



Walsall Council

Economy and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on: **28 February 2023 AT 6.00PM**

Meeting to be held at: Council Chamber

Public access to meeting via: www.walsallcouncilwebcasts.com

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillor M. Follows (Chair)
Councillor B. Allen (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P. Bott
Councillor C. Creaney
Councillor A. Garcha
Councillor I. Hussain
Councillor P. Kaur
Councillor R. Larden
Councillor A. Nazir
Councillor J. Whitehouse
Councillor R. Worrall

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor M. Bird – Leader of the Council
Councillor A. Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor G. Perry – Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities
Councillor K. Murphy – Clean and Green
Councillor M. Statham – Education and Skills
Councillor G. Flint – Health and Wellbeing

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1.	Apologies To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee.	
2.	Substitutions To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.	
3.	Declarations of interest and party whip To receive declarations of interest or the party whip from Members in respect of items on the agenda.	
4.	Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.	
5.	Minutes of the previous meeting To approve the minutes of the meeting on 2 February 2023.	Enclosed
ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY		
6.	Willenhall Framework Plan To provide the Committee with an update of work undertaken to date in relation to the Willenhall Framework Plan focusing on the delivery of Phase 1, Moat Street and Villiers Street.	Enclosed
7.	Public Toilets across the borough To update the Committee on current public toilet provision and the pilot scheme for public toilets in Bloxwich.	To follow
8.	Play Strategy To provide the Committee with details regarding the play area improvement programme.	Enclosed
9.	Derelict Properties Taskforce To update the Committee on decisions taken at Cabinet in relation to derelict sites.	Enclosed
ITEMS FOR OVERVIEW		
10.	Areas of focus – 2022/23 To consider the areas of focus for the Committee during 2022/23.	Enclosed

11.	Forward Plans To receive the latest Forward Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet • Black Country Joint Executive Committee • West Midlands Combined Authority Board 	Enclosed
12.	Recommendation Tracker To consider progress on recommendations from the previous meeting.	Enclosed
13.	Date of next meeting To note the date of the next meeting will be 13 April 2023.	

The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
 - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
 - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
 - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2 February 2023 at 6.00pm held at Walsall Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall,
WS1 1TW.

Committee Members	Councillor M. Follows (Chair) Councillor B. Allen Councillor C. Creaney Councillor A. Garcha Councillor I. Hussain Councillor P. Kaur Councillor R. Larden Councillor A. Nazir Councillor J. Whitehouse Councillor R. Worrall	
Portfolio Holders	Councillor A. Andrew Councillor G. Perry Councillor K. Murphy Councillor G. Flint	Deputy Leader and Regeneration Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities Clean and Green Health and Wellbeing
Officers Present:	Simon Neilson Dave Brown Fraz Hussain Matt Crowton Kathryn Moreton Jaki Brunton-Douglas Sian Lloyd	Executive Director, Economy, Environment and Communities Director, Place and Environment Lead Accountant, Economy, Environment and Communities Transportation Major Projects & Strategy Manager Head of Highways, Transport & Operations PHP Marketing and Funding Manager Democratic Services Officer
Invited Attendees:	Liam Brooker Hayley Bradbury	West Midlands Rail Executive West Midlands Rail Executive

40/22 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

41/22 Substitutions

There were no substitutions.

42/22 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

43/22 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to consider in private session.

44/22 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

45/22 **Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Railway Stations**

Due to technical issues with remote attendees to the meeting it was agreed that this item should be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee to allow for a full discussion at that time.

Resolved:

That:

- 1. The report on Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Railway Stations be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.**

46/22 **Corporate Financial Performance 2022/23 – 7-month position ended 31 October 2022**

The Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities presented to the Committee a report which gave the updated forecast financial position for 2022/23 as reported to Cabinet on 14 December 2022. He highlighted that the services within the remit of the Committee were expected to return a £1.133m underspend which was helping to reduce the council's overall predicted overspend which was currently £11.33m for 2022/23 at year end.

Resolved:

That the Committee notes the forecast year-end position for the council as a whole and for the services that fall under the remit of the committee.

47/22 **Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2026/27**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration introduced the report and underlined that it was still a time of budgetary pressures but a balanced budget had been set.

The Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities highlighted amendments that had been made to the Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme since the papers for the meeting were distributed to the Committee which included an additional £207,000 in contractual inflation. He also advised of

two policy changes due to consultation feedback and equality impact assessments with the removal of savings related to the outsourcing of the Mobile/Home Library service and removal of the introduction of charges for advisory disabled parking bays. The Capital Programme was also to be amended to reflect the monies to be received following the successful bid for Levelling Up funding for Willenhall.

Members of the Committee expressed their support for the retention of the Mobile/Home Library service following consultation responses and equalities assessments.

Questions were asked in relation to the commitment to tackle derelict sites, the investment in memorial safety in cemeteries and the pilot scheme for public toilets in Willenhall and Bloxwich. The Committee concluded that all these proposals were beneficial for the authority and for its residents.

Resolved:

That the Committee notes the draft revenue budget proposals and draft revenue capital programme.

48/22 **Evaluation of Walsall Council Bonfire and Fireworks Events 2022**

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing introduced a report relating to bonfire and fireworks events held across the borough in 2022, giving his thanks to the staff involved in the organisation and successful running of these events for the first time since the pandemic. He highlighted that for the first time in recent years the events had made a modest profit which demonstrated the appetite for such events within the borough.

Members of the Committee asked questions regarding the differences between this and previous years' events and the opportunity to engage with local businesses for sponsorship. The Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Communities advised that early purchasing of the fireworks and bonfire supplies and the switch to online only ticket sales had contributed to the reduction of overall costs and that efforts were made to engage local businesses in the event but there had not been large take-up which was thought in part to be due to current cost pressures affecting all businesses.

Resolved:

That the Committee notes the report.

49/22 **Areas of focus – 2022/23**

The Committee noted the proposed areas of focus for the remaining meetings of the municipal year.

Resolved:

That:

- 1. The areas of focus 2022/23 and forward plans be noted; and**
- 2. A report on public toilet provision be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.**

50/22 Recommendation Tracker

The Democratic Services Officer updated the Committee on the recommendations from previous meetings of the Committee. She advised that the one outstanding item was to be discussed at the next meeting of Cabinet which was to be held in the following week.

Resolved:

That the progress on recommendations from the previous meeting be noted.

51/22 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 28 February 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated 6.45pm.

Signed:

Date:

28 February 2023

Willenhall Framework Plan: Phase 1 Development

Ward(s): Willenhall South; Short Heath

Portfolios: Regeneration

1. Aim

- 1.1 The preparation of the Willenhall Framework Plan is an essential first step to guide future housing development, economic growth and place making in Willenhall. The Framework Plan sets out a 10-year vision for Willenhall which provides an ambition for housing growth and healthy, prosperous communities. The vision is that *Willenhall will grow into a vibrant, connected and welcoming town with a strong sense of place which celebrates its diverse communities and promotes safe, healthy and active lifestyles. Quality design and sustainable construction will move Willenhall towards a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future.*
- 1.2 This report provides the Committee with an update of work undertaken to date in relation to the Willenhall Framework Plan focusing on the delivery of Phase 1, Moat Street and Villiers Street.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Committee is recommended to:
 - Note the progress made by Officers to deliver Phase 1 of the Willenhall Framework Plan.
 - Agree to receive a further report at an appropriate time setting out progress in implementation of the Willenhall Framework Plan.

3. Report detail – know

- 3.1 At its meeting on 9 February 2022 Cabinet supported the Willenhall Framework Plan as a 10-year vision for housing growth and place making in the area as well as providing a number of related approvals. The Framework Plan is attached as Appendix A. A report to Scrutiny Committee on 14 April 2022 provided detailed information about the Framework Plan and the four housing-led Areas of Opportunity, focusing particularly on Phase 1 of the Plan, Moat Street and Villiers Street. The Moat Street and Villiers Street project is the first phase of a wider housing programme to enable delivery of over 500 new homes in the Framework Plan area. Phase 1 is aiming to deliver circa 106 new high-quality homes, including new affordable homes, family-focused housing, and an improved streetscape.

- 3.2 Since the reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee in 2022 Officers have been progressing the development of Phase 1 by focusing on a number of key workstreams: land assembly, developer partner procurement and planning. These workstreams are considered to be the key activities required to deliver the c106 new homes. An update on each of these workstreams is provided in the following paragraphs. Officers have also submitted a bid for funding to the Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 2 and an update is also provided in Paragraph 3.8.
- 3.3 **Land assembly**
As Committee Members will be aware, the Council has very little landholding within the proposed red line for Phase 1 and therefore needs to acquire the necessary land parcels. At its meeting in February 2022 Cabinet agreed to the in-principle use of the Council's compulsory purchase powers for Phase 1 where land cannot be acquired by agreement within a reasonable timeframe, noting that approval to make any compulsory purchase order (CPO) would be subject to a future Cabinet report.
- 3.4 The Council's appointed Property Consultants, Avison Young, are continuing to contact landowners to acquire the necessary land parcels by negotiations, offering business support where possible. In the event that the negotiations are not fruitful Officers intend to seek a formal CPO decision from Cabinet in Summer 2023.
- 3.5 **Outline planning application**
The outline planning application is continuing to be developed to ensure that it meets the Council's requirements for an outline planning application but also ensures that the Council is able to deliver a high-quality scheme. The planning application is due to be submitted imminently. It is envisaged that the outline application will include appearance and landscaping as reserved matters.
- 3.6 **Procurement of a developer partner**
Cabinet at its meeting on 14 December 2022 approved the use of the Homes England Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to procure a developer partner, at the same meeting Cabinet also agreed for Officers to commence the procurement process. The DPS was recommended to Cabinet as the best way forward following due diligence undertaken by the Council's Strategic Advisor, Arcadis. The Homes England DPS will also enable the Council, at its discretion, to appoint the preferred developer partner to deliver the future phases of the Willenhall Framework Plan.
- 3.7 The procurement of the developer partner is progressing with an Expression of Interest (EOI) launched on 6 February 2023 to ascertain the level of interest in the project. The closing date for the EOI stage is 27 February 2023 and to date there has been a positive response to the EOI. Officers anticipate concluding the procurement exercise in Summer 2023 to enable Cabinet to take a decision on the appointment of the preferred developer partner in September 2023. Following which there will be a contracting period to the end of 2023.
- 3.8 **Levelling Up Funding**
It was announced by Government on 18 January 2023 that the £20million funding bid to LUF Round 2 for the Walsall North constituency has been successful. The bid was focused on two interlinked projects in Willenhall- 1) housing delivery (Phase 1) and 2) active travel/ highway improvements. LUF funding secured for

Phase 1 will be used to support enabling works. The Council is currently in pre-contract negotiations with the Department for Housing Levelling Up and Communities (DHLUC) and anticipates concluding these before the end of the financial year.

3.9 Indicative programme

The key project milestones for Phase 1 were submitted as part of the LUF bid. Since the submission of the bid the key milestones have been kept under review and the indicative programme for Phase 1 is as follows:

- Outline Planning Application approval – anticipated Summer 2023
- Developer Partner Procurement (to contract signed) – December 2023
- Early Works Completed – March 2025
- Current deadline for LUF2 spend – March 2025
- Main works completed – December 2026

These dates, and the detailed programme, are subject to continued review.

4. ***Financial information***

4.1 Supported by the Strategic Advisor, Officers have a robust cost estimate for Phase 1.

4.2 Walsall Council capital and revenue monies required for Phase 1 were agreed by Cabinet in February 2022 and these details were set out in the report to this Committee in April 2022. In addition to the Levelling Up Funding, the Council has also been successful in securing a £3.2m capital contribution towards Phase 1 from the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP). This funding has been secured from the Land, Property and Investment Fund (LPIF) and will need to be spent by 31 March 2025.

5. ***Reducing Inequalities***

5.1 The Willenhall Framework Plan provides the framework to drive forward the regeneration of the area. It sets out the Council's aspiration to promote Willenhall as an area that is a sustainable place to live, work and spend leisure time and in turn contribute towards the Council's vision as outlined in the Corporate Plan (2022-2025): Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised. The delivery of new housing in particular will contribute to ensuring that everyone has the right housing in the right place.

6. **Decide**

6.1 The Committee is asked to consider the content of this report, provide comments on progress to date and confirm any specific information required for a subsequent project update.

7. **Respond**

7.1 The Council will continue to seek to conclude the initial negotiations for the acquisition of land within Phase 1 and submit the outline planning application for the proposed scheme to evidence deliverability. If acquisition by agreement is not

possible then Cabinet will be asked to consider the use of the Council's CPO powers. In parallel work will also continue to procure a developer partner to deliver Phase 1.

8. Review

- 8.1 In order to progress the project to this stage the Council and its advisors have held regular project meetings, and these will continue throughout the delivery phase to monitor progress and deal with any issues as they arise.

Background papers

Willenhall Framework Plan, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 14 April 2022

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WILLENHALL FRAMEWORK PLAN

FEBRUARY 2022



FOREWORD

The Willenhall Framework Plan aims to have a firm focus on the future of Willenhall, to have the aspiration to become a more vibrant, healthy and prosperous community. The delivery of the New Willenhall Rail Station, through the West Midlands Mayor and Government investment, has been the catalyst to launch this ambitious plan. A real plan and vision to tackle derelict sites that have blighted the area for decades, to build back better by developing the sites to create homes, businesses and infrastructure.

Willenhall has a strong identity linked to its proud industrial past including at the heart of the lock making industry. Now is the time to focus on the future, Willenhall's distinct heritage and mixed land uses presents opportunities to boost housing, create a stronger economy and greener and more sustainable environment.

The delivery of regeneration in Willenhall is complex and will require direct intervention by the Council and its public sector partners. The Council's commitment to strong intervention in Willenhall should not be underestimated and will ensure that the area thrives and prospers through housing growth by creating the conditions for private sector investment and delivery to flourish.

The aspirations for Willenhall, and importantly the interventions needed to realise those aspirations, are contained in this Willenhall Framework Plan. This sets out a 10-year ambition for levelling up, creating growth, attracting investment in Willenhall to create a more vibrant, healthy and prosperous community.

Cllr Adrian Andrew
Deputy Leader Walsall Council



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1

INTRODUCTION



1.1 INTRODUCTION

Willenhall has been identified as a key area of sustainable growth within the West Midlands Region due to the imminent arrival of a new train station in the town and opportunities to deliver housing growth. This Framework Plan presents a vision and aspiration for the future of Willenhall aimed at promoting the town and raising its profile within the region. The Framework Plan creates a solid foundation to support coordinated interventions leading to the delivery of high-quality housing and creation of a strong sense of place.

The Framework Plan describes Walsall Council's commitment to facilitate the comprehensive delivery of high-quality homes integrated with movement and place-making interventions. The movement interventions ensure that Willenhall residents capture the benefits of the town centre and a new train station on the edge of the town, which is expected to open in 2023. The investment will see communities of Willenhall being far better connected to Birmingham, Wolverhampton and opportunities across the wider region. The place-making interventions will create greener and healthier environment that encourages residents in Willenhall to capture the benefits of the public green spaces and links.

The Plan builds on the high level design principles of the 'Black Country Garden City' and will help to transform perceptions of the Black Country by the development of attractive and well-designed places where individuals aspire to live.

Following the concepts of this Plan, Walsall Council aims to create a quality, legible, connected town with diverse and cohesive communities where people of all ages and backgrounds choose to live.

PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK PLAN

The preparation of this Framework Plan is an essential first step to guide future housing development, economic growth and place making in Willenhall. It establishes a context for future due-diligence development briefs, development of local planning policy and planning applications. The Framework Plan sets the vision and the delivery strategy as well as assists to attract partners and investors.

The Framework Plan sets out a 10-year vision for Willenhall which provides an ambition for housing growth and healthy, prosperous communities. This is presented through comprehensive delivery which considers wider supporting connectivity and place making strategies to support the Areas of Opportunity and Plan area to create an attractive environment to live in.

It is intended that this Framework Plan will be developed into a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will support the interventions through planning policy. The SPD will be subject to statutory public consultation with a range of stakeholders, agencies, residents and businesses in order to capture and consider all issues and options.



FIGURE 1.1: ELEMENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK PLAN

WALSALL COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO DELIVERY

Facilitating growth and investment in Willenhall remains a high priority for Walsall Council. In 2015, the Council's Cabinet agreed to support the intention to undertake a regeneration approach to a defined area in Willenhall. The report led to the commencement of due diligence and baseline work to understand the opportunities and challenges that would inform this Framework Plan.

The multiple ownerships across the area make comprehensive and coordinated development very challenging. This, together with low property values in Willenhall, results in lower levels of profitability which makes development at scale unattractive to the private sector.

The previously industrial nature of the area adds risks such as significant ground and environmental issues, including contamination, flooding, and mine workings. These high risks lead to poor viability, often acting as a barrier for private sector delivery.

Therefore, Walsall Council and its partners, Homes England and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), recognise that to drive large scale, comprehensive and coordinated growth, the Public Sector must intervene in many ways to ensure that the vision and objectives are delivered, including through investment, planning, provision of infrastructure, and use of its statutory powers.





1.2 WILLENHALL CONTEXT

Willenhall, within the Borough of Walsall, is located approximately 2.5 miles west of Walsall town centre, 2.5 miles east of Wolverhampton and 8 miles north-west of Birmingham.

Within the emerging BCP, The Council has identified a pipeline of housing development projects, which will deliver Walsall Borough's housing target.

Willenhall is identified as a location that could accommodate significant housing development on brownfield land. The emerging BCP aims to achieve high quality design and Willenhall is a location where the garden city concept could be applied to new development. The emerging BCP will incorporate many of the existing proposals in the Walsall Site Allocation Document (SAD) which already identifies a number of sites for new homes either on land that is already vacant or which can be considered for release from its current use for employment.

Willenhall contains a mix of residential areas interspersed with industrial areas. Many industrial buildings identified as local quality consider for release within the Plan area have been left empty and derelict, attracting anti-social behaviour and play a limited economic role. Parts of the industrial areas, many of which are dirty and noisy, are located immediately adjacent to housing creating incompatible neighbours. The age of many of the units also means that they may not meet the strengthening minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) targets in the future and would require significant investment to bring them up to standard.

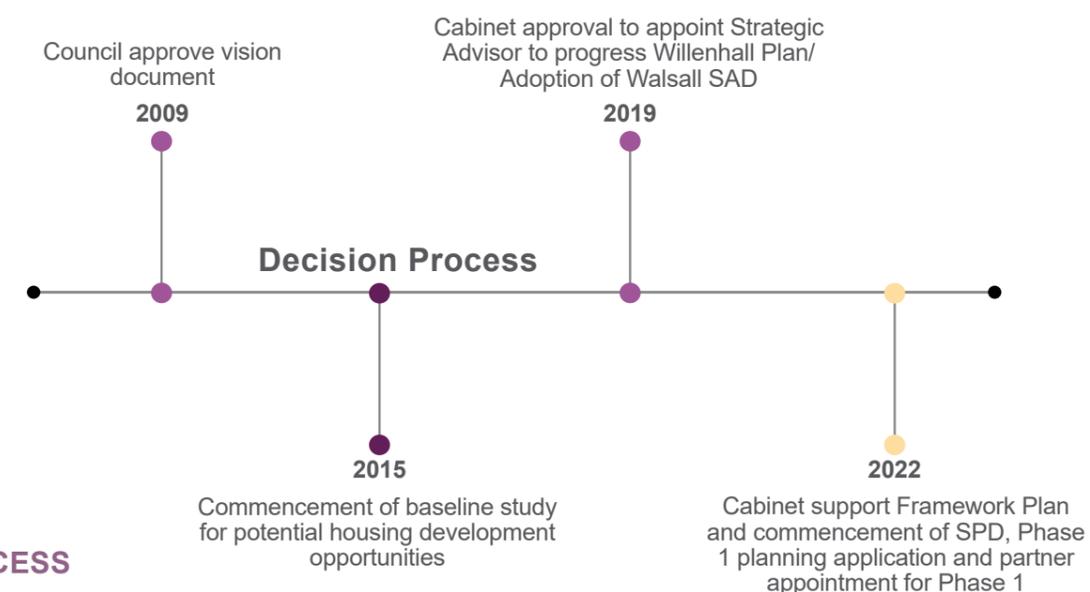
Some of the existing housing stock such as HMOs is often in poor condition, and social housing is in reasonable condition but in need of upgrades. The aim of Walsall Council, through this Framework Plan, is to drive transformational change in Willenhall through the development of high-quality homes across a broad mix of tenures and affordability levels, including specialist housing where appropriate.

