Solihull Local Plan Review

Sustainability Appraisal

Draft Scoping Report

September 2016

Prepared for: Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Schedule of Revisions

Rev No	Comments	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by	Date
1	Draft Scoping Report for review	Lucy Sykes *Graduate Planner*	Ian McCluskey *Senior Sustainability and Planning Consultant*	N/A	12/08/2016
2	Final draft Scoping Report for Client Review	Lucy Sykes *Graduate Planner* Ian McCluskey *Senior Sustainability and Planning Consultant*	Ian McCluskey *Senior Sustainability and Planning Consultant*	Alex White *Associate*	18/08/2016
3	Scoping Report Update	Lucy Sykes *Graduate Planner* Ian McCluskey *Senior Sustainability and Planning Consultant*	Ian McCluskey *Senior Sustainability and Planning Consultant*	Alex White *Associate*	13/09/2016
3	Final Scoping Report for Consultation	Ian McCluskey *Senior Sustainability and Planning Consultant*	Ian McCluskey *Senior Sustainability and Planning Consultant*	Alex White *Associate*	07/10/2016

Limitations

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this Report are based upon information provided by others and upon the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested and that such information is accurate. Information obtained by AECOM has not been independently verified by AECOM, unless otherwise stated in the Report.

The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by AECOM in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The work described in this Report was undertaken in July 2016 - October 2016 and is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period of time. The scope of this Report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

Where assessments of works or costs identified in this Report are made, such assessments are based upon the information available at the time and where appropriate are subject to further investigations or information which may become available.

AECOM disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report, which may come or be brought to 'AECOM' attention after the date of the Report.

Certain statements made in the Report that are not historical facts may constitute estimates, projections or other forward-looking statements and even though they are based on reasonable assumptions as of the date of the Report, such forward-looking statements by their nature involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from the results predicted. AECOM specifically does not guarantee or warrant any estimate or projections contained in this Report.

Where field investigations are carried out, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to meet the stated objectives of the services. The results of any measurements taken may vary spatially or with time and further confirmatory measurements should be made after any significant delay in issuing this Report.

Copyright

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

1.1   The Local Plan review

1.1.1   Following the Examination in Public for the Solihull Local Plan for the period 2011 to 2028 in April 2013, the Local Plan was adopted in December 2013. A Judicial Review concluded in December 2014, "that only parts of the policy should be impacted, that these need not be quashed but remitted back to the Council for re-examination. The main issue at stake is the overall number of houses to be built in Solihull between 2012 and 2028".

1.1.2   The Judicial Review also considered two sites at Tidbury Green where the Council was seeking to return the land to Green Belt. The judge ruled that there are no exceptional circumstances justifying an alteration to the Green Belt boundary; and that the Inspector was wrong in accepting that the stringent tests for a change in the Green Belt had been met. However, these two sites have now been allowed development on Appeal.

1.1.3   The Local Plan Review takes account of the following changed circumstances:

- Representations made to the Regulation 18 consultation for the High Speed 2 Interchange and adjoining area Local Area Plan;

- The Spatial Plan for Growth (SPfG) currently being prepared on behalf of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP);

- The West Midlands Transport Strategy – Movement for Growth;

- The emerging Hampton in Arden Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission draft;

- The GBSLEP Housing Needs Study; and

- Revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework and Building Regulations.

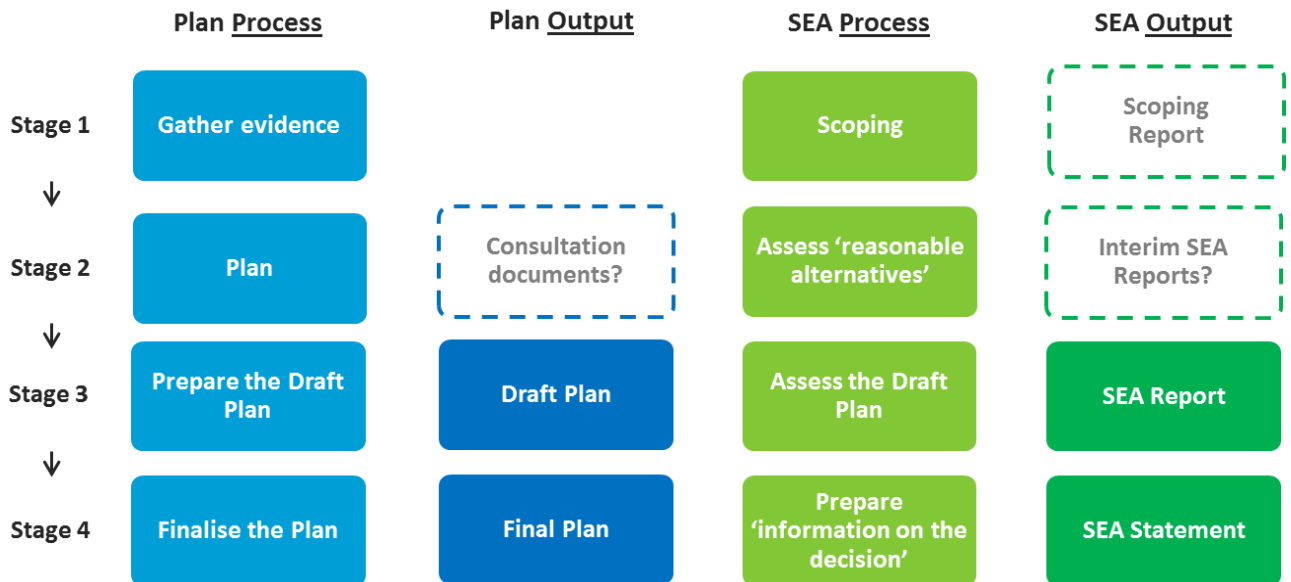1.1.4   There is urgency in the preparation of the Plan due to:

- The legal challenge on the Local Plan resulted in an absence of an overall housing requirement making it difficult to demonstrate a five year housing and supply risking speculative housing developments being allowed on appeal.

- A commitment was given by the Council to revise the housing allocations following completion of the GBSLEP[102] Housing Study and the Spatial Plan for Growth. The examination of Birmingham Development Plan confirmed that Solihull may need to meet some of the shortfall in housing needs of the City.

- The UK Central Masterplan and prospectus for a Garden City approach to HS2 Interchange and the adjoining area proposed Local Area Plan highlighted the need to review the Green Belt boundary to enable the Interchange Area to be allocated for development.

1.1.5   The Council is reviewing existing policies in the adopted Solihull Local Plan to assess those where there has been a significant change in circumstances since they were adopted, or where the evidence base needs updating. However, this does not mean that all the policies will change, as some may still remain up to date and relevant.

1.2   The Sustainability Appraisal process

1.2.1   Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process for helping to ensure that Local Plans achieve an appropriate balance between environmental, economic and social objectives. SA should help to identify the sustainability implications of different plan approaches and recommend ways to reduce any negative effects and to increase the positive outcomes.

1.2.2   SA is also a tool for communicating the likely effects of a Plan (and any reasonable alternatives), explaining the decisions taken with regards to the approach decided upon, and encouraging engagement from key stakeholders such as local communities, businesses and plan-makers.

1.2.3   Although SA can be applied flexibly, it is a legal requirement under the 'Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (which were prepared in order to transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive).   The regulations set out prescribed processes that must be followed. In particular the Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The SA/SEA report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses when finalising the plan.

1.2.4   SA/SEA can be viewed as a four-stage process that produces a number of statutory and non-statutory outputs. As illustrated in Figure 1.1 below, 'Scoping' is a mandatory process under the SEA Directive, but the publication of a scoping report is a voluntary (but useful) output.

Figure 1.1: SA/SEA as a four stage process

2. Introduction to Scoping

2.1 Scoping

2.1.1 This is Part 1 of the SA Report, the aim of which is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SA. In particular, and as required by the Regulations [1], this Chapter answers the series of questions below:

- What's the Plan seeking to achieve?
- What's the sustainability 'context'?
- What's the sustainability 'baseline'?
- What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

2.1.2 Chapter 3 answers the first question by listing the Local Plan vision and objectives and illustrating the geographical scope of the Plan. The fourth question is answered in chapter 8, with the key issues identified for a range of sustainability topics. These key issues have been identified by answering questions 2 and 3 in chapters 4 through 7.

2.1.3 Following on from previous scoping exercises that have been undertaken in support of the Local Plan, the scope of the SA has been established under a series of sustainability topics. These topics reflect the factors outline in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations.

Sustainability Topic	Factors covered	Links to Schedule 2 of Regs[1]
Population and communities	*Demographics, health, deprivation, crime, towns and villages*	*Population, human health*
Housing	*Housing*	*Material assets*
Economy	*The economy, employment and workforce, retail and town centre services*	*Population*
Transport and access	*Transport, access to services*	*n/a*
Air quality and noise	*Air quality, noise*	*Air*
Climate change	*Greenhouse gases, climate change adaptation, flooding*	*Climatic factors*
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	*Environmental designations, Biodiversity Action Plans.*	*Fauna, flora, biodiversity*
Landscape and land	*Landscape designations, landscape character, open space, agriculture and land use.*	*Landscape, soil*
Cultural heritage	*Designations, Conservation Areas, Heritage at Risk, historic landscape. archaeology, built environment*	*Cultural heritage*
Water	*Water availability, waste water*	*Water*
Waste and minerals	*Waste, minerals*	*Material assets*

---

[1] Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

2.1.4 Four over-arching 'themes' have also been established to aid in the presentation of findings and the structure of reports:

- Sustainable consumption and production;

- Climate change and energy;

- Natural resource protection; and environmental enhancement; *and*

- Sustainable communities

2.1.5 The baseline position and policy context is provided in this scoping report under each of these key themes.

3. The Local Plan Review

3.1 What is the Scope of the Local Plan Review?

3.1.1   The current local plan, the 'Solihull Local Plan', was adopted in December 2013 and covers the period 2011 to 2028. Since the Local Plan was adopted, a legal challenge has resulted in the overall housing requirement being deleted and remitted back to the Council for reconsideration. It is intended that this deficiency be addressed through a review of the Solihull Local Plan.

3.1.2   In addition, the government's plans for high speed rail are currently passing through Parliament and have reached an advanced stage. The first station outside of London is to be built in Solihull on land next to the M42 and opposite the NEC. Works are scheduled to start in 2017 and construction should be complete by 2026. The Interchange station will be constructed on land that it is currently within the Green Belt.

3.1.3   In November 2014, the Council sought views on a *local area plan* based on the HS2 Interchange area near the National Exhibition Centre & Birmingham Airport. This earlier consultation indicated the benefits of reviewing the HS2 Interchange area in the context of a wider Borough review, as is now proposed.

3.1.4   Figure 3.1 sets out the geographical extent of the Plan area. Whilst the influence of the Plan policies will be restricted to within this boundary, there could be effects in neighbouring authorities that will need to be considered in the SA process.

Figure 3.1: Solihull Metropolitan Borough plan area

3.1.5   The Solihull Local Plan sets out a series of 12 key challenges facing the Borough and the objectives for how these can be addressed. The Challenges and objectives are presented below:

Challenge A – Reducing inequalities in the Borough

- Close the gap of inequality between the most and least affluent wards in Solihull, particularly reducing the inequalities that exist between North Solihull Regeneration Area and the rest of the Borough

Challenge B – Addressing Affordable housing Needs across the Borough

- Accommodate additional development to help meet the Borough's local housing need, whilst ensuring high quality places across the Boprough through continuing to improve the quality of the environment in the North Solihull Regeneration Area and the mature suburbs and, conserving the qualities of the mature suburbs and rural settlements that make those places attractive areas to live.

- Maximise the provision of affordable housing of the right size, type and tenure and in the right location to help meet the Borough's local housing need.

- Address constraints in supply including the inability to deliver affordable housing in recent years through windfall development by reducing site thresholds.

- Widen the range of options for older people and those with disabilities through provision of accommodation which is designed to meet these diverse needs.

Challenge C – Sustaining the Attractiveness of the Borough for people who live, work and invest in Solihull

- Ensure high quality design and development which integrates with its surroundings and creates safer, inclusive, adaptable and sustainable places which make a positive contribution to the Borough's sense of place, attractiveness and to people's quality of life.

- Conserve and enhance the qualities of the built, natural and historic environment that contribute to character and local distinctiveness and the attractiveness of the mature residential suburbs and the rural area.

- Ensure development does not have an adverse impact on residential and other amenities, and where that impact is unavoidable, to incorporate satisfactory mitigation.

- Widen the range of options for older people and those with disabilities through provision of accommodation which is designed to meet these diverse needs.

Challenge D – Securing Sustainable Economic Growth

- Support the continued success of key economic assets such as Birmingham Airport, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham and Blythe Valley Business Parks and Jaguar Land Rover whilst maintaining the quality of the environment and managing congestion.

- Support the continued success of Solihull Town Centre whilst maintaining the quality of its environment and managing congestion.

- Encourage investment into Shirley and Chelmsley Wood Town Centres to improve competitiveness and the shopping environment.

Challenge E – Protecting Key Gaps Between Urban Areas and Settlements

- Maintain the Green Belt in Solihull, to prevent unrestricted expansion of the major urban area, to safeguard the key gaps between settlements such as the Meriden Gap and the countryside, and to contribute to urban regeneration in North Solihull.

- Ensure that the countryside is managed so as to deliver a range of benefits including the growing of food and energy products, create an attractive rural setting and improved public access and recreational opportunities.

Challenge F – Climate Change

- Reduce the Borough's greenhouse gas emissions, so as to contribute to the national target for reduction, through a range of measures such as the location and design of development, provision of renewable and low carbon energy schemes, and promoting opportunities for low carbon travel.

- Promote decentralised energy and heating networks within the Mature Suburbs and North Solihull Regeneration Area, and the generation of energy from on-site renewable sources.

- Encourage the use of public transport by ensuring that new development is located in areas of high accessibility or potential high accessibility.

- Support the Affordable Warmth programme to ensure high standard of home insulation for older people and others at risk.

- Ensure that new development does not increase, and where possible reduces risks such as flooding and urban heating.

- Ensure new development, and where possible existing communities have resilience to the effects of future climate change.

- Promote the use and beneficial effects of trees and green infrastructure in new developments.

- Encourage the mitigation and adaptation of existing buildings to climate change.

- Recognise the implications for biodiversity and landscape.

Challenge G – An Imbalance in the Housing Offer Across the Borough and a Shortage of Gypsy and Traveller Sites

- To provide an adequate amount and variety of homes which are affordable by local people including homes for rent, for purchase and intermediate tenure.

- To provide an adequate amount and variety of homes to meet the increasing demand from older people and those with disabilities, and other needs.

- To increase the number of authorised pitches for Gypsies and Travellers in the Borough in the most appropriate locations, to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and enable Gypsies and Travellers to access the services and facilities to meet their needs, whilst respecting the interests of the settled community.

Challenge H – Increasing Accessibility and Encouraging Sustainable Travel

- Improve accessibility and ease of movement for all users to services, facilities, jobs and green infrastructure.

- Reduce the need to travel.

- Manage transport demand and reduce car reliance.

- Enable and increase the modal share of all forms of sustainable transport.

- De-couple economic growth and increase in car use.

Challenge I – Providing Sufficient Waste Management Facilities and Providing for Sand and Gravel Aggregates

- To promote the management of waste arising in the Borough further up the waste hierarchy and its treatment as a resource to be used wherever possible.

- To address the capacity gap between waste arising and the capacity of facilities by taking advantage of opportunities to provide facilities for recycled materials, organic and residual waste.

- To provide for a total of 7.5 million tonnes of primary sand and gravel resources from sources within Solihull for the Plan period to 2028, including the maintenance of a minimum 7 year land bank, whilst ensuring that provision is

made to encourage the use of secondary and recycled aggregates, that sand and gravel resources are safeguarded from possible sterilisation by non-mineral development, and that environmental, restoration and aftercare criteria are met.

Challenge J – Improving Health and Well-Being

- Create healthier, safer neighbourhoods.

- Enable people to pursue an active lifestyle and make healthier choices.

- Meet local housing and employment needs whilst facilitating the provision of appropriate health care services.

- Ensure that development does not have an adverse impact on physical and mental health and well-being.

Challenge K – Protecting and Enhancing our Natural Assets

- Halting and reversing decline and loss by conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

- Contributing to sub-regional initiatives to improve the natural environment.

- Reviewing and updating biodiversity information and the network of local wildlife and geological sites.

- Addressing gaps in the strategic wildlife network.

- Promote a landscape scale approach to protecting and restoring the landscape of the Borough and its characteristic features.

Challenge L – Water Quality and Flood Risk

- To contribute towards improving the quality of the water environment by ensuring that the Plan's policies and land allocations help to protect and improve the quality of the main water bodies in the Borough.

- To minimise the risk of flooding by avoiding development in high risk areas wherever possible, reducing flows to rivers during periods of high intensity rainfall, and ensuring that new development is designed so as to minimise surface water flooding risks.

3.1.6 These challenges and objectives contribute towards the overall vision of the Solihull Local Plan, as follows:

'*By 2028, Solihull will have built on its distinct reputation as an attractive and aspirational place to live, learn, work and play; with strong links to Birmingham and the wider Local Enterprise Partnership area, to the major urban area of Coventry and rural Warwickshire.*'

4. Baseline Position: Sustainable Consumption and Production

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This sustainability theme covers the following sustainability topics. For each topic, the baseline position ('a snapshot in time'), trends and the projected baseline has been established.

- Prosperity and employment
- Accessibility and transport
- Material assets
- Climate change and energy
- Biodiversity
- Landscape and green infrastructure
- Historic environment
- Air quality, water and soil

4.2 Prosperity and Employment

4.2.1 The activity of those categorised as 'economically active' within the Borough is broadly similar to the England and West Midland average across most categories. With regards to the 'Economically Inactive', however, there is a significantly higher proportion of individuals who are retired within Solihull (55.5%) compared to both the West Midland (45.5%) and England (45.5%) average. Subsequently there are fewer individuals within the 'student', 'long –term sick or disabled', or 'looking after home/ family' categories.

Table 4.1: Economic Activity, Census, ONS, 2011

	Solihull		West Midlands		England	
	Count	% Total	Count	% Total	Count	% Total
All Categories	148,360		4,067,119		38,881,374	
Economically Active	105,108	70.8	2,778,859	68.3	27,183,134	69.9
Part Time	21,701	20.6	569,727	20.5	5,333,268	19.6
Full Time	59,212	56.3	1,521,871	54.8	15,016,564	55.2
Self Employed	13,673	13.0	345,928	12.4	3,793,632	14.0
Unemployed	6,304	6.0	207,415	7.5	1,702,847	6.3
Full- Time Student	4,218	4.0	133,918	4.8	1,336,823	4.9
Economically Inactive	43,252	29.2	1,288,260	31.7	11,698,240	30.1
Retired	24,019	55.5	586,305	45.5	5,320,691	45.5
Student	6,496	15.0	241,856	18.8	2,255,831	19.3
Looking after home/ family	5,506	12.7	185,328	14.4	1,695,134	14.5
Long term sick or disabled	4,949	11.4	178,489	13.9	1,574,134	13.5
Other	2,282	5.3	96,282	7.5	852,450	7.3

4.2.2   In July 2015 there were 1,744 working age (16 to 64 years) individuals claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in Solihull, equating to a claimant unemployment rate of 1.4%. Solihull's rate remains lower than the West Midland (2.1%) and the England average (1.6%)[2]. Claimant rates are higher within the northern wards of the Borough than the non-northern wards, further highlighting the prosperity divide. The male claimant unemployment rate in Solihull (1.7%) is significantly higher than the female claimant unemployment rate (1.0%), however for both sexes these figures are lower than the national and regional rates.

4.2.3   The average gross weekly earnings for individuals in full-time employment within the Borough are £593. This is 20% higher than the West Midland average, and 11% higher than the England average[3]. This average rose between 2010 and 2015 by 9% in Solihull compared to just 5% for England and the West Midlands.

4.2.4   Solihull is challenged by a prosperity gap, with performance indicators in the regeneration zone for North Solihull being lower than the rest of the Borough[4]. Area's such as Chelmsley Wood, Kinghurst and Fordbridge, and Smith's Wood experience below average income and employment levels when compared to the rest of Solihull. Although 20% of the population live in the North of the Borough, only 5% of jobs within Solihull are located there.

4.2.5   Qualifications gained within the Borough as a whole are closely aligned to the England average. In comparison to the region, there are fewer individuals with no qualifications (22.7%) than the West Midlands area as a whole (26.6%), suggesting that a slightly more qualified workforce is available for the local job market.

Table 4.2: Highest Level of Qualification

	Solihull		West Midlands		England	
	Count	% Total	Count	% Total	Count	% Total
All Categories	167,493		4,507,405		42,989,620	
No Qualifications	38,035	22.7	1,196,794	26.6	9,656,810	22.5
Level 1 Qualifications	22,790	13.6	616,225	13.7	5,714,441	13.3
Level 2 Qualifications	26,933	16.1	695,544	15.4	6,544,614	15.2
Level 3 Qualifications	19,597	11.7	553,600	12.3	5,309,631	12.4
Level 4 Qualifications	47,783	28.5	1,050404	23.3	11,769,361	27.4
Other Qualifications	6,640	4.0	244,485	5.4	2,461,829	5.7
Apprenticeships	5,715	3.4	150,353	3.3	1,532,934	3.6

4.2.6   Qualification attainment is reflected in the industry employment for Solihull, whereby a higher proportion of the Boroughs economically active population are employed in higher skilled and managerial positions than other parts of the region. The workforce is mainly employed in services with the public administration, education and health sectors accounting for approximately a 26% of local employment and 18% of local economic output.

4.2.7   The West Midlands has a considerably higher proportion of workers in the manufacturing sector than experienced across the country (12.3% compared to the

England average of 8.8%). This above-average employment within the manufacturing sector occurs within Solihull (10.0%), likewise with the electricity, gas and air conditioning sector (1.5% compared to the England average of 0.6%).

Table 4.3 Industry, Census, ONS, 2011

	Solihull		West Midlands	England
	Count	% Total	% Total	% Total
All Categories	97,941			
A Agriculture, forestry, Fishing	200	0.2	0.9	0.8
B Mining and Quarrying	32	0.0	0.1	0.2
C Manufacturing	9,837	10.0	12.3	8.8
D Electricity, gas, air conditioning	1,435	1.5	0.7	0.6
E Water supply, sewerage, waste management	795	0.8	0.8	0.7
F Construction	7,621	7.8	7.5	7.7
G Wholesale and retail trade	15,257	15.6	17.1	15.9
H Transport and storage	4,435	4.5	5.2	5.0
I Accommodation and Food service	4,749	4.8	5.2	5.6
J Information and Communication	4,261	4.4	2.9	4.1
K Financial and insurance activities	4,997	5.1	3.1	4.4
L Real estate activities	1,520	1.6	1.4	1.5
M Professional, scientific and technical	6,969	7.1	5.1	6.7
N Administrative and support services	5,230	5.3	4.7	4.9
O Public admin and defence	4,764	4.9	5.3	5.9
P Education	10,211	10.4	10.2	9.9
Q Human health and social work	11,448	11.7	12.9	12.4
R, S Arts, entertainment and recreation	4,097	4.2	4.5	4.8
T Activities of households as employers	57	0.1	0.1	0.1

Economy

4.2.8   The total size of the Boroughs economy (as measured by Gross Value Added) in 2013 was £5,310 million, accounting for 4.8% of the regional total[5]. The GVA per head within Solihull was £25,426 in 2013, approximately 6% above the England average (£24,091) and the highest out of other Local Authorities within the West Midlands Region.

