

# Black Country | **Plan**

Planning for the future of the Black Country



HOUSING



ENVIRONMENT



EMPLOYMENT



TRANSPORT

## Draft Plan Consultation

August - October 2021

## Sandwell borough summary

# We are reviewing the Black Country Plan and would like to hear your views.

## Introduction

The Black Country Authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton are consulting on a new Draft Plan for the Black Country. This Plan will identify where new employment and housing development will be located and where investment for new infrastructure, such as transport, schools and green space will be made.

This document provides a summary of the main proposals in the Draft Black Country Plan relating to Sandwell. If you would like to read the full version of the Draft Plan you can find this on the Black Country Plan website, or it is available at a number of council buildings. Details can be found at the end of this document.

## What is a Local Plan?

All Local Planning Authorities are required by Government to write a Local Plan that describes where the necessary development over the next 20 years or so will be located and how it will be dealt with through the planning process.

The Local Plan is a planning document which is used to help decide planning applications. It considers the amount of land required to support future jobs and provide new housing and where additional retail, office and leisure development is needed. The Local Plan also considers whether any additional supporting infrastructure (e.g. schools, green space, utilities, health services, public transport, cycle routes and highway improvements) is required.

## What is the Black Country Plan?

The Black Country Plan is a joint Local Plan prepared by the four Black Country Authorities (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton). The Plan will direct where new housing and employment development will be located in the Black Country up to 2039.

The Plan will make key decisions like:

- **New Housing** - How much new housing is needed? How much can be provided in sustainable locations and where will it go? What type and density of housing should be provided and how much affordable housing?
- **Employment land** - Where does employment land need protection? How much new employment land is needed and where should it go?
- **Supporting infrastructure and services** - What improvements to transport, schools, green space, etc, will be needed to support new development? Where will new services be located?
- **In the face of new development** how will the natural and historic environment be protected and improved?

## Why are we reviewing the Black Country Plan?

The Government requires Local Authorities to have Local Plans that are less than five years old and are based on up to date information. If a Local Plan is not up to date it will have less weight at planning appeals and this will mean that the local planning authorities are less able to control new development. Having an up to date Plan in place helps local planning authorities to turn down development proposed by landowners and developers, where it considers the proposal to be inappropriate.

We need to review the Black Country Plan to ensure that we can plan for new homes and jobs in the right places. If we don't review the Plan, we risk seeing unplanned development which might not be supported by the right services and facilities.

## **Do we have a plan in place now?**

Yes, our current plan, called the Black Country Core Strategy, was formally adopted in 2011. This Plan provided the framework to allocate enough housing and employment land to meet the Black Country's development needs up to 2026. These allocations have been made through other Local Plan documents – in Sandwell these are the Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (SAD), West Bromwich, Smethwick and Tipton Action Area Plans (AAPs).

When we have finished the new Black Country Plan and it is adopted (i.e. it has been examined and approved by an independent Planning Inspector and approved by Councillors for the four local authorities), it will replace the Black Country Core Strategy (2011) and parts of the Sandwell SAD and the AAPs.

## **When did we start reviewing the Black Country Plan?**

We started reviewing the Black Country Plan in 2017. We held a public consultation in July 2017 – September 2017 on the issues facing the Black Country and some possible solutions. Following the Issues and Options consultation we have now produced the next stage of the Plan preparation process which is the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan considers the responses we received to the Issues and Options consultation along with a range of other technical studies which we have produced on planning issues.

## **What does the Black Country Plan need to plan for?**

The Draft Black Country Plan we are consulting on sets out proposed planning policies and proposed land allocations to guide and manage the development of the Black Country up to 2039.

Our economy, our population and the number of households is growing, and the Plan needs to identify land to meet our future employment needs and ensure that enough homes can be built to accommodate new households. We need to provide enough land to build approximately 76,076 homes by 2039. This would mean increasing the number of homes that are currently built across the Black Country from 2,600 homes per year to 4,000 homes per year. We know this because the Government has published the housing need figures for each local authority which must be used when preparing a Local Plan. We also need around 565 hectares (ha) of employment land to provide enough jobs to accommodate the growth needs of our existing and future businesses.

