



# INTERIM PLANNING STATEMENT FOR WEST BROMWICH TOWN CENTRE

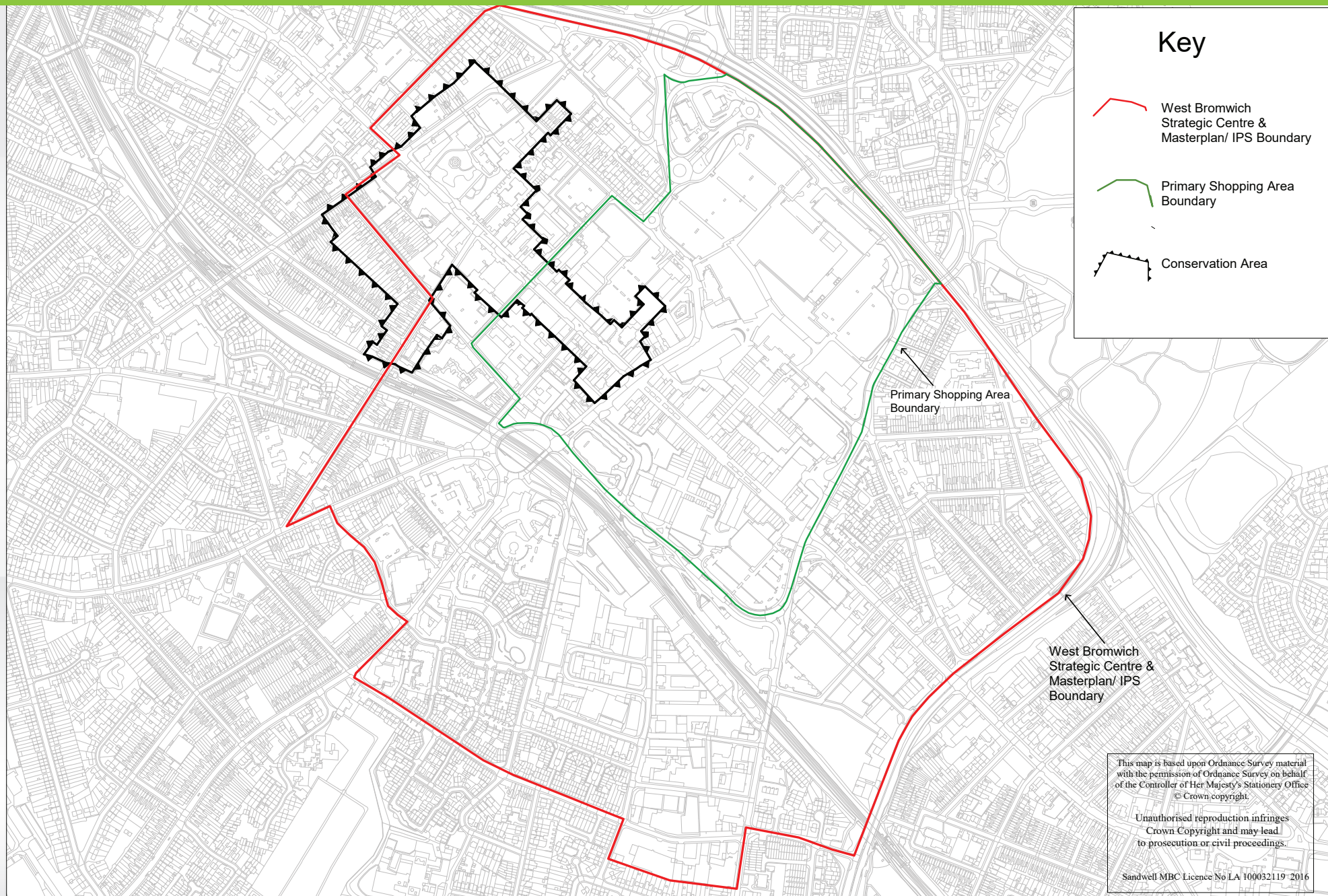
To be read in conjunction with the West Bromwich Masterplan

**January 2022**





# WEST BROMWICH STRATEGIC CENTRE, MASTERPLAN/INTERIM PLANNING STATEMENT BOUNDARY





## WHAT IS THE INTERIM PLANNING STATEMENT FOR WEST BROMWICH?

Sandwell MBC has prepared an Interim Planning Statement (IPS) for West Bromwich, which will help to guide development in the West Bromwich Town Centre area until the revised West Bromwich Area Action Plan (WBAAP) is adopted.