Willenhall will soon benefit from the re-opening of the Walsall to Wolverhampton railway line providing direct rail access to Walsall, Wolverhampton and Birmingham. Due to this infrastructure investment and the town's proximity to the national motorway network, Willenhall has been identified as having significant opportunity for economic growth.

Willenhall Garden City is an aspirational project that aims to promote transformational place-making within and around Willenhall town centre. Willenhall has also been identified as a pilot for the Black Country Garden City concept.

A Willenhall 'vision document' was completed in 2009. However, due to a number of external factors, in particular the impact of the recession, further work was not progressed at that time. However it informed other regeneration and planning policies including the Walsall SAD 2019. In 2015, the Council's Cabinet agreed to support the intention to undertake a regeneration approach to a defined area in Willenhall. The report led to the commencement of due diligence and baseline work to understand the opportunities and challenges that would inform this Framework Plan.

The Walsall SAD (2019) allocates sites for housing, employment and consider for release employment sites which provides opportunities to develop new homes across a number of sites identified as housing or consider for release sites.



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FIGURE 1.2: DECISION PROCESS

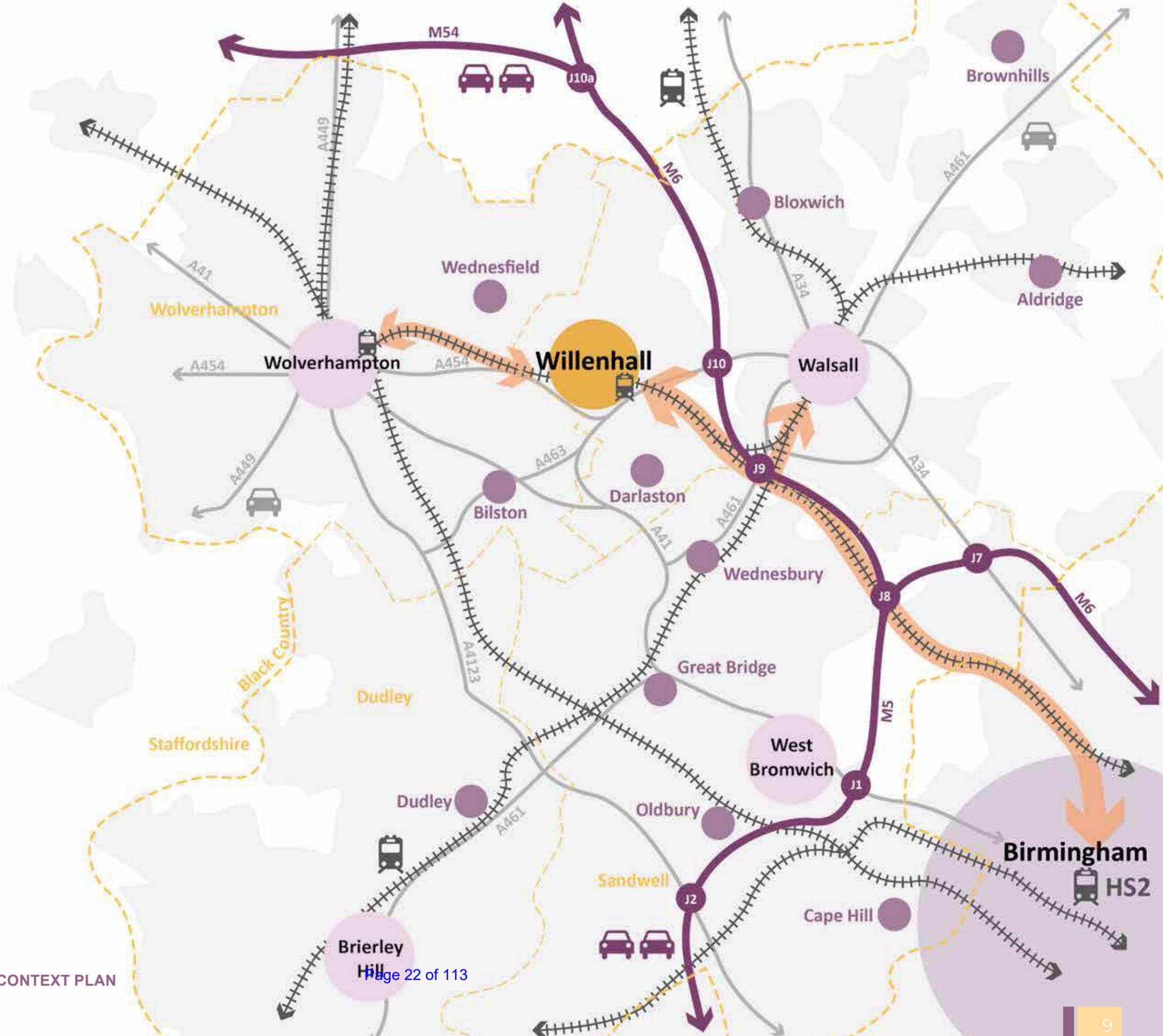


FIGURE 1.3: LOCAL CONTEXT PLAN



PLANNING POLICY

The statutory development plan for the Willenhall Framework Plan area comprises the following documents:

- Black Country Core Strategy (adopted 2011) (BCCS)
- Walsall Site Allocations Document (adopted 2019 (WSAD)
- Saved policies from the Walsall Unitary Development

Plan (adopted 2005) (WUDP)

- Emerging Black Country Plan (BCP) which, once adopted, will supersede the Black Country Core Strategy.

HOUSING AND REGENERATION

Planning policy for Willenhall recognises a significant shortfall of housing across the area and leads to the vision and proposals within this Framework Plan which aim to deliver new housing to meet targets set by both the BCCS and the emerging BCP.

The emerging BCP, anticipated to be adopted in 2024, states that there is a requirement to find land to accommodate the local housing need of 76,076 homes over the period 2020-2039 but there is only enough land to accommodate 47,837 homes. In Walsall, the emerging BCP supporting evidence suggests a potential housing shortfall of nearly 8,760 homes up to 2039. This builds on the existing BCCS targets of 1,698 homes from 2009 to 2026 in the Regeneration Corridor 6: Darlaston, Willenhall, Wednesfield.

Through the BCCS, housing may be allowed on sites not allocated for housing in the WSAD where it can ensure a satisfactory residential environment; housing would be suitable with respect to adjacent land uses; and there are no allocated or safeguarded uses on the site.

WILLENHALL HOUSING MARKET

The Black Country Urban Capacity Review Update 2020 and The Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) Housing Need and Housing Land Supply 2020 Position Statement anticipate an impending housing shortfall with local housing need outstripping housing supply. There is good demand for unencumbered residential development land, with house builders and registered provider's competing for land opportunities to deliver affordable and private sale and rent housing. Supply of vacant, developable land in Willenhall is limited and the Council must intervene to ensure the right land, in the right locations is made available for housing to be delivered.

Relative affordability, excellent connectivity and strong and diverse employment makes the Black Country an attractive place to live. Walsall Borough has a strong and established local housing market and has seen reasonable levels of private sector development over recent years.

Willenhall is regarded as affordable compared to other parts of the Black Country and the wider West Midlands conurbation.

Willenhall's residential characteristics and demographics demonstrates that:

-  There is demand for First Time Buyer (FTB) homes caused by a significantly higher young population
-  Requirement for small family housing
-  The need for a range of affordable housing which is linked to the lower levels of economic activity.
 - Home ownership in Willenhall is generally lower than Walsall and England,
 - Shared ownership is higher when compared to Walsall and England
 - Requirement for small, private ownership family housing



The following table is taken from the Black Country Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and demonstrates the significant need for open market housing across Walsall.

This shows that nearly 60% of new homes to be provided should be for owner occupation, whilst 13% should be for social or affordable rent.

Table 1 Tenure of new accommodation required in Walsall				
Tenure	Base tenure profile (2020)	Tenure profile 2039	Change required	% of change required
Owner-occupied	67,765	77,477	9,712	59.9%
Private rent	17,246	20,282	3,036	18.7%
Shared Ownership	543	1,846	1,303	8.0%
Social Rent/Affordable Rent	27,786	29,950	2,164	13.3%
Total	113,340	129,555	16,215	100.0%

Table 2 Profile of new accommodation required in Walsall					
Size of home	Owner occupied	Private rented	First Homes	Shared Ownership	Social/ Affordable Rented
1 bedroom	2,017	315	307	351	547
2 bedroom	3,068	216	373	433	206
3 bedroom	2,656	394	456	287	497
4+ bedrooms	1,971	740	233	232	914
Total	9,712	1,666	1,370	1,303	2,164

FIGURE 1.4: HOUSING TENURE

EMPLOYMENT

Industrial businesses have formed a part of Willenhall’s landscape for centuries. These businesses have, in the past, provided significant levels of employment for the local communities. However, several of these businesses, particularly near to the town centre, have already closed leaving empty and derelict buildings. Other industrial buildings create poor neighbours and uses which are incompatible with adjacent housing areas.

There is a need in the emerging BCP to retain and expand the supply of land for industry, although some current and former employment land, including some in Willenhall, may not be suitable for long term retention so is proposed to be considered for redevelopment as part of the regeneration of the area subject to a number of criteria being met. The evidence that supports the emerging BCP has been used to identify the areas to be examined in more detail in this Framework Plan.

The BCCS aims to protect sustainable employment uses saying that Employment land should only be released for other types of development where a number of criterion are met which includes amongst other things.

As part of this study the Council has completed an Employment Land study focusing on Moat Street and Villiers Street. This study has informed the evolving Business Charter which identifies the assurance that the Council will provide to affected businesses in the Framework Plan area.

EMPLOYMENT MARKET

Over the past five years, there has been a substantial increase in demand for warehousing and industrial space across in the West Midlands as the sector continues to benefit from the strong growth in e-commerce.

In terms of manufacturing, the automotive sector is facing challenges, however, the pivot towards electric power has seen investment in battery assembly plants. Increased construction activity has also led to demand for construction products and has seen recent acquisition for large production and distribution sites.

Locally, within 5 miles of Willenhall, there are a number of well-established industrial areas. As at Q4 2020, more than 900,000 sq ft of industrial units are available with several new builds underway. There has been limited new development of smaller unit multi-let industrial estates over the last 5 years, due to higher cost of construction impacting on developer profits and investor returns, in comparison to developing units of 30,000 sq ft plus, leading to greater demand for secondary industrial units in that size range. More development of modern, multi-let industrial accommodation is required in the medium to longer term to enable further growth in this sector and to create carbon neutral, efficient spaces that meet occupier specification requirements.



1.3 CELEBRATING WILLENHALL TODAY

1 EMPLOYMENT

Willenhall has a long history of industrial business and employment which supported early growth giving the town regional relevance. Recently many of these businesses have closed or relocated to more suitable, fit for purpose locations. The Council has developed a business charter and, where possible, aims to support businesses impacted by this Plan.

2 ATTRACTIVE GREEN SPACES

Green spaces within Willenhall include Willenhall Memorial Park and the Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve. Created to commemorate people who died in the Great War, Willenhall Memorial Park is an attractive green space incorporating areas of woodland, a bandstand, play areas and community pavilion. Fibbersley LNR is a wetland area created on former mine workings; now a haven for wildlife, the area is popular for walking and nature watching. These two areas provide a fantastic local resource for people to enjoy whilst promoting bio-diversity.

3 CONNECTIVITY

The town is well connected to surrounding areas by road, with links to Walsall, Wolverhampton and the M6. Proposals for a new rail station in Willenhall town centre on the Walsall to Wolverhampton line now have planning permission. Attractive walking and cycling connections include the east-west route to the north of the town centre, passing through Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve and the Willenhall Memorial Park. These assets can be further developed to create a truly connected and active town centre.

4 A RICH HERITAGE

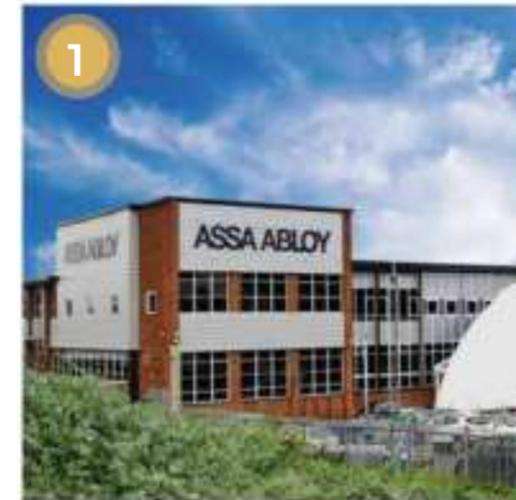
The town of Willenhall has a rich industrial heritage, built around a thriving trade in the production of locks and keys. Willenhall has retained the historical character developed during the 17th to 19th centuries, and the sense of a traditional Black Country town. A Heritage Trail, telling the story of Willenhall's past, links the town centre to the Willenhall Memorial Park and Fibbersley.

5 DISTINCTIVE TOWN CENTRE

A distinctive place, Willenhall town centre is still dominated by elegant Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings. The Willenhall Townscape Heritage Initiative, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, VIEW and Walsall Council has enabled over £1.3 million to be spent on repairing, restoring and reusing historic properties in the town.

6 STRONG COMMUNITY

Willenhall is a strong, diverse community, with a population of over 28,000 people and a proud industrial history. The town has a strong community spirit with an active volunteering network and range of community groups



Willenhall Employment



Willenhall Memorial Clock



Willenhall Memorial Park



Market Place



Proposed Train Station



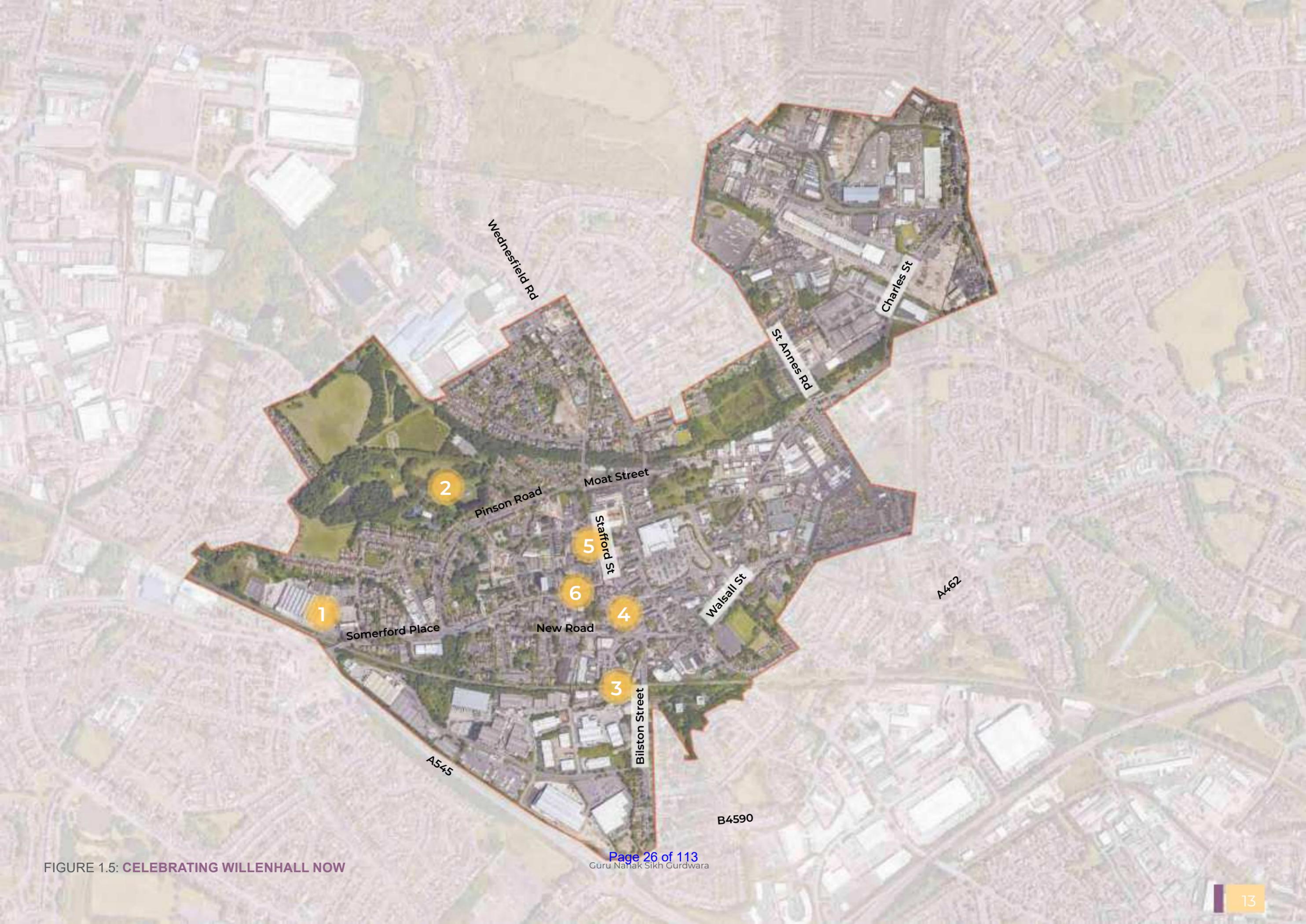


FIGURE 1.5: CELEBRATING WILLENHALL NOW

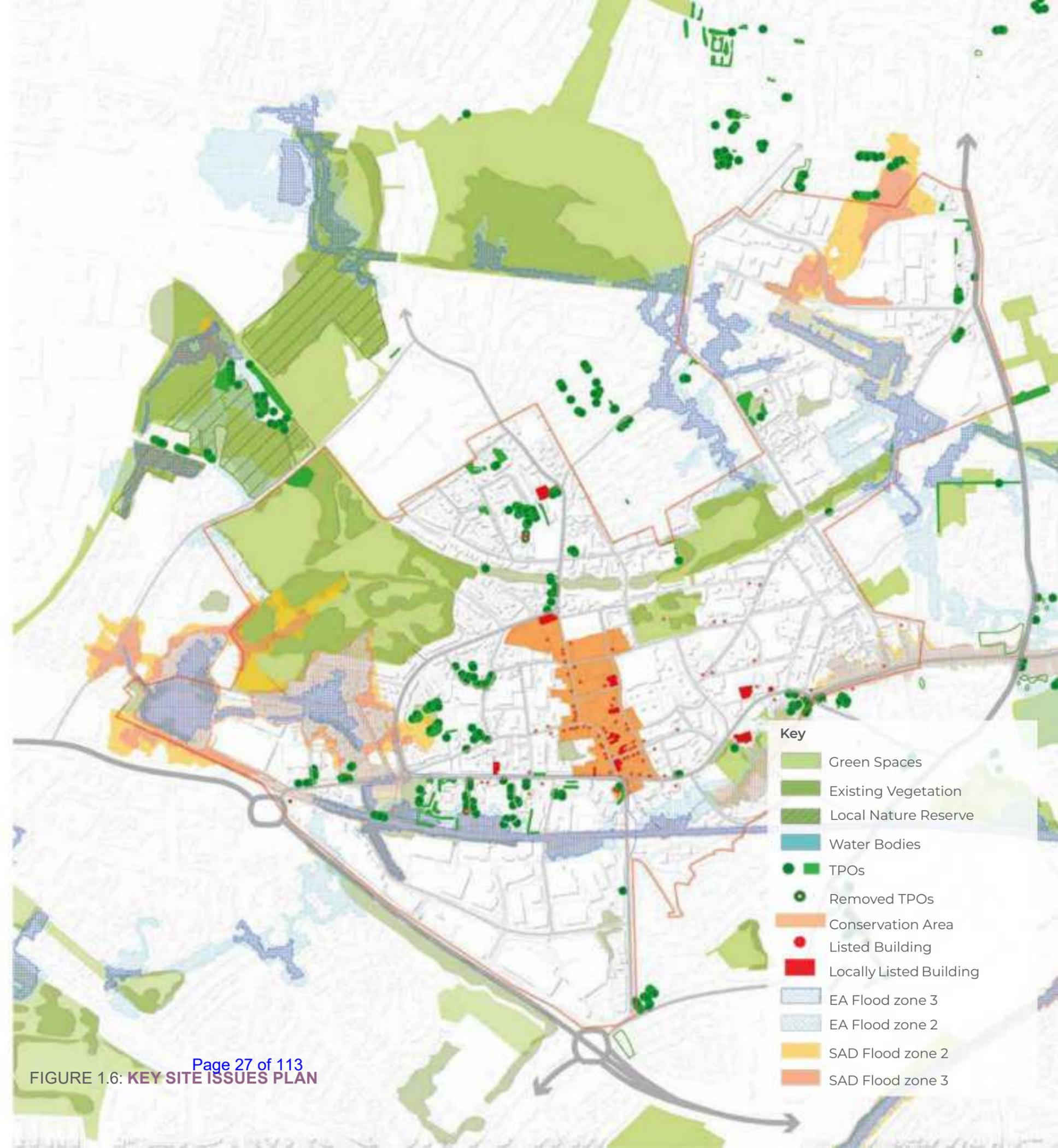


1.4 UNDERSTANDING WILLENHALL'S CHALLENGES

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Across Willenhall there are numerous challenges and physical constraints to residential development and to delivering the Council's vision for a coordinated, comprehensive development. The adjacent townscape analysis plan summarises the key physical constraints which have been taken into account in the formulation of the Framework Plan presented later in the document:

- Recognised shortage of owner occupier and private rental housing required to meet identified housing demand according to a market assessment completed in Q4 2020
- Inefficient use of space created by low value industrial buildings making poor neighbours with their adjacent residential areas
- Derelict and unused buildings lead to anti-social behaviour and poor appearance.
- Lack of green in the town centre which fails to connect the town to the green space
- Key arrival points and gateways are indistinct and movement route poorly defined
- Flood risk and utilities e.g sewers/easements/high voltage cables)
- Multiple land holdings across the area making development parcels hard to assemble to ensure comprehensive development in a reasonable timeframe
- Barriers creating severance such as the railway line which presents a movement barrier
- Existing large industrial areas inhibit connectivity to some areas within and out with the study area
- Narrow roads combined with narrow footways throughout the town.
- Ground conditions from historical uses across the area.





