From April 2022: Decision on final masterplan

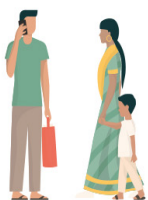


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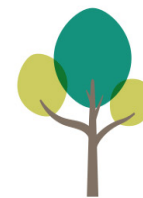
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The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in public session:-

	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
8	General Fund Budget and Capital Programme 2023/24 Contact Officer: Simone Hines Director of Finance – Simone Hines	Cabinet - Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)	15 February 2023		



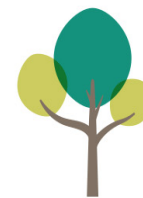
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
9	Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 Contact Officer: Simone Hines Director of Finance – Simone Hines	Cabinet - Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)	15 February 2023		
10	Adoption of Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan Contact Officer: Gillian Douglas Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing	Cabinet – Housing (Cllr Padda)	15 February 2023		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
12	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and Local Transport Capital Programme Update Contact Officer: Andy Miller Director: Tony McGovern - Director of Regeneration & Growth	Cabinet - Regeneration and Growth (Cllr Hughes)	15 February 2023		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
13	Sandwell Local List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets Contact Officer: Mark Stretton Director: Tony McGovern – Director Regeneration & Growth	Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)	15 February 2023		Sandwell Local List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
14	Asset transfer of The Bridge, Tipton to Murray Hall Community Trust Contact Officers: Stefan Hemming/ Heather Chinner Director: Tony McGovern – Director of Regeneration and Growth	Cabinet - Regeneration and Growth (Cllr Hughes)	15 February 2023		
16	Supply of Electricity 2024-2028 Contact Officer – Neil Whitehouse Director -	Cabinet - Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)	15 February 2023	N/A	Report



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
18	Trees Strategy and Policy Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins Director – Borough Economy, Alice Davey	Cabinet - Environment Service (Cllr Ahmed) Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Rolllins)	15 March 2023		
20	Parking Charges Policy Contact Officer: Robin Weare Director – Alice Davey, Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet – Environment Services (Cllr Ahmed)	15 March 2023		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
21	Levelling Up Fund Local Authority Memorandum of Understanding, Grant Determination Letter & Assurance Framework Contact Officer: Gemma Ryan Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth	Cabinet – Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Rollins)	15 March 2023		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
22	<p>Preparation of a Compulsory Purchase Order report to support retail acquisitions in West Bromwich Town Centre</p> <p>Contact Officer: Alexander Oxley</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)</p>	15 March 2023		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
23	Demolition Framework 2023-2027 procurement Contact Officer. Mark Drake Director: Tony McGovern - Regeneration and Growth	Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)	15 March 2023		
24	Friar Park Masterplan Contact Officer: Tammy Stokes Director: Tony McGovern - Regeneration and Growth	Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)	15 March 2023		



The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in private session:-

Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Reason for Exemption	List of documents to be considered
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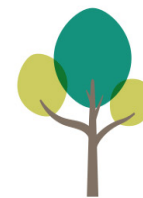


Annual Programme Reminder (these items are not added automatically)

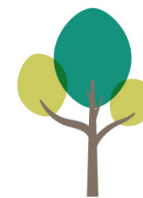
Title/Subject		Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
	Review of Fees and Charges		January		
	Determination of Admission Priorities for Sandwell's Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools		January/February		
	Schools Funding		December/January		
	Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring		February		
	Council Finances		February		
	Financial Regulations		February		
	Business Plans		February		
	Highways Asset Management Plan		March		
	Local Transport Settlement		March		



Title/Subject		Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
	Revenues and Benefits Policy framework 2022/23		March		
	Schools Capital Programme		April to June		
	Financial Outturn		May		
	Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules		July		
	Review of Fees and Charges Sandwell Residential Education Services Centre Charges		May – July		
	Childcare Sufficiency Report		July - September		
	Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring		August		



Title/Subject		Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
	Model Schools Pay Policy		October/November		
	Winter Service Operational Plan		October/November		
	Road Safety Plan		November		
	Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring		November		
	Council Tax Base Calculation		December		
	Business Rates Retention Estimates		December		
	Council Tax Reduction Scheme		December		



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Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2022/23

Economy, Skills Transport and Environment



Standing Items:-

- Tracking and Monitoring of Recommendations to the Executive
- Work Programme (including Cabinet Forward Plan)

Meeting Date	Item	Presented by
14 July 2022	Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership	Sarah Middleton (Chief Executive of Black Country Consortium Limited)
	Towns Fund Update	Rina Rahim (Towns Fund Programme Manager)
16 th November 2022	Towns Fund Update	Rina Rahim (Towns Fund Programme Manager)
	Black Country Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	Robin Weare (Assistant Director – Highways)/ Tony McGovern
9 th February 2023	Sandwell Development Plan Issues & Options	Andy Miller
	Friar Park Masterplan	Tammy Stokes/ Joshua Singh
9 th March 2023	Corporate Fleet Management	Larry Wolf (Waste and Fleet Service Manager)/ Alice Davey (Director of Borough Economy)
	Bus Service Improvement Plan	Andy Miller
	Outcome of E-Scooters Trial	Andy Miller

Items to be scheduled:

Review of private hire and hackney carriage licensing policy – late 2022/early 2023

Local Transport Plan – TfWM via Andy Miller

Visit to Europa cycle path to be scheduled

Update from Officer's in relation to Europa cycle path petition – Briefing Note

Waste Scrutiny Update – Briefing Note

Scrutiny Review/s**Review of the 2017-2022 Strategic Road Safety Plan**