This statement sets out the anticipated 'direction of travel' of planning policy for West Bromwich, and the general locations and scale of development anticipated.

This statement provides confidence to developers and land owners on what can be accommodated in the town centre and on what the Council expects to see delivered as part of the ongoing regeneration of West Bromwich.

The wider West Bromwich area contained within the WBAAP 2012 (outside the red line boundary on plan to the left) is not included in the IPS. This will be covered by the Black Country Plan and Sandwell Development Plan





## DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

The Black Country Core Strategy (2011) outlines the strategic spatial vision for future development in the Black Country. This is currently being reviewed (renamed the Black Country Plan) and the Draft Black Country Plan has been to public consultation during the summer of 2021, with adoption anticipated in 2024.

Development plan proposals for West Bromwich Centre are set out in a hierarchy of planning policy documents, with site-specific policies and proposals currently contained within the WBAAP, which was adopted in December 2012.

Local plans need to be consistent with the strategic planning framework to determine development proposals and the WBAAP cannot be updated in advance of the Black Country Plan and Sandwell Development Plan.

However, the current WBAAP is becoming out of date; it contains policies and proposals for retailing, employment, office development and residential development in West Bromwich that have now been overtaken by recent events and economic shifts.

The Interim Planning Statement will provide up to date guidance until the WBAAP can be formally updated.

Sandwell Council is looking to deliver transformational change to West Bromwich Town Centre, to create a place that people can be proud to call their home, where people live, work and play and a place that is capable of capitalising on the significant opportunities that will be available in the West Midlands.

To achieve this ambition, Sandwell MBC commissioned a Masterplan for West Bromwich in October 2020.





## The Objective Of The Masterplan Is

*'to provide a vision to enable sustainable economic growth for the town and how intervention sites identified can be transformed and regenerated for the future'*

The role of the Interim Planning Statement (IPS) is to facilitate land use proposals in the town centre of the Masterplan where they are at variance with the adopted West Bromwich Area Action Plan (WBAAP) until the Sandwell local development plan can be updated.

The IPS and Masterplan will inform related planning decisions in the Town Centre and will also act as a precursor to the full review and adoption of the WBAAP, anticipated post-2024. In this interim period, the IPS and Masterplan will provide confidence to developers and land owners when they are making decisions on the use, development and disposal of land, buildings and sites within the town centre.

The IPS and Masterplan will be material considerations when determining planning applications.

The IPS and Masterplan are to be used as a catalyst for future bidding to external organisations such as the Local Enterprise Partnership, West Midlands Combined Authority, Government Towns Fund / Future High Streets Fund and others, as opportunities arise for grant funding support.





## CURRENT SITUATION

In the years since adoption, many of the growth and development aspirations of the WBAAP

have become reality. For example, the following have been brought forward over recent years:

Other major developments include realignment of West Bromwich Ringway, Lyng Medical Centre, New Leisure Centre, and more.



**New Square**



**Lyng Residential Redevelopment**



**Sandwell College Central Campus**



**Lyng Residential Redevelopment**



**Lyng Residential Redevelopment**



**Lyng Residential Redevelopment**



These developments have led to a significant transformation of the town over recent years that has seen it reinforce its position in the Black Country as one of the four strategic centres. It has a renewed capacity to serve the needs of local people, the wider population and the business community.

Although still relevant, the pace and extent of changes since 2012 has meant that in some areas the WBAAP no longer reflects the current direction of new development or how the town can capitalise on emerging opportunities.