4.2.9   Investments in the Borough have been considerably higher than the average recorded for all local authorities within the West Midlands area, with only Coventry, Sandwell, and Walsall receiving higher levels of investment. For 2013/14, the amount of investment totalled £122,600 compared to the regional average of £46,722[6]. High levels of investment have historically been the case; between 2005/06 and 2009/10, Foreign Direct Investments accounted for 13% of new investments into Solihull recorded by the Council.

4.2.10 Solihull is located in proximity to a few economic assets which have contributed to the strength of the Boroughs investment offer. These include Birmingham Airport, the NEC, the GBS LEP (Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership), and the potential future development of HS2 and its Solihull interchange.
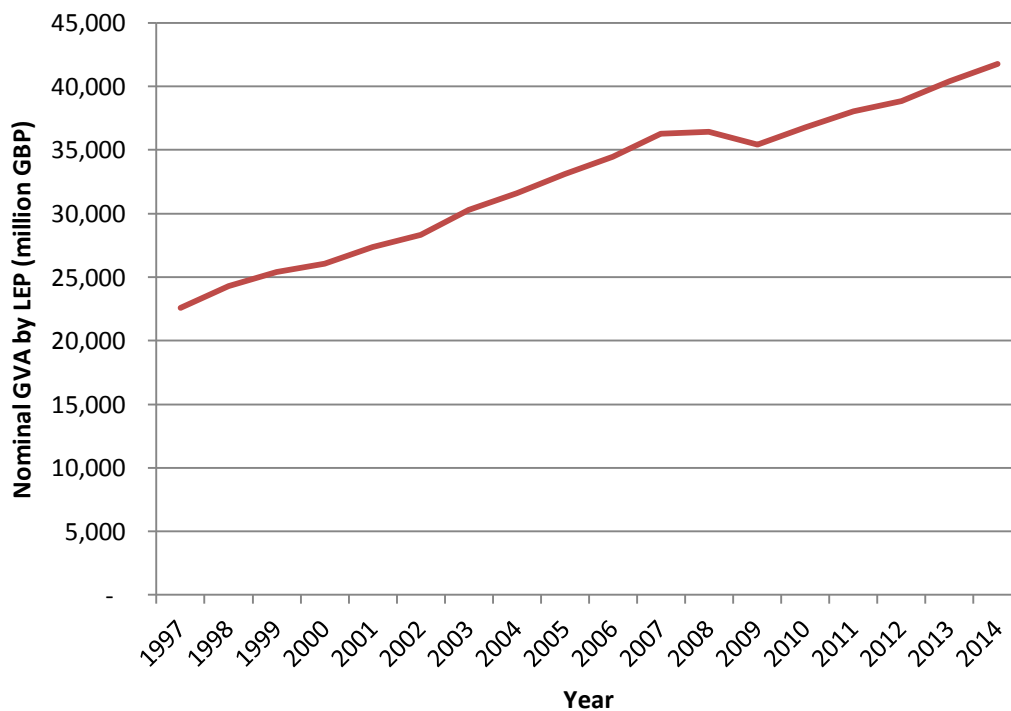
---

[5] The Solihull Economy, Jobs and Businesses, Available:
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/KeyStats/Solihull_Economy_Jobs_and_Businesses.pdf, Accessed: 29/07/16
[6] Local Government Association, Total Investments in Solihull, Available: http://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=4203&mod-period=3&mod-area=E08000029&mod-group=AllLaInRegion_WestMidlands&modify-report=Apply ,
Accessed: 29/07/16.

4.2.11   In anticipation of HS2 development, the GBS LEP has marketed the connectivity of the Borough and highlighted the number of infrastructure assets is has on offer. This rebranding of the Borough under the name of the proposed interchange station ('UK Central') is thought to have been a key factor in attracting investment since 2013. Such investment and strong capital value growth since the 2012 baseline has led to the Borough being considered as a growth leader. As a result, continued growth and investment is expected to be experienced within Solihull over the coming years[7].

4.2.12   North Solihull is identified as an area with low skill levels and high unemployment, and as such is targeted as an area of focus within the GBS LEP Strategy for Growth[8]. The strategy intends to increase investment in this area in order to break the cycle of deprivation and deliver inclusive growth into the future. Should development of UK Central (the proposed HS2 Interchange station) go ahead in Solihull, it is thought to have the potential to provide 245,000 sq. metres of commercial space, 2,000 new homes and 20,000 new jobs. This may have a significant impact on the trajectory of the Solihull economy, and may result in increased investment over the years to its completion (assumed to be 2026).

4.2.13   The Gross Value Added by the GBS LEP has shown continued growth in the period between 1997 and 2014.

Figure 4.1 Nominal Gross Value Added by Local Enterprise Partnership 1997-2014[9]

[7] JLL, Investors head in search of smaller cities for capital growth, 2015, Available: http://www.jll.co.uk/united-kingdom/en-gb/news/2148/investors-head-in-search-of-smaller-cities-for-capital-growth, Accessed:29/07/16
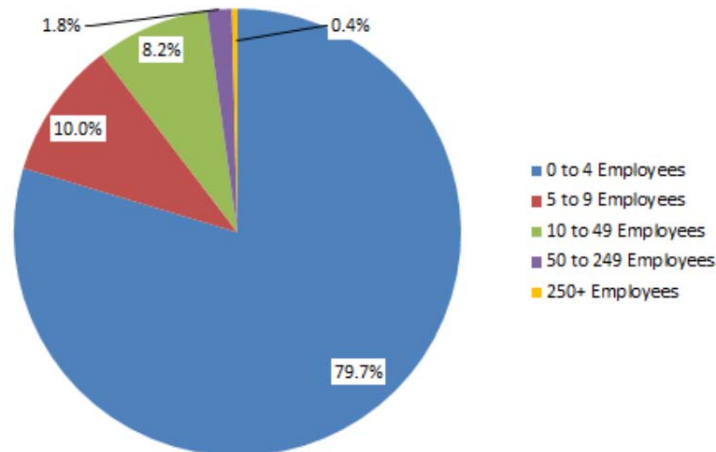[8] Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Strategy for Growth 2016, Available: http://centreofenterprise.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/GBSLEP-SEP-2016-draft-for-consultation.pdf, Accessed: 29/07/16
[9] GVA for Local Enterprise Partnerships, 2016, Available: https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/datasets/gvaforlocalenterprisepartnerships, Accessed: 29/07/16

4.2.14 In March 2015 there were 7,560 VAT and/ or PAYE enterprises in Solihull, equating to 36 per 1,000 residents. Whilst this is below the England average of 39 per 1,000, this is above the average for the West Midlands 33.5 per 1,000.

4.2.15 The enterprises are predominantly small in size, with 79.9% employing between 0-4 people, and only 2.2% employing more than 50 people. Most enterprises are in the professional, scientific, and technical sectors.

Figure 4.2 Solihull Enterprises by Number of Employees 2015, ONS

4.2.16 Between the period 2010 to 2014, 945 new enterprises were established within Solihull (+14%). Whilst slighter below the England average (+18%), this growth was above that experienced across the West Midlands (+12%). In 2014, there were more business start-ups than business closures within the Borough (1,110 starts compared to 730 deaths). Only in the period between 2009 and 2011 were there more business deaths than starts.

Predicted future baseline for prosperity and employment

4.2.17 An ageing population in Solihull could change the proportion of the economically active individuals against the economically inactive individuals within the Borough.

4.2.18 There is potential for the prosperity gap between the north and the rest of the Borough to widen into the future. Without the creation of more jobs within this area, the north may experience a weaker local economy, and have a greater dependency on the rest of Solihull to provide employment opportunities and services. The GBS LEP Strategy for Growth, however, may offset this divide by helping to catalyse regeneration efforts in various northern wards. Likewise, delivery through the UK Central programme would further boost local employment and investment levels in the north.

4.2.19 In terms of educational attainment, there may prove to be an increased need to provide opportunities for individuals with low qualification levels to join the job market. There may also be a need to provide a local workforce equipped to address the low carbon, import/export and ITC businesses. Measures to help retain the well-educated members of the workforce within Solihull may need to be adopted under the development and attractiveness of surrounding higher order urban areas.

Town Centre

4.2.20 Solihull town centre is located on the south east fringe of the West Midlands conurbation, in the western part of the Borough. It acts as the administrative and commercial centre for Solihull Borough, and contains extensive office space and Council administration functions. The economic performance of the town centre is considered important to the continued growth and prosperity of Solihull.

4.2.21 The town centre, however, has some weaknesses, including a limited diversity of uses; a decline in the environment and retailer representation in parts of the town centre (e.g. Mell Square); peak time congestion; limited public transport access; a limited evening economy; limited independent and convenience retail; and an absence of development sites.

4.2.22 Shirley is the second largest shopping centre in the Borough, but has faced increased competition from nearby out-of-centre retail development along the Stratford Road corridor, as well as from the increased offer at Solihull town centre.

4.2.23 Despite being well served in terms of variety for convenience shopping, Shirley lacks a substantial retail core, and instead relies on several food stores to act as anchors, creating localised clusters of economic activity.

4.2.24 The town centre is currently characterised by single large use areas which have little interaction. There is a domination of cars through the public realm, with various roads and junctions acting as barriers to pedestrian and cyclist permeability. As a result of the highways system, there is poor pedestrian connectivity between the north and south of Solihull town centre.

4.2.25 The Solihull Retail, Leisure and Offices Study Update 2011[10] tells how the majority of 286 retail units within Solihull town centre fall into the comparison goods category (56%), followed by service units (34%). At the time of the study, only 7 units were vacant within the centre, representing just 2% of the total stock available. This suggests a healthy demand for floor space within the centre.

4.2.26 Solihull town centre is thought to be of a high quality, not least since the introduction of the Touchwood shopping centre which acts as a modern facility. The pedestrianised and tree lined High Street help to provide a pleasant environment for visitors. The retail offer is therefore thought to be attractive and well maintained, with a strong representation from retailers.

4.2.27 Chelmsley Wood town centre is the third largest centre but is not viewed as being attractive, lacking night time activity along with other weaknesses identified in the DTZ Retail Study.

4.2.28 The Solihull Town Centre Masterplan is currently in a period of public consultation (consultation closes 9 September 2016). The Masterplan will offer a blueprint for future investment and development within the town centre until 2036, helping to enhance its distinctive character and to ensure that it remains an attractive place to live and work.

---

[10] Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 2011 Solihull Retail, Leisure and Office Study Update 2011, Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/LDF/SMBC_Retail_Study_2011_Appendices.pdf, Accessed: 09/09/16

Predicted future baseline for town centres

4.2.29 With regards to the structure of town centres, Solihull may have to increase its leisure uses in order to remain competitive, and one of the priorities for Shirley has been to offer flexible building space and grow its evening economy. Online retail is likely to continue to pose a threat to the town centre retail offer. However this is likely to plateau to a more steady level compared to previous years of recent growth. Due to online shopping and other external factors (such as future out of town development), there may be some fluctuations with regards to the performance and vitality of the town centre as these shopping habits become apparent.

4.3 Accessibility and transport

Road Network

4.3.1 The Borough of Solihull is located to the east of the West Midlands Conurbation, and is bordered by the administration areas of Birmingham City Council, Warwickshire County Council, Worcestershire County Council and Coventry City Council. Solihull is positioned centrally to the national rail and motorway network, with direct rail services to London. Access to other regions in the UK can be achieved through the M42, which links the Borough to the M6 in the north and the M40 in the south.

4.3.2 Changes from Census Data between 1981 and 2011 highlight that the overall use of public transport has steadily declined within the Borough, whilst the used of car, especially between 2001 and 2011, has increased[11]. This is against national trends which have seen a decline in car used over the same period.

Rail Network

4.3.3 Solihull rail station is located approximately 1.0km to the west of Solihull town centre, on the Chiltern line to London. Located on the periphery, there is poor connectivity to the centre, due largely to the presence of major roads and junctions which reduce permeability, and poor legibility. There are a lack of facilities within the station, and no formally allocated pick up and drop off points.

4.3.4 There are frequent services to and from Birmingham at both peak and off peak hours from Solihull Station. Approximately 1.6 million passengers use Solihull Station each year, equating to 2,500 per day[12]. This figure reflects annual growth of 16.5% in the period since 2011/2012. Applying longer term growth forecasts, a 49% passenger volume growth the 2023 and 114% growth to 2043 is predicted, without taking into consideration the potential increase of other stations within the Borough.

4.3.5 A new interchange station to serve the proposed HS2 line is due to be developed within Solihull (UK Central Station). This transport opportunity would increase the accessibility of Solihull from the north and the south, and would make the Borough a more attractive location for businesses and residents. It may also help to create jobs and regenerate the currently deprived northern wards of the Borough.

Bus Network

4.3.6 Solihull is well served by bus services, connecting the Borough to the wider West Midlands region. Despite its important role, as a gateway into the Borough, the quality of the public realm outside the bus interchange station is relatively poor, and has limited pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to the town centre.

4.3.7 The Solihull Gateway Project (completed in November 2015) saw the completion of a £2.3m highways improvement scheme in the Station Road and Poplar Road area of Solihull town centre. The project aims to improve road safety for pedestrians, but has also provided improved facilities for buses and bus passengers in anticipation of the delivery of UK Central.

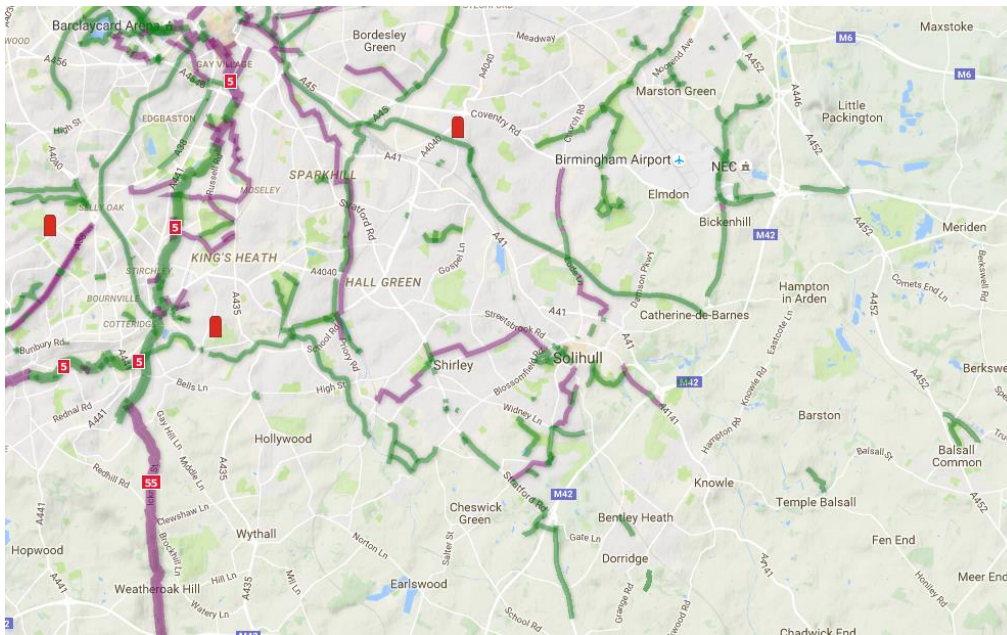[11] Solihull Connected Transport Strategy 2016, Available:
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/ParkingTravelRoads/Solihull_Connected_2016_1.5.pdf, Accessed: 27/07/16
[12] Solihull Town Centre Masterplan, Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Users/045/45/45/Chapter_3_-_Spatial_Audit.pdf, Accessed: 19/08/16

Cycle Network

4.3.8 Whilst approximately half of all households have access to a bicycle within the Borough, only 1.4% of individuals currently cycle to work. This is low compared to the West Midlands average of 2.0%, and worse than the England average of 3.0%[13].

4.3.9 Various designated cycle routes are present within the Borough. The longer routes are concentrated in the north-west, where they offer access towards Birmingham. In the south and the east, the routes are shorter and are more disjointed.

Figure 4.3 Local Cycle Routes within Solihull, Sustrans[14]

Travel to Work

4.3.10 Approximately 50,000 individuals commute into the Borough each day for work, representing approximately 50% of all jobs within Solihull. Of the 81,316 Solihull residents who travelled to work, the majority commuted out to other Local Authority areas, as highlighted in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Solihull Travel to Work Patterns, ONS Census 2011

	Count	% Total
Solihull	32,114	**39%**
Birmingham	29,458	**36%**
Coventry	3,654	**4%**
Warwick	2,327	**3%**
North Warwickshire	2,301	**3%**
Stratford-on-Avon	1,612	**2%**
Black Country	2,078	**3%**
Rest of West Midlands	3,770	**5%**
Rest of UK	4,002	**5%**
All Solihull Residents Travelling to Work	81,316	

---

[13] Solihull Connected Transport Strategy 2016, Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/ParkingTravelRoads/Solihull_Connected_2016_1.5.pdf, Accessed: 27/07/16
[14] Sustrans Interactive Map, Available: http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map Accessed: 27/07/16

4.3.11 With regards to commuting, a greater proportion of the population use private modes of transport within Solihull (73.0%) and the West Midlands (72.3%) than within England (63.4%).

Table 4.5 Method of Travel to Work, Census ONS, 2011

	Solihull		West Midlands		England	
	Count	% Total	Count	% Total	Count	% Total
All Categories	97,941		2,536,876		25,162,721	
Work from home	5,208	**5.3**	121,260	**4.8**	1,349,568	**5.4**
Car/ van/ taxi/ motorcycle	71,528	**73.0**	1,834,275	**72.3**	15,948,450	**63.4**
Public transport	13,411	**13.7**	265,949	**10.5**	4,257,848	**16.9**
On foot	5,991	**6.1**	251,452	**9.9**	2,701,453	**10.7**
Bicycle	1,361	**1.4**	50,388	**2.0**	742,675	**3.0**
Other	442	**0.5**	13,552	**0.5**	162,727	**0.6**

Car and Van Availability

4.3.12 Whilst the West Midlands presents proportions similar to the England average with regards to car and van availability, more households have access to 2 or more cars or vans in Solihull than experienced across the region and the country. There are significantly fewer households with no car or van availability (19.7%) than in both the West Midlands (24.7%) and England (25.8%), suggesting a greater reliance on this mode of transport.

4.3.13 High levels of car ownership are less so in the north, where there is greater reliance on public transport. This is partly due to the urbanised nature of the north which allows for strong commuting links into central and eastern parts of Birmingham and North Warwickshire, and the smaller travel to work area. A higher provision of such transport is therefore available in this part of the Borough.

4.3.14 Overall, less than 20% of all journeys within Solihull are made using public transport with services being limited for people working non-standard hours.

Table 4.6 Car or Van Availability, ONS, Census 2011

	Solihull		West Midlands		England	
	Count	% Total	Count	% Total	Count	% Total
All cars and vans	86,056		2,294,909		22,063,368	
No cars or vans in household	16,992	**19.7**	566,621	**24.7**	5,691,251	**25.8**
1 car or van in household	33,983	**39.5**	952,798	**41.5**	9,301,776	**42.2**
2 car or van in household	26,573	**30.9**	591,210	**25.8**	5,441,593	**24.7**
3 car or van in household	6,341	**7.4**	136,201	**5.9**	1,203,865	**5.5**
4 car or van in household	2,167	**2.5**	48,079	**2.1**	424,883	**1.9**

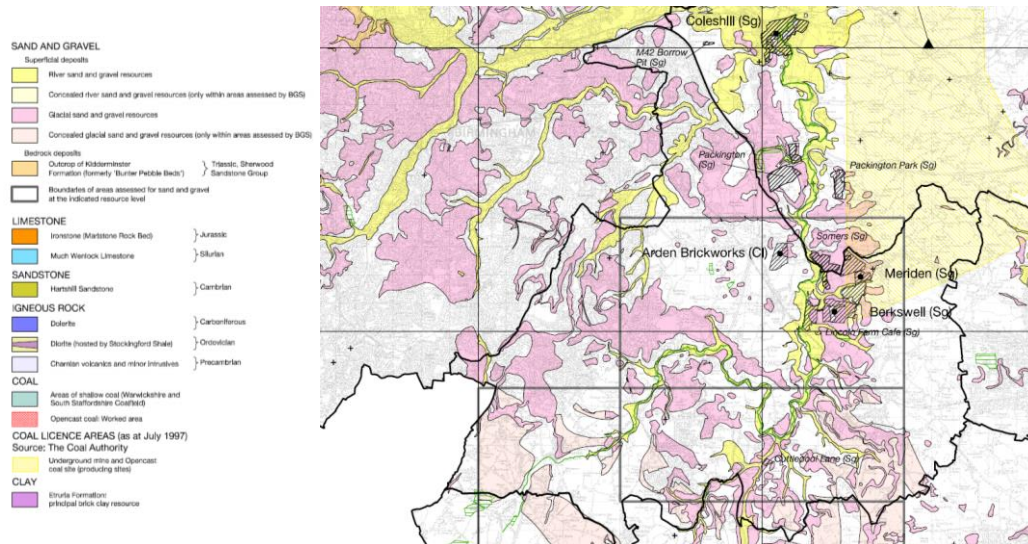*Predicted future baseline for accessibility and transport*

4.3.15   As the local population grows, and until alternative infrastructure is invested in, journeys to work within the Borough by private vehicles are likely to increase in the short and medium term.

4.3.16   The Solihull Connected Strategy sets out a long term strategic vision offering how to manage the extra travel demand from future economic and population growth. Along with the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan 'Movement for Growth'[15], the Solihull Connected Strategy will help to prepare the Borough for the expected arrival of the HS2 Interchange, and is likely to help counteract the potentially negative effects on the local transport network. The Strategies are also likely to encourage more sustainable and alternative forms of transport, and there might be an increase in these modes of travel as a result.

4.3.17   Accessibility across the Borough, especially to/from the northern wards, and between the urban and rural areas, will need to be addressed in order to overcome disparities and to remove potential barriers to work.

4.4   Material Assets

Minerals

4.4.1   There are substantial areas of sand and gravel aggregates in the south- east, south-west, west and north of the Borough, and in the River Blythe Valley. Solihull is the main source for aggregates provision within the West Midlands, and significantly contributes to primary sand and gravel production[16]. Deep coal reserves are located within the east of the Borough from Meridian to south of Balsall Common[17].

4.4.2   *Figure 4.4 Mineral Resources within the Borough*

Predicted future baseline for minerals

4.4.3   Given the concentration of sand and gravel aggregates in the Borough, there is a risk these may be sterilised by piecemeal development . The Local Plan should safeguard these mineral resources and ensure their provision into the future, especially as development is likely to lead to an increased demand for such resources.

Waste

4.4.4   Historically, the Waste Management Strategy for Solihull has prioritised access to services and reducing the impact of waste on climate change18. The strategy recognises and acknowledges that household waste per person is 'relatively' high at just less than half a tonne per person each year based on 2010 data.

4.4.5   Total household waste arising from across Solihull fluctuated between 2009/10 and 2012/13, though overall the trend is downwards, This is similar to the levels recorded for the West Midlands area which have shown a more steady decline over the period. The data shows how Solihull has historically had a higher household waste output that the West Midlands average, although this amount has reduced since its 2009/10 levels. However, it is important to acknowledge that these figures report on total waste generated, which relates to the number of households and population within Solihull (as well as representing waste generation per se). Given that Solihull has a higher population than a number of other authorities in the West Midlands, the higher total amount is not surprising. What is more important is to note the rate at which waste generation has decreased; which shows that Solihull actually had a greater decrease (-7.6%) compared to the West Midlands average (-5.8%) over the same time period (2009/10 – 2015/16).