We also need to plan for:

- How we will address climate change
- How we will create healthy and safe places
- How we will protect and enhance the historic and natural environment
- The design standards that new development should meet
- How we will provide housing to meet the needs of different residents, including affordable housing
- How we will maintain vibrant and attractive town centres



## What does the Draft Black Country Plan propose?

- The Plan allocates around 1,200 hectares (ha) of housing land (the equivalent of 1,800 football pitches) to provide at least 47,837 new homes. This will be provided on a mix of existing sites (including those with planning permission and carried over from current Local Plan documents) and new sites.
- The Plan supports the recovery and growth of the economy, particularly in key employment sectors such as advanced manufacturing; and will deliver the development of at least 354ha of employment land, which is the equivalent of 531 football pitches.
- In the light of the challenges facing our high streets, the Plan will facilitate the rejuvenation and diversification of our centres as places to live, work, shop and visit.
- The Plan seeks to minimise the amount of waste generated across all sectors and increase the re-use, recycling, and recovery rates of waste material.
- Identifies provision within the Black Country for up to 6.2 million tonnes of quarried construction aggregate (sand and gravel) to 2039, and around 720,800 tonnes per annum of secondary and recycled aggregates each year.
- The Plan ensures that sufficient physical, social and environmental infrastructure will be delivered to meet identified needs and support growth.

## Where will the growth be?

- The Draft Plan seeks to deliver the majority of development in the existing urban area making use of brownfield land (i.e. previously developed land), vacant properties and surplus industrial land. The density of the housing development (i.e. the amount of housing build on a site) will be increased to ensure this land is used efficiently. This will provide enough land to build around 40,117 new homes and 306 ha of employment land. This land is located in:
  - the Strategic Centres of Brierley Hill, West Bromwich Town Centre, Walsall Town Centre and Wolverhampton City Centre;
  - Core Regeneration Areas covering the central area of the Borough.
- We are aiming to use as much land in the urban area as possible but there is a significant shortage of sites in the urban area to meet our future housing and employment needs.
- Therefore, we are proposing to remove sites from the green belt to provide an additional 7,720 homes and 47.8 ha of employment land. The majority of these homes are provided in the proposed new Neighbourhood Growth Areas with the remainder provided on small sites on the edge of the Towns and Neighbourhood Areas.
- The proposed Neighbourhood Growth Areas are located in highly sustainable locations and will provide 250 homes or more on the edge of the urban area where there are existing pedestrian and public transport routes and high levels of access to local services (such as schools or health services). In some cases, new services may need to be provided as part of a new development. We are not proposing any Neighbourhood Growth Areas in Sandwell.

You can see these areas for Sandwell on the plan shown in this document.

## **Why are we proposing to develop in the green belt?**

The green belt around the Black Country forms part of the West Midlands Green Belt which has been in place since 1975. Green belt is a national planning designation and national policy strictly controls which types of development can take place within it.

The Black Country Councils attach great importance to the green belt. However, the green belt boundary is drawn tightly around the urban edges. To help meet our future housing and employment land needs, there is an exceptional circumstance to alter the green belt boundaries through the Black Country Plan review process, to release land for housing and employment development. It is proposed to remove 6% of the green belt area in the Black Country for development. The new Black Country green belt boundaries are intended to be permanent and should not need to be changed in future.

The Councils have undertaken an extensive review of the green belt, taking into account evidence on historical, ecological and landscape value and local character. A comprehensive site assessment process has taken place to ensure that all sites selected for removal from the green belt can deliver sustainable development and the necessary supporting infrastructure by 2039, and will not cause harm to the natural or historic character of the Black Country or breach any other planning policies. Where sites are removed from the green belt, developers will be required to pay for improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining green belt land nearby.

## **Are we able to build all future housing and employment land that we need in the Black Country?**

No. We need to find enough land to build 76,076 homes and provide 565 ha of new employment land. The land we have identified in the Draft Plan will provide 47,837 homes and 354ha of employment land, this will allow most of our housing and employment land needs to be met in the Black Country. However, there will be a shortfall of 28,239 homes and 211 ha of employment land as we do not have enough land available to accommodate all of our development needs.

The Government requires neighbouring local authorities to work together to meet housing and employment land needs when producing Local Plans – this is called the “Duty to Cooperate”. Under the Duty to Cooperate, we are asking neighbouring authorities, such as South Staffordshire, Lichfield, Cannock Chase, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, to provide additional housing and employment land in their areas to meet the needs of the Black Country. Currently there have been offers from neighbouring authorities of between 8,000 to 9,500 homes and 102- 173 ha of employment land to be tested through their own Local Plan reviews.

