

# Black Country | **Plan**

Planning for the future of the Black Country



HOUSING



ENVIRONMENT



EMPLOYMENT



TRANSPORT

## Draft Plan Consultation

August - October 2021

## Walsall 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 covered in the Draft Black Country Plan relating to Walsall. If you would like to read the full version of the Draft Plan you can find this on the Black Country Plan website at: <https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/bcp/> and in key buildings across the borough. Details can be found at the back 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 provision, 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.

It will guide key issues 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. Sites to ensure these targets are met are allocated through other local plan documents – in Walsall these are the Walsall Site Allocation Document and Town Centre Area Action Plan.

When we have finished the new Black Country Plan and it is adopted (after it has been examined by an Independent Planning Inspector and approved by Councillors) it will replace the Black Country Core Strategy and most of the Walsall Site Allocation Document.

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

We started reviewing the Black Country Plan in 2017. We held a public consultation for eight weeks 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 receive to the Issues and Options consultation along with a range of other technical studies 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:
  - o The Strategic Centres of Brierley Hill, West Bromwich Town Centre, Walsall Town Centre and Wolverhampton City Centre;
  - o Core Regeneration Areas in and around town/district centres and along transport networks, such as Walsall to Wolverhampton; and
  - o existing Towns and Neighbourhoods Areas such as Walsall itself, Aldridge, Bloxwich and Brownhills.
- 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.

You can see these areas for Walsall 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 Walsall?

In Walsall we are proposing to provide enough land to build an additional 13,344 new homes and provide 164ha of employment land over the period to 2039.

### Where will future growth be allocated?

The majority (7,926) of these new homes will be provided in the urban area on brownfield sites (sites that have been previously developed), with a small number on surplus open space. 128ha of the employment land also comprises brownfield sites in the urban area.

The brownfield sites are identified for housing or employment in our existing plans and many of them have planning permission. We will carry these sites forward into the new Black Country Plan.

5,418 of the homes and 47ha of the employment land will be provided on land that is currently in the green belt. A total of 347ha of land is involved. This is the equivalent of roughly 485 football pitches. Not all of this land will be built on. Some of it will be used to provide new areas of open space to serve the new homes, and land to enhance nature conservation.

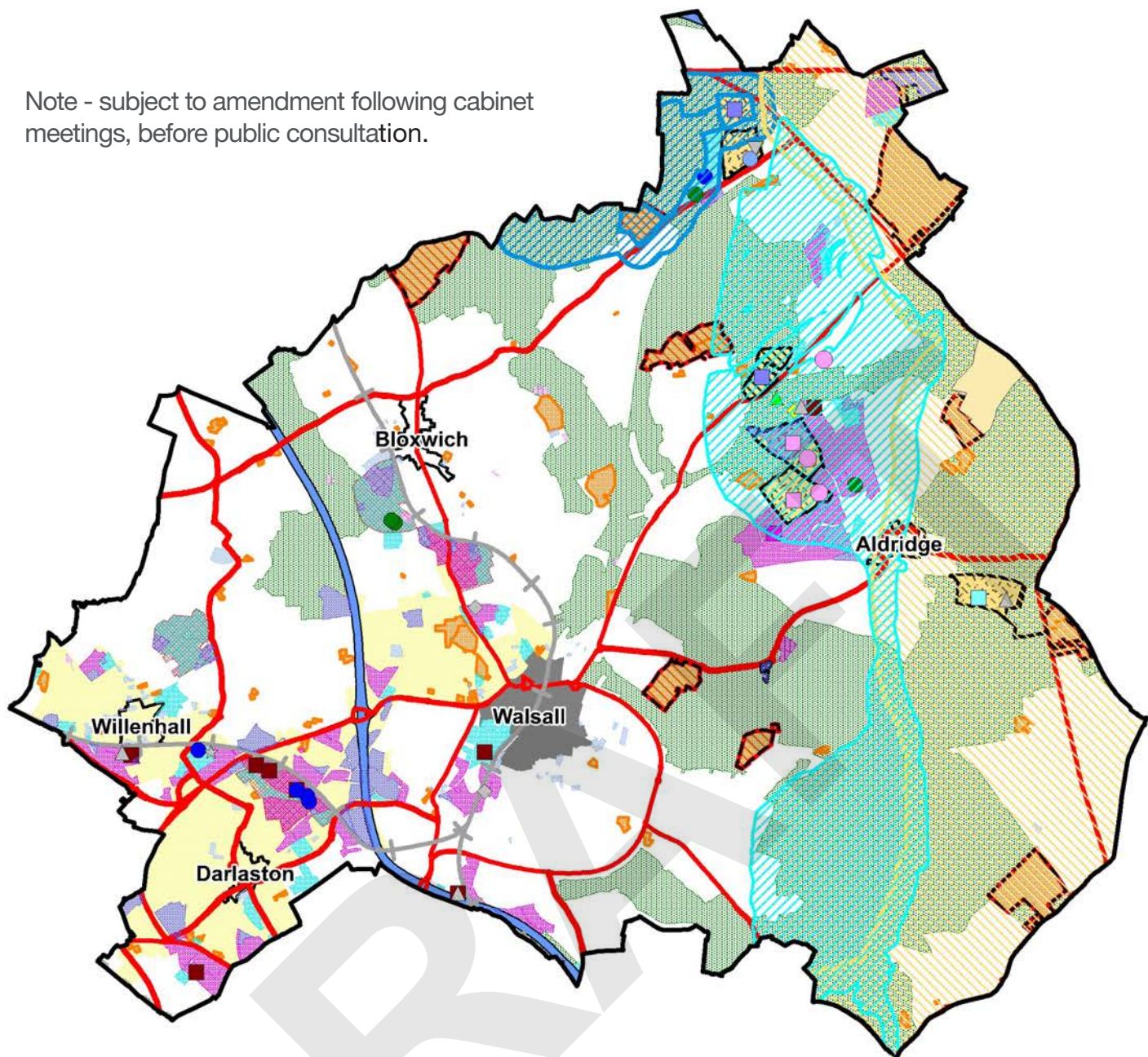
There are 32 new housing and employment sites currently in the green belt that are proposed for allocation in the Black Country Plan. These including the following large sites:

Site Name		Hectares (ha) of land to be developed (net)	Number of homes to be built
<b>Home Farm, Sandhills</b>	Aldridge North and Walsall Wood	54	800
<b>Yieldsfield Farm, Bloxwich</b>	Bloxwich East	37	600
<b>Queslett Road East/ Aldridge Road</b>	Streetly	42	960
<b>Sutton Road/ Longwood Lane</b>	Pheasey Park Farm	8	202
<b>Yorks Bridge, Pelsall</b>	Pelsall	13	580
<b>Coronation Road/ Mob Lane</b>	Aldridge North and Walsall Wood	30	763
<b>Calderfield, Aldridge Road</b>	St Matthews	19	442
<b>Bentley Lane (Beatwaste)</b>	Short Heath	11	Employment
<b>Johnsons Farm/ Meadow Farm, Watling Street</b>	Brownhills	8	Employment

The map overleaf below shows the proposed distribution of all new housing and employment land for Walsall.

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 Walsall Council buildings.

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



NORTH

## Walsall Spatial Strategy

### Key

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| Housing Allocations (HOU1)                           | Metal Recycling Sites (MRSs)                      | Active Quarry  |   |
| Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations (HOU4)         | Waste Disposal Installations                      | Pre-operational Quarry   |   |
| Land For Employment (EMP1)                           | Other Significant Waste Management Infrastructure | Dormant Quarry   |   |
| Strategic Employment Areas (EMP2)                    | Hazardous Waste Treatment Infrastructure          | <b>Mineral Extractions Sites &amp; Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MIN2)</b> |   |
| Local Employment Areas (EMP3)                        | Preferred areas for new Waste Facilities (W3)     | Mineral Extraction Site  | Fire Clay Mineral Safeguarding Area     |
| Other Employment Areas (EMP4)                        | <b>Mineral Infrastructure (MIN1)</b>              |  |   |
| Core Regeneration Area (CPS2)                        | Aggregates Recycling Facilities                   | Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area                                |   |
| Neighbourhood Growth Area (CPS3)                     | Concrete Batching Plant                           | Brick Clay Mineral Safeguarding Area                                     | Preferred Area for Sand & Gravel (MIN3) |
| Strategic Allocations                                | Fireclay Stockpile                                | Motorway   |   |
| Tier 1 Strategic Centre (CEN2)                       | Coating Plant                                     | Key Route Network (TRAN1)  | Rail Network (TRAN4)                    |
| Town Centres (CEN3)                                  | Concrete Products                                 | Green Belt (GB1)   |   |
| <b>Waste Infrastructure (W2)</b>                     |   |  |   |
| Municipal Waste Recovery Installations               | Dry Silo Mortar Plant                             |  |   |
| Municipal Waste Recovery – Supporting Infrastructure | Pot Clay Factory                                  |  |   |
|  | Brickworks  |  |   |

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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 Plan and evidence documents at <https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/t2/p4/> . You can also view copies of the Draft Plan documents and a map of proposed land allocations at the following venues:

**Walsall First Stop Shop**

**Bloxwich Library**

**Darlaston Library**

**Willenhall Library**

**Lichfield Street Hub**

**Brownhills Library**

**Streetly Community Library**

**Mobile Library Services**

**Aldridge Library**

## Have your say

### Visit the website:

Complete our online response form 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 Walsall Council First Stop Shop Receptions.

We will use the responses to inform the preparation of the next stage of the Plan which is called the Draft Pre-submission of the Black Country Plan. We intend to publish this in summer 2022 and there will be an opportunity to make representations about this at that time.

## 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