Table 4.7 Total household waste (tonnes)[19]

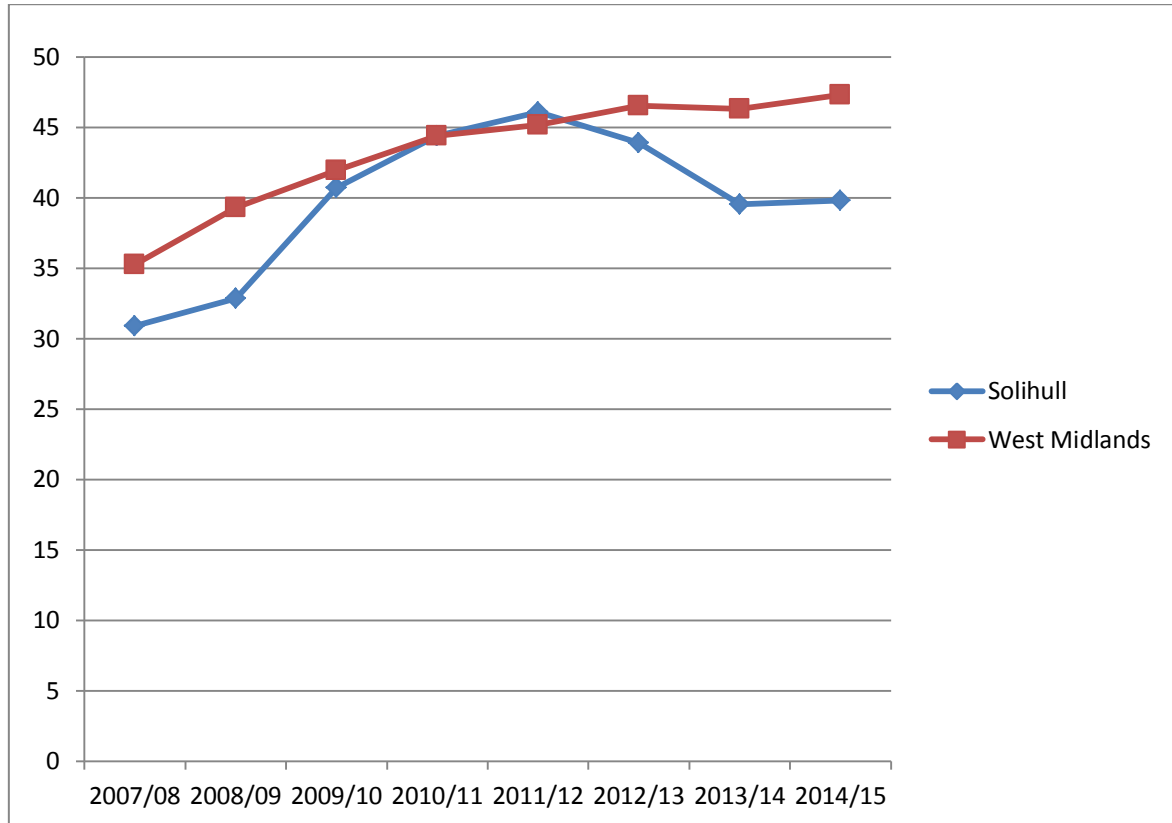|	Solihull	West Midlands
2009/10	98,648	78,180
2010/11	94,302	76,496
2011/12	90,939	74,151
2012/13	91,137	73,630
2013/14	90,631	-
2014/15	91,474	-
2015/16	90,546	-

4.4.6   The percentage of waste land which has been landfilled has fallen since 2007/08 from 16.2% to 8.9% in 2014/2015 (approximately a 54% reduction). A similar reduction has been experienced across the West Midlands, falling from 34.8% in 2007/08 to 16.1% in 2011/12 (46% reduction). This suggests that waste is increasingly being intercepted before landfill, either through recycling, incineration or alternate means.

4.4.7   Household recycling levels across the West Midlands have increased since 2007, and are currently averaging at 47.3%. This is considerably higher than the Solihull domestic recycling levels which, although higher than their 2007/08 baseline position,

---

[18] Waste Management Strategy 2010-2020, Available:
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/LDF/Waste_Management_Strategy_for_Solihull.pdf Accessed: 28/07/16
[19] Local Government Association, Total household waste arising (tonnes) for Solihull and all local authorities in West Midlands, Accessed: 28/07/16.
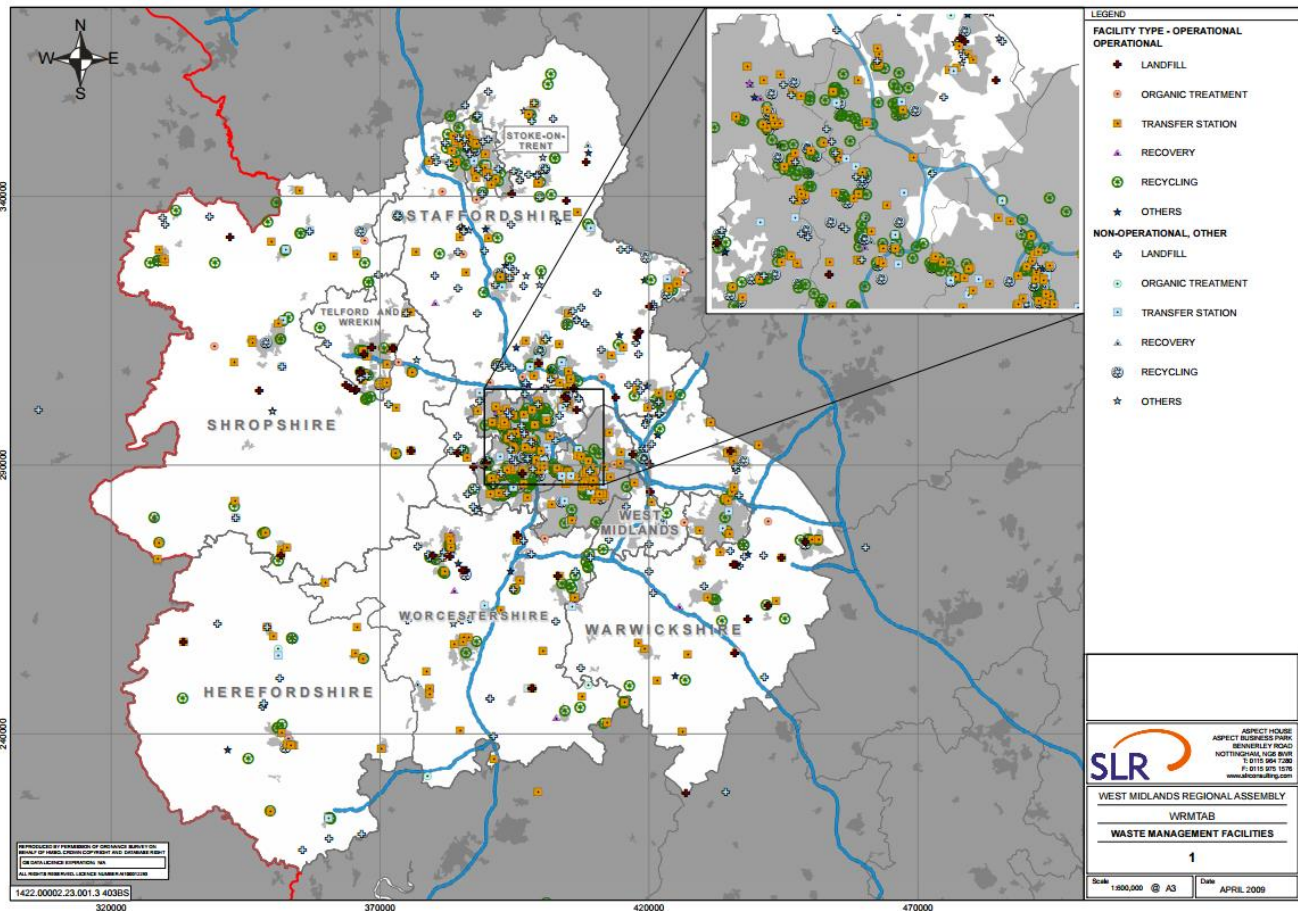
peaked in 2011/2012 at 46.1%, but have since fallen to 42.9% due to a reclassification of recycling materials[20].

Figure 4.5: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (%) from 2007/8 to 2014/15.

[20] Local Government Association, Percentage household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting in Solihull, Accessed: 28/07/16

Figure 4.6: Location of Waste Management facilities within West Midlands

Predicted future baseline for waste

4.4.8   The high level of total household waste from within the borough may indicate certain behavioural challenges need to be made/ facilities put in place. Although declining, the high waste levels coincide with low recycling rates. It is expected that recycling rates will improve, driven by the need to meet national and local targets, as well as the financial gains that can be achieved through effective waste management.
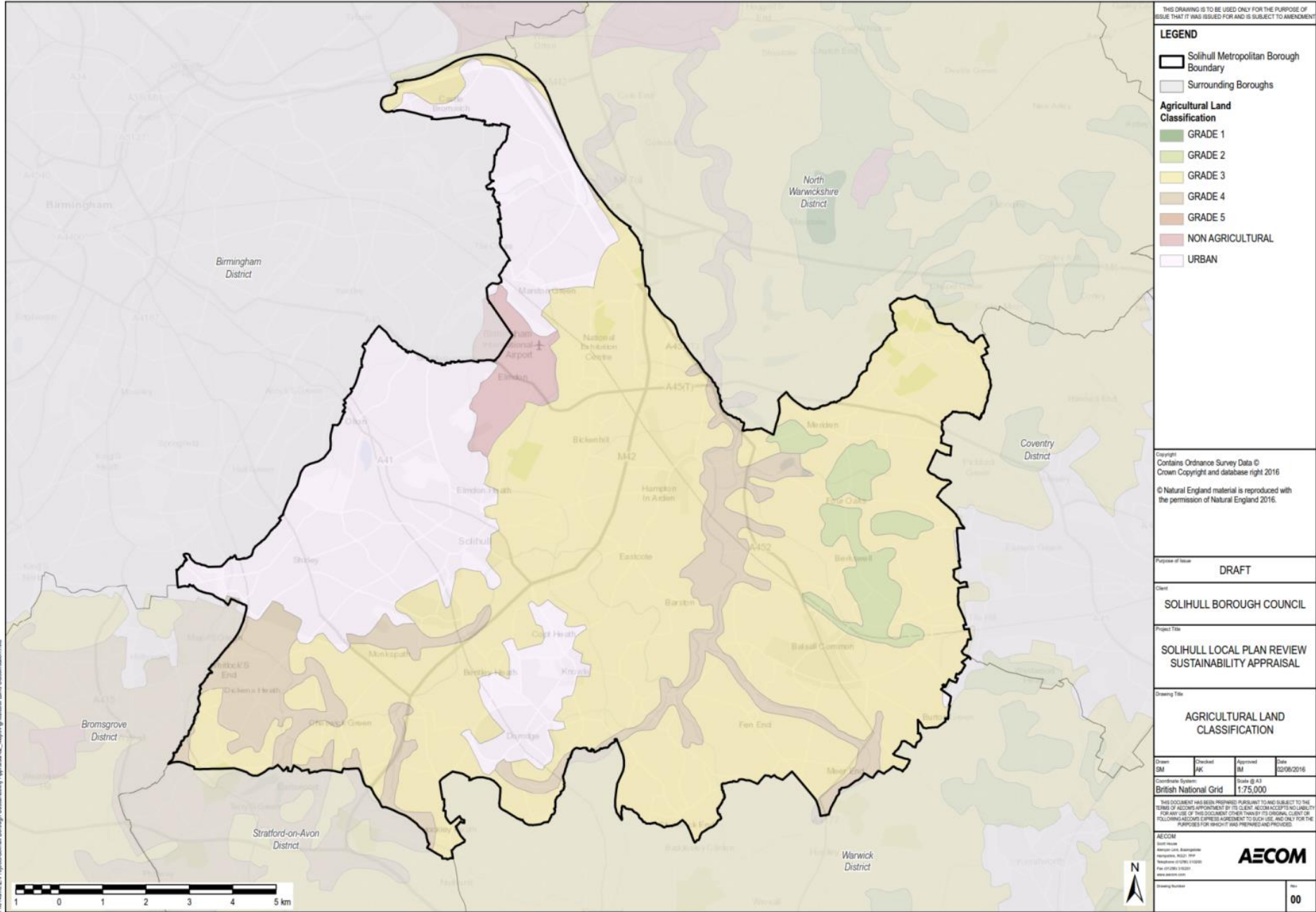
4.4.9   A waste treatment plant is due to open in early 2017 at Meridian Quarry within the Borough[21], and will process food waste and waste water. This is likely to make a significant contribution to recycling levels within the borough into the future (provided that the waste collection authority introduces kerbside services), and may act as an opportunity for the Borough to develop alternative fuel sources.

Agricultural Land

4.4.10 Significant parts of Solihull's Western Fringe, Motorway Corridor and Rural Heartland are classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land. As illustrated on figure 4.7 below, the majority of this land is Grade 3, with parcels of Grade 2 land on the fringes of Meriden, Four Oaks, Berkswell, and to the north of Balsall Common.

---

[21] 'Waste treatment plant at Meridian Quarry to open early 2017', Solihull Observer, January 2016, Available: http://solihullobserver.co.uk/news/waste-treatment-plant-meriden-quarry-open-early-2017/, Accessed: 28/07/16

Figure 4.7: Agricultural Land Classification

Predicted future baseline for agricultural land

4.4.11 Development, if not mitigated, could encroach on some of the best and most versatile agricultural land deposits, and there is therefore a need to protect the local soil resource. For new development, the inclusion of open space including allotments may help to negate any loss that might incur from development in the Borough.

Water Management

4.4.12 There is a recorded problem of nutrient enrichment in some of the Boroughs watercourses, mainly from agriculture and sewage effluent. Diffuse pollution is also considered to be an increasing problem, and may require the introduction of more surface water management through the use of sustainable drainage systems.

4.4.13 There have been protections introduced which prevent further licensed abstractions from the Meriden groundwater unit from being taken which may adversely impact the River Blythe.

4.4.14 The River Tame was assessed by the Environment Agency in 2013 as having water available for licensing subject to a Hands-Off Flow' (HOF) with regards to 80 of 197Ml/d at Water Orton gauging station, and the River Blythe having availability of 100Ml/d at Castle Farm gauging station. Hands-Off Flow conditions mean that abstractions have to stop once the river falls below a particular flow level.

Figure 4.8 Location of Gauging Stations subject to HOF

Predicted future baseline for water

4.4.15 Development is likely to put an extra demand on the sewage capacity of the Borough. The functioning of the sewage systems may need to be monitored in order to ensure it has the capacity to deal with future usage levels.

5. Baseline Position: Climate Change and Energy

5.1.1 This sustainability theme covers the following topics. For each topic, the baseline position ('a snapshot in time'), trends and the projected baseline has been established.

- Climate change
- Energy consumption
- Business and urban adaptation

5.2 Climate change and energy consumption

5.2.1 It is now accepted by the overwhelming majority of the world's scientists that climate change is already happening and that further change is inevitable. Over the last century, the average global surface temperature rose by approximately 0.7% and global sea levels have risen 10-20cm over the past 100 years.

Greenhouse gases

5.2.2 Carbon Dioxide emissions per capita have decreased since 2005 in Solihull, the West Midlands, and on a national level. In the period from 2005 to 2013 Birmingham reduced per capita emissions from 6.6t to 5.0t, while Coventry reduced per capita emissions from 7.1 t to 5.0t and Lichfield from 9.0t to 7.6t. Tamworth and Dudley both had 2013 per capita emissions of 4.7t. This suggests further effort is needed across the Borough to achieve a more equal per-capita emission when compared to its neighbouring local authorities.
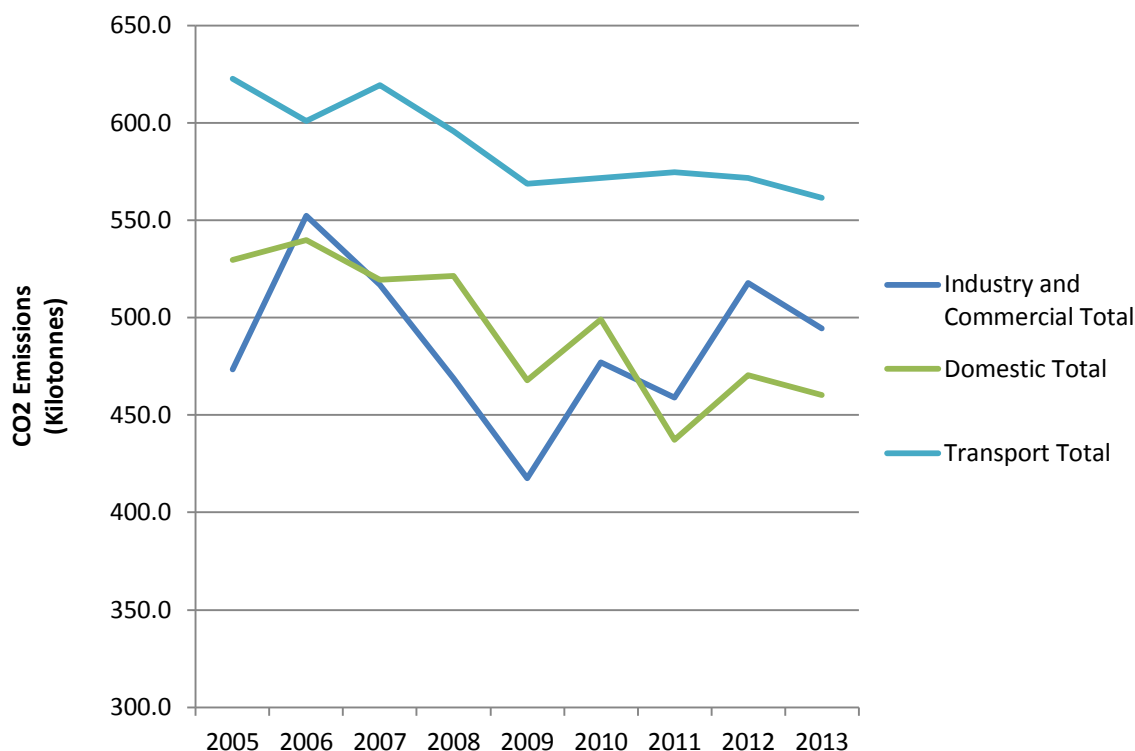
Table 5.1: Total CO_2 Emissions per capita (tonnes per person)[22],

Year	Solihull	West Midlands	England
2005	8.1	9.5	8.5
2006	8.4	9.5	8.4
2007	8.2	9.3	8.2
2008	7.8	8.9	7.9
2009	7.1	8.0	7.1
2010	7.5	8.3	7.3
2011	7.1	7.7	6.6
2012	7.5	7.8	6.9
2013	7.3	7.7	6.7
2014	6.8	7.1	-

5.2.3 Emissions can be further analysed according to their sources. According to data between 2005 and 2013, emissions across all sectors have decreased. This has been most steady for the Transport sector, whilst the Domestic and Industry & Commercial sector has shown more fluctuation in their decline. These patterns have been consistent with emissions data the West Midlands and England, whereby the grand total of emissions have declined over the same period.

---

[22] Local Government Association, CO2 Emissions Estimates- Total per capita in Solihull, Accessed:28/06/16

Figure 5.1: Co2 Emissions per Source 2005-2013, ONS Census

Energy consumption

5.2.4 In 2013, Solihull residents consumed an average of 1,660GWh (gigawatt hours) of energy[23]. Of this, gas accounted for 75%, electricity 20%, and 5% for oil based products. This is a decrease in energy consumption from the 2012 levels, which totalled 1,708GWh per capita.

5.2.5 Solihull Metropolitan Borough installed Automated Meter Reading (AMR) devices on its school gas and electricity supplies in 2015 with the intention to reduce energy consumption. 197 electricity AMRs and 171 gas AMRs were installed throughout the Borough[24].

5.2.6 The West Midlands Renewable Energy Capacity Study (2010)[25] showed that Solihull has considerable potential for renewable energy generation from both micro-generation sources, and for larger commercialised wind generation given its outer-urban location. Other technologies such as waste and biomass offer more modest potential sources of energy.

5.2.7 Waste from within Solihull offers an opportunity which could be capitalized upon with regards to low carbon energy generation (given the existence of appropriate facilities and the relatively high population of the Borough). Waste generation may increase overall alongside household and economic growth, which could provide a source of

---

[23] Home Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategy 2015, Available:
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/StrategiesPlansPolicies/Housing/EnergyandAffordableWarmthStrategy.pdf Accessed: 28/07/16
[24] Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council: Embedding Energy into the Curriculum, Available: http://www.stark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Stark-Case-Study-Solihull.pdf, Accessed: 28/07/16
[25] West Midlands Renewable Energy Capacity Study- Implications for Solihull, 2010, Available:
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=p40I5iXtVes%3D&portalid=0, Accessed 23/07/16

energy. The logistics and commercial attractiveness of such schemes being developed are not known though.

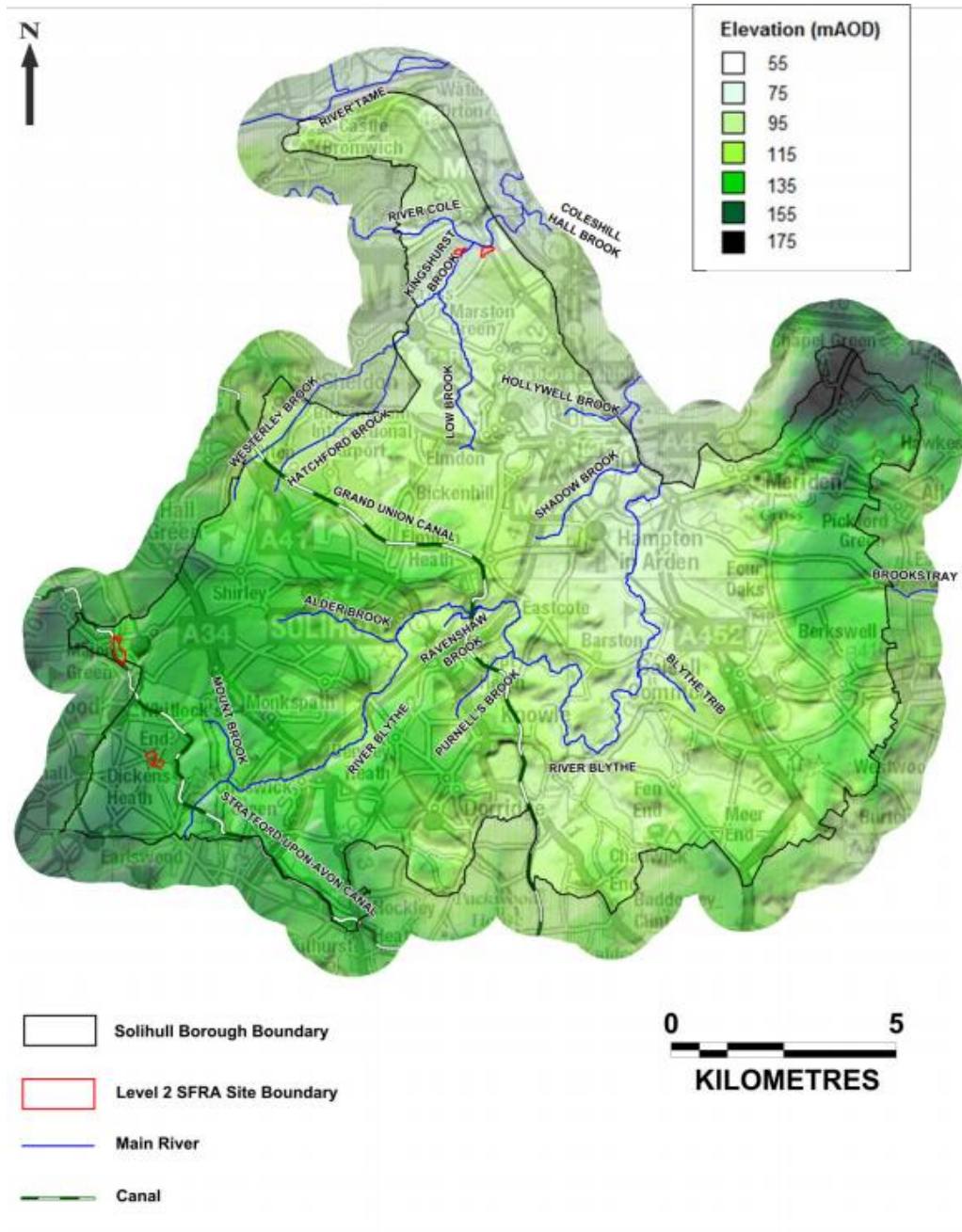*Predicted future baseline for climate change and energy consumption*

5.2.8 Increased awareness of the benefits of adopting low carbon technologies may see a rise of usage within the Borough in the longer term. Likewise, housing construction will need to use more low-carbon techniques and efficiency measures to meet national housing standards.