## What does this mean for Sandwell?

- In Sandwell, we are proposing to provide enough land to build 9,158 additional new homes over the next 15 years and provide 26ha of new employment land.
- We have adopted new Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs) designations and have made some amendments to existing designations.

## Where will future growth be allocated?

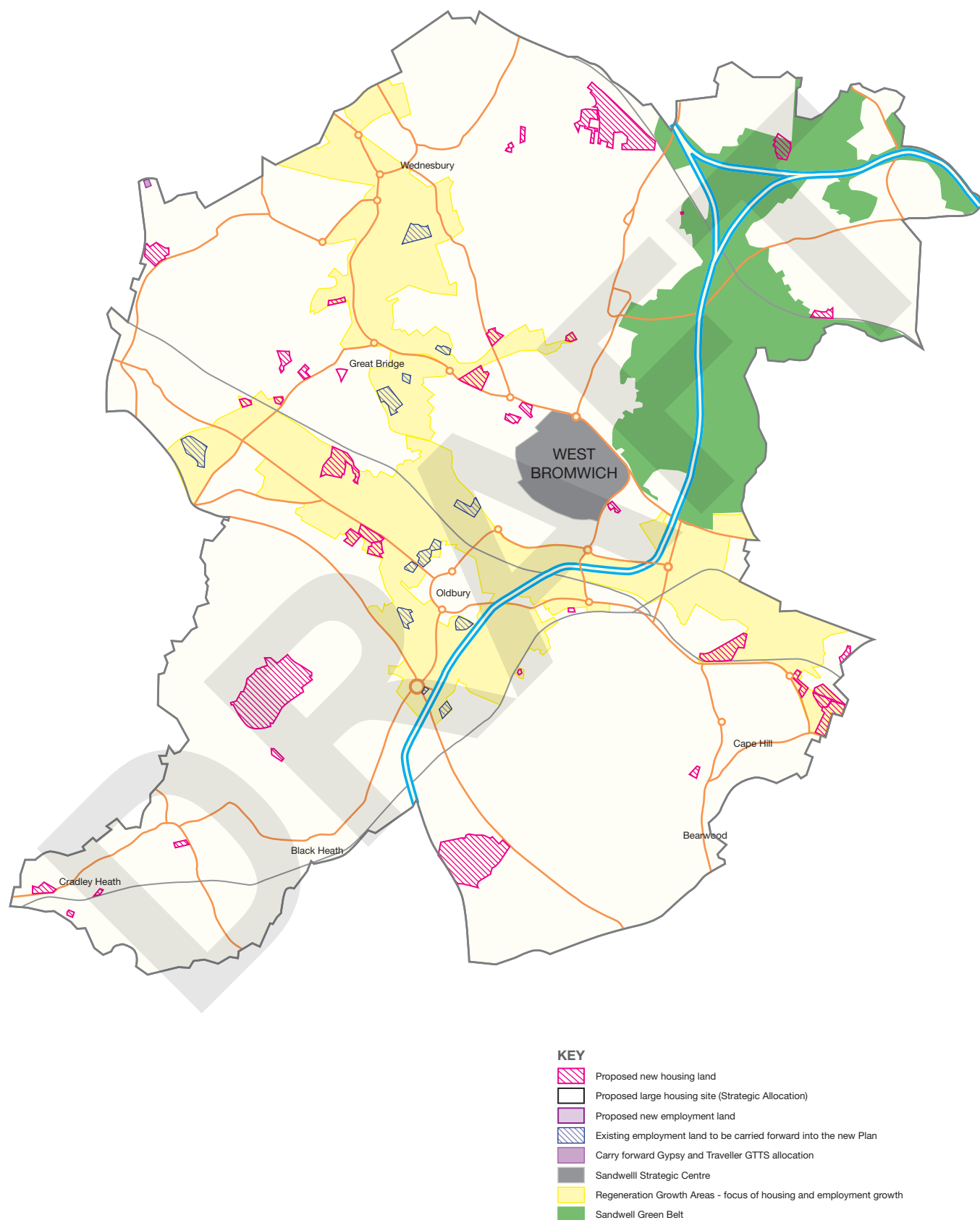
- 8,719 homes will be provided in the urban area on brownfield sites (sites that have been previously developed) or some green space (these are sites non- green belt) sites. This includes land already identified for housing in our existing plans. We will carry these sites forward into the new Black Country Plan, as well as identifying some new sites.
- A 171 further homes, will be provided in the green belt. We are proposing to release a total of 7 hectares (ha) of land from the green belt.