1.5 REDISCOVERING WILLENHALL'S OPPORTUNITIES

Willenhall presents many opportunities for development and growth from a market perspective and physical nature.

- Opportunity to provide new housing in response to significant housing needs identified for Walsall and the Black Country
- To create a series of new residential areas linked by a network of high-quality public realm and green corridors linking areas of town centre
- Create a high quality residential offer across a range of tenures
- Opportunity to consolidate existing industrial uses into more fit for purpose buildings and locations
- Opportunity to make the area feel safer and provide a cleaner environment
- Opportunity to celebrate local heritage
- Improve cycle and pedestrian connectivity, strengthening existing routes to and from the town centre, new train station and employment areas.
- Opportunity to improve image and change first impressions
- Define key arrival points and gateways through new landmarks
- Improve bus services to the north of the town
- Railway - improve connectivity over railway
- Address potential constraints on development
- Digital connectivity

Across Willenhall it is strategically important to combine new housing with sustainable transport, green infrastructure and employment opportunities.





1.6 STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Baseline and Vision Development

At the baseline stage, several key stakeholders were engaged to understand their unique perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing Willenhall. These stakeholders also helped to shape the vision for Willenhall by providing insight into what should be included. The engagement was completed with various teams at Walsall Council including planning, housing, employment, transport and green spaces. The Council have also engaged with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

Key themes are outlined below.

- The proposed railway station will be important for several reasons:
 - Providing a direct connection to Birmingham will provide better access to a large jobs market that has been performing better than Willenhall, Walsall or Wolverhampton recently.
 - This connectivity will help to attract residents over neighbouring areas such as Darlaston and Wednesbury.
 - The station will help to provide a new focal point and key route through the town centre on to locations such as the market place.
- There is a need to deliver a broad range of housing types and tenures to help diversify Willenhall's housing offer.
- Housing development close to the town centre could help to improve connections between the centre and the rest of the town.

- There are issues with viability on many brownfield sites in Willenhall due to low land values.
- Willenhall should be in a position to benefit from the rollout of full fibre broadband and 5G mobile internet before most places in the country.

Development of the Framework Plan

Once feedback from stakeholders has been built into the development of the vision, initial findings and scenarios will be shared with a wider range of stakeholders. These discussions will help to further shape the vision and strategic objectives, develop plans for individual sites, and understand the impact of the proposed development on local services.

Stakeholders to be engaged include:

- Officers at Walsall Council
- Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group
- West Midlands Combined Authority
- Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership
- Homes England
- Walsall Housing Group
- Walsall Economic Board

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At the baseline stage of the Framework Plan, a public consultation called 'Love Willenhall' was carried out to enable local residents, businesses and community groups to help shape the Framework Plan. This consultation ran from 14 February to 7 March 2021. Further engagement with the local residents, businesses and community will continue throughout the development of the Plan.

170 responses were received. These are summarised below.

-  Over 80% of respondents lived in Willenhall while around 30% worked in the town.
-  When asked what things they loved about Willenhall, respondents frequently mentioned Willenhall Memorial Park, the local people and community spirit, and the town's history and heritage.
-  When asked what things they would change about Willenhall, respondents frequently mentioned better and more diverse retail, restoration or redevelopment of derelict buildings, better public transport, and reduced crime levels.
-  When asked for three words that would best describe a future Willenhall, respondents frequently mentioned words such as "cleaner", "busier", "vibrant", and "safer".
-  When asked about a variety of issues, respondents were most likely to see bringing derelict sites back into use as "very important".



Understanding Willenhall's Challenges



There are also challenges and constraints facing the town in terms of

THE BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Environmental challenges in Willenhall include flood zone areas, particularly in the vicinity of the River Tame to the south of the town centre. Other environmental challenges relate to the need for better links between green spaces and destinations and incorporating green space and planting into residential areas.

MEETING COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

There is a need for a better choice of good quality and affordable housing which meets the needs and aspirations of local people.

EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES

Unemployment is higher than average and a high proportion of people have no formal qualifications, leading to shortages of appropriate skills for employment. Employment sites vary in quality across Willenhall, with some sites poorly located in terms of connectivity and their effects on neighbouring land uses.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

The lack of a station has meant the town has suffered from no rail connections. Public transport arrival points are disconnected, with pedestrian links between them in need of improvement.

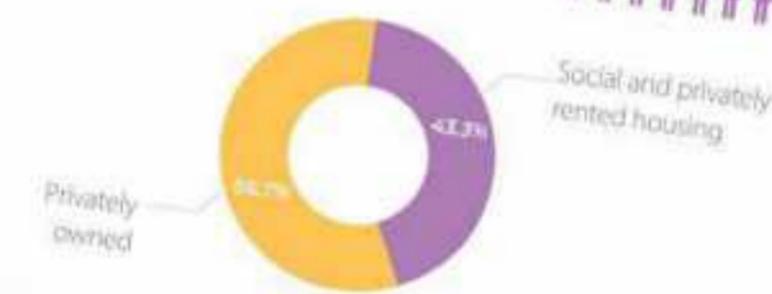
AREAS OF HIGH DEPRIVATION

There are pockets of high deprivation across Willenhall, with some parts of the town falling into the 10% most deprived in England. Residents in these areas suffer from low-incomes, poor health outcomes and poor quality living environments.

High population density - **35.4** people per hectare



Housing Tenure



6.5% of households 'overcrowded'

7.9% of residents in Willenhall are unemployed
Unemployment claimant numbers are high in Willenhall South (**6.9%**) (May 2019)

71.6% of adults in Walsall **walk or cycle** at least once a month



Unemployment has increased for all UK regions due to Covid-19 impacts.

WHAT DO THE EXISTING COMMUNITIES WANT/NEED?

PRIORITIES FOR WILLENHALL

Respondents were asked to categorise a number of issues according to level of importance.

- Bringing derelict or redundant sites back into use (81% of respondents)
- Access to a range of employment opportunities (69% of respondents)
- Variety of open and green spaces (63% of respondents)
- Shopping facilities (59% of respondents)
- Community services and facilities (57% of respondents)

" Small community of shops and organisations reflecting Black Country history "

" Friendly, local people always happy to help "

" 'Willenhall is a good town, but I don't feel safe here' "



2

**VISION AND STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVES**



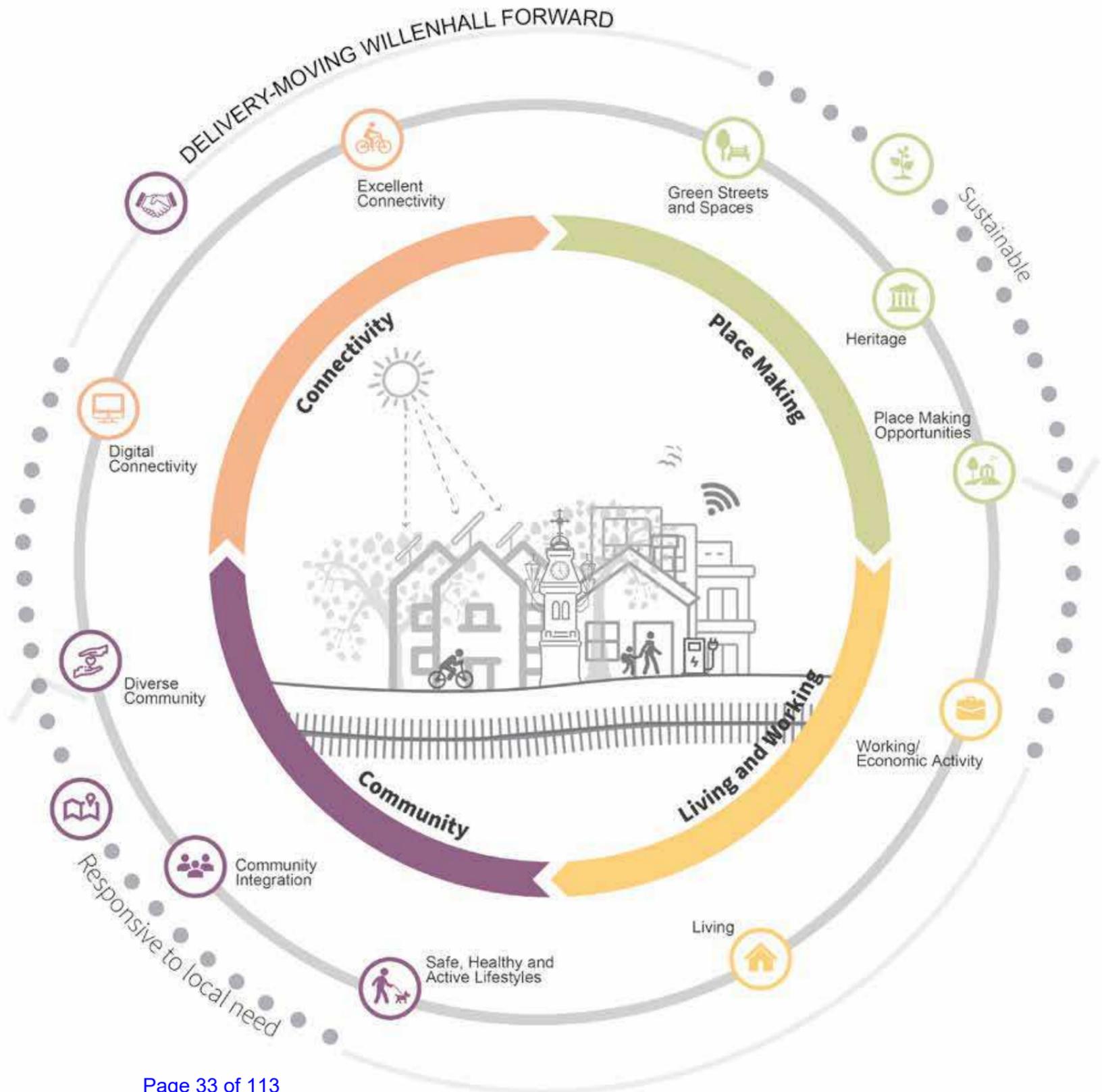
2.1 VISION FOR WILLENHALL

The adjacent objectives and design principles for the Framework Plan build upon the vision and high level design principles of the 'Black Country Garden City': a document produced by Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership and also Walsall's Corporate Plan for 2021-22.

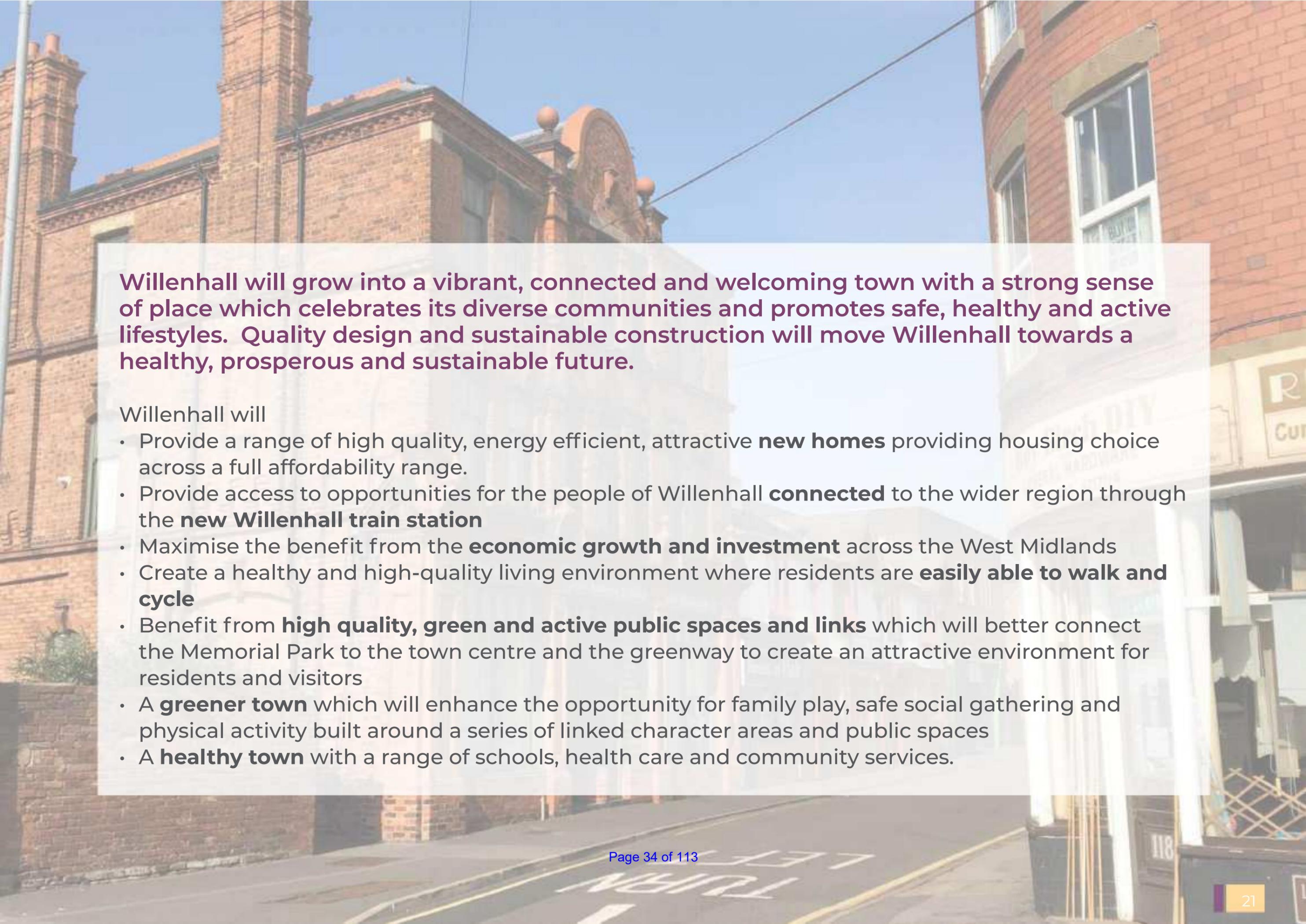
The Black Country Garden City vision is to transform perceptions of the Black Country by the development of attractive and well-designed places where individuals aspire to live. The Black Country Garden City concept includes ten key principles that developers should aspire to deliver against as part of their housing developments to create a new 21st Century Garden City which will connect into existing communities and infrastructure. Walsall's Corporate Plan 2021-22 builds on previous plans and responds to the impact of Covid-19. The Corporate Plan plays an important role in ensuring that the Council's strategic objectives are achieved. The learning will be used in the next Corporate Plan for 2022-25.

Key principles of the Black Country Garden City

- Greater connectivity by public transport, cycling and walking
- Mixed density, mixed use, mixed tenure neighbourhoods
- Green streets and easy access to green space
- Space for enterprise and the creative industries
- Chances for local people to get involved in managing their communities
- Making the best use of heritage assets like the fantastic canal network.



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FIGURE 2.1: STRATEGY DIAGRAM



Willenhall will grow into a vibrant, connected and welcoming town with a strong sense of place which celebrates its diverse communities and promotes safe, healthy and active lifestyles. Quality design and sustainable construction will move Willenhall towards a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future.

Willenhall will

- Provide a range of high quality, energy efficient, attractive **new homes** providing housing choice across a full affordability range.
- Provide access to opportunities for the people of Willenhall **connected** to the wider region through the **new Willenhall train station**
- Maximise the benefit from the **economic growth and investment** across the West Midlands
- Create a healthy and high-quality living environment where residents are **easily able to walk and cycle**
- Benefit from **high quality, green and active public spaces and links** which will better connect the Memorial Park to the town centre and the greenway to create an attractive environment for residents and visitors
- A **greener town** which will enhance the opportunity for family play, safe social gathering and physical activity built around a series of linked character areas and public spaces
- A **healthy town** with a range of schools, health care and community services.



2.2 OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The adjacent objectives and design principles for the Framework Plan build upon the vision and high level design principles of the 'Black Country Garden City'.

Building upon evidence of Willenhall's proud industrial and lock manufacturing history, the Framework Plan will create the foundation for aspirational place making and growth of a cohesive, vibrant and diverse community within Walsall Borough.

Connectivity is a key pillar within the Framework Plan; maximising the benefits of the new train station and promoting active travel and healthy living through high quality public realm which links streets, public spaces and community facilities.

The communities of Willenhall will have access to high quality housing across a range of affordability developed within attractive, safe and green environment and near to schools, health care and supporting services.



Responding to Local Need

- Contribution towards the unmet housing needs requirements
- A plan which captures the views of existing communities
- Provision of an appropriate range of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet local need
- Inclusion of family friendly environments, activities and facilities and provision for youth and elderly residents
- Provision of wider community facilities and social infrastructure that supports communities



Excellent Connectivity

- A development where people are well connected and can easily navigate
- Connectivity throughout the Framework Plan with a strong network of footpaths and cycle links integrated into the green spaces and train station
- Promotion of sustainable transport modes which reduce the dependence on car travel



Place Making Opportunities

- Creation of a strong sense of place
- Create a series of residential character areas that respond to existing townscape, heritage and scale
- Positive image and arrival to the area by defining new gateways
- Provision key local landmarks and areas of interest to enhance legibility
- A seamless transition between existing and proposed through an enhanced public realm



Green Streets and Spaces

- New or enhanced green space to support new housing areas
- Provision and enhancement of green links to create a strong landscape structure
- Respect the Memorial Park landscape character through adjacent housing development
- Protection and enhancement of existing landscape and ecological features, including Tree Preservation Orders.



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PRECEDENT IMAGES



Heritage

- New housing to create a place with a unique character and identity reflecting the area's industrial history in lock manufacturing
- Respect the setting of the Willenhall conservation area
- Protection and enhancement of existing heritage assets
- Street enhancement proposals to reflect the value of existing heritage in creating 'experiential' streets.



Living and Working

- A variety of high quality residential provision and new residential uses which creates a strong long term residential community
- Create commercially viable residential developments which can be delivered
- To provide greater choice, quality and diversity of housing across all tenures to meet the needs of residents
- Creation of high-quality public realm and green spaces



Community Integration

- New housing to promote community cohesion and strengthen the existing strong community feel
- Provide new facilities that are complementary to existing community and facilities
- Strong integration between new and existing residential areas by strengthening and enhancing the existing network of footpaths and cycleways.