#### **Key issues include: -**

- The loss of comparison retail shopping (i.e. clothes, shoes, electrical goods etc) to the internet.
- Increased levels of convenience (food) shopping also being undertaken online.
- The rise of limited-range food discounters.
- 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 changes: this has seen considerable numbers of new dwellings created from the conversion of existing offices in the centre. This is mirrored across the nation and is unlikely to be reversed.
- Technological changes driven by people working from home has led to reduced demand for offices in centres, with levels of future demand now uncertain.
- 'Knock-on' effects of reduced office occupancy on aspects of the service economy dependent on high footfall in centres like West Bromwich,

These trends have been greatly accelerated by Covid pandemic-related opening restrictions on non-essential retail and services. Predicted levels of retail expenditure growth forecast in the 2012 WBAAP will not now come forward. There is a clear excess of retail floorspace in the centre that requires repurposing.





## TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Area Action Plan had as one of its key objectives the need to improve accessibility and movement within the area by;

- Giving greater priority to pedestrian movements in certain parts of the town centre.
- Developing routes and crossings that are safe and attractive and balance the needs of the pedestrian and the car.
- Promoting the use of public transport, through improvements to infrastructure and accessibility to services.
- Promotion of greater priority measures for public transport to improve service provision both in and around the centre.

- Developing a hierarchy of roads across the town that meet the needs of an expanded town centre.
- Providing appropriate levels of short and long stay car parking that meet the future long term needs of the town.
- Providing a co-ordinated approach to signage, furniture, lighting and paving materials to create a stronger sense of place and identity.

These elements continue to underpin the transport strategy for the town. Many of the proposals identified in the AAP in 2012 have been delivered; the underpass on the A41, alterations to the Ringway, Metro Plaza and much of the pedestrian and public realm improvements. Much of the cycling

infrastructure proposed in the AAP is now either being delivered or will be in the next few years, funded through such initiatives as the Government's Towns Fund and Active Travel Fund.





During 2021 the West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme was rolled out across the metropolitan area, including in West Bromwich. Cycle Hire docks are located in nine locations around the Town and at Sandwell & Dudley Railway Station around a kilometre to the south. The scheme is expected to be expanded further over the next two to three years to cover more of the borough including West Bromwich's hinterland.

A major transport driver affecting the local economy and housing provision is the development and extension of the West Midlands Metro network. West Bromwich is a key point on the network that links Birmingham city centre with Wolverhampton and, when the extension is complete, to Dudley and Brierley Hill. The development of a 'turn-back' facility and third platform at West Bromwich Central stop would enable services to start and stop in West Bromwich facilitating a potential doubling of frequency of services into Birmingham. Significantly increased connectivity would influence the viability of retail, office and residential markets particularly in competition with and in support of West Bromwich's largest and most influential market - Birmingham. The extension of the metro to New Street Station was completed in 2016 and will eventually reach Birmingham Airport. These extensions further enhance and influence national and international connectivity. The stop will also

play an important role in making best use of the extension to Brierley Hill, by allowing more flexible service patterns.

The proposals contained in the Masterplan will result in significant changes to the patterns of movement across the town for all modes. The location and quantum of car parking will also be reviewed to meet the changed and emerging needs. The impact of car parking on the vitality and viability of the town centre needs to be considered within the context of the need to address air quality issues and the Council's commitments in relation to climate change.

A complementary transport strategy will be developed in recognition of these issues and will be an integral component of the reviewed AAP.





## PROPOSED WAY FORWARD:

### Intensification

- To support and grow an evening economy and provide economic drivers for other services and uses, the centre of West Bromwich needs to intensify. This will involve buildings with greater height and capacity. Residential use in particular will be sought on upper floors. Developing a vibrant, mixed use town centre is a top priority.