5.2.9 As a result, it is expected that per capita C02 emissions are likely to decline from their 2005 level. However with population growth and development the overall CO2 emissions may actually increase.

5.2.10 There may be a shift in terms of how energy is sourced as the Borough attempts to adopt more sustainable methods of energy production and consumption. This might include the development of renewables and technologies to unlock energy through waste and biomass. In addition to positive environmental effects, this shift to a low carbon economy may also help to create long term jobs in the sustainability sector.

5.3 Flooding

5.3.1 The Borough has several Main River catchments within its boundary, including the River Blythe, the River Cole, Ravenshaw Brook, Shadow Brook, Hollywell Brook, Low Brook, Kinghurst Brook and the Mount Brook. A number of Ordinary Watercourses also flow through the Borough, including the Alder Brook, Cuttle Brook, Pickford Brook, Hatchford Brook and numerous unnamed water courses[26].

5.3.2 With regards to the local topography, higher elevations are found in the western and eastern boundaries, which slope towards the River Blythe. Soils in Solihull are predominantly loamy and clay rich, which generally impedes infiltration and are expected to be seasonally wet. Within the Borough there are also significant areas of naturally wet loamy soils. The water table in such areas is expected to be close to the ground surface.

---

[26] Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, 2015, Available:
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/CrimeAndEmergencies/Final_LFRMS.pdf, Accessed: 28/07/16

Figure 5.2: Key Hydrological Features and Topography, Solihull[27]

Contains Ordnance Survey 1: 250, 000 scale mapping and Panorama data © Crown Copyright and database right 2011
© Copyright. Environment Agency and database right. All rights reserved. 2013.
© Copyright. All rights reserved. Canal and River Trust 2013.

5.3.3   Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council acts as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), and is responsible for co-ordinating flood risk management within the Borough. Historic records of fluvial flooding are concentrated around the River Blythe and the River Cole, both of which were extensively flooded during the 2007 extreme rainfall event.

---

[27] Solihull Level 2 Strategic FRA, 2014 Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/LDF/2014-12_ Solihull_Level_2_SFRA_FINAL_ISSUED.pdf , Accessed: 28/07/16

5.3.4   Government policy looks to local planning authorities to identify areas of flood risk, guide development to areas at least risk and include policies to reduce the risk of flooding and the damage that floods cause. Solihull MBC has published a Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in 2008 and 2014, respectively, as well as a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015).

5.3.5   According to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015), the number of residential properties at risk of a 1 in 30 year flood is 1,553, a 1 in 100 year flood 4,512, and a 1 in 1000 year flood 16,005 properties.

5.3.6   There have been numerous records of surface water flooding within the Solihull area. Whilst experienced throughout the Borough, there has been a concentration of these events in the west. The cause of these events has been attributed to overland flows, inundation of the sewage system, and overtopping of the drainage ditches[28].

5.3.7   Groundwater flooding within the Borough has not been a common historical occurrence; however there has been a recent increase of reports of groundwater emergence beneath the floor of properties, notably within the Shirley area. There are a number of canals and impounded water bodies within Solihull, however only one event has been recorded which involved the flooding of an artificial source.

5.3.8   It has proven difficult to determine the effect of climate change on 'local' flood risk, and there is currently a lack of publically available modelling to show the impacts on surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourse flooding. Within the Technical Guidance of the NPPF, precautionary sensitivity ranges are presented which offers approximate figures about what to expect in future years. These offer a suggestion as to what might be experienced within the Borough.
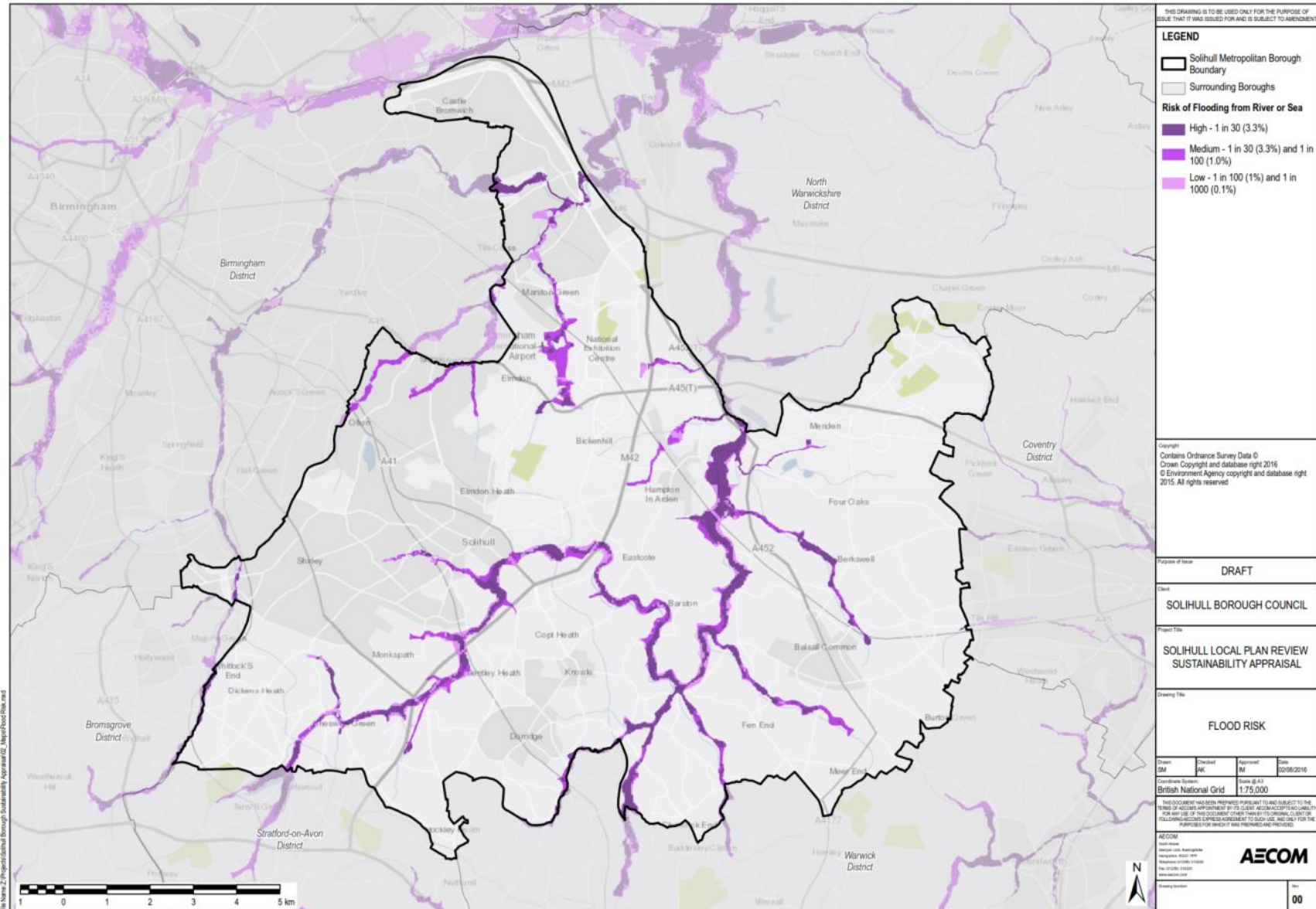
Table 5.2: National precautionary sensitivity ranges, Table 5 Technical Guidance NPPF

Parameter	1990-2025	2025-2055	2055-2085	2085-2115
Peak rainfall intensity	+5%	+10%	+20%	+30%
Peak river flow	+10%		+20%	

5.3.9   The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy also discusses the effects of climate change on the West Midlands. In particular, projected increases in precipitation are likely to lead to an increase in the frequency and severity of river flooding, putting some 21,000 residential and commercial properties at risk. Within these flood risk zones, there are a number of sensitive infrastructure sites, including a hospital, 43 care homes and 35 emergency response centres.

---

[28] Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Report, 2011, Available:
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/CrimeAndEmergencies/PFRA.pdf Accessed: 27/06/16

Figure 5.3: Areas at risk of fluvial (river) flooding across the borough

Predicted future baseline for flood risk

5.3.10   Flood events, particularly from groundwater emergence, may increase under changing climatic conditions. Groundwater flooding may therefore need to be closely monitored alongside property development, and it is likely to be a necessity to improve the capacity of the drainage network in order to reduce the economic losses from flooding. To help build resilience against these events, locations could be identified for flood attenuation ponds or wetlands, and culverts opened reverted back to natural channels.

5.4   Business and urban adaption

5.4.1   Sectors with high vulnerability to carbon constraints on operations in Solihull are: health & social work, transport equipment, transport & communications, electricity, gas & water supply, education, and other manufacturing sectors. The sectors with low vulnerability are: business services, construction, finance & insurance, and agriculture. Solihull businesses are equally vulnerable to carbon constraints on products and services as West Midlands' businesses, however, employment within Solihull is much more vulnerable (+7 percentage points) to carbon constraints than employment in the region[29].

Predicted future baseline for business and urban adaptation

5.4.2   There is an opportunity to enhance the presence of climate change within the voluntary and community sector as one method of assisting behavioural change and awareness.

---

[29] WMRO, (2010) Regional Growth into a Low Carbon Economy Solihull Briefing

6. *Baseline Position: Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement*

6.1.1 This sustainability theme covers the following topics. For each topic, the baseline position ('a snapshot in time'), trends and the projected baseline has been established.

- Biodiversity
- Landscape and green infrastructure
- Historic Environment
- Air quality, water and noise

6.2 Biodiversity

6.2.1 Biodiversity is a term used to describe the variety of life found on the earth and all natural processes.

6.2.2 In 1992, during the Earth Summit in Rio, the UK government, along with 150 other countries, signed the Convention of Biological Diversity. This offered the UK government the commitment to: 'Rehabilitate and restore degraded ecosystems through planned intervention or strategy- UK Biodiversity Action Plan'.

6.2.3 As captured in the URS Sustainability Appraisal Report[30] (2012) there are five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the Borough as set out in Table 6.1. Data on the condition of SSSI in the Borough is collected by Natural England and shows that only a fifth of the areas designated are in 'favourable' or 'recovering' condition. The low figure is due to the continuing unfavourable condition of the River Blythe which accounts for 70% of the Borough's 57 hectares of SSSI[31].

6.2.4 There are also 108Local Wildlife Sites mostly situated in the rural parts of the Borough, three Local Geological Sites and 23 Local Nature Reserves.

6.2.5 The River Blythe is one of two main rivers that flow through Solihull. It is a designated SSSI and the Environment Agency classifies it as a Strategic River Corridor. In addition, it is the finest example of a lowland river on clay and provides important habitat for rare aquatic plant and invertebrate communities. The River Blythe continues to be in an unfavourable condition due to agricultural and sewage pollution. The River accounts for 70% of the Borough's 57ha of SSSI[32]. The River Cole flows through North Solihull and joins the Blythe river in North Warwickshire. The River Cole is managed as a wildlife corridor and provides a valuable green corridor for wildlife, including kingfishers, frogs and various aquatic plants[33]. In addition, it provides valuable recreational opportunities for the local and wider community.

---

[30] URS, Sustainability Appraisal Report, Jan 2012, Accessible [online] http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/LDF/Solihull_Draft_Local_Plan_-_Sustainability_Appraisal.pdf
[31] Natural England, River Blythe SSSI data available [online] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1001772&SiteName=River%20Blythe&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=
[32] Solihull MBC 2010: Nature Conservation in Solihull, Nature Conservation Strategy: First Review 2010-2014. Available [online] http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/StrategiesPlansPolicies/LandscapeandEcology/Nature_Conservation_Strategy.pdf
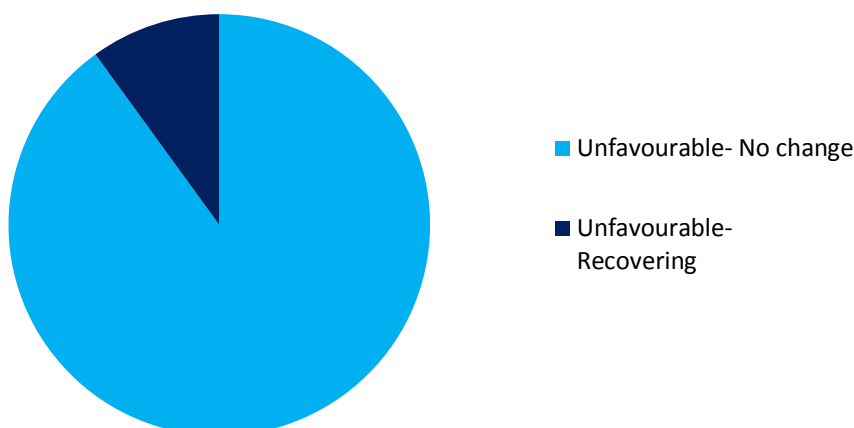[33] Ibid

Figure 6.1 River Blythe SSSI Condition Summary[34]:

- Unfavourable- No change
- Unfavourable- Recovering

Table 6.1 Condition of SSSI in Solihull[35]:

Site	Condition
Berkswell Marsh	Site comprises a total of 7.96 hectares of neutral grassland – lowland. 28.54% of the site is in favourable condition the other 71.46% is unfavourable, exhibiting no change.
Bickenhill Meadows	Site comprises a total of 5.68 hectares of neutral grassland – lowland. Both units are in an unfavourable condition recovering
Monkspath Meadow	Site comprises a total of 0.97 hectares of neutral grassland – lowland in favourable condition
River Blythe	Site comprises a total of 4.51 hectares of lowland river. 7.28% of the site is in unfavourable recovering condition and 92.72% is in unfavourable- no change condition.
Clowes Wood & New Fallings Coppice	Site comprises a total of 45.59 hectares of broadleaved mixed and yew woodland in favourable condition

6.2.6   As part of the Local Biodiversity Action Partnership (LBAP), Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull produced Biodiversity Action Plans between 2012 and 2015. This oversaw the creation of 52 biodiversity action plans, 28 which target identified vulnerable species and 24 targeting characteristic habitats which range from rural and urban settlements to wetlands and woodlands.

6.2.7   These plans are continuously updated as further information becomes available[36].

6.2.8   The area of Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull fall into 6 broad habitat types: grassland, farmland, woodland, urban, post-industrial and wetland. UK BAP priority

---

[34] Adapted from Natural England Designated Sites View, accessible [online]
https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportConditionSummary.aspx?SiteCode=S1001772&ReportTitle=River%20Blythe%20SSSI
[35] Data accessed via the Natural England Designated Sites View, accessible [online]:
https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteSearch.aspx
[36] Local Biodiversity Action Partnership, 'Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan' accessible [online]
http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/LBAP%20Action%20Plans

habitats cover a wide range of semi-natural habitat types, and were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK BAP. The 6 broad habitats types present within the study area have been subdivided into 25 Action Plans with the following identified as UK BAP Priority Habitats:

- Acid Grassland
- Built Environment
- Calcareous Grassland
- Fen & Swamp
- Field Margins
- Lowland Heathland
- Hedgerows
- Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land

- Natural Grassland
- Orchards
- Old Parkland & Veteran Trees
- Ponds
- Reed beds
- Rivers & Streams
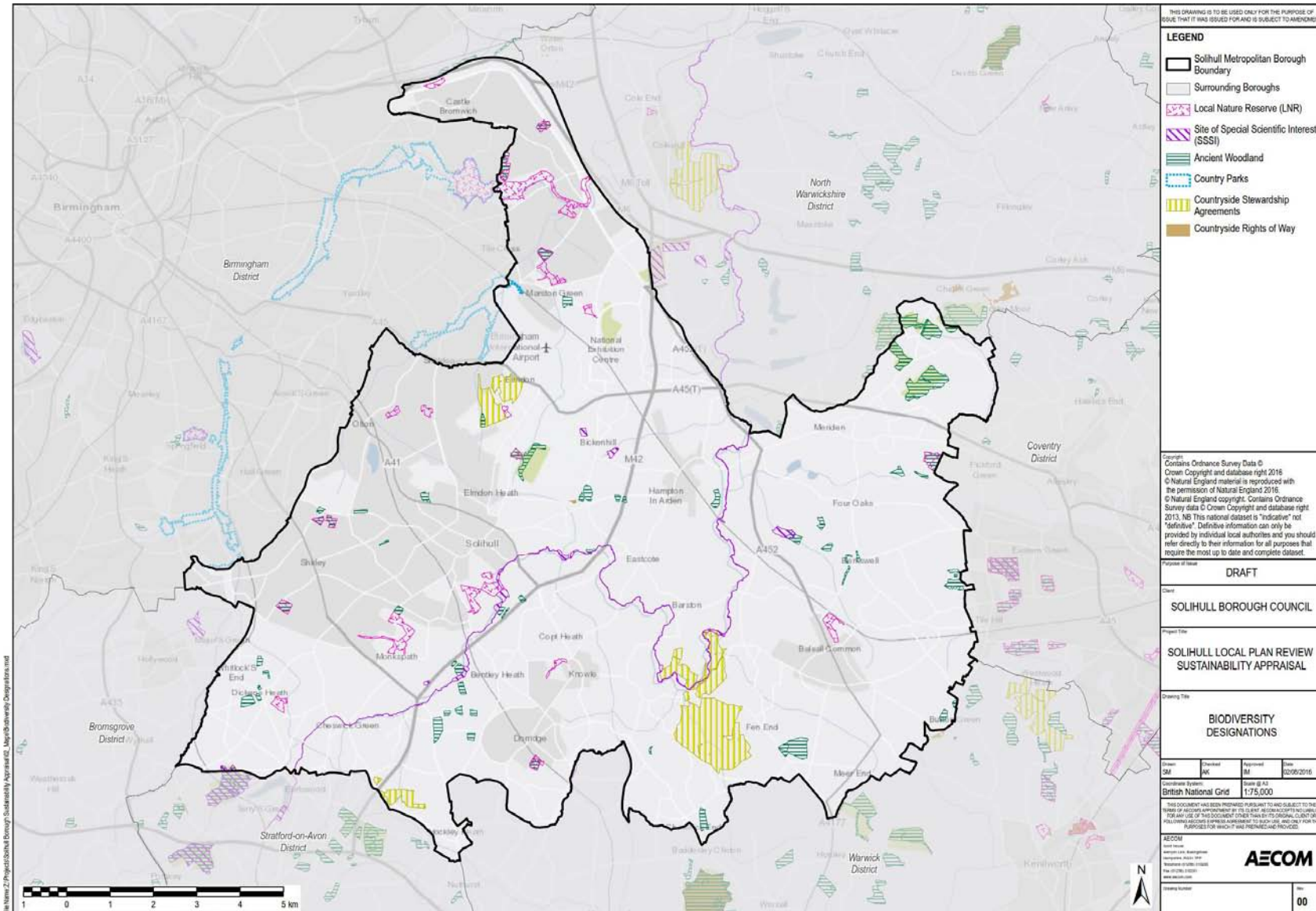- Woodland

Predicted future baseline for biodiversity

6.2.9 In recent years otters have re-colonised Solihull and signs of otter activity have been found in the Tame catchment and on the River Blythe. All major watercourses in Solihull are considered by the Environment Agency and SMBC to be 'otter positive'[37].

6.2.10 While some limited improvements in biodiversity have taken place, this is to be set against the adverse effects of increasing pressures from development, the effects of climate change and declining budgets for land management. Without a clear strategy in place, there could be more piecemeal development that does not take consideration of strategic issues and could lead to fragmentation of habitats.

6.2.11 It is unlikely that significant effects on designated sites would occur, as these are afforded national protection. However, it is possible that local wildlife species and habitats could be affected by development and opportunities for enhancement not realised.

6.2.12 The increased interest in green infrastructure at a governmental level is illustrated by the Government's White Paper on the Natural Environment and the 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services'[38] which promoted recognition of ecosystem services and habitat banking[39].

6.2.13 Whilst there is positive movement in policy, a lack of a proactive local plan could lead to slower or less comprehensive progress in terms of habitat connections, and improving resilience to climate change and human pressures. Having said this, increased awareness of the value of biodiversity assets through the BAP and other schemes may help to guide development which is sensitive to local species and habitats.

---

[37] Solihull MBC 2010: Nature Conservation in Solihull, Nature Conservation Strategy: First Review 2010-2014. Available [online] http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/StrategiesPlansPolicies/LandscapeandEcology/Nature_Conservation_Strategy.pdf
[38] Available [online] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf
[39] Defra (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Natural Environment White Paper Implementation update report, February 2014, available [online] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/286547/newp-implementation-update-20140226.pdf

Figure 6.2 Designated Biodiversity Habitats

6.3 Landscape and Green Infrastructure

6.3.1 There are no designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within the plan area. There are two Country Parks present: Kingfisher Country Park and Dicken's Heath Country Park. In addition, Sheldon Country Park is in close proximity to North Solihull Regeneration Zone.

6.3.2 The Solihull landscape is within the Arden Natural England National Character Area (NCA) 97. Arden comprises farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham, including part of the West Midlands conurbation[40]. It is characterised by well-wooden farmland landscape with rolling landform. The landscape assessment identifies seven distinct local landscape types, of which Arden Parklands, Arden Pastures, Ancient Arden and Arden River Valleys are evident in Solihull. The Natural England NCA 97 profile highlights the overall reduction in historic features in the area, stating that in 1918 approximately 3 per cent of the Arden area was historic parkland, by 1995 it is estimated that 54 per cent of that 3 per cent had been lost. Less than half of the remaining parkland is covered by a Historic Parkland Grant and only 12 per cent is included within an agri-environmental scheme. The NCA profile suggests that this is illustrative of some neglect of an important resource. It should also be noted that only about 58 per cent of historic farm buildings remain unconverted of which the majority are intact structurally[41].