Site Name	Ward	Hectares (ha) of land to be developed (net)	Number of homes to be built
<b>Land off Tanhouse Avenue, Great Barr</b>	Newton	1.25	50
<b>Charlemont Community Centre</b>	Charlemont with Grove Vale	0.05	1
<b>Land to North of Painswick Close Sub Station</b>	Great Barr with Yew Tree	4.30	120
<b>Total</b>		<b>5.60</b>	<b>171</b>

- 26ha of employment land will be identified in the urban area, most of this land has already been identified in our existing plans and will be carried over into the new Plan.
- The plan overleaf below shows the proposed distribution of the housing and employment land for Sandwell.
  - The majority of sites are located within the urban area. This includes sites within Core Regeneration Area taking in parts of West Bromwich, Oldbury, Smethwick, Tipton and Wednesbury.
  - Two sites on the edge of the green belt in West Bromwich and Great Barr have been included, Land at Tanhouse Avenue, Great Barr, Painswick Close Yew Tree and the site at Charlemont Community Centre, West Bromwich.
- A more detailed map showing all the sites can be found on the following link <https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/t2/p4/> or paper copies can be viewed in local libraries or key Sandwell Council buildings.

# PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS

Note - subject to amendment following cabinet meetings, before public consultation.



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A complete list of all sites can be found at  
<https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/bcp/>

# What happens next?

## We want your views

You can view the Draft Black Country Plan and supporting documents at: <https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/t2/p4/> . You can also view a copy of the Draft Black Country Plan document and a map of proposed development allocations in Sandwell at the following venues:

**Sandwell Council House** Freeth Street , Oldbury B69 3DE

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**Central Library West Bromwich** High Street, West Bromwich B70 8DZ

**Blackheath Library** High Street, Blackheath, Rowley Regis B65 0EA

**Cradley Heath Library** Upper High Street, Cradley Heath B64 5JU

**Great Bridge Library** Sheepwash Lane, Tipton DY5 7JF

**Oldbury Library** Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury B69 3DE

**Smethwick Library** High Street, Smethwick B66 1AA

**Tipton Library** Owen House, 17 Unity Walk, Tipton DY4 8QL

**Wednesbury Library** Walsall Street, Wednesbury WS10 9EH

**Bleakhouse Library** Bleakhouse Road, Oldbury B69 9DS

**Brandhall Library** Tame Road, Oldbury B68 0JT

**Glebefields Library** St Marks Road, Tipton DY4 0SZ

**Hamstead Library** Tanhouse Centre, Hamstead Road, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 5EL

**Hill Top Library** Park Buildings, Hill Top, West Bromwich B70 0RZ

**Langley Library** Barrs Road, Oldbury B68 8TQ

**Oakham Library** Poplar Rise, Tividale, Oldbury B69 1RD

**Rounds Green Library** Martley Road, Oldbury B69 1DZ

**Stone Cross Library** Beverley Road, Stone Cross, West Bromwich B71 2LH

**Thimblemill Library** Thimblemill Road, Smethwick B67 5RJ



## Have your say

You can send your comments to us in any of the three ways

### Visit the website:

Complete our online survey at: [www.blackcountryplan.co.uk](http://www.blackcountryplan.co.uk)

### Email:

[blackcountryplan@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:blackcountryplan@dudley.gov.uk)

### Write to us:

Black Country Plan  
Planning & Regeneration, 4 Ednam Road, Dudley DY1 1HL

You can also fill in a response form and leave it at the library or at the Reception of Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury B69 3DE.

We will use the responses to inform the preparation of the next stage of the Plan, which is called the Publication Black Country Plan. There will be a further consultation on the Publication Plan in summer 2022 – however, at this stage, responses will only be sought on whether the Plan has been prepared in accordance with legislation and national planning guidance.

### Plan making process timetable

Stage	Date
Consultation on the Draft Publication Plan	August - September 2022
Submission of Plan to Secretary of State for Examination	March 2023
Examination in Public	April 2023 – March 2024
Adoption	April 2024