### Additional dwellings

- There is a strategic need for more dwellings in Sandwell and the wider Black Country Plan area, as shown by the draft Black Country Plan, Sandwell Strategic Housing Land Availability assessments (SHLAA) and Black Country Urban Capacity Review Update.
- Additional dwellings will be a significant factor in West Bromwich. They will capitalise on the centre's excellent and sustainable public transport links. They will bolster a consolidated retail offer, support service uses, add to the centre's vitality and viability, and boost the night time economy.

### Retail capacity / repurposing

- Retail capacity in West Bromwich exceeds the level that can be sustained, as evidenced by the current number of vacant units.
- Emerging retail capacity forecasts show no increase in retail floorspace requirements up to 2028. Consolidation, renewal and repurposing is required.
- New Square has changed the 'centre of gravity' of the Town Centre and there are areas of the town that are in clear decline. A Retail Diversification Program is required to fund the acquisition, remediation and redevelopment of sites for new homes and a sustainable level of retail and service uses on repurposed and regenerated brownfield sites.
- Community, education and health uses will assume a greater importance in the centre, taking advantage of the centre's excellent sustainable transport links.
- A program of Urban Greening will provide a central linear park and pocket parks forming a route through the centre to Dartmouth Park.

- This will incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) principles. These parks will promote non-transactional interactions, with places for informal association, increasing community contact in the centre, and adding footfall, vitality and viability.





## PROPOSAL SITES

The 2012 West Bromwich Area Action Plan sets out the adopted development plan allocations. IPS/Masterplan-proposed changes are on the maps that follow. These show:

- the existing WBAAP location and allocated use,
- the new land use proposals in the IPS/Masterplan,
- the intended scale of the IPS/Masterplan proposals.

This should be read in conjunction with the Masterplan, which shows in greater detail the proposals, scale, massing and interactions.

Note: proposal site numbers are carried forward from the WBAAP 2012 for ease of reference. However, boundaries do not always coincide. In particular, WBPR4 & WBPR5 should be viewed together, while WBPR3 allocation boundary does not match the Masterplan 'Pocket Park' boundary.

## WEST BROMWICH AREA ACTION PLAN

ADOPTED DECEMBER 2012





# SITE WBPR2: QUEENS SQUARE



## Queens Square WBPr2

Current WBAAP Allocation:  
Retail plus small amount of  
complementary uses.

**Proposed Use :**  
**Now to include:**  
**Retail/ Residential**  
**Leisure/ Community**

Scale 1:1500



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# SITE WBPR3: TOWN SQUARE WEST



## WBPr3 Town Square West

Current WBAAP Allocation:  
A1 Retail/ B1 Business/  
C3 Residential

**Proposed Use :**  
**Now to include**  
**Pocket Park.**

**Site Area:** 1.36 hectares

**Current allocation:** A1 Retail /  
B1 Business / C3 Residential

**Indicative proposed uses:** F &  
B 260m<sup>2</sup>, Community / Leisure  
1350m<sup>2</sup> 'Pocket Park', Car  
parking 77m<sup>2</sup>

See West Bromwich Masterplan  
Zone 4 'Pocket Park' p102.