6.3.3 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council released a 'Green Space Strategy Review 2014' which provided an update on progress since the last released version in 2006. Green space is of central importance to Solihull as it characterises the borough with the provision of more than 1,000 hectares of accessible green space which equates to over 5 hectares of natural areas, parks, open spaces, play areas and allotments per 1,000 head of population. Depending on the location this can vary from 3 to 11 hectares per 1000 population. The borough now has 10 Green Flag Award green spaces. Green space is reflected in all aspects of the Borough from the historic landscape fabric of the Arden Forest, the network of green spaces and connecting corridors such as the towpath canal routes.

6.3.4 However, the borough is divided in terms of quantity of green space; the north is characterised by areas of multiple deprivation with large amounts of "amenity" land, used for screening, creating road boundaries etc. but very little open space which meet local needs. The south is formed by mature suburbs and rural settlements. is faced with challenges resulting from further cuts in spending and key issues in the future will focus on the efficient allocation of limited resources whilst ensuring that any new proposals going forward are undertaken in line with green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity strategies[42].

6.3.5 The Borough published the Woodlands Strategy First Review 2010-2014. Many of the LNRS and Local Wildlife Sties are woodlands. The council owns 8% of Solihull woodlands covering an area of 77ha in the Borough. The existing woodland is envisaged to be retained with gradual improvements in the green infrastructure.

6.3.6 Overall there have been a number of achievements since the adoption of the 2006 Green Space Strategy including projects such as[43]:

- Tudor Grange Park improvement

---

[40] Natural England NCA Profile: 97 Arden, available [online] http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/1819400
[41] Ibid
[42] Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 'Green Space Strategy Review 2014' available [online]
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/StrategiesPlansPolicies/LandscapeandEcology/Green_Spaces_Strategy_Review.pdf
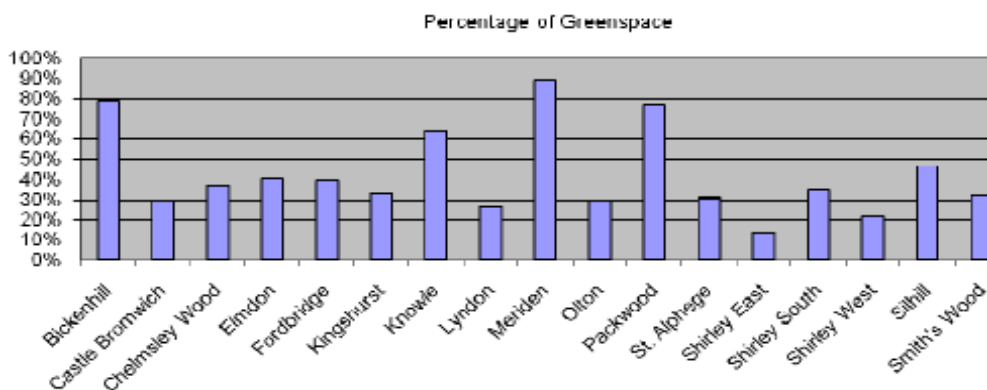[43] Ibid

- Solihull's Playbuilder Project enabled the redevelopment and improvement of 23 play spaces with £962,143 over a 3 year period 2008–2011;£200k funding from the Environment Agency for the development of an Urban Drainage System in Babbs Mill Park;

- Delivered the 2010 Local Area Agreement reward target for increase in Green Flag Parks, including Meriden park in North Solihull;

- Successful joint project with Solihull Cycling Club to deliver the first of its kind purpose built 1km Cycle Circuit available to the general public;

- Establishment of Friends of Elmdon Park, Friends of Dorridge Park, Friends of Babbs Mill, Friends of Damson Parks and Hillfield Park Improvement Group;

6.3.7   Provision of park space is vital to ensure that residents in urban wards such as Shirley East, Olton, Smith's Wood and Silhill (where there are less than 3ha per 1,000 population) have access to the social and health benefits associated with use of green space.

6.3.8   The Borough has a high density of voluntary and community sports clubs, and a range of sports facilities. There are more than 20 gyms and private health clubs within five miles of the town centre, 280 local providers of sport and active recreation and 10 golf courses and driving ranges. Most of these facilities and organisations are located in the south of the Borough. However, there is a need to improve access to these sports facilities[44].
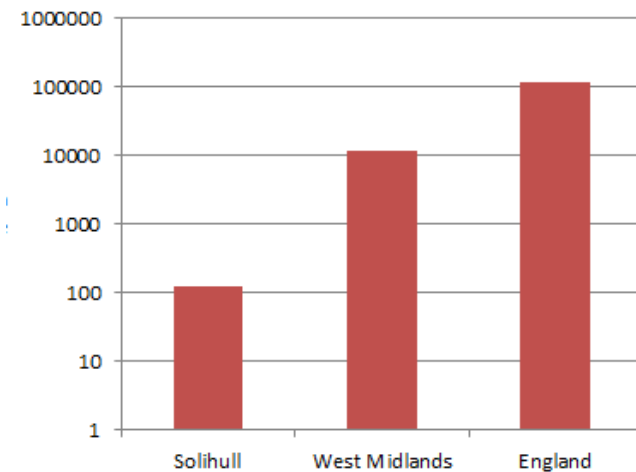
6.3.9   By 2025 Solihull aims to provide a network of attractive, high quality, accessible green spaces that are managed and developed, recognising the Borough's landscape character and local distinctiveness, to meet the diverse needs of the community and the natural environment. Most people within Solihull have access to, at least, a small area of green space within 400 m from home, and the amount of accessible green space is high compared to many places. On average there are more than 6 ha of accessible green space for every 1000 people across the Borough, but this varies at the individual ward level. Parks and gardens are the most used spaces by all age groups in Solihull. They are used, at least occasionally by 90% of residents, and 60% use them at least monthly.

Figure 6.3 Distribution of Green Space across the Borough

---

[44] Community Sports Strategy for Solihull, 2007-2016

Figure 6.4 Area of green space in Solihull (sq. km).

Predicted future baseline for landscape and green infrastructure

6.3.10 Development may encroach upon the character of the existing landscape, and may threaten remaining historic parkland if resources are not contributed to their safeguarding. The Green Space Strategy Review ought to help to highlight green spaces for protection and improvement within the Borough; however there may need to be more efforts to improve the quality of these spaces across the whole of the Borough given the current disparity.

6.3.11 There is an opportunity for Solihull to ensure that the environmental quality and accessibility of parks, open space and countryside is maintained to enable biodiversity connectivity and support social and economic development. Watercourses and riparian habitats could be enhanced within developments to protect important wildlife corridors. However, without a proactive strategy in place, these improvements would be more difficult to secure at a strategic level.

6.4 Historic environment

6.4.1 The Borough has a rich built heritage. There are 380 listed buildings in the MBC, of which 12 are Grade I Listed and 39 are Grade II* Listed. This includes the six new listings of 2016, including two structures at Olton Friary and four structures at Tidbury Green Farm. There are 16 scheduled monuments, and a Grade II* park at Castle Bromwich Hall. There were however no assets listed on the 'Heritage at Risk' register in 2015[45].

6.4.2 Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest in the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' designated by the borough council. There are 20 conservation areas in the MBC. These vary greatly in nature and character, and comprise:

- Ashleigh Road
- Barton
- Berkswell
- Bickenhill

- Malvern Park Farm
- Meriden Green
- Meriden Hill
- Olton

---

[45] Historic England (2015) Heritage at Risk – West Midlands Register [online] available at:
https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2015-registers/wm-har-register2015.pdf/

- Castle Bromwich
- Granville Road
- Grove Avenue
- Hampton-in-Arden
- Knowle
- Malvern Hall and Brueton Avenue

- Solihull
- Station Approach Dorridge
- Temple Balsall
- Walsal End
- Warwick Road
- White House Way

6.4.3   There are appraisals available for Berkswell, Hampton-in-Arden, Knowle, Olton and White House Way. These provide an overview of the significant features within the settlements, notably the origins of development, key elements of the structure, layout, architectural and historic quality of buildings, open space and green space, building materials and listed buildings. The appraisals for each of these conservation areas except Olton and White House Way include recommendations for their future management.

6.4.4   Rural parts of the Borough fall within the Arden Landscape Character Area. The Arden landscape retains ancient features like:

- Irregular fields defined by thick hedgerows;
- Networks of narrow, winding and often sunken lanes and trackways; and
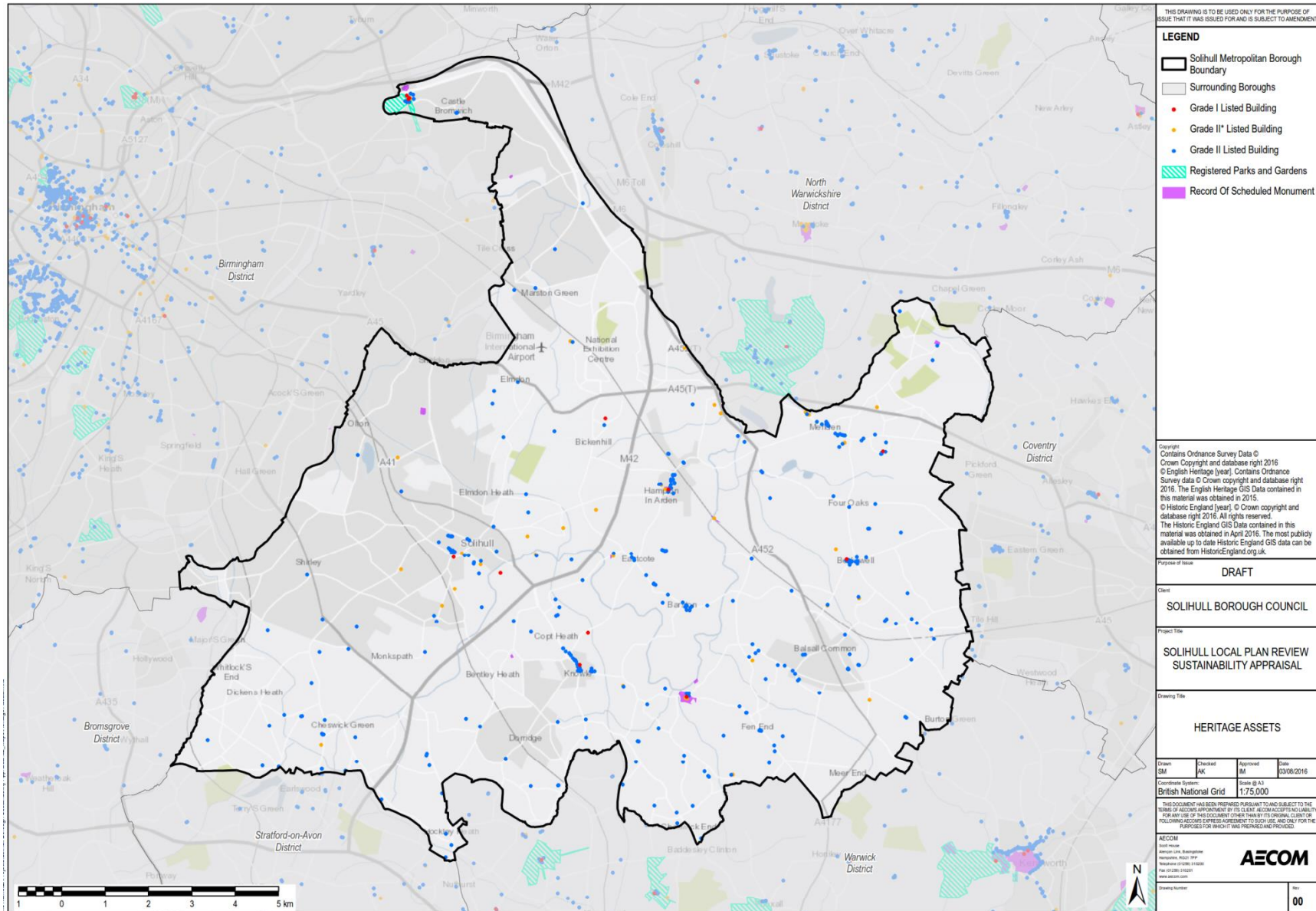- Dispersed farmsteads and hamlets.

6.4.5   However, the Solihull Countryside Strategy 2010-2020 recognises that the distinctiveness of the Arden landscape is being eroded, and traditional buildings and agricultural features like hedgerows are declining. Change is also being driven by factors like climate change and urban fringe effects.

6.4.6   Figure 6.5 maps the location of designated heritage assets within the Borough.

Predicted future baseline for historic environment

6.4.7   It can be anticipated that the increasing population in the Borough will place both direct and indirect pressures upon the historic fabric of the area. With policies and listed status, a number of these significant heritage assets are likely to be protected into the future, especially with the importance placed on such assets under the current national planning policy. The less significant and/ or smaller assets are more likely to be threatened however, and it may be a gradual decline of these features which is witnessed within the Borough over time if piecemeal development occurs.

Figure 6.5: Designated heritage assets

6.5   Air Quality, Water, and Noise

Air quality

6.5.1   Air Quality is a measure of how 'clean' the air is in terms of the type and quantity of pollutants contained within it. Air is polluted if it contains substances that may have a harmful effect on human health and the environment. Poor air quality can affect people's health causing problems such as heart diseases and breathing problems. Government standards and air quality objectives are related to observable health effects.

6.5.2   There are no Air Quality Management Areas across the Borough with few houses near highways. The Borough's rural and sub-urban character facilitates the rapid dispersion of pollutants. Monitoring indicates low to moderate levels of NO^2 at some locations but none exceed the action levels set out in legislation.

Water

6.5.3   Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) lies within the upland catchment of the Rivers Trent and Severn. It has two main rivers flowing through its boundaries, the River Blythe and the River Cole, in addition to several brooks like Hollywell Brook and Ravenshaw Brook. The River Blythe is a particularly fine example of a lowland river over clay, and is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) along most of its length.

Water Quality

6.5.4   The Environment Agency is responsible for maintaining or improving the quality of fresh, marine, surface and underground water in England and Wales. The Drinking Water Inspectorate, or DWI, has overall interests for the quality of water in our taps, for which Local Authority Environmental Health Departments have local responsibility. Water in this area is supplied by Severn Trent Water. The Water Supply Regulations 2010 sets out the regulatory framework to ensure sustainable supply of quality water in England and Wales. The quality of this water is assessed against a range of standards set by the Government[46].

6.5.5   Many human activities and their by-products have the potential to pollute water. Large and small industrial enterprises, the water industry, the urban infrastructure, agriculture, horticulture, transport, discharges from abandoned mines, and deliberate or accidental pollution incidents all affect water quality. Pollutants from these and many other activities may enter surface or groundwater directly, may move slowly within the groundwater to emerge eventually in surface water, may run off the land, or may be deposited from the atmosphere. Pollution may arise as point sources, such as discharges through pipes, or may be more dispersed and diffuse. Both point source and diffuse water pollution may be exacerbated by adverse weather conditions.

Water Conservation Management

6.5.6   Severn Trent Water is the supply company for the area. Water supply is taken from the Welsh Mountains and treated at works in Birmingham. Foul water from Solihull and the surrounding area is treated at the Barston Sewage Treatment Works (STW).

6.5.7   A Water Cycle Study (2007/2009) for Solihull MBC was produced to set out a strategic overview of the capacity of the existing water and sewerage infrastructures in relation to the planned levels of growth identified within the Borough. The study suggests that proposed development in the Borough - both in terms of site allocation and the level of development - will not require significant water and sewerage infrastructure

---

[46] A summary of drinking water quality is available from www.stwater.co.uk; full details are available at www.dwi.gov.uk.

improvements. An updated water cycle study is currently being undertaken, and the findings will be incorporated in the scope of the SA as plan preparation progresses.

Noise

6.5.8   The European Noise Directive 2000/14/EC requires the drawing up of strategic noise maps, as well as informing and consulting the public about noise exposure, its effects and the measures considered to address noise. It also requires authorities to draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and to maintain 'good' environmental noise.

6.5.9   Furthermore, Defra has developed a Noise Action Plan for the West Midlands Agglomeration, which includes Solihull MBC. Defra also require airport operators, including Birmingham International Airport, to draw up Noise Action Plans. Birmingham International Airport is located within Solihull.

6.5.10 Defra's Noise Agglomeration Action Plan suggests that some 400 people in the Borough live within a road or rail Noise Important Area.[47]

6.5.11 Birmingham International Airport's Noise Action Plan suggests that residential areas in Birmingham and Solihull to the north of the airfield are most affected by noise. Some properties are overflown as low as 500 feet. To the south of the airfield, concerns about aircraft noise have been reported in Balsall Common, Barston, Bickenhill, Catherine de Barnes, Eastcote, Hampton in Arden and Knowle. Settlements to the east and west of the airport are less affected by overflying aircraft noise, but are impacted by ground noise and by noise from aircraft taking off or landing.

Predicted future baseline for air quality, water and noise

6.5.12 Whilst there are no current AQMAs in the Borough, an increase of vehicles into the future may contribute to increased air pollution and noise. An AQMA may then be required in order to help to manage air quality.

6.5.13 More noise is also likely to be attributed to the HS2 rail line should it be delivered, having an impact on an increased number of residents within Solihull. Increased residential development in the north may also increase the number of dwellings which are exposed to overhead noise from associated aircraft. New technologies and mitigation measures however may offset the potential increase of negative effects.

6.5.14 The water supply in Solihull looks set to remain stable, particularly as Severn Trent Water announced in late 2015 their plans to upgrade the Elan Valley Aqueduct which supplies water to Birmingham and Solihull[48].

---

[47] Defra (2014) Agglomeration Noise Action Plan. Appendix B: Detailed Agglomeration Data. [Online] Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/276236/noise-action-plan-agglomerations-appb-201401.pdf
[48] Severn Trent Water (2015) Birmingham Resilience Project (BRP) [online] available at https://www.stwater.co.uk/my-supplies/live-updates/investing-in-local-improvements/birmingham-resilience-project/
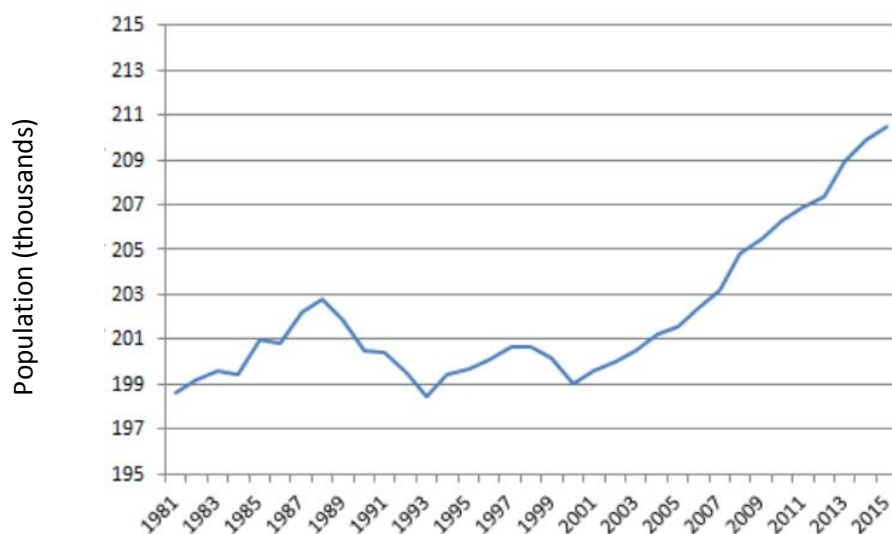
7. Baseline Position: Sustainable Communities

7.1.1 This sustainability theme covers the following topics. For each topic, the baseline position ('a snapshot in time'), trends and the projected baseline has been established.

- Population

- Deprivation

- Housing

- Health

- Crime

7.2 Population

7.2.1 The resident population for Solihull in 2015 was estimated at 210,400[49]. This is a 0.2% increase since 2014 (of approximately 500 residents), and a 4.4% increase since 2005 (of approximately 8,800 residents). Between 2000 and 2015, the Solihull population has increased by a total of 5.7% (11,400 individuals), however the proportion of growth is less than that experienced within the West Midlands (9.1%) and England (11.3%)[50].

Figure 7.1: ONS Mid- year population estimates, Solihull 1981-2015

---

[49] ONS Population estimates, Labour Market Profile, Solihull, 2015, Available:
https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157190/report.aspx?town=solihull#tabrespop, Accessed: 26/06/15.
[50] Solihull People and Place 2016, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Prepared by Solihull Observatory. Available:
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/portals/0/keystats/solihullpeopleandplace.pdf, Accessed: 26/07/16.

Table 7.1: Gender Breakdown, ONS Mid-2015 population estimates

	Male	Female	Total
Aged under 1 year	1,100	1,100	
Aged 1-4 years	5,300	4,900	
Aged 5-9 years	6,500	6,200	
Aged 10-14 years	6,400	6,000	
Aged 15-19 years	6,600	6,200	12,800
Aged 20-24 years	5,600	5,400	11,000
Aged 25-29 years	5,900	5,800	
Aged 30-34 years	5,400	5,900	11,300
Aged 35-39 years	5,500	6,200	11,700
Aged 40-41 years	6,600	7,100	
Aged 45-49 years	7,600	8,200	16,100
Aged 50-54 years	7,800	8,300	
Aged 55-59 years	6,600	6,600	11,800
Aged 60-64 years	5,700	6,100	
Aged 65-69 years	6,200	6,700	12,900
Aged 70-74 years	4,900	5,500	10,400
Aged 75-79 years	3,600	4,300	
Aged 80-84 years	2,600	3,600	6,200
Aged 85 and over	2,300	4,200	6,500

7.2.2 The area exhibits a higher proportion of individuals aged 65 years and over (20.9%) than compared to the West Midlands (18.2%) and England (17.7%), whilst the proportion of those aged between 0-15 years conforms to the regional and England average.

Table 7.2: Age Profile, ONS Mid-2015 population estimates

	Solihull		West Midlands		England	
	Count	% Total	Count	% Total	Count	% Total
Aged 0-15	40,152	**19.1%**	1,122,376	**19.5%**	10,405, 114	**19.0%**
Aged 16-64	126,404	**60.1%**	3,582,819	**62.3%**	34,669,641	**63.3%**
Aged 65+	43,889	**20.9%**	1,045,805	**18.2%**	9,711,572	**17.7%**
All People	210,445		5,751,000		54,786,327	

7.2.3 Between the period 2004/05 to 2013/14, a total of 96,046 people migrated into Solihull, whilst 90,822 migrated out, resulting in a net increase to the Solihull population of 5,224 individuals.

Table 7.3: Type of Migration within Solihull, ONS

Type of Migration	Flow	Ten Year Total Mid 2004-Mid 2014
Migration from within UK	In	90,943
	Out	86,177
	Net	4,766
International Migration	In	5,103
	Out	4,645
	Net	458
Total Migration	Net	5,224

Ethnicity

7.2.4   Solihull is predominantly comprised of white residents which account for 89.1% of the population. This is considerably higher than the average across England (85.4%) and the West Midlands (82.7%).