Sustainable Living

- Promote the objectives of sustainable development through layout and design to shift Willenhall to a more sustainable future
- Promote walking, cycling, public transport & user safety
- Promote energy efficient development and maximise low carbon opportunities



Safe, Healthy and Active Lifestyles

- Promote health and well-being and active lifestyles
- Promoting community safety through building layout and street design
- Community and health facilities located within walkable catchments of existing and new housing in response to local need



Delivery

- Emphasis on delivery
- Flexible framework which is adaptable to changes to the market and demand and resilient to future requirements
- Promote meaningful engagement and liaison with landowners, the community and key stakeholders
- Establish clear partnerships for delivery
- Intervention by the Council and its partners in the market if required to ensure that they deliver the vision and objectives in a coordinated way



PRECEDENT IMAGES



3

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY



3.1 PLAN AREA AND AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

The area of the Willenhall Framework Plan has been identified to deliver comprehensive housing growth across the heart of the town.

This Framework Plan aims to deliver around 500 high quality homes over the next 10 years. The housing delivered will include a mix of styles, types and tenures providing housing choice which attracts people to remain in and relocate to Willenhall.

In parallel, interventions into public realm, movement and green spaces will have significant place making benefits. A step change in housing quality and an improved environment will see Willenhall develop into an attractive, vibrant and cohesive town. Connecting to the wider region through the new train station will provide greater opportunities, attracting new residents to live in the town whilst working in Birmingham, Walsall or Wolverhampton.

The Framework Plan also recognises the importance of industrial businesses in Willenhall. This Plan will consolidate these existing employment uses into more fit for purpose areas and buildings in the proximity of Willenhall and improve residential places and wellbeing.

Identification of this Framework Plan area provides the Council and its partners with a focus for investment into housing, movement, public spaces, employment and community facilities. The plan area encompasses the town centre, industrial zones to the north as well as the predominantly residential area to the west of the town centre.

Within the Framework Plan boundary, focussed **Areas of Opportunity** have been identified which will see direct, intervention by the Council to facilitate housing delivery and economic growth.

Intervention in these Areas of Opportunity will deliver a broader, high quality housing offer and the creation of a cohesive, connected town with a real sense of place.

THE FRAMEWORK PLAN AREA

The identified area of the Framework plan – shown with a red line in the adjacent plan - was originally endorsed in 2015 by Cabinet. The area surrounds the town centre and is intended to promote development and intervention that will drive economic and social growth across the town. Interventions in this area will see the introduction of a balanced mix of quality homes, improved connectivity and a healthier environment by addressing low quality, derelict and inefficient industrial spaces that are nested close to or within residential areas.

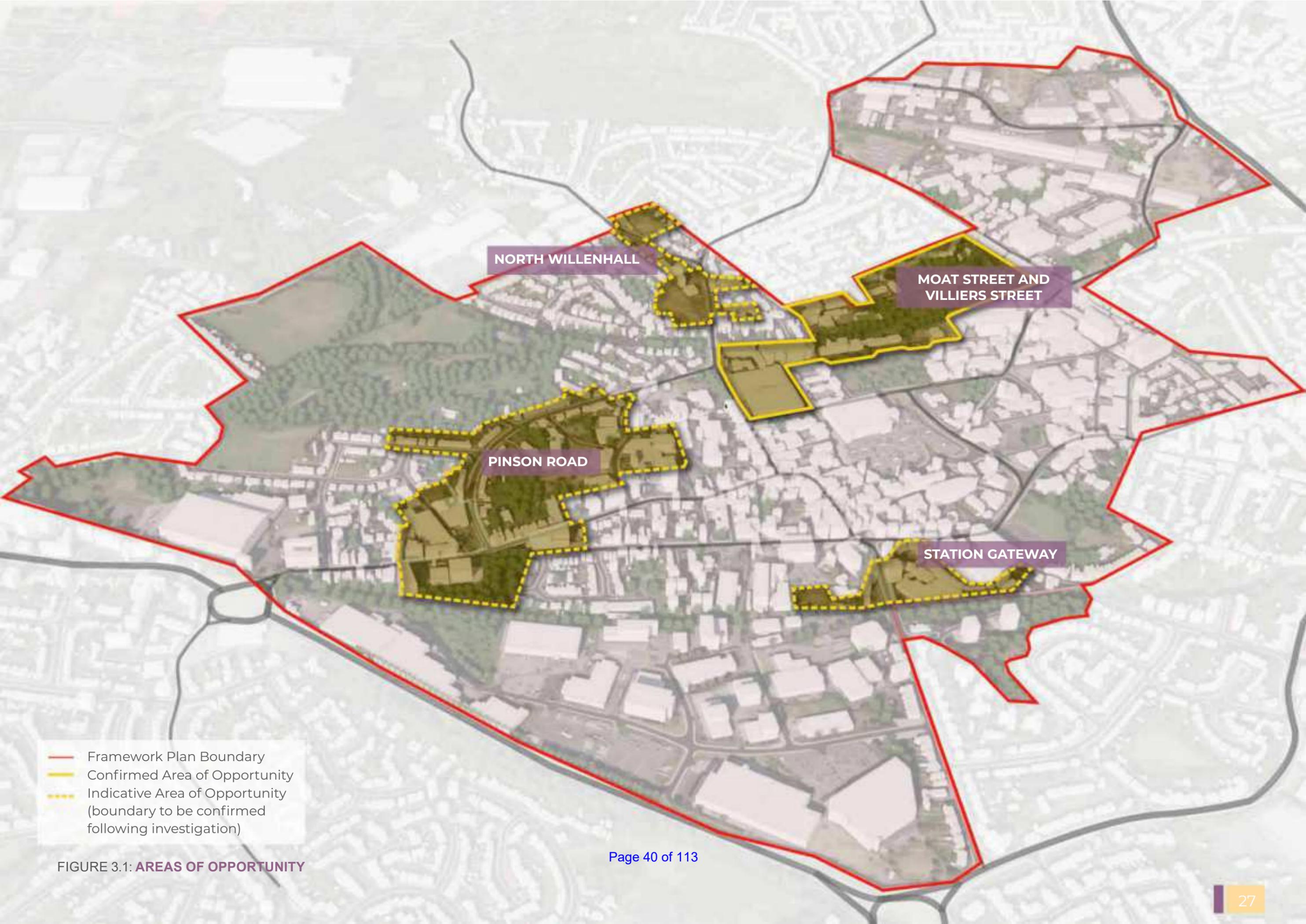
Housing development will be encouraged across the Framework Plan area and it is expected that over the plan period, many development opportunities will be progressed by the private sector. However, it is recognised that to enable and kick start this development, public led intervention is essential.

Therefore, through this Framework Plan, the Council has identified four **Areas of Opportunity** where their investment and direct intervention will be focussed.

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

The Areas of Opportunity have been carefully selected based on their current use as well as their ability to deliver the vision for Willenhall. Through comprehensive re-development, the Areas of Opportunity will begin to deliver structural change and economic growth in Willenhall.

The Areas of Opportunity have been assessed against a series of criteria and are expected to incorporate new housing as well as green space, community facilities and improved walking and cycle routes creating a comprehensive approach to growth. The criteria ensures that the identified areas deliver towards the vision for Willenhall at this point in time. As the housing market develops and the interventions progress, it may be necessary to re-visit the criteria for future phases to ensure the benefits of this intervention are maximised. The Areas of Opportunity are indicative and not every property in the area will be directly impacted by the interventions.



NORTH WILLENHALL

MOAT STREET AND
VILLIERS STREET

PINSON ROAD

STATION GATEWAY

- Framework Plan Boundary
- Confirmed Area of Opportunity
- - - Indicative Area of Opportunity (boundary to be confirmed following investigation)

FIGURE 3.1: AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY SELECTION CRITERIA

A rigorous process has been followed to identify four Areas of Opportunity which will see public sector intervention led by Walsall Council and their partners. Areas of Opportunity will either meet the criteria or will complement the criteria.

The criteria is as follows:

Ability to deliver housing	The area demonstrates the ability to deliver a net increase in the number, and quality of housing to support need.
Support the delivery of the planning policy	Provides opportunities to support the policies set out in the Black Country Core Strategy and emerging BCP, Walsall Site Allocations Document and Saved Policies of the Walsall Unitary Development Plan. This includes areas that will support the delivery of housing targets, release of employment land that is of low quality or unsuitable in the long term, and support regeneration.
Enhances the connectivity to the new station	Provides the opportunity for physical interventions that improve movement across the Plan area to the new Willenhall train station through creation of legible connections.
Enhances the connectivity to the town centre and high-quality green spaces	Provides the opportunity for physical interventions that improve movement across the Plan area to the town centre and high quality green spaces through creation of legible connections.
Addressing employment buildings identified as derelict, unsafe or unsuitable	Provides the opportunity to improve the perception of the area by removing derelict and unsafe buildings and relocating businesses that are in unsuitable locations (such as located largely residential communities).

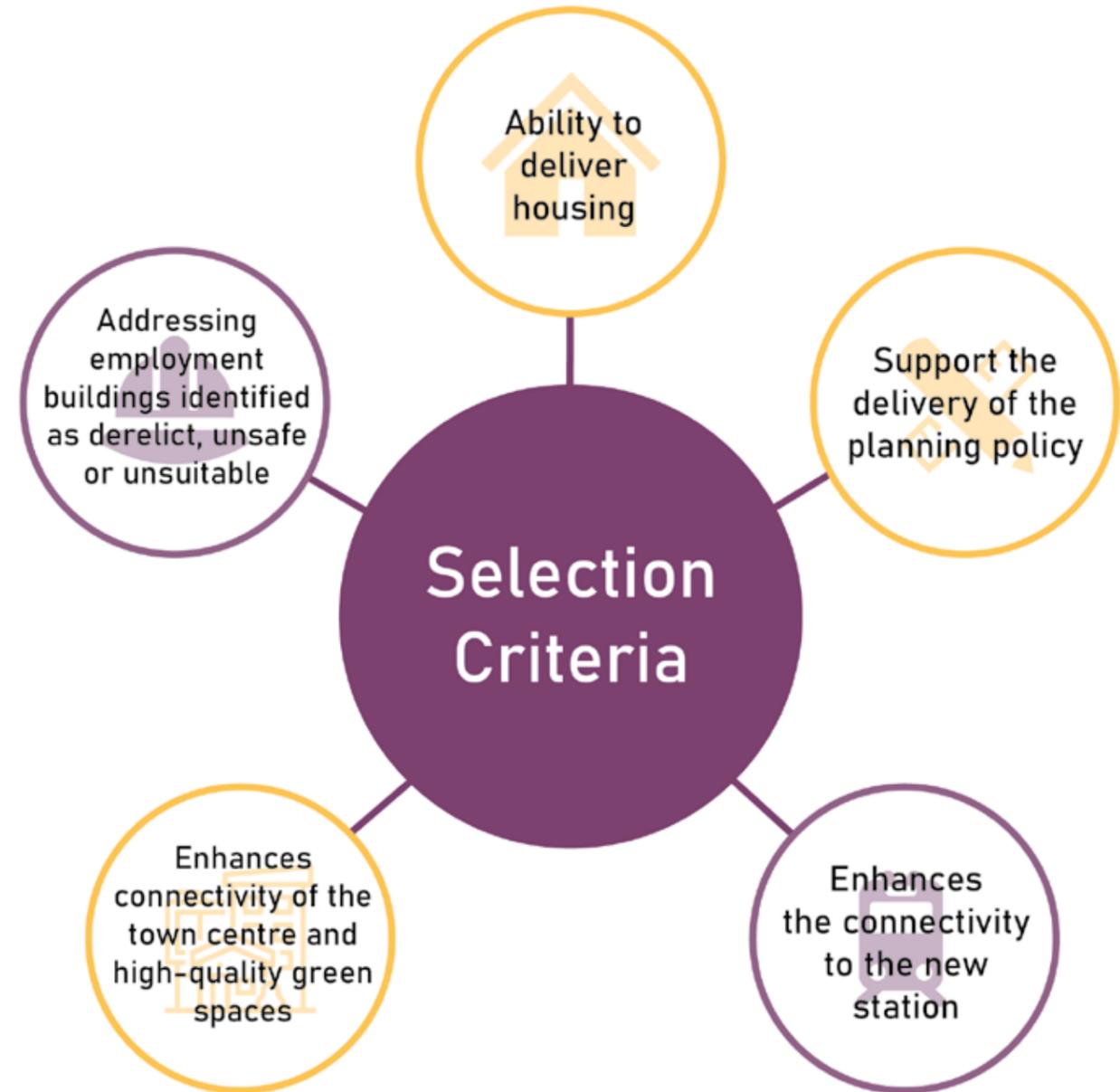


FIGURE 3.2: SELECTION CRITERIA DIAGRAM
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THE IDENTIFIED AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

The assessment criteria has led to the identification of four Areas of Opportunity which will become the focus of intervention by the Council. These are at differing stages of development :

1. Moat Street and Villiers Street
2. Pinson Road
3. Station Housing
4. North Willenhall

Additional investigation has been undertaken in the Moat Street and Villiers Street Area of Opportunity where initial engagement has begun with the owners and occupiers across the site to understand existing ownership and business needs. This has therefore been identified as Phase 1 and will be the initial focus for the Council.

The other Areas of Opportunity are still under investigation and further work is required to fully understand the level of opportunity and impact on properties in the area. The boundaries of these areas may change and the Council will engage with owners and stakeholders in the areas before final decisions are taken.

RANGE OF INTERVENTION WITHIN THE AREA OF OPPORTUNITY

Delivering new housing to meet local demand and create a step change in quality across Willenhall is the core focus across the Framework Plan. However, these Areas of Opportunity have been identified for their ability to deliver housing, improved connectivity and improved access to green space.

The interventions proposed in the Plan area will include:

Assembly of development sites by the Council and their partners: Through the assembly and/or acquisition of predominantly underutilised, derelict, inefficient and poorly located industrial premises development sites will be created for the comprehensive delivery of quality, mixed tenure housing.

Housing delivery: Walsall Council, in partnership with its delivery partners, is committed to the delivery of quality housing to meet the needs of Willenhall communities and to maximise the benefits of the enhanced connections into the wider region. The Council will actively create and implement planning policies to promote delivery.

Creating a connected town: Following the principles proposed in the movement framework, invest in the improvement of walking and cycling across the town; better connecting the Areas of Opportunity with the town centre and the new train station.

Greening the town: Green infrastructure that builds on the character of Willenhall Memorial Park and a east-west greenway that links the Plan via a network of multi-functional green space to create a healthy and attractive environment.

Improving community facilities: As part of the ongoing investment in Willenhall, Walsall Council and partners will explore the community requirements for the town. A new, health hub is proposed to serve the local area and location for this will be considered within the framework area.

**3.2 MOAT STREET AND
VILLIERS STREET**





DESCRIPTION

- The area has many derelict dilapidated buildings alongside some underused and run down sites
- Various smaller scale existing industrial businesses are situated to the west of the area off Temple Bar and at the far eastern end of New Hall Street.
- The northern part of the area around Villiers Street includes a mixture of industrial uses, some derelict industrial sites, Willenhall Liberal Club with a bowling green. The private sector is converting a factory building into residential uses in this part of the area.

KEY SITE CONSTRAINTS

- Existing sub station - Villiers Street
- Geo-tech constraints
- Listed buildings - 2
- Conservation Area in the south

ESTIMATED HOUSING CAPACITY

Up to 150 dwellings

- Direct Impact
- Complementary Impact

HOW THE SITE MEETS THE CRITERIA

Ability to deliver housing	● Estimated up to 150 new homes including up to 38 affordable
Support the delivery of the planning policy	● In this area the Walsall SAD (2019) allocates housing sites and also 'Local Industry Consider for Release' sites to potential alternative uses such as housing, subject to certain policy criteria within Policy DEL2 of the Black Country Core Strategy being met, before these 'Local Industry' sites are released.
Enhances the connectivity to the new station	● The proposals include enhanced walking routes and cycle networks via the town centre, connecting to the new train station which is due to reopen in 2023.
Enhances the connectivity to the town centre and high-quality green spaces	● The greenway, adjacent to the site, creates the opportunity to provide a safe, green cycling and walking route along this corridor, connecting to Willenhall Memorial Park and the town centre. Part of the Area of Opportunity is within the town centre boundary and within close proximity of the primary retail area. Enhance existing greenspaces such as the bowling green and St Annes Public Open Space at the Summers to create healthy, attractive amenity spaces for residents.
Addressing employment buildings identified as derelict, unsafe or unsuitable	● Proposals include the removal along Moat Street and Newhall Street of significant derelict and dilapidated buildings. The proposals to reduce the industrial uses in this area will create a more sustainable residential area on the edge of the town.



HOUSING CHARACTER

- Potential for medium density housing to create an urban character which reflects the manufacturing character of this area and also positively addresses the adjacent green spaces. There are opportunities to create apartments that act as gateway buildings and potential for specialist housing in this area.



PRECEDENT IMAGE



PRECEDENT IMAGE

3.3 PINSON ROAD





DESCRIPTION

- The area transitions from Willenhall town centre uses from the east to residential to the west.
- The northern and western perimeter is predominately residential which borders the Willenhall Memorial Park.
- The central and south west area towards to Somerford Place contains a mixture of residential and existing business, predominately light industrial. There is also an area of mature trees in the centre.
- The northern parcel includes health uses such as The Keys Family Practice.

KEY SITE CONSTRAINTS

- TPO's - Located throughout area
- Flood Zones 2 and 3 - Located throughout area
- Public Rights of Way - Along Round Croft
- Existing housing
- 975mm/450mm Diameter Public Surface Water Sewer
- 275v HV Cable

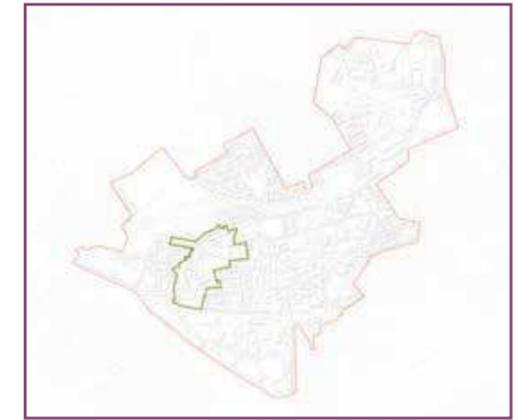
ESTIMATED HOUSING CAPACITY

Up to 200 dwellings

HOW THE SITE MEETS THE CRITERIA

Ability to deliver housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Estimated up to 200 new homes including up to 50 affordable.
Support the delivery of the planning policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In this area the Walsall SAD (2019) allocates housing sites and also 'Local Industry Consider for Release' sites to potential alternative uses such as housing, subject to certain policy criteria within Policy DEL2 of the Black Country Core Strategy being met, before these 'Local Industry' sites are released.
Enhances the connectivity to the new station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The proposed traffic calmed residential streets, enhanced walking and cycling routes from this area to the new train station help to encourages health and sustainable modes of travel.
Enhances the connectivity to the town centre and high-quality green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The walking and cycling routes provide accessible links into Willenhall Memorial Park and other existing open spaces.
Addressing employment buildings identified as derelict, unsafe or unsuitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposals aim to see the lower quality and vacant industrial uses redeveloped to create a housing and community area. <p>Further exploration is required in this area to assess occupancy of existing uses.</p>

- Direct Impact
- Complementary Impact



HOUSING CHARACTER

- Lower density, family friendly housing with a strong landscape character extending the character of the adjacent park into the residential area.



PRECEDENT IMAGE



PRECEDENT IMAGE

3.4 NORTH WILLENHALL





DESCRIPTION

- To the west of Wednesfield Road the southern parcel appears to be unused with industrial sheds at the rear of the area. Otherwise, the remainder is home to existing businesses.
- The eastern parcel of land includes an existing industrial unit and car park with a larger rectangular area which appears to be derelict for more than 10 years..