Scale 1:2000



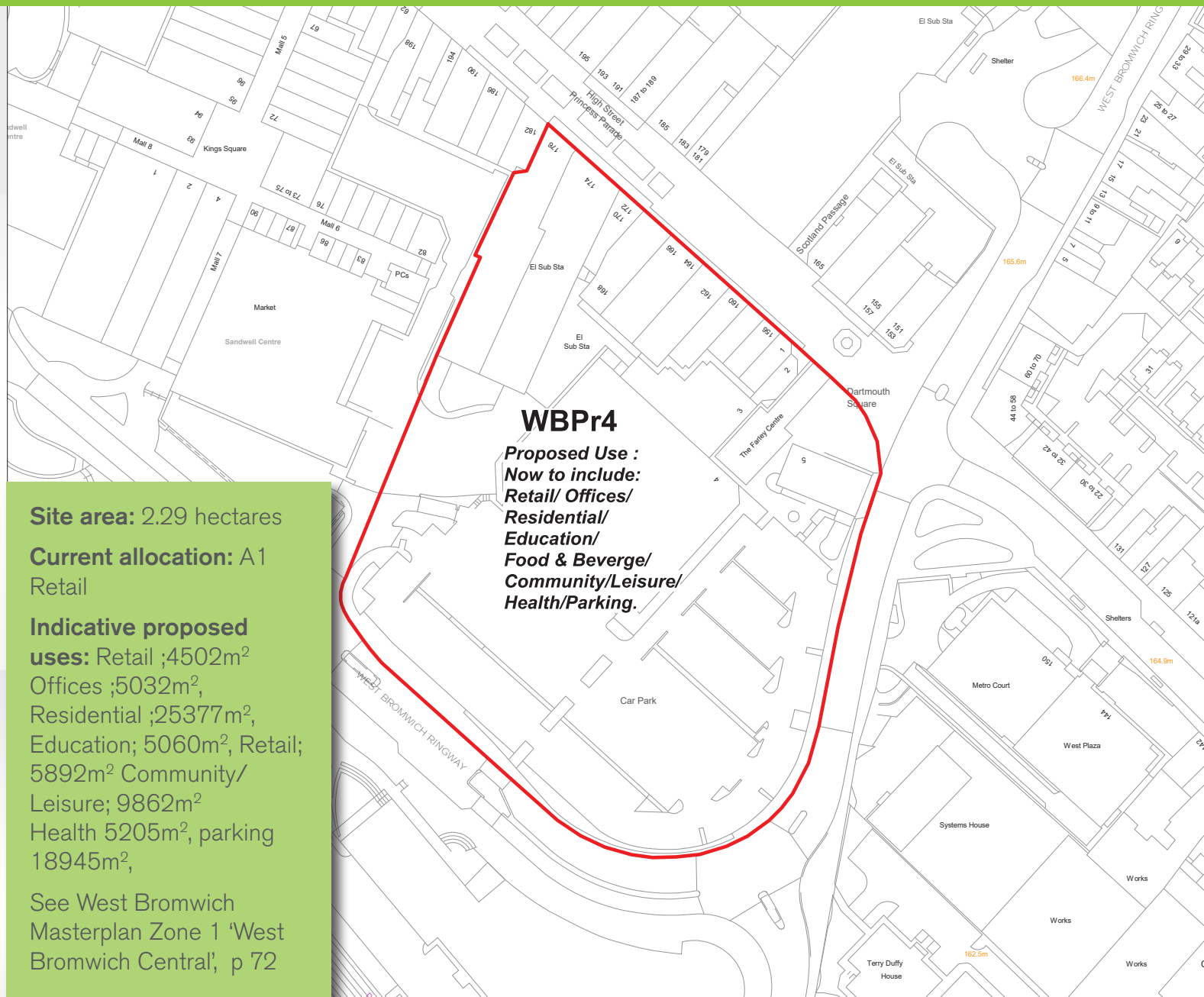
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# SITE WBPR4: THE FARLEY CENTRE (see in conjunction with WBPR5)



**Site area:** 2.29 hectares

**Current allocation:** A1  
Retail

**Indicative proposed uses:** Retail ;4502m<sup>2</sup>  
Offices ;5032m<sup>2</sup>,  
Residential ;25377m<sup>2</sup>,  
Education; 5060m<sup>2</sup>, Retail;  
5892m<sup>2</sup> Community/  
Leisure; 9862m<sup>2</sup>  
Health 5205m<sup>2</sup>, parking  
18945m<sup>2</sup>,

See West Bromwich  
Masterplan Zone 1 'West  
Bromwich Central', p 72

## WBPR4

**Proposed Use :  
Now to include:**  
Retail/ Offices/  
Residential/  
Education/  
Food & Beverage/  
Community/Leisure/  
Health/Parking.



## WBPR4 Farley Centre

**Current WBAAP Allocation:**  
A1 Retail

**Proposed Use :  
Now to include:**  
Retail/ Offices/  
Residential/  
Education/  
Food & Beverage/  
Community/Leisure/  
Health/Parking.