Table 7.4: Ethnic Group, Census ONS, 2011

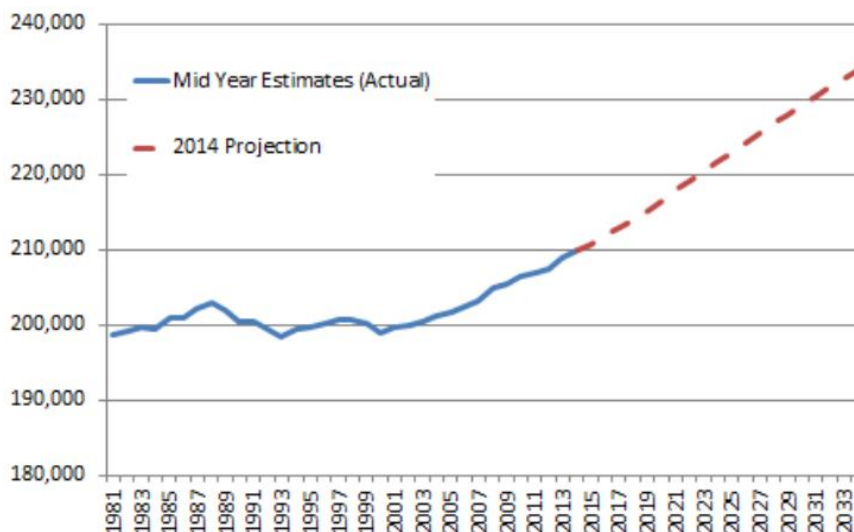|	Solihull		West Midlands	England
	Count	**% Total**	**% Total**	**% Total**
White	184,244	**89.1**	82.7	**85.4**
Mixed	4,404	**2.1**	2.4	**2.3**
Asian	13,561	**6.6**	10.8	**7.8**
Black/ African/ Caribbean	3,239	**1.6**	3.3	**3.5**
Other	1,226	**0.6**	0.9	**1.0**

7.2.5   There are significant spatial variations in the settlement patterns of residents of different ethnicities within Solihull. Black or Black Caribbean residents are recorded as being most likely to live in the 'North Solihull' regeneration area. Asian or Asian British Indian residents are most likely to live in the urban south of the Borough. With regards to the spatial patterns of religious groups, Muslim residents are most likely to live in the urban west whilst Sikh residents live throughout the south of the Borough, with significant communities living in Blythe and Meriden.

Predicted future baseline for population

7.2.6   The Solihull population is predicted to increase by 11,890 people (5.7%) between 2014 and 2024. This growth is set to continue between 2024 and 2034 by a further 12,138 (5.5%), resulting is a total growth of 24,028 (11.1%) between 2014 and 2034. Whilst the population between 2002 and 2012 grew by approximately 0.4% p.a., based on the above figures population for the period between 2012 and 2034 is estimated to be 0.7%.

7.2.7   The majority of this growth is expected to occur within the 0-15 year age bracket (14.6% between 2014 and 2034) and the 65 and over age bracket (36.1% between 2014 and 2034). It is considered likely that by 2034 those aged 85 and over will account for 5% of the Solihull population compared to 3% currently[51].

Figure 7.2: Solihull ONS Sub-National Population Projections 2014

---

[51] Solihull People and Place 2016, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Prepared by Solihull Observatory. Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/portals/0/keystats/solihullpeopleandplace.pdf, Accessed: 26/07/16.

7.3 Deprivation

7.3.1 Since the 1970s the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has calculated multiple measures of deprivation at a local level across England. The latest version of these statistics was published in 2015. This updates the Indices of Deprivation published in 2007, 2010 and 2013.

7.3.2 It is important to note that these statistics are a measure of deprivation, not affluence, and to recognise that not every person in a highly deprived area will themselves be deprived. Equally, there will be some deprived people living in the least deprived areas.

7.3.3 Deprivation here describes unmet needs caused by a lack of resources, and is measured using 38 indicators grouped into seven domains (income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime). Each of these domains has their own scores and ranks, allowing users to focus on specific aspects of deprivation. Alternatively they can be combined using a weighting system to calculate the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 (IMD 2015), which can in turn be used to rank every Lower layer Super Output Area (LSOA) in England according to its relative level of deprivation.

7.3.4 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines a range of economic, social and housing indicators into a single deprivation score. The IMD rank shows that as a Borough Solihull is ranked 216th out of 326 Local Authorities within England, and is therefore among the least deprived 35% of Local Authorities in the country on this measure[52].

7.3.5 Although Solihull is broadly affluent, the Borough is relatively polarised. There are pockets of deprivation with some LSOAs being within the most deprived 10% of the country (77th out of 326, 24th percentile). Indeed, the Borough has 10 LSOAs in the most deprived 5% of neighbourhoods in England in terms of crime, employment and income. Some 16% of children (6,100 children) in the Borough live in poverty (Solihull MBC Health Profile 2015).

7.3.6 As illustrated on figure 7.3, the overall most deprived LSOAs are primarily located in the North Solihull regeneration area, and include Chelmsley Wood, Kinghurst and Fordbridge, Smith's Wood and Bickenhill. Chelmsley Wood town centre and Bennett's Wood are in the bottom 3% nationally. The only LSOAs outside the North Solihull regeneration area that are in the bottom 20% nationally are Green Hill (Shirley East ward) and Hobs Moat North (Lyndon). Olton South, Ulverley East (Lyndon) and Solihull Lodge (Shirley West) are also in the bottom 30% nationally.

7.3.7 Deprived LSOAs in the North Solihull regeneration area also suffer higher population density, less green space per head and a greater proportion of socially rented housing than the rest of the Borough. Deprivation in the North Solihull regeneration is linked to (and affected by) educational attainment, employment, crime and health.

7.3.8 Average weekly earnings across the Borough for people in full-time employment are £593. This is 11% higher than the national average, and 20% higher than the West Midlands average. It is also the highest amongst neighbouring upper tier Local Authorities. Nevertheless, there is significant variation in weekly household incomes, which vary from £470 per week to £1,070 per week (£390 and £820 after deducting household costs). Furthermore, Solihull has 18 LSOAs in the bottom 10% nationally for income deprivation, with 10 in the bottom 5%. All Solihull LSOAs in the bottom 10% nationally are found in the North Solihull regeneration area.
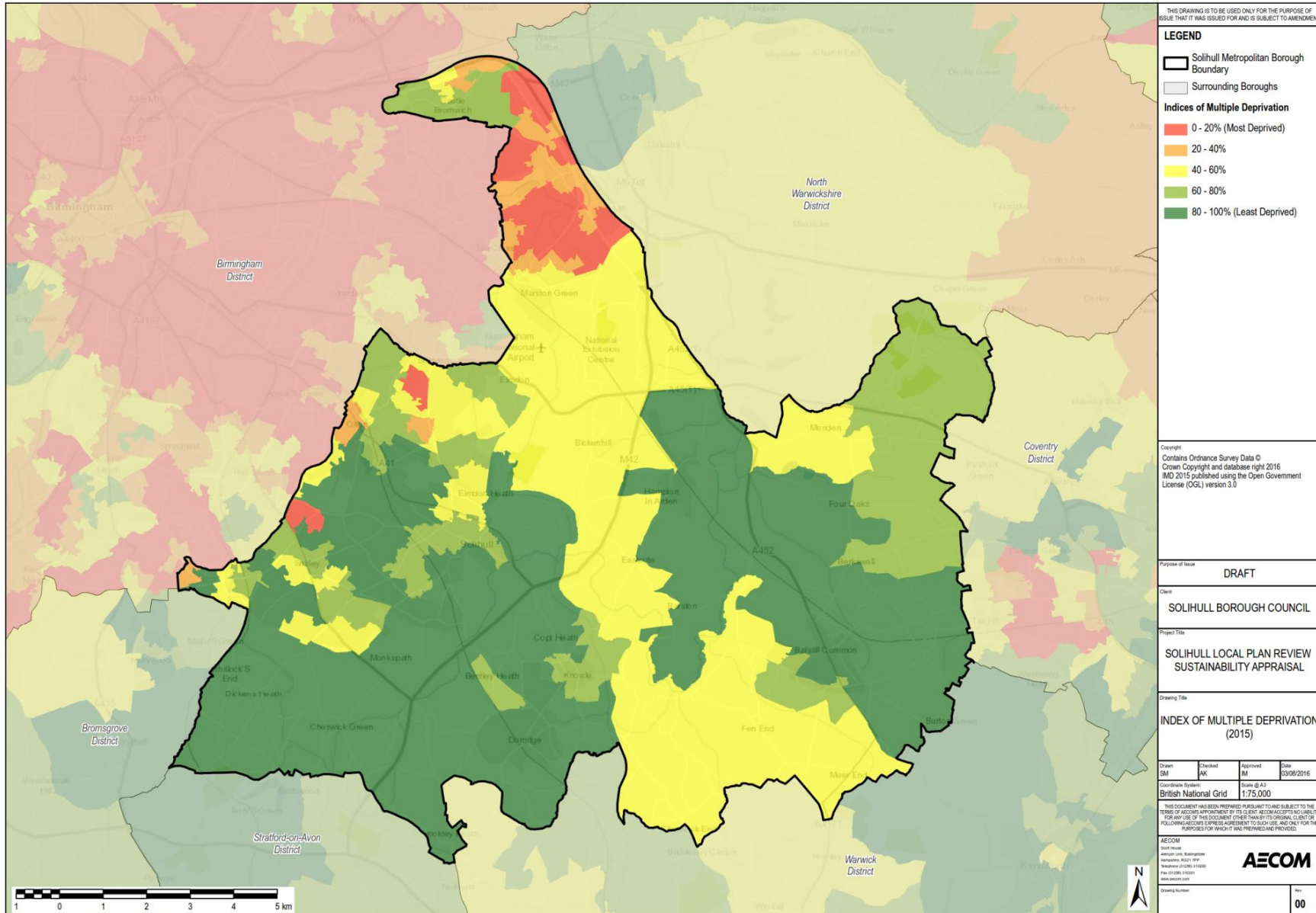
---

[52] Solihull People and Place 2016, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Prepared by Solihull Observatory. Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/portals/0/keystats/solihullpeopleandplace.pdf, Accessed: 26/07/16.

7.3.9   Inequalities also mean that a significant number of local people across Solihull face poorer health, education, housing and employment opportunities than others in the Borough.

Predicted future baseline for deprivation

7.3.10   There is potential for the polarisation within the Borough to become more acute unless addressed. The allocation of a regeneration area within the north is likely to help to balance this inequality, as new development and investment help to reduce the deprivation within Chelmsley Wood, Kinghurst and Fordbridge, Smiths Wood and Bickenhill. There should be an effort to equip the local workforce to exploit local opportunities, especially in these northern wards.

Figure 7.3: Distribution of Deprivation (IMD 2015)

7.4 Housing

7.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) indicates that planning authorities should plan to boost significantly the supply of housing. This requires an evidence-based approach to identifying and meeting the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing.

7.4.2 Solihull is an attractive residential environment, which has created high demand for housing. This demand is reflected in higher than average house prices relative to the West Midlands, significant numbers of households on Council and Registered Social Landlord housing lists, and few 'difficult to let' problems. Land Registry data from the second quarter of 2013 suggests that median sales values in Solihull were £211,000, compared to £184,000 for England as a whole. Levels of home ownership are high (74.5% of households owned their home in 2011) relative to the West Midlands and England. However, the Borough has a small proportion of affordable homes (14.9%) than the West Midlands and England.

7.4.3 High house prices have presented affordability challenges in the Borough. Moreover, reductions in the level of Council housing and a high proportion of smaller properties mean it is increasingly difficult to meet housing needs. As of end-March 2015, there were 8,300 households with housing needs on the Housing Register. Approximately 52% of these households live in the North Solihull regeneration area.

7.4.4 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2010) identified a number of housing issues in the Borough. The issues identified are included here for completeness, but will need to be updated following the publication of the updated SHMA in September 2016:

- Homelessness – anecdotal evidence suggested that homelessness rose in 2010 as a result of the Great Recession;
- Growing numbers of households unable to buy properties on the open market;
- Significant levels of unhousing unfit for habitation and in a state of disrepair in the Urban Housing Market Area;
- Right to Buy had significantly reduced Solihull's social housing stock;
- Rates of new buildings fell following the Great Recession;
- Conversions on windfall sites resulted in approximately 2,000 new dwellings between 2001 and 2008; and
- Empty properties offer an opportunity to meet housing demand.

7.4.5 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2010) also concluded that:

- Solihull has one of the most severe affordability problems in the West Midlands, although prices fell during the Great Recession;
- There are issues for first-time buyers in Solihull who have not built up equity;
- The need for affordable housing is growing.

7.4.6 The SHMA showed that 70% of newly forming households were unable to satisfy their needs in the market. It highlighted an increasing need for homes which are suitable for those with disabilities and for older people in addition to the affordable housing need. The shortage of affordable housing is particularly acute in parts of the mature suburbs and rural areas within the Borough. There are also areas of the Borough where existing housing mix is poor, and there is a limited supply of smaller dwellings.

Projected future baseline housing

7.4.7 Should housing continue to be sold and rented at an unaffordable level, it is likely that the polarised deprivation experienced across Solihull will become more pronounced. A need may also arise to provide specialist housing stock for the ageing population and their specific needs. New residential development may offer an opportunity to expand the affordable housing stock within the Borough, and enable access for first time buyers and those on a lower income to enter the housing market. The volume of housing is likely to increase should the current investment levels continue; however without a local plan review this may not become appropriate to the need.

7.5 Health

7.5.1 Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average; however this is not projected equally across the Borough. There is a stark contrast between the areas within Solihull, with life expectancy 10.7 years lower for men and 9.7 years lower for women in the most deprived areas than in the least deprived areas. Three wards consistently have the least advantageous health outcomes, namely: Chelmsley Wood; Kingshurst and Fordbridge; and Smiths' Wood[53].

7.5.2 Solihull performs better than the England average in various health-related domains;

- fewer under 16 year olds living in poverty (16 compared to the England value of 19)

- fewer children in Year 6 who are categorised as obese (16.1 compared to the England value of 19.1)

- fewer obese adults (16.3 compared to the England value of 23.0)

- fewer alcohol-specific hospital stays with regards to under 18 year olds (27.3 compared to the England value of 40.1)

- a lower prevalence of smoking (13.0 compared to the England average of 18.4)

- fewer smoking related deaths (238.9 compared to an England value of 288.7)

7.5.3 In a number of other health domains, however, the Borough is considered to be significantly worse than the England average. There are a significantly higher proportion of individuals living in statutory homelessness, more instances of malignant melanoma, and a higher level of recorded diabetes within Solihull than across England[54].

7.5.4 General health across all categories is similar to the England average, and performs slightly better than the West Midlands when it comes to the proportion of residents with 'very bad health' and 'bad health' (Table 7.5).

---

[53] Public Health England (2015), Available: http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=171740&bcsi_scan_ab11caa0e2721250=1LQDAgCoCN6iatpKiuOmstg8e3kWA, Accessed: 26/07/16.
[54] Public Health England (2015), Available: http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=171740&bcsi_scan_ab11caa0e2721250=1LQDAgCoCN6iatpKiuOmstg8e3kWA, Accessed: 26/07/16.

Table 7.5: ONS General Health, 2011

	Solihull		West Midlands		England	
	Count	% Total	Count	% Total	Count	% Total
All Categories	206,674	**100.0**	5,601,847	**100.0**	53,012,456	**100.0**
Very good health	98,197	**47.5**	2,525,862	**45.1**	25,005,712	**47.2**
Good health	70,683	**34.2**	1,946,936	**34.8**	18,141,457	**34.2**
Fair health	27,056	**13.1**	786,583	**14.0**	6,954,092	**13.1**
Bad health	8,241	**4.0**	263,217	**4.7**	2,250,446	**4.2**
Very bad health	2,497	**1.2**	79,249	**1.4**	660,749	**1.2**

7.5.5   Instances of fuel poverty are measured statistically using the 'Low Income High Costs' definition, under which a household is considered to be in fuel poverty. To fall into this category, a household would have fuel costs which are above the national average, and would, upon spending these fuel costs, be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

7.5.6   There were an estimated 8,733 (10.1%) fuel poor households in Solihull in 2013[55]. Whilst this is similar to the average across England (10.4%), this proportion is considerably below the amount of fuel poor households within the West Midlands region (13.9%). Nonetheless, fuel poverty is deemed to be a significant issue and is considered to be a contributory factor to excess winter mortality rates.

7.5.7   As the 80 years and above age category grows dementia is predicted to become increasingly common within the Borough. The number of people living with dementia is estimated to grow by 31% within Solihull by 2021, totalling 900 individuals[56]. This will create an increased demand for certain services, and will pose a growing challenge in meeting the mobility and access needs of those living with the condition, particularly in rural areas. Other long term conditions such as cardiovascular disease, disability and frailty are also increasing.

7.5.8   Mental health issues are often associated with a poor quality environment and lack of employment, both of which are prevalent in the more deprived populations of the Borough. Limited public transport and poor access to services can also contribute to feelings of isolation.

Influences on Health

7.5.9   Only 7.5% of Solihull residents in employment either walk or cycle to work. This is considerably lower than both the West Midlands (10.9%) and England average (13.7%)[57], and suggest a less physically active commuting pattern. Physical exercise can have a positive effect on both physical and mental health, and can act as a platform to reduce instances of social isolation. The Indoor Facilities Strategy and Report[58] identified:

- 19 sports hall sites;
- 39 sites with activity halls;
- 21 health and fitness gyms, with at least 1,524 fitness stations;

---

[55] Solihull People and Place 2016, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Prepared by Solihull Observatory. Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/portals/0/keystats/solihullpeopleandplace.pdf, Accessed: 26/07/16.
[56] Census 2011, ONS
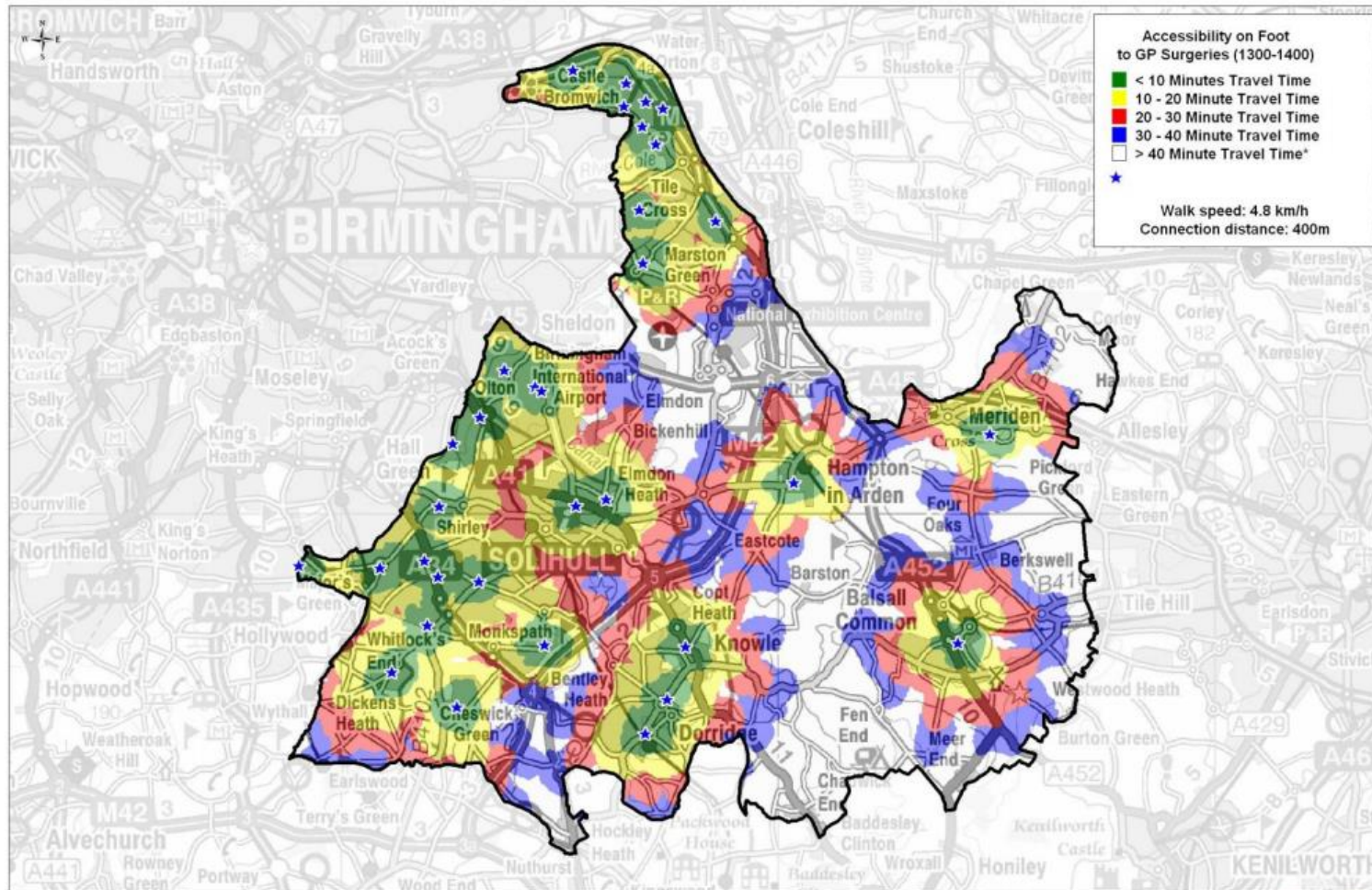[57] Census ONS QS701EW Method of Travel to Work, 2011
[58] Solihull Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy, 2012 Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/LDF/FINAL_Indoor_Facilities_Strategy_and_Report.pdf, Accessed:29/07/16

- 2 indoor tennis facilities with 10 courts; and
- 1 indoor bowls site.

7.5.10 These sites are thought to provide an adequate supply and condition of indoor sport and recreation facilities within the Borough, although the management, use and accessibility is said to vary considerably.

7.5.11 The Solihull hospital is located within the Borough, approximately 0.5 miles from Solihull Town Centre. Various smaller surgeries and health centres are located in Solihull, with a concentration to the west more so than in the east.

Figure 7.4 Accessibility to doctor's surgeries/ health facilities by walking[59]

---

[59] Solihull Strategy Accessibility Study, 2010, Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=PqUee0qYN0Y%3D&portalid=0 , Accessed: 19/08/16
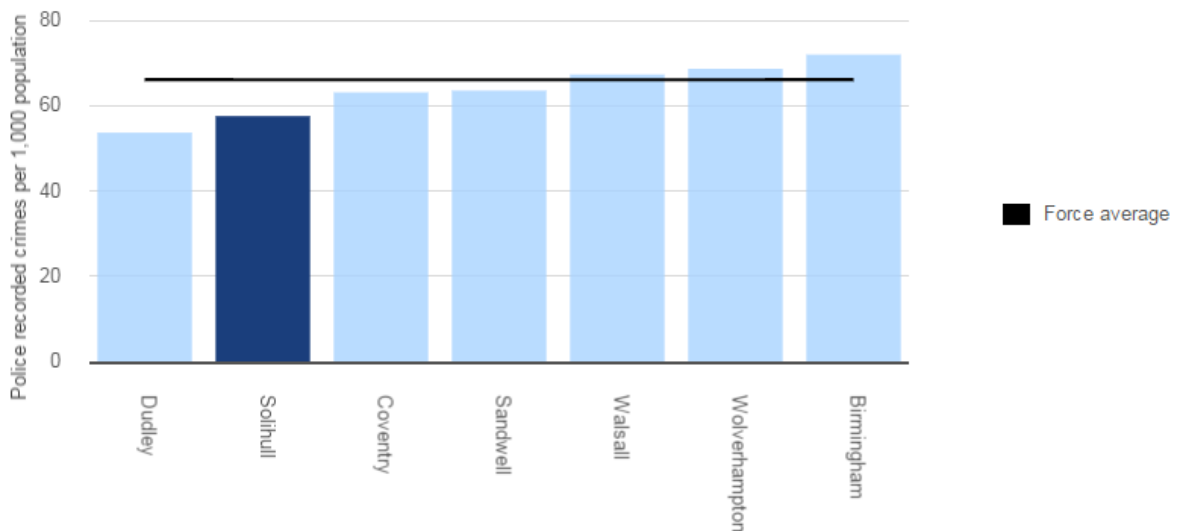
Predicted future baseline health

7.5.12 Priorities for Solihull include integrating health and social care further into communities, and working to improve local health outcomes[60]. The 65+ population is predicted to increase by 26% and the 85+ population by 58% over the next 14 years; over half the population will then be older adults and pensioners. Those over 70 are forecast to increase by over a third in the next 20 years, and the number of people over 85 by more than 70%[61].   With a growing and ageing population, the Borough needs to safeguard its access to dementia-friendly facilities and increase necessary services. The Birmingham and Solihull Dementia Strategy 2014-2017[62] will help to outline the requirements of these predicted demographic changes, and as such the strategy may help to offset, and prepare for, some of the future challenges.