KEY SITE CONSTRAINTS

- Public Rights of Way - along western boundary
- TPO's - Located in various locations, mainly western boundary

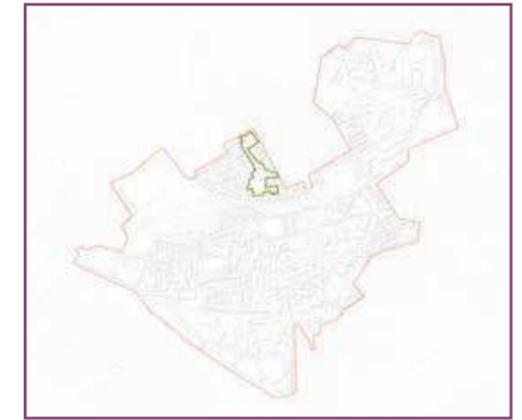
ESTIMATED HOUSING CAPACITY

Up to 70 dwellings

- Direct Impact
- Complementary Impact

HOW THE SITE MEETS THE CRITERIA

Ability to deliver housing	● Estimated up to 70 new homes including up to 17 affordable.
Support the delivery of the planning policy	● In this area the Walsall SAD (2019) allocates 'Local Industry Consider for Release' sites to potential alternative uses such as housing, subject to certain policy criteria within Policy DEL2 of the Black Country Core Strategy being met before these 'Local Industry' sites are released.
Enhances the connectivity to the new station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The proposed enhanced walking routes, improved cycling network and pedestrianised zone from this area through to the new train station creates great opportunities for health and sustainable travel.
Enhances the connectivity to the town centre and high-quality green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The proposal to widen the carriageway and footway creates the opportunity to provide safe cycling and walking route along this corridor, connecting to Willenhall Memorial Park and the town centre. Better access between residential areas and the town centre will increase footfall.
Addressing employment buildings identified as derelict, unsafe or unsuitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The area predominantly consists of existing employment units but is set within a largely residential area of Willenhall. The area also consists of a vacant, derelict site. • Further exploration is required in this area to assess occupancy of existing uses.



HOUSING CHARACTER

- Housing to reinforce the sense of arrival for this northern gateway
- Opportunity for medium density housing to positively address Temple Bar and to create a boulevard character through new street tree planting.



PRECEDENT IMAGE



PRECEDENT IMAGE

3.5 STATION GATEWAY





DESCRIPTION

- The western part of the area includes a mixture of derelict spaces and existing small industrial and commercial businesses. The proposed station will be immediately south of this location.
- The eastern part of the area generally includes existing heavy industrial and manufacturing businesses. Amongst this, there is a run of existing terraced housing. To the west of this area, there are retail units. There appears to be a triangular area of derelict land at the south western corner of this parcel.

KEY SITE CONSTRAINTS

- Railway directly to the south of the area
- Predominantly Flood Zones 2 and 3 area
- Public Rights of Way - Throughout area
- Existing sub station - East of Bilston Street
- 500mm/450mm Diameter Public Surface Water Sewer
- 275v HV Cable

ESTIMATED HOUSING CAPACITY

Up to 100 dwellings

- Direct Impact
- Complementary Impact

HOW THE SITE MEETS THE CRITERIA

Ability to deliver housing	● Estimated up to 100 new homes including up to 25 affordable.
Support the delivery of the planning policy	● This area is within Willenhall Town Centre and whilst there are no housing allocations the adopted Black Country Core Strategy will allow the release of employment land subject to certain policy criteria within Policy DEL2 being met.
Enhances the connectivity to the new station	● The Station Gateway area is adjacent to the new station and pedestrian/cycling friendly routes will be provided from other Areas of Opportunity to the station.
Enhances the connectivity to the town centre and high-quality green spaces	● Station Gateway will be at the heart of the new station and will be the focal arrival point. Quality housing development will provide an alternative housing offer in Willenhall and improve the sense of arrival in the town.
Addressing employment buildings identified as derelict, unsafe or unsuitable	● Further exploration is required in this area to assess occupancy of existing uses.



HOUSING CHARACTER

- Higher density housing to reflect this key station gateway and arrival area with potential for active ground floor uses.



PRECEDENT IMAGES



4

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES



4.1 HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY

The Framework Plan promotes the growth of housing around Willenhall town centre. Its focus across the four Areas of Opportunity is to see a significant increase in both the number and quality of homes, driving a mix of tenures to meet local demand. The SHMA suggest that 60% of new homes should be owner occupied. Willenhall will continue to be a town which supports local businesses and this plan retains many business and employment areas across the plan area whilst delivering new build housing to improve quality of life and drive economic growth in the town.

A STEP CHANGE IN HOUSING QUALITY

Willenhall will become a town where more people choose to call home. It will be a connected and active town which provides high quality housing to suit the needs of current and future residents.

The new development will drive up quality of housing in Willenhall to create healthy, aspirational living. The new homes will be energy efficient, digitally connected to increase the access to opportunities for residents. Use of modern methods of construction will be encouraged to reduce on-site disturbance as well as helping to build local skills capacity.

The new housing will include a combination of contemporary and traditional architecture which respects existing heritage whilst positively enhancing the areas appearance. Market evidence demonstrates that the majority of housing will be aimed at family living with two to four storey housing. However, in some locations – especially in close proximity to the new station – higher density apartments will be appropriate.

Housing across all tenures: The aim of this plan is to deliver a more balanced mix of housing tenures across Willenhall. Intervention by the Council will encourage the development of a higher proportion of homes for private ownership and private rent. The proposals aim to promote a change by creating tenure balance which better delivers the housing need identified within the SHMA. The SHMA suggests 60% of new homes should be owner occupied which means a larger proportion of new homes in Willenhall should be developed for owner-occupation.

Private homes for sale and rent: One of the key objectives for Willenhall is to create a step change through the introduction of high quality privately owned housing. Around 78% of the new housing is expected to be delivered for either private sale or private rent. This commitment will see Willenhall becoming the location of choice for people across all demographics.

New, affordable homes: The delivery of new homes in Willenhall will address the housing requirements for the Borough. The Framework Plan demonstrates the ability to deliver up to 500 new homes over the 10 year period and these will include a mix of house types and sizes to meet housing and market demand. The Framework Plan retains the flexibility to ensure that as the demographic in Willenhall changes – due to natural growth and the arrival of the train station – the mix of housing delivered on each phase can be adjusted to suit demand.

Planning policy dictates that the housing mix must include 25% affordable housing on sites above 15 dwellings or more. The Council is committed to see this policy delivered through a range of affordable tenures which meet the needs of all Willenhall residents.

Housing with care or support: Walsall as a Borough has an identified need for both care and supported housing. Willenhall presents a real opportunity to deliver schemes which meet this demand.

Supporting residents: Where residential properties are impacted by this Plan, the Council will openly engage with residents to agree solutions.

	Estimated Homes to be Delivered
Moat Street and Villiers Street	Up to 150
Pinson Road	Up to 200
North Willenhall	Up to 70
Station Gateway	Up to 100
Potential Homes Delivered	Up to 520

FIGURE 4.1: HOUSING CAPACITY Page 53 of 113



CURRENT EMPLOYMENT USES

Historically, the Willenhall area has proven popular for manufacturing and industrial companies. It has attracted a mix of regional and national companies such as Assa Abloy, DS Smith and AF Blakemore. The town's industrialisation developed close to the town centre. However, much of this development is now dated and no longer suitable for modern industrial and distribution requirements. As such, occupiers have moved to the outskirts of the town to more suitable properties, vacating several historic employment areas within the town centre.

Whilst there are industrial and trade occupiers located on the Areas of Opportunity, there are also vacant plots of land and several empty buildings, which are now beyond their economic life and no longer suited to the requirements of today's industrial occupiers. A number of the smaller workshop units are occupied by automotive repair businesses and trade occupiers who require good roadside prominence. Larger units are occupied by more sizeable businesses.

SUPPORTING BUSINESS

Industrial businesses are an essential part of the fabric of Willenhall and recognised for their contribution towards future economic growth and community cohesion in the town. Currently, within the Areas of Opportunity and wider Framework Plan area, there are many low-quality industrial buildings making unsuitable neighbours within existing residential areas and often not making efficient use of the land or premises.

Walsall Council will support viable, local businesses; working with owners to understand their needs and explore options. The Council has developed and evolving Business Charter which presents ways of working and demonstrates the commitment to local business.



EMPLOYMENT



COHESIVE, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

One of the key aims of the Willenhall Framework Plan is to support community cohesion. The following Place Making strategy presents proposals for improvements to walking and cycling in the town and the enhancement of green assets for the benefit of Willenhall residents.

In addition, the Framework Plan recognises the need for wider community assets across Willenhall.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Health and Social Care: Willenhall currently has four health facilities within the Framework Plan area. Work by the Walsall Together Partnership through the One Public Estate programme has identified the potential for Health and Social Care Hubs to be created which will provide improved and increased services in the locations where they are required. This approach would also free up under-used assets across the borough. Willenhall was identified as a potential location for one of the hubs. Creation of such a hub in Willenhall would be supported by a partnership between the Black Country CCG, health trusts, GPs and the Council to bring services together and collaborate. A well designed health hub within the Framework Plan area would have a positive place making impact; generating footfall and activity and helping to create community integration. Locations for this hub will be considered as the project progresses.

Education: The level of housing proposed in Willenhall will lead to an increase in the need for pupil placements. However, through preliminary engagement we understand that the increase can be accommodated in the existing schools. This will be managed and planned through the programme of redevelopment.

Supported Living: Walsall Council aims to deliver housing to suit all needs across the Borough. This includes meeting the significant demand for housing with support provision. Demand for a range of support needs has been identified by the Council which is not currently being met by the private sector. Provision of a mix of housing will increase the offer in Willenhall and help build a true, multi-generational community. This approach will help to provide solutions to housing and social care challenges, keep people closer to their families and even provide employment opportunities in the care sector. Some forms of support or care housing can also provide the chance to increase development density with residential developments incorporating other community infrastructure such as health and social hubs thus providing integrated solutions to meet community need.



HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE / EDUCATION





4.2 MOVEMENT & CONNECTIVITY

New and potential developments in the Willenhall area will have an impact on the way that people move around the area. In particular, the introduction of the new railway station will create changing movement patterns for all modes. The station will be connecting Wolverhampton in the west to Walsall in the east.

There is also potential for a Multi-modal Transport Link from the station. There is currently a potential site within the Station Gateway Area of Opportunity. This will provide a place with a variety of public, shared and active modes of transport options.

The adjacent figure shows the key potential pedestrian and cycle flow/desire lines in the context of new development proposals.

The diagram reflects the key movement generators and destinations in the area including the following:

- Proposed station and bus interchange
- Green way
- Town centre/Market Place
- Memorial Park



1. New Train Station

2. Local Bus Service

3. Summer Street

4. Cycle Routes



- Connections to Railway Station
- Pedestrian Priority Zone
- Enhanced Cycle Route
- Enhanced Walking Route
- Public Rights of Way
- Green Way
- Green Links
- Road Network
- Railway
- Connection Nodes
- Super crossing

FIGURE 4.2: MOVEMENT STRATEGY



WALKING & CYCLING

The existing level of provision for walking has been appraised by the Council through a Walking Route Audit undertaken in 2018. The WRAT (Walking Route Audit Tool) was used to assess the condition and sustainability of walking routes within the study area. The routes assessed are shown in the adjacent figure (main walking routes to be enhanced). There are also a number of other more minor links which need to be enhanced, such as the links through to Market Place and the Railway Line.

There are a number of opportunities to improve the walking and cycling network in Willenhall to integrate the Areas of Opportunity and extend and enhance the existing rights of way and cycling network.

The east-west greenway through Moat Street and Villiers Street Area of Opportunity, presents an opportunity to create a strategic pedestrian and cycle route. There are currently proposals to create a cycle route along the full length of the route.

There is potential to redesign the street network in the vicinity of new housing areas to create a more traffic-calmed, pedestrian and cycle friendly environment. For more minor access roads, there is potential for a more comprehensive redesign to create a 'Traffic calmed Residential Street' type treatment.

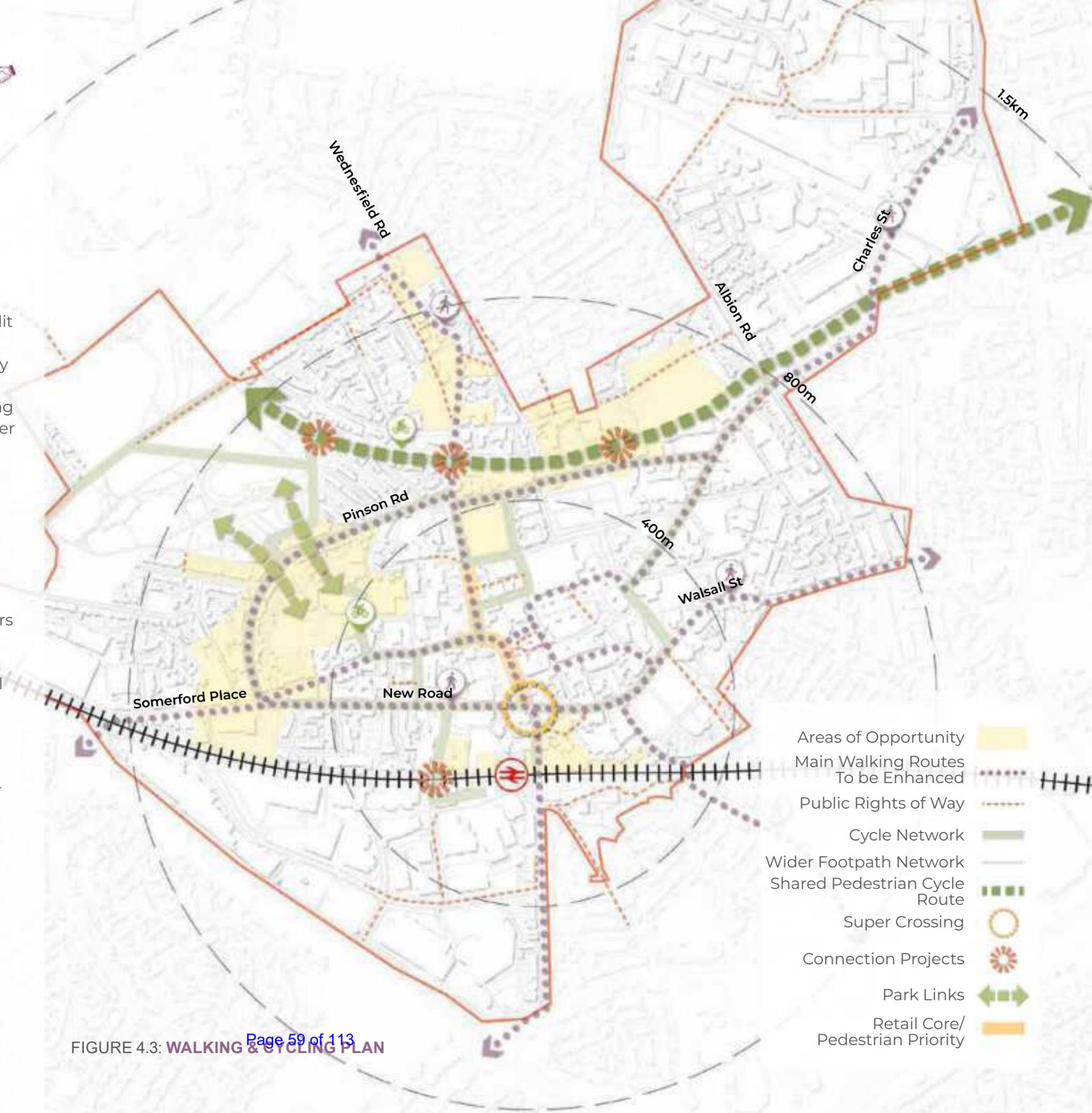


FIGURE 4.3: WALKING & CYCLING PLAN



VEHICULAR AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Willenhall is connected to Walsall and Wolverhampton by the A454, a strategic road which runs in a west/east direction to the south of the town and is connected to Willenhall by the B4464 Somerford Place and by the B4484 Bilston Street/ Rose Hill. The A454 also connects the study area to junction 10 of the M6 to the east of the study area.

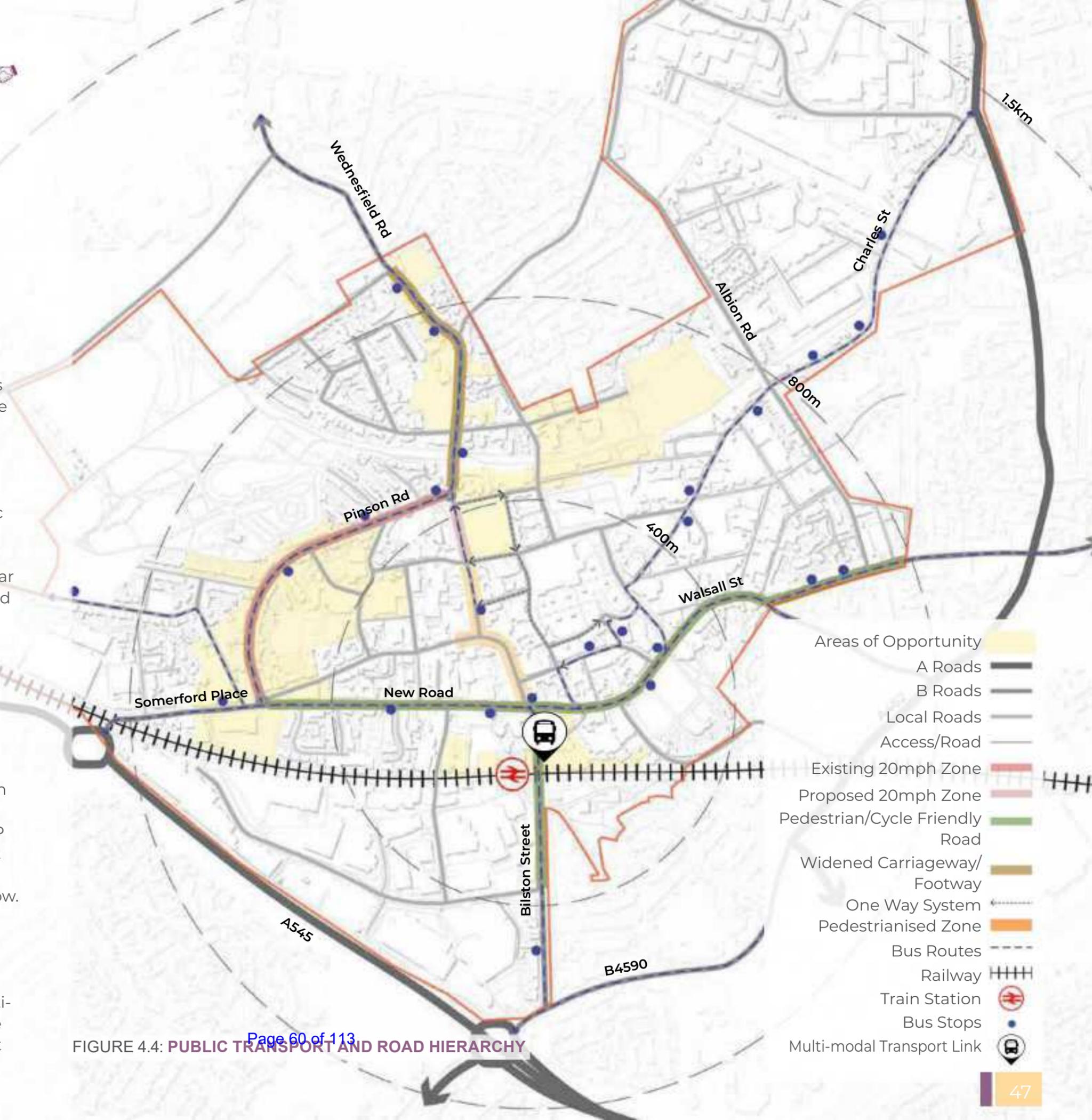
To reinforce the objectives to create a more pedestrian and cycle-friendly road network, and to address these safety concerns, there is an opportunity to create traffic calmed roads.

Throughout the public engagement process, it was clear that many of the respondents felt that existing road and public transport networks needed to be improved.

In terms of public transport, around 8 bus routes serve the study area. Bus stops are in close proximity to the town centre and served by all services. These connect the town with Wolverhampton, Bilston, Wednesbury, Walsall, County Bridge, Bloxwich and Pendeford.

There are plans for to improve access to the new station through highway improvements. The Council have an approved amount of £50,000 in the Walsall Council STP Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme 2021/22 for 'Willenhall Rail Station - Highways Infrastructure Development, with plan for further investments to follow.

In order to maximise the use of the future station and improve even more the mobility of Willenhall residents and visitors, the Plan proposes to relocate existing bus stops nearer to the railway station to create a new multi-modal transport link, providing a place where there are a variety of public, shared and active mode of transport options.



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FIGURE 4.4: PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ROAD HIERARCHY



4.3 PLACE MAKING CONTEXT AND LOCAL CHARACTER

The existing character of the area provides important context for place-making and has a key influence on the potential character of future housing proposals, summarised in the adjacent figure.

1. NORTHERN BOULEVARD

Northern Boulevard represents the main northern gateway into Willenhall. High-quality architecture coupled with urban greening along Temple Bar and Wednesfield Road will create an attractive arrival point, positively contributing to the connectivity and wayfinding in the area.