Scale 1:1500



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# SITE WBPR5: KING'S SQUARE (see in conjunction with WBPR4)



**Site area:** 1.5 hectares

**Current allocation:** A1 Retail

**Indicative proposed uses:** See WBPR4 on previous page.

See West Bromwich Masterplan Zone 1 'West Bromwich Central', p 72



## King's Square WBPR5

Current WBAAP Allocation:  
A1 Retail

**Proposed Use :**  
**Now to include:**  
**Retail/ Offices**  
**Residential/Education**  
**F & B**  
**Community/Leisure**  
**Health/Parking**

Scale 11500



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# SITE WBPR10: TOWN HALL COMPLEX



## Town Hall Complex WBPr10

Current WBAAP Allocation:  
Mixed Use: Cultural /Leisure/  
Office/ Retail /Cafes/ Bars.

**Proposed Use :**  
**Now to include:**  
**Residential ,**  
**Food & Beverage,**  
**Community/Leisure**  
**Parking**

**Site area:** 1.1hectares

**Current allocation:** Mixed  
Use: Cultural / Leisure/ Office;  
Retail / Cafes and Bars

**Indicative proposed uses:**  
Residential 5450m<sup>2</sup>, Food and  
Beverage; 1054m<sup>2</sup>, Community  
/ Leisure; 2000m<sup>2</sup>, Car parking  
spaces 123m<sup>2</sup>

See West Bromwich  
Masterplan Zone 3 'Cultural  
Quarter' p96

Scale 1:1500



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# SITE WBPR11: IZONS ROAD



## Izons Road WBPr11

Current WBAAP Allocation:  
Car Park

**Proposed Use :**  
**No change\***

**\*(Boundary amended  
to exclude dwellings)**

Scale 1:1500



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**Site area:** 0.31 hectares

**Current allocation:** Car park

**Indicative proposed use:** No change to the use, however the boundary has been amended to exclude residential area



# SITE WBPR13: NORTH LYNNG



**WBPr13**  
**Proposed Use :**  
**Future Mixed Use**

Site area: ?

Current allocation: ??

Indicative proposed uses: ??

See West Bromwich  
 Masterplan ??



**North Lyng  
 WBPr13**

Current WBAAP Allocation:  
 B1 Office.