7.5.13 Solihull may also need to monitor and maintain its existing leisure facilities in order to enable physical exercise for a growing population. Increased education on lifestyle choices regarding diet, exercise, smoking and alcohol could help individuals make more healthy decisions.

Crime

7.5.14 Overall crime rates within the Borough from 2015-2016 are recorded as being lower than the West Midland average. Crime incidents are concentrated in the north, the west, and the centre of the Borough as concluded from data taken in May 2016 (Figure 7.5)[63].

7.5.15 Between June 2015 and May 2016, the most recorded crime types were anti-social behaviour (23.8%), violent and sexual offences (16.0%), and vehicle crime (13.4%). Of all crimes committed, 74% required no further action, whilst 7.1% were dealt with in court, and 6.0% were dealt with by the police.

Figure 7.5: Crime in Solihull compared with crime in the West Midlands force area[64]

---

[60] Public Health England (2015), Available: /www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=171740&bcsi_scan_ab11caa0e2721250=1LQDAgCoCN6iatpKiuOmstg8e3kWA,

[61] Solihull MBC and Solihull NHS Care Trust (2010) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2009- 2010

[62] 'Give me something to believe in', Birmingham and Solihull Dementia Strategy 2014-2017, Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/StrategiesPlansPolicies/Dementia_strategy.pdf Accessed: 26/07/16

[63] Police UK, Crime Map, Available: https://www.police.uk/west-midlands/SHBD/performance/compare-your-area/ Accessed: 29/07/16

[64] Police UK, 'Crime in Solihull compared with crime in the West Midlands force area, Available: https://www.police.uk/west-midlands/SHBD/performance/compare-your-area/ Accessed: 29/07/16

7.5.16 Solihull has a relatively low crime rate compared to neighbouring areas such as Birmingham and Coventry, and is about average compared to similar areas. Within the West Midlands, total annual crime rates are higher than the mean for other local authority districts, however this is likely to be part attributed to the size of the Borough.

Predicted future baseline for crime

7.5.17 Overall crime levels are falling from a relatively low starting point, and whilst crime rates are difficult to predict over a long period of time, it is likely that these trends may continue in the short term.

7.5.18 With a growing population, instances of crime may be more likely within the certain parts of the borough (mostly urban centres). However improved security, re-offending interventions and improved youth facilities may reduce the likelihood of certain crimes over the longer term.

Figure 7.6: Index of Deprivation Crime Decile (2015)

8. *Identifying Relevant Policies, Plans and Programmes, and Sustainability Objectives*

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The sustainability appraisal process requires an appreciation of the overarching policy context within which the Plan is prepared. This includes national, regional and local plans, programmes, policies, strategies and initiatives, including environmental protection objectives. The European and national policies have been drawn together under the four sustainability themes identified in Section 2.2.

8.1.2 Following a review of European and national policies, the chapter considers the implications of the Local Plans of neighbouring authorities before addressing other plans and strategies. The chapter concludes with a summary of key development projects that are anticipated to emerge during the early part of the Plan period.

8.1.3 There have been some changes to the policy framework since the review presented in the January 2012 SA Report for the Submission Draft Local Plan[65]. For example, changes to the national policy framework have been introduced first by the Coalition Government and now by the Conservative Government. Many of the changes have been to the National Planning Policy Framework and to the Building Regulations.

8.1.4 A list of the relevant policies and plans can be found in Appendix A.

8.2 Sustainable consumption and production

Prosperity

8.2.1 In 2010, the European Union published its strategy for achieving growth up until 2020. This strategy focuses on smart growth, through the development of knowledge and innovation; sustainable growth, based on a greener, more resource efficient economy; and inclusive growth, aimed at strengthening employment, and social and territorial cohesion[66].

8.2.2 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include*:*

- The planning system can make a contribution to building a strong, responsive economy by 'ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure'.

- Capitalise on 'inherent strengths', and meet the 'twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future'.

- Support new and emerging business sectors, including positively planning for 'clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries'.

- Support competitive town centre environments, including where there are active markets. Edge of town developments should only be considered where they have

---

[65] Available: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Planning/appealsenforcement/planmaking/ldf/localplan
[66] European Commission (2010) Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth [online] available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF

good access and there will not be detrimental impact to town centre viability in the long term.

- The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills report 'Fixing the Foundations'[67] highlights the intention to invest in the strategic road network as well as introduction of a zonal planning system, giving planning permission for housing on suitable brownfield sites. Figure 8.1 sets out the Government's framework for raising productivity. Of particular relevance to the Local Plan Review are those dealing with economic infrastructure.

Figure 8.1: The Governments' Framework for Raising Productivity

Source: HM Treasury

8.2.3 Specifically in relation to the preparation of Local Plans, the 'Fixing the Foundations' report states that it is vital that local authorities 'put in place Local Plans that set the framework for the homes and jobs local people need'. The Government intends to set deadlines by which Local Plans are to be adopted.

8.2.4 The Government intend to publish league tables, setting out local authorities' progress on providing a plan for the jobs and homes needed locally. Where they are not, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will intervene for those local authorities that do not produce them, to arrange for local plans to be written, in consultation with local people.

8.2.5 Where Councils cannot meet their housing need in full, cooperation with other local authorities is required and hence the Government is to strengthen guidance to improve the operation of the Duty to Cooperate on key housing and planning issues.

---

[67] BIS (2014) Fixing the Foundations, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-the-foundations-creating-a-more-prosperous-nation

8.2.6   Areas around commuter transport hubs offer significant potential for new homes. As a result of powers sought through the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill, development corporations may be established to deliver higher-density development in designated areas. The Government will also consider how national policy and guidance can ensure that unneeded commercial land can be released for housing. Linked with this, the Government intend to introduce a new approach to station redevelopment.

8.2.7   The Government intends to speed up the planning system by:

- Allow major infrastructure projects with an element of housing to apply through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects procedures;

- Tighten the planning performance regime, so that local authorities making 50% or fewer of decisions on time are at risk of designation;

- Extend the performance regime to minor applications, so that local authorities processing those applications too slowly are at risk of designation;

- Introduce a fast-track certificate process for establishing the principle of development for minor development proposals, and significantly tighten the 'planning guarantee' for minor applications;

- Reduce net regulation on house builders hence the Government does not intend to proceed with the zero carbon Allowable Solutions carbon offsetting scheme, or the proposed 2016 increase in on-site energy efficiency standards; and

- Introduce a dispute resolution mechanism for section 106 agreements.

8.2.8   With a focus upon housing, the Government is promoting 'Starter Homes' seeking 200,000 to be built by 2020 by:

- Requiring local authorities to plan proactively for the delivery of Starter Homes;

- Extending the current exception site policy, and strengthening the presumption in favour of Starter Home developments, starting with unviable or underused brownfield land for retail, leisure and institutional uses;

- Enabling communities to allocate land for Starter Home developments, including through neighbourhood plans;

- Bringing forward proposals to ensure every reasonably sized housing site includes a proportion of Starter Homes;

- Implementing regulations to exempt these developments from the Community Infrastructure Levy, and re-affirming through planning policy that section 106 contributions for other affordable housing, and tariff-style general infrastructure funds, will not be sought for them;

- Putting in place new arrangements to monitor their delivery.

8.2.9   In order to revitalise town centres and high streets, the Government response to the Portas Review[68] noted that it is necessary to re-imagine these places, ensuring that they offer something new and different that neither out-of-town shopping centres nor the internet can offer. Hence local policies should look to 'reinforce local distinctiveness and community value and develop the social function with a view to underpinning ongoing commercial viability'[69].

8.2.10   The NPPF records that in preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should:

- Support the viability and vitality of town centres;

- Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;

- Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;

- Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;

- Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive;

- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development;

- Allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, set policies for meeting the identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre;

- Set policies for proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres;

- Recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites; and

- Where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.

8.2.11   To help achieve economic growth the NPPF directs that local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. Local Plans are to:

- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth?

---

[68] CLG (2012) High streets at the heart of our communities: The Government's response to the Mary Portas Review [online] available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/regeneration/portasreviewresponse
69 DCLG (2012) Parades of shops: towards an understanding of performance and prospects [online] available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/regeneration/pdf/2156925.pdf

- Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;

- Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances;

- Plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries;

- Identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement; and

- Facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit.

8.2.12 Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed.

8.2.13 The NPPF sets out a need for planning policies to promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

- Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors, while respecting the character of the countryside; and

- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages.

Transport

8.2.14 In March 2011, the European Commission issued a White Paper on Transport in which it expresses a desire for transport users to pay for emissions, noise and other harm they cause. The Commission envisages a radically different transport system by 2020 including greener infrastructure and low-carbon technologies. The White Paper foresees an increasing economic cost of transport due to expensive oil, congestion, scarcity of labour skills and wider application of the user pays principle.

8.2.15 The White Paper established ten goals two of which are of relevance to the Local Development Framework (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1: EU Transport Policy Goals

- Halve the use of 'conventionally-fuelled' cars in urban transport by 2030; phase them out in cities by 2050; achieve essentially CO_2-free city logistics in major urban centres by 2030.

- 30% of road freight over 300km should shift to other modes such as rail or waterborne transport by 2030, and more than 50% by 2050, facilitated by efficient and green freight corridors.

8.2.16 The NPPF in considering transport provides the following objectives:

- To minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure and other activities, planning policies should aim for 'a balance of land uses'. Wherever practical, key facilities should be located within walking distance of most properties.

- The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable modes (including walking, cycling and public transport), giving people a choice about how they travel.

- Planning for transport and travel will have an important role in 'contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives'.

8.2.17 The NPPF states that plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. It is also stated that plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to:

- Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;

- Give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities;

- Create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones;

- Incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and

- Consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.

8.2.18 The NPPF records that planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area, so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities. Where practical, particularly within large-scale developments, key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties.

8.2.19   The NPPF notes that Local Plans should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband. The number of radio and telecommunications masts and the sites should be kept to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network with existing masts, buildings and other structures being used, unless the need for a new site has been justified. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

8.2.20   The Department for Transport (DfT) 'Door to Door' strategy[70] considers what is necessary to ensure that people can be confident in choosing sustainable transport.   Measures include: regular and straightforward connections at all stages of the journey and between different modes; safe, comfortable transport facilities; and cycling and walking facilities and stations at the heart of the 'plug-in hybrid vehicle programme'.

Resources

8.2.21   The European Commission has embarked upon a strategy to encourage resource efficiency and a move towards the circular economy. The 2011 report 'A Resource-Efficient Europe'[71] seeks to achieve a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy through the following actions:

- Coordinated action in a wide range of policy areas;
- Act urgently due to long investment lead-times; and
- Empower consumers to move to resource-efficient consumption, to drive continuous innovation and ensure that efficiency gains are not lost.

8.2.22   The initiative aims to create a framework for policies to support the shift towards a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy to:

- Boost economic performance while reducing resource use;
- Identify and create new opportunities for economic growth and greater innovation and boost the EU's competitiveness;
- Ensure security of supply of essential resources; and
- Fight against climate change and limit the environmental impacts of resource use.

8.2.23   The Roadmap[72] to support strategy to a 'Resource Efficient Europe' proposes ways to increase resource productivity and de-couple economic growth from resource use and its environmental impact. The following initiatives are proposed:

- Strengthening green public procurement;
- Benchmark environmental performance over the life cycle;
- Setting measures to boost material resource efficiency;
- Enhanced information on the environmental footprint of materials; and

---

[70] DfT (2013) Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142539/door-to-door-strategy.pdf
[71] Commission of the European Communities (2011) A Resource Efficient Europe, http://eurlex. europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0021:FIN:EN:PDF
[72] European Commission, (2011) Road Map to a Resource Efficient Europe, http://eurlex europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0571:FIN:EN:PDF

- Networking and exchange of best practice on resource efficiency.

8.2.24 The Roadmap requested that Member States:

- Incentivise corporate benchmarking and improved resource efficiency;

- Help companies make best use of waste and by-products (e.g. by exploiting industrial symbiosis);

- Ensure advice and support is available to SMEs; and

- Ensure that by 2020 all relevant Substances of Very High Concern are placed on the REACH Candidate List.

8.2.25 In-line with the mandatory requirements of the Waste Framework Directive, the Waste Management Plan for England includes analysis of:

- The current waste management situation and measures to prepare for re-use, recycling, recovery and disposal of waste; and

- Planned waste management technologies and methods to promote high quality recycling, including separate collections of waste; and measures to encourage the separate collection of bio-waste.

8.2.26 The Government's December 2013 statement on waste, 'Prevention is Better than Cure'[73] provided a move towards resource efficiency. The aim being to improve the environment and protect human health by supporting a resource efficient economy, reducing the quantity and impact of waste produced whilst promoting sustainable economic growth. The Government wants to 'encourage businesses to contribute to a more sustainable economy by building waste reduction into design, offering alternative business models and delivering new and improved products and services'.

8.2.27 In preparing Local Plans, the NPPF records that local planning authorities should:

- Identify and include policies for extraction of mineral resource of local and national importance in their area (excluding peat);
- Take account of the contribution that substitute or secondary and recycled materials and minerals waste would make to the supply of materials, before considering extraction of primary materials, whilst aiming to source minerals supplies indigenously;

- Define Minerals Safeguarding Areas and adopt appropriate policies to avoid needless sterilisation by non-mineral development, whilst not creating a presumption that resources defined will be worked; and define Minerals Consultation Areas based on these Minerals Safeguarding Areas;

- Safeguard:

---

[73] HM Government, (2013): Prevention is Better than Cure: The Role of Waste Prevention in Moving to a More Resource Efficient Economy, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265022/pb14091-waste-prevention-20131211.pdf

- o existing, planned and potential rail heads, rail links to quarries, wharfage and associated storage, handling and processing facilities; and

- o existing, planned and potential sites for concrete batching, the manufacture of coated materials, other concrete products and the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material;

- Set out policies to encourage the prior extraction of minerals, where practicable and environmentally feasible, if it is necessary for non-mineral development to take place;

- Set out environmental criteria against which planning applications will be assessed so as to ensure that permitted operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment or human health; taking into account the cumulative effects of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or a number of sites in a locality;

- When developing noise limits, recognise that some noisy short-term activities, which may otherwise be regarded as unacceptable, are unavoidable to facilitate minerals extraction; and

- Have policies to ensure early reclamation taking account of aviation safety and that high quality restoration and aftercare takes place, including for agriculture, geodiversity, biodiversity, native woodland, the historic environment and recreation'

- Provide for the maintenance of land banks of non-energy minerals.

8.3   Climate change and energy

Greenhouse gas emissions

8.3.1   In its 2007 strategy on climate change, the European Commission assesses the costs and benefits of combating climate change and recommends a package of measures to limit global warming to 2° Celsius[74]. On energy, the Commission recommends that the EU's energy efficiency improves by 20% and the share of renewable energy grows to 20% by 2020. This was followed up by the 2011 report 'A Roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050'[75].

8.3.2   Key messages from the NPPF include:

- Support transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a 'core principle'.

- There is a key role for planning in meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008[76]. Specifically, policy should support the move to a low carbon future through:

- Planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions;

- Actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;

- Setting local requirements for building's sustainability in a way that is consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy;

- Positively promoting renewable energy technologies and considering identifying suitable areas for their construction; and

- Encouraging those transport solutions that support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reducing congestion.

8.3.3   To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should:

- Have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;

- Design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;

---

[74] Commission of the European Communities (2007) Limiting Global Climate Change to 2 degrees Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond [online] available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0002:FIN:EN:PDF

[75] Commission of the European Communities, (2011) A Roadmap for Moving to a Competitive Low Carbon Economy in 2050 http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0571:FIN:EN:PDF

[76] The Climate Change Act 2008 sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO_2 emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

- Consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;

- Support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside such areas being taken forward through neighbourhood planning; and

- Identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.

8.3.4   The NPPF states that Local Plans are to take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development is to be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the impacts arising from climate change. New development in areas vulnerable is to have adaptation measures, including green infrastructure to manage the risks.

8.3.5   To support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should:

- Plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions;

- Actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and

- When setting any local requirement for a building's sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described   standards.

8.3.6   Insofar as energy is concerned, local authorities are to:

- Have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;

- Design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;

- Consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;

- Support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside such areas being taken forward through neighbourhood planning; and

- Identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.

8.3.7 With regards to low-carbon district heating networks, the DECC report the 'Future of Heating' points out that around half (46%) of the final energy consumed in the UK is used to provide heat. The Government's vision is one of: buildings benefiting from a combination of renewable heat in individual buildings, particularly heat pumps, and heat networks distributing low carbon heat to communities.

Flood Risk

8.3.8 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC) drives a catchment-based approach to water management. The EA is identifying 'Significant Water Management Issues' for each catchment with a view to presenting the second River Basin Management Plans to ministers during 2015. The Plans will seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance and prevent further deterioration of aquatic and wetland ecosystems;

- Promote the sustainable use of water;

- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority hazardous' substances; and

- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

8.3.9 The EU's 'Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources' promotes the use of green infrastructure, such as wetlands, floodplains and buffer strips along watercourses to reduce vulnerability to floods and droughts. It also emphasises the role water efficiency can play in reducing scarcity and water stress[77].

8.3.10 With regard to flooding, the NPPF provides the following guidance:

- Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply and wastewater.

- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, including factors such as flood risk, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape.

- Development should be directed away from areas at highest risk from flooding, and should "not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding". Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing risk elsewhere. Where new development is vulnerable this should be managed through adaptation measures.

8.3.11 The Climate Change Risk Assessment for 2017 report prepared for the Committee on Climate Change[78] set out the following key messages:

- Business as usual in managing flood risk: A 50% increase in expected annual damage (EAD) is projected under a 2oC climate change projection and 150% with a 4oC change with further increases due to population growth.

---

[77] European Commission (2012) A Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources [online] available at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/blueprint/pdf/COM-2012-673final_EN_ACT-cov.pdf
[78] Sayers, (2015) The Climate Change Risk Assessment for 2017, Projections of Future Flood Risk in the UK https://d2kjx2p8nxa8ft.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CCRA-Future-Flooding-Main-Report-Final-06Oct2015.pdf.pdf

- Flood sources most important for risk today and in the future: Fluvial (river), contributing £560m (40%) of total UK EAD. Future change in groundwater flooding is dominated by flooding from permeable superficial deposits.

- Anticipated impacts: The number of residential properties exposed to flooding more frequently than 1:75 years (on average) increases from 860,000 to 1.2 million (a 40% increase) by the 2080s under a 2°C increase in GMT, and to 1.7 million (a 93% increase) under 4oC. Both estimates assume no population growth and adaptation continuing at current levels. The area of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land at risk from flooding increases by 32% and 65%. By the 2080s the number of care homes located in the highest flood probability category increase by 48% and 140%; schools by 32% and 95%; emergency services sites by 36% and 100%; hospitals by 23% and 68%; and GPs surgeries by 46% and 140% for 2°C and 4oC respectively, assuming current levels of adaptation and no population growth.

- Number of people at risk: The total number of people living in properties exposed to flooding more frequently than 1:75 years (on average) increases from 1.8milllion to 2.5million (an increase of 41%) under 2°C climate change projection and 3.5million (an increase of 98%) under 4°C climate change projection by the 2080s, assuming current levels of adaptation are continued and no population growth. People living in properties located within the UK's most deprived communities face even higher increases in risk with the number of people exposed to flooding more frequently than 1:75 years (on average) increasing by 48% and 110% under 2°C and 4°C respectively.

- Current approach to adaptation: Current levels of adaptation will not be sufficient to completely offset all of the projected increases under either a 2°C or 4°C climate change projection.

- Effective adaption measures: Spatial planning and building codes are already very effective at reducing the risk to new build properties within the coastal and fluvial floodplain (less so in areas prone to surface water or groundwater flooding) and remain an important component all future Adaptation Scenarios. The potential for perverse outcomes is highlighted where development is relocated away from one source of flooding (i.e. fluvial or coastal) into areas subject to either surface water or groundwater flooding.

- Action needed by: Significant increases in flood risk are projected to occur as early as the 2020s. The need for early adaptation also reflects the long lead time required to implement policy change and the long lived nature of the decisions made today that influence future risk.

8.3.12 The Water White Paper[79] sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector, where water is valued as a precious resource. Measures must address poorly performing ecosystems and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. Measures are put in place to encourage and incentivise water efficiency, with the aspiration to reduce average demand to 130 litres per head, per day by 2030.

---

[79] Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf

8.3.13 The Flood and Water Management Act[80] sets out the following objectives regarding flood risk:

- Incorporate greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fit at risk properties (including historic buildings);

- Utilise the environment, e.g. utilise land to reduce runoff and harness wetlands to store water; and

- Identify areas suitable for inundation and water storage.

8.3.14 Each River Basin District (RBD) has a plan to safeguard its waters to protect human health, water supply, natural ecosystems and biodiversity. Solihull is situated within the Humber River Basin. River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) must be reviewed and updated every 6 years. Following a period of consultation between October 2014 and April 2015, the Humber RBMP[81] was published in February 2016, which encourages local authorities to:.

- Consider the impact of hydromorphology in decisions on spatial planning, new buildings and infrastructure, many of which have implications for water management;

- Ensure the spatial planning process takes into account the full range of costs and benefits related to water by taking an integrated approach; and

- Consider urban diffuse pollution pressures when designing and constructing local council owned buildings, infrastructure and grounds which should incorporate sustainable drainage schemes, green infrastructure and water.

8.3.15 Solihull resides in the Tame, Anker and Mease Management Catchment[82] and the Tame Lower and Blythe operational catchments. Specific measures identified by the EA for the Tame Lower operational catchment are to:

- Reduce the impact of diffuse pollution from rural and urban sources;

- Reduce inputs of phosphate and ammonia from water industry point sources;

- Improve habitats;

- Removing barriers to fish movements; and

- Mitigating physical modifications in heavily modified water bodies.

8.3.16 The Blythe operational catchment has experienced deterioration in the status of the water environment and has similar actions to those for the Tame Lower with exception of not requiring measures to improve habitats or rectify physical modifications.