2. PARKLAND ARC

Development within Parkland Arc will be of a lower density, creating an attractive edge against Willenhall Memorial Park. Slower vehicle speeds and urban greening will help create a leafy, suburban feel that will contribute towards a safe family environment.

3. HIGH STREET HERITAGE

This area represents the heart of the community comprising a mix of uses. The character of this area reflects Willenhall's rich heritage, including many unique Victorian buildings and the historic market place. New residential development in this area should respect the town centre character and heritage value.

4. STATION GATEWAY

This area will be a key arrival point into Willenhall as a result of the proposed train station and Bilston Street. Development in this area will support the arrival experience to create a positive image for visitors to Willenhall. New residential development will consist of higher density development with the potential for active ground floor uses to provide activity in this area.

The place-making proposals include the following:-

- Green links - linking key green spaces and destinations along the greenway and towards the station. Links also to external green areas
- Key nodes and arrival spaces
- New links to overcome barriers creating severance
- Key buildings and uses promote legibility
- Connectivity between Areas of Opportunity
- Integration of green space into residential areas
- Active travel and movement networks
- Blue infrastructure - explore opportunities for sustainable urban drainage (suds) including swales, rain gardens and blue roofs

The area has a distinctive character combining the heritage assets and the conservation area with the green space network and Memorial Park.

The town's heritage is a key positive factor with the study area containing the Willenhall Conservation Area and listed buildings. All the listed buildings within the town centre are category II, many of which originate from the 17th and 18th century. There are many buildings of local interest many of which are listed including:

- Locksmiths House Museum
- St Giles Church
- The Clock Tower

The framework highlights key nodes and junctions which require a focussed design intervention, to address particular movement or place-making objectives.

In these areas there is an opportunity for new built form to define these key nodes including landmark buildings to reinforce the sense of place. There is also an opportunity to define key arrival points to create a more legible environment.

A number of gateway and arrival points in the town would benefit from enhancement including:

- Pinson Road and Temple Bar roundabout
- Pinson Road and Memorial Park boundary
- Wolverhampton Street into Market Place
- Bilston Street to Market Place
- Somerford Place to Wolverhampton Street

The quality of visitor experience is particularly important between the new station and the neighbourhood centre. Similarly, it is important to create a positive pedestrian and cycling experience between the new residential areas and the town centre.

The aim is to create a more positive experience for both residents and visitors by improvements to the public realm and through new built form development proposals. New residential buildings should front to public space to create a positive relationship and provide active frontages to create an environment which is pedestrian-friendly, more attractive and feels safer.

Moving forward Willenhall can be seen in terms of a number of different character areas which have been identified to reflect both existing townscape and landscape character, and also in terms of future development opportunities.

Character Areas

- 1** Northern Boulevard
- 2** Parkland Arc
- 3** High Street Heritage
- 4** Station Gateway

-  Gateways
-  Key Buildings
-  Key Node
-  Travel Node
-  Pedestrian Priority Routes
-  Green Streets
-  Green Spaces
-  Existing Vegetation
-  Water Bodies
-  Retail Core/
Pedestrian Priority Conservation Area
-  Locally Listed Buildings
-  Listed Buildings

FIGURE 4.5: PLACE MAKING CONTEXT



BUILT FORM

Built form plays an important role in defining the character of new housing development.

The National Design Guide describes built form as *"the three-dimensional pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings and open spaces. It is the interrelationship between all these elements that creates an attractive place to live, work and visit, rather than their individual characteristics. Together they create the built environment and contribute to its character and sense of place"*.

Typically, well-designed places will have:

- compact forms of development that are walkable.
- access to local public transport, services and facilities.
- recognisable streets and other spaces with their edges defined by buildings.
- memorable features or groupings of buildings, spaces, uses or activities that create a sense of place.

The combination of contemporary and traditional architecture, as shown in the adjacent photos, will help respect existing heritage while positively enhancing an areas aesthetic appearance.



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PRECEDENT IMAGES



The adjacent photographs present different developments from around the UK which illustrate a range of potential design approaches to the Areas of Opportunity. The photographs illustrate both contemporary and traditional approaches to residential development.



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GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The green infrastructure strategy is an integral element of the Framework Plan both in terms of sustainability objectives but also in terms of active travel and healthy living.

The existing green infrastructure network comprises a range of green space typologies including: parks and gardens, churchyards and cemeteries, amenity open space, allotments and outdoor sports facilities. The main green spaces and links within the vicinity of the study area are:

- Willenhall Memorial Park
- Wood Street Cemetery
- Eaton Yale Athletic and Social Club
- Greenway (former railway line)
- Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve is a local authority designation, located in close proximity to the north west of the Framework Plan.

The east-west greenway connects various green spaces within the Framework Plan to the wider green space network, notably Fibbersley LNR to the west and there are proposals to create a cycle route along the full length.

There are a large number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) comprising groups and individuals within the Framework Plan area which need to be accommodated, where possible, in the Areas of Opportunity. In addition trees within the Conservation Area are also afforded protection.

The green infrastructure framework seeks to create a linked network of multi-functional green space providing for a range of uses and activities including outdoor sport, play, recreation, movement and drainage.

This network is to be supported by a strong landscape structure focussed on new tree planting to extend the parkland character of Memorial Park into new and existing residential areas and to promote urban greening.

There is an opportunity to strengthen links and create green streets between them to create an extensive network of green spaces. Pinson Road, Wolverhampton Street and adjacent proposed Traffic Calmed Residential Streets have potential for new street tree planting (green streets).

The retention of existing TPOs in the Pinson Road Area of Opportunity creates the potential for a new green space.

There is also potential for sustainable urban drainage (SUDs), such as swales, both within these streets and also within proposed residential plots.

Other green infrastructure elements such as green walls, green roofs should be considered as part of the new residential design. New landscape planting should also promote biodiversity.



WILLENHALL MEMORIAL PARK



Pedestrianised Zone		Landmarks/key buildings	
Green Ways		Cycle Way	
Traffic Calmed Residential Street		Play Areas	
Links to the park		Greenspace	
Key node		Gateway	
Travel node			

FIGURE 4.6: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN



4.4 BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

The proposals have been formulated from a range of technical inputs to create a comprehensive framework for development in Willenhall.

Each supporting strategy can be seen as a place making layer which together combine to create the final, holistic Framework Plan. In this way the plan can be seen as a synthesis of urban design, town planning, environmental, infrastructure, transport and property inputs.

The Framework Plan seeks to integrate the proposed Areas of Opportunity with movement proposals to create a connected community. High quality place-making is promoted through high quality design and public realm enhancements. A holistic approach to green infrastructure has been taken promoting urban greening and sustainability objectives. Digital connectivity is also a key objective for the area.

4.5 OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES SUMMARY

OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
 AROUND 500 HIGH QUALITY, ENERGY EFFICIENT, ATTRACTIVE NEW HOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » £1.3M of additional yearly long term local spend » £20M local supply chain spend
 3.9HA NEW & ENHANCED PUBLIC & AMENITY SPACES, PARKS AND PLAY AREAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 10 new indirect local jobs and 450 local construction jobs
 NEW MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORT LINK FROM THE STATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 3,000 weeks of apprenticeships and work placements
 10KM OF ENHANCED WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Strong sense of place and community cohesion » Increased footfall to serve the town centre retail, resulting in increased spend.
 850M TRAFFIC CALMED RESIDENTIAL ROADS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Cross-cutting impacts on long term economic and clean growth
 CYCLE HUBS AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE POINTS	

* Values are indicative and may be subject to change following further due diligence. The outcomes are based on the impact of delivering an estimated 500 homes.



FIGURE 4.7: FRAMEWORK PLAN OVERVIEW



5

A FOCUS ON DELIVERY



INTRODUCTION

The Framework Plan presents a bold and ambitious Vision for Willenhall. It provides the framework of interventions required to overcome the identified challenges and barriers to delivery and presents opportunities for housing delivery which meet housing need and local demand. The proposals seek to deliver and coordinate comprehensive redevelopment across the Framework Plan area to deliver the Council's vision and objectives and will maximise the benefit to the existing and new communities of improved regional and national connectivity.

The proposed approaches to delivery provides a range of identified social, economic and environmental outcomes which will positively impact upon Willenhall's communities and people. Realisation of these outcomes is dependent upon a robust approach to delivery led by the public sector which will create the environment for both public and private investment leading to the delivery of the Framework Plan objectives and vision.

The Council's approach to overcoming the delivery challenges previously discussed and delivering the vision for Willenhall is captured in the following section.

THE NEED FOR INTERVENTION

This Framework Plan clearly sets out why public led intervention is essential to deliver the aspirational vision for Willenhall. The cost and effort to assemble deliverable housing sites in Willenhall presents a high degree of risk to the private sector which is preventing early involvement of developers. Market testing demonstrates a high demand from the private sector, who, when presented with developable opportunities, will be very keen to build new homes in Willenhall.

All the interventions proposed in this plan are aimed at facilitating development of new homes and high-quality Place Making. Walsall Council is prepared to intervene in the regeneration of Willenhall in the following ways:





PLANNING POLICY

This Framework Plan will inform the development of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Willenhall. The SPD will be subject to statutory consultation and, alongside other key planning policy documents such as the emerging BCP, will help to inform planning decisions. This approach will provide further certainty and reduced risk to development organisations who wish to deliver housing in the Framework Plan area.

The SPD can be further supported by a Design Code which can guide the aspiration for high quality place making and deliver the objectives of the Framework Plan and Black Country Garden City principles.

Walsall Council will take a lead on developing an outline planning application for Phase 1 – Moat Street and Villiers street, to provide further certainty of delivery. This approach may also be taken on future phases however that decision will follow more detailed investigation.

The Council acknowledges that further review is needed on the application of policy criteria set out in existing and emerging planning policy, specifically relating to the redevelopment of poor quality industrial land for housing. Further work will be undertaken to determine potential impacts on the delivery and approach to achieving the regeneration aspirations of the Framework Plan.

CONNECTIVITY & PLACE

Walsall Council are committed to securing funding to deliver the proposed connectivity, green space and Place Making interventions proposed through this plan.

Walsall Council are committed to deliver comprehensive development including infrastructure and place making investment. Further work is ongoing to support this investment.

HOUSING DELIVERY

Walsall Council will pro-actively facilitate the delivery of housing across the Framework Plan area. They will adopt the lead role in the regeneration of Willenhall using a range of approaches to suit the needs of each individual development opportunity.

Phase 1 - Moat Street and Villiers Street; is further progressed than the remaining Areas of Opportunity and the delivery approach has been identified. Future phases are still in an early stage of exploration and the route to delivery will be agreed when the development opportunities are fully understood.

Approach to Delivery Phase 1 - In the role of facilitator, the Council will acquire the identified land parcels to create a developable site for housing. The council will obtain outline planning approval and procure a partnership with a suitable private sector delivery organisation to deliver high quality housing and public realm. This partnership approach will allow the Council to retain significant control of the outcome whilst benefiting from the expertise and investment of a private developer.

If suitable, the procurement will make use of an existing public sector procurement framework to accelerate delivery.

Specialist Housing Need – Walsall Council has identified a need for supported housing and housing with care across the borough. This need is not being catered for by the private sector. The Council has an opportunity in Willenhall to deliver homes for care and may choose to direct deliver small, stand-alone projects or work with a specialist provider to do so.

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FUNDING THE GAP

Walsall Council is committed to supporting comprehensive development not only of housing but also interventions which will improve connectivity and place making across the town. Each phase of housing development will include elements of the interventions identified within the movement strategy and place making strategy.

The Council Cabinet will need to take a decision in relation to the funding for Phase 1, Moat Street and Villiers Street.

As has been identified, one of the key challenges for Willenhall is viability due to the high costs involved in site assembly and site remediation. In addition, the value of houses is low in Willenhall resulting in an overall viability gap.

Through the interventions of this project there is expected to be a positive impact on house prices, however, the ongoing need to assemble and remediate sites remains. Once due diligence is completed on the further three Areas of Opportunity, the level of potential interventions will be known. The Council continues to work with partners at the West Midlands Combined Authority and Homes England to secure the funding necessary to deliver housing in all Areas of Opportunity. Specific funding arrangements will be agreed as work progresses on the Areas of Opportunity.



LAND ASSEMBLY

To support the development of housing within a reasonable timeframe the Council is committed to assembling land at appropriate points in the programme. Land assembly intervention has been identified as essential to deliver comprehensive redevelopment leading to the delivery of the identified outcomes and benefits.

It is the Council's intention to work with property owners and existing business occupiers and to acquire the required land by negotiation where possible. The council has developed an evolving Business Charter setting out the support available to businesses that may be impacted by land acquisition. The Council is committed to acquiring land by negotiation but will consider using its statutory powers including compulsory purchase and appropriation if required and where necessary to ensure timely delivery.

PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT

The Council has a clear understanding of the interventions required within Moat Street and Villiers Street – Identified as Phase 1. In this area the boundary has been defined and engagement has already commenced with landowners and businesses. This engagement will continue with regular information updates and direct one to one conversation taking place throughout the process. Acquisition of property will be supported by the guidance set out in the evolving Business Charter which can be found on the Council's website.

FURTHER PHASES

Whilst the further three Areas of Opportunity have been identified as having significant potential for new housing and place making interventions, the Council is still investigating the areas in terms of ownerships, occupation and opportunity.

The boundary of these three areas; Pinson Road, Station Gateway and North Willenhall; is currently subject to further investigation and the exact boundaries will be more clearly defined over time. The areas demonstrate some potential for development and through further engagement and discussion the boundaries will be defined.

As the programme progresses, focussed engagement will take place with landowners, businesses and the public within all Areas of Opportunity aligned to the phasing plan.

BARRIERS TO LAND ASSEMBLY

Walsall Council is aware of the challenges which the necessary relocation will place on existing businesses and is giving consideration to these in the evolving Business Charter.

An Employment Land study has been completed which raised the following challenges:

- Need to identifying suitable type and scale of property to meet occupiers' needs
- Costs of relocation
- Retention of a skilled workforce that rely on local transport links



28th February, 2023

8

Play Area Improvement Programme

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Health and Wellbeing

1. Aim

- 1.1. The aim of the play area improvement programme is to improve the quality of play provision and the accessibility of fitness provision across the Borough, thereby improving the health and wellbeing of residents.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the scrutiny committee note progress on the play area improvement programme.

3. Report Detail – Know

- 3.1. The health and wellbeing of the residents is of prime importance to the council. Through a process of improving the quality of play and fitness provision, the council will encourage more young people and adults to use their local open spaces for play, sport and exercise.
- 3.2. The importance of parks and green spaces was demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitor numbers dramatically increased over the lockdown period.
- 3.3. Cabinet received a report in February 2022 which set out options for a play improvement programme as part of a wider programme of providing green spaces for health improvement.
- 3.4. The report set out the background in play investment over the last 10 years, which had been limited. The proposals also identified a way forward for prioritising the way to improve the play infrastructure in the borough over the next few years.
- 3.5. A programme of delivering outdoor gyms in the strategic parks was also identified to ensure that the infrastructure for healthy lifestyles is improved. This delivers on the main objectives of the healthy spaces team to encourage people to use their green spaces for improved health, fitness and wellbeing.

- 3.6. A capital programme of play improvement was agreed, costing £1,644,000, which was made up from council capital and external funding.
- 3.7. A total of 13 play areas were selected for the first phase of improvements, although 29 sites in total were identified in need of improvement. A further 9 sites were in need of review to assess whether they were still fit for purpose and located in the right place, and 6 new outdoor gyms were programmed for delivery across the strategic sites in the borough.
- 3.8. The healthy spaces team are currently consulting on the proposals using the new online platform Common Place, which can be accessed using the address below:

<https://walsallparksandgreenspaces.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/play-area-improvement-programme/step1>
- 3.9. The consultation will close in the middle of March, currently there have been over 3,500 visitors to look at the proposals and over 500 responses to the proposals. Over 70 of these responses have been about other sites not covered by this investment the largest percentage being about Arena Park in Palfrey, which will be improved through the Palfrey Big Local funding.
- 3.10. The consultation also involved a large leaflet drop to ensure that people local to these play facilities and parks were aware of the consultation online.

Financial information

- 3.11. Improving the 13 most poorly equipped sites with new equipment and safety surfacing and 6 outdoor gyms would be £1,644k. Please see the table as shown below:

Expenditure types	Expenditure
Play areas: 13 with new equipment @ £80k each	£1,040,000
Outdoor gyms: 6 @60k each	£360,000
Contingency and professional services	£244,000
Total	£1,644,000

Reducing Inequalities

- 3.12. The project will provide the improvement of play and sports provision for children and young people with additional needs by providing more accessible play equipment as part of the programme.

4. Decide

- 4.1. The option to do nothing would have resulted in play areas deteriorating further and this will result in further vandalism and anti-social behaviour. This would have been likely to have had a knock-on effect of reducing pride in areas which look neglected and may result in further decline.

- 4.2. The option of improving the worst 13 play areas and reviewing 9 areas in need of urgent attention will cost over £1m but should be considered alongside the delivery of 6 outdoor gyms to increase the opportunities for people to exercise in a cheap and effective manner at their local strategic park.
- 4.3. A further option of improving the remaining 29 sites which need further improvement maybe considered as a second phase of this project.

5. Respond

- 5.1. Comments from this committee can be discussed with the Portfolio holder for Health and Wellbeing and actions decided upon
- 5.2. The initial consultation phase will close in March and the implementation phase will then start. The delivery phase should take approximately 12 months.

6. Review

- 6.1. As part of the programme regular reviews of progress will be carried out and reported to senior management and portfolio holder for Clean and Green.

Background papers

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28 February 2023

Derelict Sites

Ward(s): All

Portfolio: Cabinet Member, Regeneration

1. Aim

- 1.1 Walsall is a town with a proud history and a considerable stock of historic and heritage buildings, a number of which have now fallen into disrepair. Walsall Council is showing civic leadership by compiling information on these buildings, sites and their owners, and creating a set of actions to address the problems caused by their condition, with a view to improving the experience, safety and enjoyment of the borough.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report brought to Cabinet on 8th February 2023, to set out the criteria for intervention and to confirm Cabinet's support in principle for the use of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to acquire derelict sites with a view to enabling safe and attractive development.

3. Report detail – know

- 3.1 On 8th February 2023 Cabinet considered the Derelict Sites report. Cabinet approved the recommendations, to support CPO provided that this would be to enable a strategic regeneration scheme; and/or that the site is a derelict and underutilised regeneration site, a long-term empty property and/or derelict land. Cabinet were also asked to approve the criteria for selection of sites, to inform a further iteration of the capital programme containing allocations to acquire any agreed sites. The report is appended below.

4. Decide

- 4.1 Cabinet approved the recommendations as detailed above.

5. Review

- 5.1 The council will develop a business case for each site as it comes forward and also review the capital programme accordingly.

Background papers

None

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Cabinet – 8 February 2023

Derelict Sites Intervention

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew – Deputy Leader & Regeneration

Related portfolios: N/A

Service: Regeneration and Economy

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 A key area of focus of the Council Plan 2022-25 is to have a thriving borough by creating vibrant places, with affordable working and living spaces. Derelict brownfield sites and long-term empty properties have a negative impact on the appearance of a neighbourhood and on the housing and employment opportunities across the borough. Bringing redundant sites and buildings back into active economic use will generate economic and environmental outputs for the area and contribute towards development targets, including new homes, employment floorspace and place making.

2. Summary

- 2.1 In driving economic regeneration in the borough and providing residents with attractive and successful places to live and work, the Council will show leadership in creating improvements to neglected or abandoned sites, in a that could be brought back into use for housing and employment, as part of a robust place making strategy.
- 2.2 In July 2022, a Derelict Sites Task Force was established which developed an information base of problematic sites within the borough and a set of potential interventions to address them
- 2.3 The task force will look at all methods of interventions, through influence, enforcement and negotiation, to bring forward and restore derelict sites. Where these are unsuccessful, it will be necessary to consider compulsory purchase as a route to acquire the sites to restore them to use, preserve the public safety and environment and drive economic activity in the borough. Various public bodies, such as Local Authorities, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Homes England, have a range of powers to compulsorily acquire

land. As a local authority, the Council has powers to acquire land and buildings in private ownership to enable comprehensive and safe development, providing it can be shown that there is a “compelling case in the public interest”. The legal test for the use of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers is set high. There must be a clear case in the public interest; there must be a clear scheme for the redevelopment or regeneration of the area; and the making of a CPO must always be done as a last resort when all efforts to acquire by negotiation have failed, amongst other things.