**Proposed Use :**  
**Future Mixed Use**

Scale 1:2000

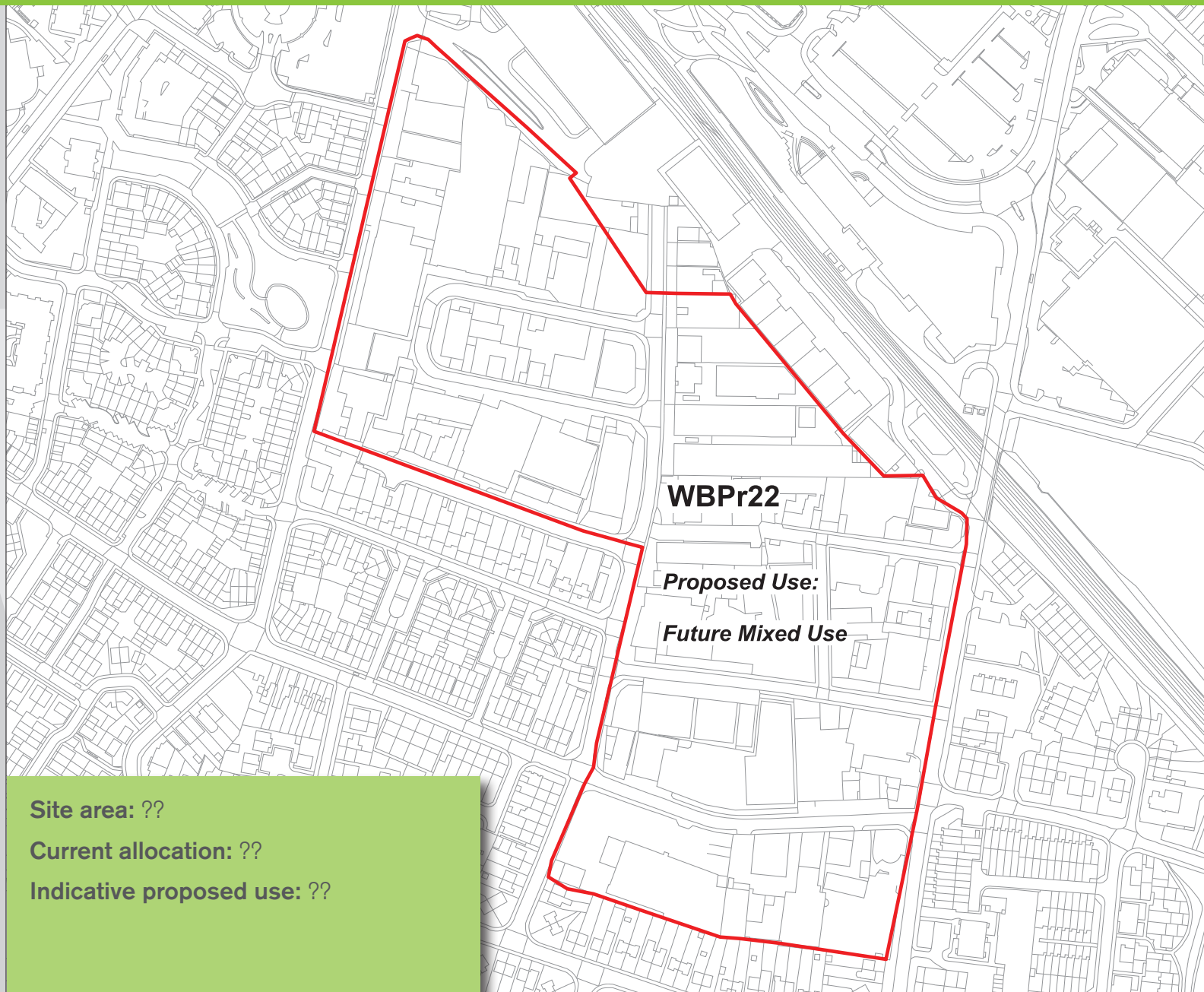


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# SITE WBPR22: NORTH LYNG INDUSTRIAL ESTATE



## Lyng Industrial Estate WBPr22

Current WBAAP Allocation:  
Residential

**Proposed Use:**  
**Future Mixed Use**

Scale 1:3000



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Site area: ??

Current allocation: ??

Indicative proposed use: ??



# SITE WBPR16: EASTERN GATEWAY SOUTH



## Eastern Gateway South WBPR16

Current WBAAP Allocation:  
Mixed use: Retail/ Office/  
Leisure/ Residential/  
Car Parking

**Proposed Use :**  
**to include:**  
**Residential**  
**Community/Leisure**  
**Parking**

**Site area:** 2.35 hectares

**Current allocation:** Mixed Use: Retail  
/ Office / Leisure / Residential / Car  
parking

**Indicative proposed uses:** Residential:  
50232m<sup>2</sup>; Community/Leisure 1150m<sup>2</sup>,  
Car parking spaces 1611m<sup>2</sup>

See West Bromwich Masterplan Zone 5  
'George Street Living' p106

Scale 1:1500



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## CONCLUSION

This interim guidance is intended to provide confidence to developers and land owners on what type and scale of new development can be accommodated in the town centre and will be the policy basis for future bidding from numerous external organisations until the update of the WBAAP.

Where new development proposals are received the IPS and Masterplan will be material considerations.

Should the proposal be contrary to existing adopted policy such as the WBAAP 2012, the Planning Authority retains its ability to refuse the proposal.

This document does not replace the 2012 WBAAP allocations, which remain extant.