- 2.4 The making of a CPO is a means to enable development and regeneration, but should never be used as a threat to landowners or as a ‘bargaining tool’. The Council’s Constitution does not provide any delegated authority for compulsory purchase. Accordingly, Cabinet authority is required before any step towards compulsory purchase can be made. There must be a clear case for a CPO and the Council must be prepared to see the process to completion, prior to making an Order. This includes preparing for a CPO to potentially proceed to a public inquiry where objections are made, and those objections are not able to be dealt with by negotiation.
- 2.5 This report invites Cabinet to support the use of compulsory purchase powers in-principle, where negotiations to purchase are not successful, to help facilitate the future development of derelict and underutilised regeneration sites and long-term empty properties and derelict land across the borough, in line with the Council’s own development aspirations. This could include, for example, sites identified within the Council’s development pipeline or funded regeneration programmes like Town Deal, where redevelopment by private landowners has not been forthcoming (e.g. long-term unoccupied/derelict with no planning proposals, or where planning consent has been awarded but no assurances or steps taken to implement in a timely manner or subsequently consent has lapsed) and negotiations to acquire via negotiated treaty prove unsuccessful. It could also extend to derelict and empty sites and buildings where an interested party requests assistance from the Council using its compulsory purchase powers.
- 2.6 Prior to making any CPO for any site in the borough, it is proposed that Cabinet receive a further report to a future meeting, setting out the detailed proposals and clear case for each CPO action, including costings in line with the relevant statutory guidance and legal tests, so that Cabinet can make an informed decision whether to use its CPO powers in respect of each individual property.
- 2.7 The recommendations of this report constitute a key decision, as there is the potential for the implementation to directly affect communities in an area comprising two or more wards in the borough, subject to the sites where the future use of compulsory purchase powers are sought.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet supports the use of compulsory purchase powers in-principle where:

- a) the land cannot be acquired by agreement within a reasonable timeframe; and
- b) the relevant statutory and Ministerial Circular tests for making a compulsory purchase order ('CPO') are met.

and either c) or d) applies:

- c) the use of CPO powers would help facilitate delivery of particular sites as part of a strategic regeneration scheme; and/or
- d) the site is a derelict and underutilised regeneration site, a long-term empty property and/or derelict land.

Noting that approval to make any compulsory purchase order would be subject to a future Cabinet report.

- 3.2 That Cabinet note that reasonable attempts will be made to acquire the various land interests of owners, occupiers or others with a legal interest in any site by agreement, before consideration is given to compulsory purchase powers.
- 3.3 That Cabinet agree the prioritisation process and criteria set out at paragraph 4.7 to be used to identify the most appropriate sites for compulsory purchase, and that a programme arising from this prioritisation should be endorsed by Cabinet in a further report, for inclusion in the capital programme.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 Across the borough there are a number of privately-owned brownfield sites and long-term vacant properties that continue to be undeveloped and left to deteriorate into dereliction causing blight in the local area. Many of these sites attract anti-social behaviour (e.g. vandalism, arson, drug abuse), vermin problems, and have an overall detrimental effect on the community, the environment and visible attractiveness and perceptions of the area.
- 4.2 As well as the environmental and community benefits of bringing sites and premises back into use, these sites are important to the borough's land supply and delivery of growth targets in relation to new homes and employment land. The redevelopment of brownfield sites will help reduce the pressure and need for the release of green belt land for development.
- 4.3 Whilst there are some responsible private owners who are proactive in bringing forward their assets for refurbishment or redevelopment, there are many examples where owners are unwilling or unable to achieve this, particularly within a reasonable timeframe, and despite concerted support and guidance from the Council (e.g. with planning and funding opportunities). This includes sites that are long-term unoccupied where the owner has no planning proposals or consent forthcoming for redevelopment; where the owner has secured

planning consent but provides no assurances, nor actively pursues steps to implement the permission in a timely manner; or where planning consent has been allowed to lapse.

- 4.4 Throughout the borough and our town and district centres, there is clear evidence of such long-term vacant sites. For example, former pub premises, redundant low quality industrial premises allocated for housing use, and empty buildings of conservation merit. There are also vacant brownfield sites within the regeneration pipeline that continue to be undeveloped, largely due to landowner expectations of valuations and viability. In cases of larger regeneration schemes where there are multiple private owners and interests, like in Walsall Town Centre and the Walsall to Wolverhampton Growth Corridor, achieving comprehensive redevelopment is also difficult without public sector intervention in land assembly.
- 4.5 As a local authority, the Council has powers to acquire land and buildings in private ownership to enable comprehensive and safe development, providing it can be shown that there is a “compelling case in the public interest”. The making of a CPO must always be done as a last resort when all efforts to bring forward redevelopment and acquire by negotiation have failed. This report seeks Cabinet authority to support the use of compulsory purchase powers in-principle, where negotiations to purchase are not successful, to facilitate and enable regeneration, subject to meeting the relevant guidance and tests, and subject to a further report to Cabinet setting out the detailed proposals and a clear case for each CPO action, including costings to enable an informed decision to be made prior to the making of any CPO.
- 4.6 In December 2022, Cabinet received a report for the Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme. Due to long standing disuse and the associated problems with the site, along with the economic and social factors set out above, a development scheme was proposed (Appendix 4) for the Brown Jug Public House Compulsory Purchase Order, setting out land CPO costs with a legal/tax contingency. Additional enforcement measures are also being pursued in order to preserve public safety.
- 4.7 The Derelict Sites Task Force, set up by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, has compiled a register of derelict sites and identified appropriate sets of measures in terms of public safety, building control, planning enforcement and any other areas where the Council can show leadership and have impact in improving the borough’s physical, economic and social condition. In addition, the taskforce has looked to identify strategic longer-term solutions to some of the sites, and has created a set of criteria through which to prioritise resource. The criteria are set out in the table below. In this way the interventions can be grouped accordingly and realistic, achievable routes to solutions can be identified. In some cases, partner intervention or corrective action by the present owners can be effective; in others a targeted intervention by the Council will be indicated through this process.

Criteria/Risk Factor	Score	Explanation
Fire	1-5	Current concerns by the Fire Service including recent call outs to the premises for fires or near to other high-risk locations.
Police	1-5	Current reports and issues identified by the Police including anti-social behaviour, exploitation, drugs, or other criminal behaviour at the premises.
Children's Services	1-5	Calls or reports to Children's Services with regards to anti-social behaviour, exploitation, drugs, or other criminal behaviour at the premises.
Community Safety	1-5	Reports received by Community Safety with regards to anti-social behaviour, modern day slavery or trafficking, links to radical groups at the premises.
Community Protection	1-5	Reports or concerns identified by Community/ Environmental Protection with regards to anti-social behaviour, fly tipping, bonfires, people gaining illegal access/unauthorised encampments, pest infestations etc at the premises.
Financial Debt	1-5	Level of debt held against the property e.g. Council Tax, Business Rates, Work in Default etc, which could be used to leverage enforcement or regeneration activity.
Impact/ Visibility	1-5	Property is a high value target e.g. proximity/ relationship with adjoining property; key public gateway to the Town/District Centre, etc.
Cost of intervention	1-5	Total cost to the public sector to intervene e.g. acquire, demolish, secure, legal, redevelop/dispose.
Building condition	1-5	Structural integrity and safety; level of building dereliction.
Enforcement Action	1-5	Likelihood of successful enforcement action.
Regeneration	1-5	Links to wider regeneration objectives and initiatives.
Building Listed Status	1-5	Listed-5 Conservation Area-4 Locally Listed- 2 Non-heritage asset - 0
Redevelopment potential	1-5	Suitability of the site/premises for refurbishment or redevelopment for an economic use; development outputs.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.8 The Council has committed to five key areas of focus in the Council Plan 2022-2025, which support the overall aim of reducing inequalities and maximising potential. The proactive action to redevelop and bring strategic regeneration sites and long-term properties back into use will have a direct positive impact on the Council's ability to deliver its priorities, as stated in the Corporate Plan in particular:

Economic - Regenerating the Borough to support places where people are proud to live and work, delivering affordable homes and attracting inward investment.

Communities - Empower our communities so that they feel they are connected and belong in Walsall, creating safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community.

Risk management

4.9 The Council is only able to use CPO powers as a last resort once it is satisfied that this is the only option left to acquire, and that there is a robust case for the use of such powers. When ascertaining the purpose, powers and extent of acquisition, the Council as the acquiring authority must consider whether it can demonstrate the existence of the following fundamental principles, which must exist if a CPO is to be confirmed:

- a) that there is a compelling case in the public interest;
- b) that the purposes for which the CPO is made justify interfering with the human rights of those with an interest in the land affected;
- c) that the land included in the CPO is needed for the purposes specified, and that there are no alternatives which involve less interference with third party property;
- d) how the land included in the CPO is going to be used i.e. there needs to be a clear, deliverable and viable plan for how the land is needed;
- e) that all necessary resources are or will be available to bring forward the underlying scheme for which the CPO is required within a reasonable timescale. Substantive details of the sources and timing of funding available for acquiring the land, implementing the scheme and paying compensation should be given, and;
- f) that the scheme is unlikely to be blocked by any physical or legal impediments to implementation, including any infrastructure accommodation works or remedial work or any planning permission or other consent or licence.

In most cases, a scheme will need to be evidenced by way of full planning permission. It is advisable that Cabinet only consider a report to make a CPO once planning permission has been granted. In some circumstances, planning permission will not be obtained first, or at all. This usually relates to large scale schemes where the planning process itself is likely to proceed to a public inquiry, in such cases there is clear benefit in running the two procedures together but it does carry greater risks.

Where planning permission for the underlying scheme has not yet been obtained, the acquiring authority must demonstrate that there is no reason why it might be withheld. Given that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, a statement from a planning consultant explaining why the balance lies in favour of granting permission may be useful.

- 4.10 In terms of the Secretary of State, any CPO must be submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for confirmation as the confirming authority. Confirmation of the CPO is subject to the Secretary of State being satisfied, that there is a balance between the intentions of the acquiring authority and the concerns of any objectors and the wider public interest, and also that the statutory procedures have been followed correctly.
- 4.11 The risks associated with the above general criteria and statutory procedures will need to be considered, and addressed as part of any future CPO case, so that Cabinet can make an informed decision whether to use its CPO powers pertaining to a specific identified site.

Financial implications

- 4.12 At this point, the financial implications are unquantified as negotiations have not yet taken place or are at an early stage for derelict sites in the Borough. When these negotiations progress, the purchase price will be subject to standard challenge by Corporate Landlord and the Section 151 officer and the availability of prioritised funds through the Capital Programme. The value of the sale will determine the subsequent approval route, as per thresholds set in the Standing Orders.
- 4.13 If a CPO is proposed, then there will be a number of associated costs relating to the acquisition, including the purchase price (based on market valuations), any disturbance payments, professional fees as well as the legal and land referencing costs in making the Order and, if necessary, the costs of any Public Inquiry and Lands Tribunal hearings. There would also be costs associated with any external support that may be procured to support the preparation of the CPO case and process (e.g. site due diligence [such as feasibility and survey work], valuations and planning), plus holding costs for securing and managing the site post a successful CPO acquisition.
- 4.14 Given the nature of brownfield sites and redundant properties that are likely to require CPO intervention, it is likely that there will also be a funding requirement to make future redevelopment viable (e.g. abnormal, remediation, infrastructure costs). As the acquiring authority, it will be for the Council to demonstrate that the funds are in place, and confirm the source of such funding to bring the proposed scheme to fruition. Funding and a clear and tangible scheme are therefore fundamental. Confirmation that the funding to deliver the scheme is in place is needed and required to sufficiently demonstrate that the scheme is likely to be delivered to justify interference with the Human Rights of those with an interest in the site.
- 4.15 A business case will be required for each proposed CPO case, for approval by the Strategic Investment Board (SIB), setting out the associated revenue and capital costs and sources of funding (i.e. internal and external) prior to seeking Cabinet approval for the making of a CPO. Sources of external funding may include public sector funding via the West Midlands Combined Authority or Homes England.

- 4.16 Where a report to Cabinet is being prepared for compulsory acquisition on behalf of a private developer, in order to bring about regeneration, the Council will need to obtain an undertaking from the developer that it will underwrite all of the Council's costs associated with the making of a CPO before any further steps are taken.

Legal implications

- 4.17 There are a number of compulsory purchase powers available to mainly public sector bodies, known as 'Acquiring Authorities.' Each power is set out in legislation known as the "enabling act" which sets out who can use the power, what the power can be used for, and criteria for confirmation of a compulsory purchase order in each situation. These are summarised in the table below.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Local Authorities	Section 226 enables local authorities to acquire land to deliver their planning policy objectives. Section 226(1)(a) enables an authority with planning powers to acquire land if they think it will facilitate development, redevelopment or improvement on or in relation to the land being acquired. Section 226(1)(b) allows an authority to acquire land required for a purpose which is necessary to achieve in the interests of the proper planning of an area in which the land is situated.
Housing Act 1985: Part 2	Local Authorities	Section 17 empowers local housing authorities to acquire land, houses or other properties by compulsion for the provision of housing accommodation. Acquisition must achieve a quantitative or qualitative housing gain.
Housing and Regeneration Act 2008	Homes England West Midlands Combined Authority	Under Section 9 Homes England, the non-departmental public sector body, has compulsory purchase powers to acquire land and new rights over land. To justify use of CPO powers, Homes England must demonstrate such powers would facilitate the achievement of its objectives as set out in section 2 of the Act. Under the devolution deal, Homes England's compulsory purchase powers have been devolved to the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority. These powers are only to be exercised in agreement with the relevant local authority.
Highways Act 1980	Highway Authorities	Part 12 of the Act enables Highway Authorities to compulsorily purchase land and interests in land. Sections 239 to 246 set out differing purposes for which land may be acquired for highways.

- 4.18 The purpose for which land is to be acquired, will define which enabling powers should be used. The most used power to assemble land interests for large redevelopment and regeneration projects is Section 226 of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act. The Guidance on use of CPO powers is set out in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 'Compulsory purchase and compensation Guidance'. The Council will therefore, need to ensure that the criteria under the enabling act and guidance is satisfied prior to the making of any future Order.
- 4.19 The acquisition of land/property compulsorily is an interference with Human Rights of affected landowners. Section 6 Human Rights 1998 Act prohibits public authorities from acting in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The main articles of the Convention that are of importance in circumstances where the Council is considering making a CPO are Article 8 – the right to respect for private and family life and his/her home and Article 1 of the First Protocol – the protection of property. Furthermore, a CPO should only be made where there is a compelling case in the public interest, where the public interests of the development that underpins the Order outweighs the infringement of affected landowners' rights. An acquiring authority should therefore, be sure that the purposes for which it is making a CPO sufficiently justify interfering with the human rights of those with an interest in the land affected, having regard, in particular, to the provisions of Article 1 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights and, in the case of a dwelling, Article 8 of the Convention.
- 4.20 With regard to the funding solutions that may be required to deliver the proposed development scheme (referenced in Financial Implications above), any funding conditions imposed, together with timeframes on the availability of the funding stream will need to be carefully considered, in particular, their impact on delivery and development cost. The funding solution adopted will also need to be considered and tested to ensure it is state aid, and procurement compliant and within the Council's statutory powers.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.21 There are no procurement implications in relation to the recommendations of the report at this stage. Any future procurement implications that arise from the Council directly undertaking a CPO, and preferred delivery route for the future development of the land to be compulsorily acquired will be considered as part of the business case for CPO and to be reported to a future Cabinet meeting.

Property implications

- 4.22 There are no property implications in relation to the recommendations of the report at this stage. If the Council acquire sites through compulsory purchase, as landowner, the Council will have on-going responsibilities for the site until it is disposed of and/or developed. Such responsibilities could include, for example, maintaining site security/boundaries, management of existing tenancies, and responsibility for environmental liabilities and building

insurance. The funding source and budget for such revenue costs when acquiring property will need to be considered and identified as part of any future business case prior to the making of a CPO.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.23 Derelict sites and buildings typically attract neighbourhood complaints about matters such as accumulations of rubbish, rodent infestations, and attracting anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, drug taking and arson, as well as negatively impacting on the environment and perceptions of an area. All issues that can potentially negatively impact upon the health and well-being of Walsall's residents and the public. Bringing these sites back into use will help towards improving the environment and amenity of the local areas and provide new living and working opportunities for residents.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.24 Council intervention through the use CPO powers, should only be used as a last resort. CPO action will have direct implications for owners and tenants whose private property/land are affected by potential acquisitions. The requirement and preparation of an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be considered, in consultation with the Equalities service, on a site-by-site basis as part of the preparation for a CPO case.

Staffing implications

- 4.25 Internal and specialist external resourcing will be required to prepare, make and deliver any CPO case. This includes service areas such as Regeneration, Housing and Economy, Legal, Finance and Corporate Landlord, as well as external technical and legal advice to complete the necessary due diligence and evidence requirements.

Climate Impact

- 4.26 Derelict sites and older premises typically have poor/low building standards that are below current legislation requirements in regard to mitigating and protecting against climate change. The redevelopment of these sites will enable climate change implications and safeguarding, for example through design, building materials and layouts, to be mitigated as part of the planning process.

Consultation

- 4.27 When using any of the enabling powers for compulsory purchase, the Council needs to demonstrate that reasonable attempts to acquire the land by agreement have been made in advance of making a compulsory purchase order. The CPO Guidance is clear that there are benefits to running landowner negotiations in parallel with the compulsory purchase order process. The RICS Practice Statement on surveyors acting in relation to Compulsory Purchase also provides mandatory requirements and guidance for surveyors acting in these matters. Any future request for approval to make a CPO should provide

details of the negotiations and reasonable offers (based on full valuation evidence) made to those with interests in the land to acquire by agreement. Negotiations with the landowner must also continue through the CPO process.

5. Decide

5.1 This report sets out the preferred option for the Council to intervene in bringing forward redundant and derelict brownfield sites (particularly where comprehensive land assembly across multiple owners is required) and long-term empty properties for redevelopment using its compulsory purchase powers.

5.2 The following alternative options have been considered:

- a) Do nothing - This would be a continuation of the existing position, whereby the Council relies on private landowners to bring forward their land and property interests for redevelopment and bring back into use. In this option there are no assurances that landowners will act independently and there is the risk that sites and buildings continue to deteriorate and negatively impact on the local environment and neighbourhood amenity, as well as attracting anti-social behaviour. This option would also not support the delivery of new homes and jobs through the brownfield regeneration.
- b) Council work with private owners to support redevelopment schemes coming forward (e.g. pre-planning guidance, funding bid support, negotiating acquisition). A CPO is a last resort and any case for a CPO must demonstrate this to be the case. The Council will, therefore, continue to work alongside private owners to bring sites back into use. However, in cases where timely and meaningful progress is exhausted, the case for Council intervention using compulsory purchase powers will be pursued.

6. Respond

6.1 Significant work is to be carried out prior to the making of a CPO. This includes land ownership and site extent investigations, owner identification, establishing existing and potential uses of the site (this may include discussions with a stakeholder for end use), valuations, communications with owners and negotiations to purchase. The CPO process itself has a number of stages. The Council does not have the power to acquire land compulsorily until the Secretary of State confirms the CPO. The stages are thus:

- a) Ascertain the case for a CPO;
- b) Seek and obtain Cabinet authority to make the CPO;
- c) Make the CPO (including all statutory publications and consultations);
- d) Deal with objections/proceed to Public Inquiry;
- e) Secretary of State confirms CPO or declines to confirm Order;
- f) If not confirmed, there is no power to compulsorily acquire;

- g) If confirmed, valuers proceed to negotiate compensation and the site is vested in the Council;
- h) If compensation is not agreed, the question of compensation proceeds to the Lands Tribunal.

6.2 CPO is a lengthy process that can take approximately 18 months to resolve. However, should the case proceed to the Lands Tribunal, then the process will take longer. It is therefore imperative that Cabinet is presented with a clear and justifiable case for a CPO (as part of a future Cabinet report(s) on a case-by-case basis) and the Council must be prepared to see the process through to completion.

7. Review

7.1 The preparation of a CPO case will be overseen by the Council's internal 'Strategic Derelict Sites Task Force' comprised of officers from Regeneration, Legal, Housing, Planning, Finance and Corporate Landlord, with oversight and input from the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, and funding approval via SIB.

7.2 Prior to making any CPO for any site within the borough Cabinet will receive a further report to a future meeting setting out the detailed proposals and clear case for CPO action.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

Compulsory Purchase and Compensation Guidance (guides 1-4), published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

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Simon Neilson
Executive Director

8 February 2023



Councillor Andrew
Portfolio Holder

8 February 2023

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Area of Focus – 2022/23

Committee responsible for all aspects and general services related to the economy and environment including:

Responsibility of scrutiny of flood risk management functions which may affect the Local Authority's area as required by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010

And the scrutinising of performance in relation to the relevant priority in the Council Plan: Enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses.

Agenda Items							
Theme	7 July 2022	29 September 2022	20 October 2022	24 November 2022	2 February 2023	28 February 2023	13 April 2023
Economy		LEP Report	Bus Network Update		Willenhall and Darlaston, Aldridge Railway Stations	Willenhall Framework Plan	Phoenix 10 Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Railway Stations
Environment	Petition regarding pedestrian crossing on Birmingham Road, Aldridge	Cemetery Maintenance	Street Scene Strategy	Off-road Bikes	Bonfires	Public Toilets Play Strategy	The Council's Waste Strategy – new HWRC and Transfer Station Geoparks
Cross cutting both Economy and Environment	Areas of Focus Portfolio Holder Presentations	Portfolio Holder Presentations – Cllrs Andrew and Perry		Town Centre Regeneration Update Quarter 2 Budget monitoring	Budget	Derelict sites Task Force	

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Area of Focus – 2022/23

*Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 Financial reports will be circulated via e-mail to Members of the Committee and will not form part of the Committee’s Agenda.

Items to be scheduled:

1. District Town Centres Update;
 2. Partnership working with West Midlands Police on traffic speed enforcement.
 3. West Midlands Local Transport Plan
 4. Derelict Properties Taskforce – Written Update
-
- An update on Walsall’s Heritage strategy

Items suggested for next municipal year:

1. Derelict Properties Taskforce



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

**Council House,
Lichfield Street,
Walsall, WS1 1TW**
www.walsall.gov.uk

6 February 2023

FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan sets out decisions that are termed as “key decisions” at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken by the Executive (Cabinet). Also included on the plan are other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet (“non-key decisions”). Preparation of the forward plan helps the Council to programme its work. The purpose of the forward plan is to give plenty of notice and an opportunity for consultation on the issues to be discussed. The plan is updated each month with the period of the plan being rolled forward by one month and republished. Copies of the plan can be obtained from Democratic Services, Walsall MBC, Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk and can also be accessed from the Council’s website at www.walsall.gov.uk. The Cabinet is allowed to make urgent decisions which do not appear in the forward plan, however, a notice will be included on the agenda for the relevant Cabinet meeting which explains the reasons why.

Please note that the decision dates are indicative and are subject to change. Please contact the above addressee if you wish to check the date for a particular item.

The Cabinet agenda and reports are available for inspection by the public 7 days prior to the meeting of the Cabinet on the Council’s website. Background papers are listed on each report submitted to the Cabinet and members of the public are entitled to see these documents unless they are confidential. The report also contains the name and telephone number of a contact officer. These details can also be found in the forward plan.

Meetings of the Cabinet are open to the public. Occasionally there are items included on the agenda which are confidential and for those items the public will be asked to leave the meeting. The forward plan will show where this is intended and the reason why the reports are confidential. Enquiries regarding these reasons should be directed to Democratic Services (craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk).

“Key decisions” are those decisions which have a significant effect within the community or which involve considerable expenditure or savings. With regard to key decisions the Council’s Constitution states:

- (1) A key decision is:
 - (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates or
 - (ii) any decision that is likely to have significant impact on two or more wards within the borough.
- (2) The threshold for “significant” expenditure/savings is £500,000.
- (3) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
MARCH 2023 TO JUNE 2023 (06.02.23)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council)	Decision maker	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall)	Date item to be considered
141/22 (10.10.22)	<p>Corporate Financial Performance 2022/23:</p> <p>To report the financial position based on 9 months to December 2022, including the impact of Covid-19.</p>	<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Non-key decision</p>	<p>Vicky Buckley</p> <p>Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk</p>	<p>Corporate Management Team and Internal Services</p>	<p>Cllr Bird</p>	<p>8 February 2023</p>
142/22 (10.10.22)	<p>Corporate Budget Plan 2023/24 – 2026/27, incorporating the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and investment Strategy 2023/24:</p> <p>To recommend the final budget and council tax for approval by Council.</p>	<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Key decision</p>	<p>Vicky Buckley</p> <p>Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk</p>	<p>Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations</p> <p>Internal Services</p>	<p>Cllr Bird</p>	<p>8 February 2023</p> <p>Council 23 February 2023</p>
150/22 (7.11.22)	<p>Payments Project Contract Award:</p> <p>To award a contract to Capita/Pay360 Ltd (soon to be Access Group Ltd) for the provision of Pay 360 Licences and Capita/Pay360 Ltd services.</p>	<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Key Decision</p>	<p>Janice Freeman-Phillips</p> <p>Janice.Freeman-Phillips@walsall.gov.uk</p>	<p>Internal Services</p>	<p>Cllr Bird</p>	<p>8 February 2023</p>

7/23 (9.1.23)	<p>TUPE transfer of Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Economic Intelligence Team:</p> <p>To consider the transfer of the Black Country LEP Economic Intelligence Team to Walsall Council.</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Stephen Gunther Stephen.Gunther@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	8 February 2023
107/22 (6.6.22)	<p>Procurement of Corporate Landlord Strategic Partner:</p> <p>To seek approval to the appointment of a strategic partner to support the programme of capital schemes related to the council's property portfolio.</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Nick Ford Nick.Ford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	8 February 2023
1/23 (9.1.23)	<p>Derelict Sites Intervention:</p> <p>That various key derelict sites be appraised and prioritised for intervention and that authority be delegated to pursue Compulsory Purchase Orders where appropriate.</p> <p><i>This will be a private report containing exempt information.</i></p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Philippa Venables Philippa.Venables@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	8 February 2023
9/23 (6.2.23)	<p>Changes to the council's bus lane provision:</p> <p>To agree the council's approach to responding to a request to grant access to bus lanes for private hire vehicles.</p>	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Dave Brown Dave.Brown@Walsall.gov.uk Background paper: Council meeting minutes 07 January 23	Internal services Transport for West Midlands Enhanced Partnership reference group	Cllr Andrew	8 February 2023

8/23 (9.1.22)	We Are Walsall 2040: To consider the draft We are Walsall 2040 strategy and consultation framework.	Cabinet Key Decision	Karen Griffiths Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	8 February 2023
151/22 (7.11.22)	Introduction of Council Tax Premium on unoccupied but furnished properties: Levy the premium on properties that are unoccupied and unfurnished for more than 12 months. Effective from 1 April 24	Cabinet Council Key Decision	Mark Fearn Mark.Fearn@walsall.gov.uk	Part of budget consultation	Cllr Ali	8 February 2023 Council 23 February 2023
156/22 (7.11.22)	Healthy Lifestyles Contract and Smoking Cessation Contract Extensions: To delegate authority to the Director of Public Health and the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing. This will allow them to extend contracts on behalf of the Council and to subsequently authorise the variations to the contractual arrangements for the services should this be required at any time during the term, in line with Public Contract Regulations and the Council's Contract Rules.	Cabinet Key Decision	Joe Holding Joe.Holding@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	8 February 2023
2/23 (9.1.23)	Adult Social Care Market Sustainability Plan: 1. To consider the outputs of Phase 2 Fair Cost of Care Exercise in Walsall and note the potential implications for	Cabinet Key Decision	Tony Meadows Tony.Meadows@walsall.gov.uk	Adult Social Care service providers Internal Services	Cllr Pedley	8 February 2023

	<p>Adult Social Care fee rate setting and budgets.</p> <p>2. To note the content of the final Market Sustainability Plan briefing paper.</p> <p>3. To seek delegated authority for the Portfolio holder, Adult Social Care and the Executive Director, Adult Social Care to approve the final Market Sustainability Plan submission to Department for Health and Social Care.</p>			Local Integrated Care Board		
3/23 (9.1.23)	<p>Determination of the Scheme for coordinated admissions, and the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for the 2022/23 academic year</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Statham	8 February 2023
152/22 (7.11.22)	<p>Renewal of the Council's Oracle Cloud Licenses:</p> <p>To renew the Council's Oracle cloud Licenses required for the operation of the Council's One Source system for HR, Payroll, Finance and Procurement from May 2023</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Ian Tuft Ian.Tuft@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird Cllr Ferguson	22 March 2023
162/22 (5.12.22)	<p>Approval of the Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement:</p> <p>Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Resources and</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Kelly Valente Kelly.Valente@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services	Cllr Bird	22 March 2023

	Transformation to enter into legal agreements with WMCA relating to the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Legacy funds.					
10/23 (6.2.23)	<p>LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Action Plan:</p> <p>To approve the Action Plan produced in response to the report by the Local Government Association following the January 2023 Corporate Peer Challenge.</p>	Cabinet Non-key decision	<p>Karen Griffiths (Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk)</p> <p>Elizabeth Connolly (Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk)</p>	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	22 March 2023
145/22 (7.11.22)	<p>Town Centre Theatre Project:</p> <p>To agree next steps for the Town Deal Theatre project, setting out funding implications and options.</p> <p><i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i></p>	Cabinet Key Decision	<p>Philippa Venables Philippa.Venables@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal services	Cllr Andrew	22 March 2023
4/23 (9.1.23)	<p>West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2023/24:</p> <p>To approve West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2023/24.</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	<p>Matt Crowton Matt.Crowton@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	22 March 2023
5/23 (9.1.23)	<p>Sandwell Local Plan – Issues and Options Consultation:</p> <p>To approve Walsall’s response to the Sandwell Local Plan consultation.</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	<p>Neville Ball neville.ball@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	22 March 2023

153/22 (7.11.22)	Walsall's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027: To approve Walsall's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2022 to 2027.	Cabinet Key Decision	Neil Hollyhead Neil.HollyHead@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services, service users, external stakeholders	Cllr Ali	22 March 2023
11/23 (6.2.23)	Walsall Civic Centre and Council House improvement works To approve Council House improvement works including heating and ventilation replacement; fire alarm replacement; Civic Centre window replacement; Civic Centre ground floor refurbishment.	Cabinet Key Decision	Ian Lister Ian.Lister@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Ferguson	22 March 2023
6/23 (9.1.23)	Borough Playing Pitch Strategy: To adopt and publish the Walsall Playing pitches strategy and the Black Country strategic framework	Cabinet Key Decision	Liz Stuffins Liz.Stuffins@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	22 March 2023
12/23 (6.2.23)	Street Scene Strategy: To approve the councils 5-year plan for residential streets	Cabinet Key decision	Kathryn Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@Walsall.gov.uk	Internal services	Cllr Murphy	22 March 2023
13/23 (6.2.23)	Trading Standards Letting Agents Enforcement Policy To approve Walsall Council's Trading Standards policy on the enforcement and determination of financial penalties in circumstances where persons engaged in letting agency work and property management business fail to comply with legislative requirements.	Cabinet Key decision	David Elrington David.Elrington@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	22 March 2023

129/22 (5.9.22)	Update on Resilient Communities Safer Streets Programme: To report back on Safer Streets activity and recommend any adjustments/additions to the programme.	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Paul Gordon Paul.Gordon@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	22 March 2023
140/22 (10.10.22)	High Needs Funding Formula: To approve changes to the High Needs Funding Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used for the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block to schools in Walsall for the 2023/24 financial year	Cabinet Key Decision	Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services, Schools Forum	Cllr M. Statham	22 March 2023
154/22 (7.11.22)	Early Years Funding Formula: That Cabinet approves the Early Years Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used for the allocation of funding to early years providers in Walsall	Cabinet Key Decision	Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Schools Forum Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	22 March 2023
14/23 (6.2.23)	Growth Funding for Schools: To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to secure sufficient primary and secondary school places, through the adoption of a policy for the application of revenue funding for school growth.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services, Schools Forum	Cllr Statham	22 March 2023
155/22 (7.11.22)	Council Plan: Review of Achievements 2021/22: To note the Review of Achievements for 2021/22, highlighting successes and	Cabinet Non-key decision	Meresh Kumari Meresh.Kumari@walsall.gov.uk Page 102 of 113	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	19 April 2023

	progress towards achieving our Council priorities.		Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk			
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Black Country Executive Joint Committee
Forward Plan of Key Decisions Published up to June 2023

Date Created	Key Decision	Contact Officer	Main consultee	Date of meeting
	Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance			
05/12/2022	<p>Approval of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement</p> <p>Approval of future arrangements for the Black Country Executive Joint Committee, and approval of the revised Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement setting out how legacy funds, including Enterprise Zones, will be dealt with.</p>	<p>Simon Neilson Simon.neilson@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Walsall Council	19/04/2023



West Midlands Combined Authority

Forward Plan

Forthcoming key decisions

Title of key decision:	Decision to be taken by and date:	Open or Exempt:	Portfolio Lead	Employee to contact:
HS2 Growth Delivery Programme To provide an update of the actions and activities undertaken over the last twelve months by the HS2 Regional Enterprise Board and the workstreams that support the delivery of the WMCA's HS2 programme.	WMCA Board 10 February 2023	Open	Councillor Ian Courts Environment, Energy & HS2 Portfolio Lead	Craig Wakeman Head of Transport Implementation
Investigation into financial breach - Metro city centre extension, Wolverhampton To update the board on the findings of the investigation.	WMCA Board 10 February 2023	Fully exempt	Councillor Bob Sleigh Finance Portfolio Lead	Helen Edwards, Director of Law and Governance
Local Transport Plan To seek approval of the latest draft of the Local Transport Plan for further public and stakeholder engagement.	WMCA Board 10 February 2023	Open	Councillor Ian Ward Transport Portfolio Lead	David Harris Transport Strategy and Place Manager - TfWM
Regional Activity & Delivery Update To provide an update on the activity and delivery across the region since the last meeting.	WMCA Board 10 February 2023	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Ed Cox Executive Director of Strategy, Integration & Net Zero
WMCA Budget 2023/2024 To approve the WMCA Budget 2023/2024	WMCA Board 10 February 2023	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Finance Portfolio Lead	Sally Truman Lead Financial Planning Accountant

<p>City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement - Metro Line 1 Business Case To consider the business case for essential renewal work to core elements of the existing line, including sections of key systems to ensure they continued to function correctly and avoided interruption to the service on the current routes.</p>	WMCA Board 17 March 2023	Open	Councillor Ian Ward Transport Portfolio Lead	Anne Shaw Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands
<p>City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and Capital Pressures Setting out the formal annual return to Department for Transport on the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and addressing the formal Change Control Submission submitted to Department for Transport.</p>	WMCA Board 17 March 2023	Open	Councillor Ian Ward Transport Portfolio Lead	Anne Shaw Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands
<p>Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund To consider a report in relation to the Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund.</p>	WMCA Board 17 March 2023	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Deputy Mayor	Ed Cox, Executive Director of Strategy, Integration & Net Zero,
<p>Financial Monitoring 2022/23 To outline the latest financial position of WMCA and provide an update on any current financial matters affecting WMCA.</p>	WMCA Board 17 March 2023	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Finance Portfolio Lead	Linda Horne Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub
<p>Race Equalities Taskforce Action Plan To approve the action plan.</p>	WMCA Board 17 March 2023	Open	Councillor Kerrie Carmichael Inclusive Communities Portfolio Lead	Claire Dhami Head of Systems Change and Inclusion
<p>Regional Activity & Delivery Update To provide an update on the activity and delivery across the region since the last meeting</p>	WMCA Board 17 March 2023	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Laura Shoaf Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority

<p>Review of the West Midlands Growth Company To Review the West Midlands Growth Company</p>	<p>WMCA Board 17 March 2023</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Andy Street Mayor</p>	<p>Dr Julie Nugent Executive Director of Economy, Skills & Communities</p>
<p>Wednesbury - Brierley Hill Metro Extension Funding Mitigation Measures To consider the latest progress in securing the mitigation measures for addressing the funding gap identified for phase 1 of the project and to close the funding gap for the full scheme.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 17 March 2023</p>	<p>Fully exempt</p>	<p>Councillor Ian Ward Transport Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Anne Shaw Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands</p>
<p>Appointment of WMCA Boards and Committees 2023/24 To approve consider the appointments to boards, chairs and meetings dates for 2023/24.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 June 2023</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Andy Street Mayor</p>	<p>Helen Edwards Director of Law and Governance</p>
<p>City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Annual Report A report setting out the progress over the first year of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme and key matters and decisions arising for the remainder of the programme.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 June 2023</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Ian Ward Transport Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Mike Waters Director of Policy, Strategy and Innovation - TfWM</p>
<p>Financial Monitoring 2022/23 To outline the latest financial position of WMCA and provide an update on any current financial matters affecting WMCA.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 June 2023</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Bob Sleight Finance Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Linda Horne Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub</p>
<p>Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report To consider a report setting out the activity of overview & scrutiny during 2022/23.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 June 2023</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Bob Sleight Deputy Mayor</p>	<p>Helen Edwards Director of Law and Governance</p>

<p>Supported Travel Policies Review A report setting out the WMCA's existing policies for directly supporting public transport and other sustainable travel options, including recommendations for options to refine these in the context of wider policy considerations.</p>	<p>WMCA Board</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Ian Ward Transport Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Helen Davies, Mike Waters Principal Policy and Strategy Officer - TfWM, Director of Policy, Strategy and Innovation - TfWM</p>
<p>Transport Governance Review To consider the recommendations arising out of the review of the WMCA's transport governance.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 June 2023</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Bob Sleight Deputy Mayor</p>	<p>Helen Edwards Director of Law and Governance</p>

The Forward Plan

This document sets out known 'key decisions' that will be taken by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) over the coming months.

Forthcoming key decisions are published online to meet the statutory 28 day notification rule for each meeting where a key decision will be taken. Where it has not been possible to meet the 28 day rule for publication of notice of a key decision or an intention to meet in private, the relevant notices will be published as required by legislation as soon as possible.

What is a key decision?

A 'key decision' means a decision of the Mayor, WMCA or officer which is likely:

- (a) to result in the WMCA incurring expenditure, making savings or generating income amounting to £1m or more; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the WMCA

The report relating to a decision, together with any other documents being considered, will be available five clear working days before the decision is to be taken (unless the documentation contains exempt information).

The forward plan also provides notice of when the WMCA may decide to exclude the press and public during consideration of a particular matter due to the potential for disclosure of confidential or exempt

information. The grounds upon which local authorities can exclude the press and public are specified by law and details of the exempt categories are available on request from the Governance Services team (governance.services@wmca.org.uk).

Councillors or members of the public wishing to:

- make a representation about why a matter should be heard in public, or
- submit information to the decision-making body about an item in the forward plan, or
- request details of relevant documents, or
- seek advice about the WMCA's decision-making arrangements,

should contact the Governance Services team: governance.services@wmca.org.uk

Committee Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action/Recommendation	Officer responsible	Status	Target Completion Date	Notes
7 July 2022	Response to petition: 'Pedestrian Crossing for Birmingham Road, Aldridge, enabling the safety of school children'	S106 funding schemes in Aldridge to be reviewed to see if any funding could be secured for the crossing in this way.	Katie Moreton	Completed		The Development Monitoring Officer who starts on 3 October will provide improved resource to review this matter. Unlikely that previous S106 funds can be used as each S106 specifies what works the obligations are to cover as it has to be related specifically to the development proposed.
20 October 2022	Urgent Item: Bus Matters – Bus Network Update	Presentation and report be circulated to all Members of the Council.	Sian Lloyd	Completed		Sent out by email 21/10/2022.
24 November 2022	Off-Road Bikes	The Committee recommends Cabinet to investigate the acquisition of a drone or drone service for community protection to use in conjunction with West Midlands Police.	Sian Lloyd/Simon Neilson	Completed		Report discussed at Cabinet on 8 February. Further fuller details to be discussed at next Cabinet meeting on 22 March.
2 February 2023	Willenhall, Darlaston and	Report to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.	Sian Lloyd	In progress		Arranged with West Midlands Rail Executive for this

	Aldridge Railway Stations					item to be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee on April 13.
	Areas of Focus 22/23	Report on public toilet provision to be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.	Sian Lloyd	Completed		Report on public toilets brought to meeting on 28 February.