8.3.17 The draft Humber River Basin District Flood Risk Management Plan25[83] identifies further actions for the Council to consider:

---

[80] Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents
[81] Environment Agency, 2016: Part 1 Humber river basin district river basin management plan, Available: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/humber-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan, Accessed: 12/09/16
[82] Environment Agency (2014) Tame, Anker and Mease Management Catchment https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/file/3172278

- Where there are no alternative options available, and development is required within the highest risk zone 3b, flood risk shall be managed through upstream alleviation in order to bring development in line with national planning policy;

- Car parking needs to be safe, especially in terms of flood warning and overnight parking areas;

- Any development adjacent to a canal should leave a minimum of an 8 metre wide buffer strip;

- Safe, dry pedestrian access/ egress up to 100 year plus climate change event;

- Existing flood defence infrastructure will be protected and development that would compromise the flood defence function will be permitted only if it is demonstrated through a flood risk assessment that the risk both within and outside the site, and to sites further downstream is not increased;

- Restoration of culverted watercourses to open channels will be encouraged, especially where this will help to reduce the risk of flooding;

- Applications for new development where there is a flood risk issue should be accompanied by a site flood risk assessment;

- Developers are encouraged to secure reduction of flood risk by the provision or enhancement of green infrastructure, wherever possible;

- Habitable use of basements within Flood Zone 3 should not be permitted. Commercial basements should have a basement with a 600mm above 1 in 100 and climate change access;

- Development should incorporate floodplain storage compensation;

- Floor levels should be situated above the 100 year plus climate change predicted maximum level plus a minimum freeboard of 300mm;

- Sequential test based approach, only permitted if flood plain capacity is maintained and limited to essential infrastructure;

- Developers will be expected to demonstrate that the layout and design of a development takes account of the surface water flows in extreme events so as to avoid flooding of properties, both within and outside the site;
- The Council will expect sustainable drainage systems to be incorporated into all developments, unless it can be demonstrated that it is inappropriate or impossible to achieve;

- Above ground attenuation, such as balancing ponds, should be considered in preference to below ground attenuation, due to the water quality and biodiversity benefits they offer;

---

[83] Environment Agency, (2014) Humber River Basin District Flood Risk Management Plan – consultation
https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/file/3092398

- The Surface Water Attenuation Volume should be for a 1 in 100 year on-site attenuation taking into account climate change;

- Greenfield discharge rates with a minimum reduction of 20%, as required by the Environment Agency.

8.3.18 The NPPF states that Local Plans are to be supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and develop policies to manage flood risk from all sources, taking account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management bodies. Local Plans are

8.3.19 also to apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid where possible flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change.

8.4 Natural resource protection; and environmental enhancement

Biodiversity

8.4.1 The EU Sustainable Development Strategy, adopted in 2006, included an objective to halt the loss of biodiversity by 201026[84]. An EU Biodiversity Strategy[85] was then adopted in May 2011 to deliver on the established Europe-wide target to 'halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020'.

8.4.2 Key messages from the NPPF include:

- Contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.

- Protect internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, giving weight to their importance not just individually but as a part of a wider ecological network.

- Promote the 'preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and the 'protection and recovery of priority species'. Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.

- Account for the long-term effects of climate change. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through measures including multifunctional green infrastructure (giving consideration to 'ecological networks').
- Encourage the effective use of land' through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'.

8.4.3 The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It signals a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves. The White Paper recognises green infrastructure as 'one of the most effective tools available' to manage 'environmental risks such as flooding and heat

---

[84] Council of the European Union (2006) The EU Sustainable Development Strategy [online] available at:
http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st10/st10117.en06.pdf
[85] European Commission (2011) Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 [online] available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/1_EN_ACT_part1_v7%5b1%5d.pdf

waves'[86]. Proposals set out in the NEWP are linked to the research on National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) that concluded that 'substantial' benefits that ecosystems provide to society directly and through supporting economic prosperity[87].

8.4.4 Wildlife Trust 'Living Landscape' initiatives focus on conserving biodiversity over large areas of land where habitats are fragmented[88]. The Wildlife Trust (with the TCPA) have also produced guidance on 'Planning for Biodiversity'[89] noting that green infrastructure can help to 'deliver some of the services currently provided by hard engineering techniques'.

Landscape, land and green infrastructure

8.4.5 The European Landscape Convention (2007) defines landscape as: "An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors." It recognises that the quality of all landscapes matters – not just those designated as 'best' or 'most valued'. Among other things, the ELC commits all signatories to establishing and implementing policies aimed at landscape protection, management and integrating landscape into planning, cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies.

8.4.6 A key message from the NPPF is that it is strategic policy to deliver conservation and enhancement of landscape, protecting valued landscapes and giving weight to conservation of scenic beauty.

8.4.7 In terms of Green Belt the NPPF records that local planning authorities are to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, by measures such as providing access; opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation as well as to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity. Opportunities to improve damaged and derelict land are also to be sought.

8.4.8 Green Belt boundaries which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy are to be capable of enduring beyond the plan period. Development is to be channelled toward surban areas; towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt Boundary.

8.4.9 In 'Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England'[90], Defra set out a vision is set out for the future of soils in the Country. Good quality soils in urban areas are recognised as being vital in supporting ecosystems, facilitating drainage and providing urban green spaces for communities. Preventing the pollution of soils and addressing the historic legacy of contaminated land is another element of the report's vision.

Historic environment

8.4.10 The NPPF addresses the historic environment with the following:

- Set strategic policy to deliver conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.

---

[86] Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf
[87] UNEP-WCMC (2011) UK National Ecosystem Assessment [online] available at: http://uknea.unepwcmc. org/Resources/tabid/82/Default.aspx
[88] The Wildlife Trusts (2010) A Living Landscape: play your part in nature's recovery [online] available at: http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/alivinglandscape
[89] The Wildlife Trusts and TCPA (2012) Planning for a healthy environment: good practice for green infrastructure [online] available at: http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/2012/07/06/planning-healthy-and-natural-environment
[90] Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/land/soil/documents/soil-strategy.pdf (accessed 01/15)

- Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance', taking account of 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' and recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.

- Set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk. Look for opportunities within Conservation Areas, and within the settings of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.

8.4.11 The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England[91] calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life. Similarly, 'Understanding Place'[92] aims to relate the designation and management of Conservation Areas to the principles of conservation management planning for historic areas and outlines how management of conservation areas relates to wider planning. 'Seeing History in the View'[93] presents a method for understanding and assessing heritage significance within views. Similarly, 'Guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets'[94] provides the methodology for defining the extent of the setting of a heritage asset, and for determining how development can impact setting.

Built environment

8.4.12 The NPPF states that it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Local and neighbourhood plans are to develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area.

8.4.13 Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

- Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;

- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses and support local facilities and transport networks;

---

[91] HM Government (2010) The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England [online] available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx

[92] English Heritage (2011) Understanding place: conservation area designation, appraisal and management [online] available at: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/understanding-place-conservation-area/

[93] English Heritage (2011) Seeing History in the View [online] available at: https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/setting-and-views/seeing-the-history-in-the-view/

[94] English Heritage (2011) Guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets [online] available at: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/setting-heritage-assets/

- Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;

- Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and

- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

8.4.14 Planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

Air quality

8.4.15 The EU Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution[95] aims to cut the annual number of premature deaths from air pollution-related diseases by 40% by 2020 (using 2000 as the base year).

8.4.16 In September 2015 Defra issued its draft Air Quality Strategy[96] in response to a Supreme Court ruling. The report states that local authorities have a central role in achieving improvements in air quality. The draft strategy records that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air pollution. New development should be appropriate for its location, taking proper account of the effects of pollution on people's health.

8.4.17 Local authority planning policies are to sustain compliance with and contribute towards meeting limit values for pollutants, which includes NO^2, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should also ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the Local Air Quality Action Plan.

8.4.18 The draft Strategy notes that the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes and that it should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable modes including, where practical, incorporating facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles and give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and have access to high quality public transport facilities.

8.4.19 The Government intends to set out a framework for the introduction of Clean Air Zones in early 2016 in which measures can vary from incentivising electric vehicles, through to introducing low emission zones or closing roads to certain vehicles. The Government also aims for nearly every car and van to be a zero emission vehicle by 2050.

8.4.20 The assessment undertaken for the West Midlands Urban Area agglomeration zone[97] indicates that the annual limit value for NO^2 was exceeded in 2013, with the standard being

---

[95] Commission of the European Communities (2005) Thematic Strategy on air pollution [online] available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0446:FIN:EN:PDF
[96] Defra (2015) Consultation on Draft Plans to Improve Aid Air Quality https://consult.defra.gov.uk/airquality/draft-aq-plans/supporting_documents/Consultation%20document%20%20draft%20plans%20to%20improve%20air%20quality.%20Septemb er%202015%20final%20version%20folder.pdf
[97] Defra (2015) Draft Air Quality Plan for the achievement of EU air quality limit value for nitrogen dioxide (NO2) in West Midlands Urban Area (UK0002)http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/no2-consultation-2015/AQplans_UK0002.pdf

likely to be achieved before 2025 through the introduction of measures included in the baseline. When combined with the measures outlined in the overview document for the UK the Government expect this zone to be compliant by 2020.

8.4.21 Key messages from the NPPF include:

- A Core Planning Principle is to take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all.

- Plans should contribute towards national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas.

- The Air Quality Strategy sets health-based objectives for nine main air pollutants.

- Performance against these objectives is monitored where people are regularly present and might be exposed to air pollution[98].

- New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

- Planning policies should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.

Noise

8.4.22 Criteria for the selection of quiet areas has been published by the European Environment Agency in 2014 in its report Good Practice Guide on Quiet Areas[99]

---

[98] Defra (2007) Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland [online] available at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/air/air-quality/approach/
[99] EEA, (2014) Good Practice Guide on Quiet Areas http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/good-practice-guide-on-quiet-areas/at_download/file

8.5 Sustainable communities

Deprivation

8.5.1 The State of the Nation report (2014)[100] sets out the progress been made across a range of deprivation indicators. Despite improvements, the report concludes that there is no realistic hope of the statutory child poverty targets being met in 2020. The Commission noted that the high cost of housing is leading to an expansion in the private rented sector.

8.5.2 While economic development and housing policies can assist in reducing deprivation, in 2013, the Government issued guidelines to make sure that the needs and interests of rural people, communities and businesses in England are properly considered. In addition to national rural proofing, a suite of local level rural proofing materials to assist local decision makers to rural proof local policies and practices was issued[101].

Housing

8.5.3 The following messages are set out in the NPPF:

- To 'boost significantly the supply of housing', local planning authorities should meet the 'full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing' in their area.

- Plans for housing mix should be based upon 'current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community'.

- With a view to creating 'sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities' authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified.

- Good design is a key aspect in sustainable development. Development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime, not just in the short term. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places.

- Larger developments are suggested as sometimes being the best means of achieving a supply of new homes.

8.5.4 The NPPF states that where there is an identified need for affordable housing, policies on meeting the need are required, but they should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time. It also advises that local planning authorities should consider the case for policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, the NPPF notes that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

8.5.5 The Housing Report[102] identifies the need to produce a step change in housing to meet the nations needs and aspirations, especially given that: 'Many of the external pressures on the

---

[100] Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission (2014) State of the Nation 2014: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365765/State_of_Nation_2014_Main_Report.pdf
[101] Defra (2013) Local Level Rural Proofing – RE0246, http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=18130
[102] The Chartered Institute of Housing, National Housing Federation and Shelter (2012) The Housing Report: Edition 2 [online] available at: http://england.shelter.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/435653/Housing_Report_2_-_May_2012.pdf

housing market, ranging from a growing and ageing population to falling incomes, are likely to intensify'. Issues include overcrowding and homelessness.

8.5.6 The report 'Housing Conditions of Minority Ethnic Households'[103] seeks to quantify the cost of poor housing among minority ethnic households to the NHS and wider society. Around 15% of the 2.2 million ethnic minority households in England are those with at least one Category 1 HHSRS hazard (classified as poor housing). The estimated annual treatment cost to the NHS is around £52m per year if the poor housing amongst the minority ethnic households is left unimproved and wider costs to society are estimated at 2.5 times the NHS costs.

8.5.7 The Select Committee[104] on housing market is not delivering enough specialist housing. An adequate supply of suitably located, well-designed, supported housing for older people could result in an increased release onto the market of currently under-occupied family housing, expanding the supply available for younger generations.

Commercial assets

8.5.8 No specific policy guidance was identified.

Health

8.5.9 The WHO 2014 report on 'Developing National Action Plans on Transport, Health and Environment'[105] provides advice for national and local government working in health, environment, transport, interior, consumer affairs, education, finance and spatial planning. Health inequalities and improving participatory governance for health are the focus for the European Commission's report Health 2020[106]. While the 2014 WHO report identifies the following actions for local authorities:

- Social justice, health and sustainability should be at the heart of all policies;

- Empowering individuals and communities to take control, promoting personal well-being, community participation, social cohesion and equity, people, process and place are key dimensions;

- The public sector should provide new forms of political, civic and public leadership focused on creating the conditions within which people and communities can take control of their lives;

- Action is required on the social determinants of health across the whole population proportionally to the level of disadvantage and across the life course to address the cumulative effect of inequities in health; and

- Strategies and policies need to be crosscutting.

---

[103] Race Equality Foundation (2014) The Housing Conditions of Minority Ethnic Households in England, Better Housing Briefing 24 [online] available at: http://www.better-housing.org.uk/briefings
[104] English Heritage (2007) Guidance on Tall Buildings [online] available at: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/setting-and-views/tall-buildings/

[105] WHO (2014) Developing National Action Plans on Transport, Health and Environment, http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/247168/Developing-national-action-plans-on-transport.-health-and-environment.pdf?ua=1
[106] European Commission, (2013) Health 2020 http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/199532/Health2020=Long.pdf

8.5.10 Key roles for local government were identified as being:

- Providing community leadership to extend civic participation and local governance, mobilizing communities to co-produce health and well-being and to develop social capital, trust and resilience;

- Identifying individual and population needs and assets to inform strategic approaches and partnership working in taking local action on the social determinants of inequalities in health;

- Promoting safe and sustainable places and communities, undertaking health equity impact assessment in urban planning and place shaping to inform new design and the regeneration of existing neighbourhoods;

- Commissioning and providing a range of direct and evidence-informed prevention services to engage individuals and neighbourhoods consistent with statutory duties;

- Regulating consistent with devolved local powers to address inequalities in health; and

- Where local government is a major employer, directly or indirectly using commissioning, contracting and the provision of employment to improve local employment conditions.

8.5.11 Among the messages from the NPPF are:

- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.

- A core planning principle is to 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all'.

- Facilitate social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities'.

- Promote retention and development of community services / facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

- Set strategic policy to deliver the provision of health facilities.

- Sufficient choice of school places is of 'great importance' and there is a need to take a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach'.

- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

- Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the local 'individuality'.

- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'where appropriate'.

8.5.12 The NPPF states that planning policies should aim to achieve places which promote:

- Opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity;

- Safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and

- Safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

8.5.13 Planning policies are to:

- Plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

- Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;

- Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and

- Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

8.5.14 Planning policies are to be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision as well as better rights of way and access facilities for users.

8.5.15 A supplementary report to 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' ('The Marmot Review') investigated health inequalities and considered links between spatial planning and health[107] highlighting the following policy actions:

- Fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality;

---

[107] The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at: http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12111/53895/53895.pdf

- Prioritise policies and interventions that both reduce health inequalities and mitigate climate change by: improving active travel; improving open and green spaces; improving the quality of food in local areas; and improving the energy efficiency of housing; and

- Support locally developed and evidence-based community regeneration programmes that remove barriers to community participation and action; and reduce social isolation.

8.5.16 The TCPA report 'Planning Healthier Places'[108] notes that an emphasis on financial viability in planning decisions can underplay the long-term costs to the public purse that are incurred if populations are unhealthy because of the places where they live. It states that there needs to be new engagement between planners, developers and communities to identify how the evidence-based health benefits of investing for the long term can be factored-in.

8.5.17 The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report 'Ready for Ageing?' [109]warned that society is under-prepared for the ageing population. Key projections about ageing include 101% more people aged 85 and over in England in 2030 compared to 2010; and a 90% increase in people with moderate or severe need for social care. Organisations involved in urban planning will need to adjust to an older population. The housing market is delivering much less specialist housing for older people than is needed.

8.5.18 The RIBA City Health Check report assesses the impact of urban design and architecture on public health and shows a clear link between green space and health outcomes, with the less healthy areas tending to have a higher density of housing and a lower proportion of green space[110]. Similarly, the report Natural Solutions looks to highlight evidence from recent studies that demonstrate the important role that the natural world can play in delivering well-being. It points to the relationship between access to nature and both physical and mental health benefits. The natural environment is also described as potentially being a resource to help reduce crime levels and increase community cohesion by providing a neutral space in which people can meet and interact.

Crime and public safety

8.5.19 No specific policy guidance was identified.

Mixed development

8.5.20 As noted above the NPPF promotes mixed use development giving benefits in terms of community cohesion.

8.6 Neighbouring Local Plans

8.6.1 It is useful for the sustainability appraisal to consider the potential for any interactions with neighbouring plans and programmes. In this regard, the evolving plans for the neighbouring authorities of Birmingham City, Coventry City, Bromsgrove, North Warwickshire and Warwick have been considered.

---

[108] TCPA (2013) Planning Healthier Places [online] available at: http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Planning_Healthier_Places.pdf
[109] Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) [online] available at:
http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/
[110] RIBA (2013) City Health Check, How design can save lives and money [online] available at:
http://www.architecture.com/Files/RIBAHoldings/PolicyAndInternationalRelations/Policy/PublicAffairs/RIBACityHealthCheck.p
df

8.6.2 To ensure consistency on cross-boundary issues, the Council has a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and holds regular meetings with planners in the neighbouring authorities. Co-ordination meetings are held with:

- West Midlands Combined Authority;

- West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority;

- Chief Executives Group;

- Duty to Cooperate Group; and the

- Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) Spatial Planning Group.

8.6.3 No specific contradictions between the Council's strategies and those of the neighbouring authorities have been identified by the Council. However, the potential for increased movement of goods and people between the authorities exist.

Birmingham City Council

8.6.4 The status and implications of relevant plans in the neighbouring authority of Birmingham are summarised in Table 9.1, with Figure 9.2 providing an over view of the spatial strategy.

Table 9.1: Birmingham City Plans

Plan	Implications for the Solihull Local Plan Review
Birmingham Development Plan[111] Consultation on post EiP Modifications closed October 2015. On Thursday 26th May 2016 the Secretary of State issued a direction to the Council not to take any step in connection with the adoption of the Birmingham Development Plan 2031.	• The Plan is currently on hold as the Inpsector has concerns about a proposal for 6000 homes on Green Belt land known as the Langley SUE and other matters relating to the plan. • The Plan identifies that it is not possible to deliver the new housing development to meet needs within the City boundary. As the latest projections are updated, it is likely that this will remain the case. • Solihull will need to consider the role it has in helping to meet Birmingham City's unmet housing needs. • An additional 100,000 jobs need to be created. .

Coventry City Council

8.6.5 The Council has submitted the Local Plan and City Centre Area Action Plan with the Examination in Public being early summer 2016. The Council intends to have both Plans adopted by November 2016. Table 9.2 presents a summary of key elements of relevance to the Local Plan Review.

---

[111] Birmingham City (2013) Development Plan
http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Development-Planning%2FPageLayout&cid=1223346396882&pagename=BCC%2FCommon%2FWrapper%2FWrapper

Table 9.2: Coventry City Plans

Plan	Implications for the Solihull Local Plan
The Coventry Local Plan and City Centre Area Action Plan were submitted to the Secretary of State on 1 April 2016.	• Objectively Assessed Housing Need is 23,600 homes between 2011 and 2031 (1,180 a year), which in itself would represent a step change in housing delivery for Coventry. • The draft SHLAA (2014) shows that approximately 16,500 new homes can be accommodated within or adjacent to the existing urban area. Of these, around 80% would be on brownfield land. • Potentially delivery all housing need within own boundary however the sustainable growth option could see amendments to the north-west and western Green Belt boundaries. • Housing needs for Coventry unlikely to affect Solihull, but potential links across travel to work areas.

Bromsgrove District Council

8.6.6   Bromsgrove District Council was programmed to publish the Core Strategy in November 2011 following a consultation period which closed in April 2011. The implications of the Draft Core Strategy 2 upon Solihull are considered below.

Table 9.3: Bromsgrove Core Strategy

Plan	Implications for the Solihull Local Plan
Submitted for Examination. The Inspector has now published a list of proposed Main Modifications to the submitted Plan which he considers are required to make the Plan sound (27th July, 2016)	• Focus new development in sustainable locations in the District such as on the edge of Bromsgrove Town in the first instance. • A housing target of 7,000 is proposed for the 19 year plan period of this 2,300 homes would require a Green Belt review. • Two residential development sites located to the north and east respectively of the existing residential area at Wythall (one approximately 6.3ha in area, the second of approximately 3.1ha with consent or under construction. • No apparent implications.

North Warwickshire Council

8.6.7   The Borough lies between Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry, Nuneaton and Hinckley, all of which are growth areas. No growth from these areas is expected to take place in the Borough during in the plan period.

Table 9.4: North Warwickshire District Plans

Plan	Implications for the Solihull Local Plan
Core Strategy Adopted 2014	• Potential need to assist in meeting housing need for Tamworth. • Concern over the capacity of the A5. • Anticipate increased traffic through the countryside close to HS2 Birmingham International. • Stressed that improved public transport connections will be extremely important. • Keen to link addressing health and social inequalities, public transport, high level of out commuting and distribution industries and skills gap. • No imperative for a Green Belt review but infill boundaries in the Green Belt will be brought forward to indicate where limited infill and redevelopment would be permitted. • Between 2011 and 2029 at least 3,650 dwellings (net) will be built. • Expansion of Hams Hall (20ha), Birch Coppice (40ha under construction) Regional Logistics Sites and MIRA Technology Park, an Enterprise Zone, south along the A5 is to be developed. • Consider collaboration on managing the transport impacts of HS2

Warwick District Council

Plan	Implications for the Solihull Local Plan
Early in 2015 Warwick District Council was informed by an Inspector that its Plan lacked a clear strategy to meet its housing market area's wider needs. The Inspector agreed to suspend the Local Plan Examination until May 2016 dependent on satisfactory progress being made to address the Inspector's concerns. The Council has since prepared and consulted upon Main modifications between 11 March and 22 April 2016 to address the issues of soundness identified by the Inspector.	• The housing policy established that unmet needs for the district and neighbouring areas in the HMA will need to be met. This should reduce pressure on neighbouring HMAs. • The council will plan for 16,776 dwellings rather than 12,860 (5976 dwellings are to help meet Coventry City's needs). • A strategic development proposed at Westwood Heath which is near the boundary with Solihull. Could have benefits for local rural communities as a health centre is proposed.

Other plans and strategies

8.6.8   A variety of other plans have been produced which are relevant to the Solihull Local Plan review. The following are summarised below:

- Sustainability Matters – A Sustainability Strategy for Solihull;

- Meeting Housing Needs (Inc. Affordable Housing) SPD 2014;

- Solihull Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16;

- HS2 Interchange and Central

- The Interchange: Prospectus for a 'Garden City' Approach;

- M42 Economic Gateway – Masterplan Report;

- The Midlands HS2 Growth Strategy;

- GBSLEP Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth;

- Towards a World Class Integrated Transport Network;

- Movement for Growth; and

- Solihull Connected.

Sustainability Matters – A Sustainable Strategy for Solihull

8.6.9   The 2012 Sustainability Strategy[112] sets out the following Action Plan.

Table 9.5: Solihull Sustainability Action Plan

Strategic Intent
• *Sustainable consumption and production* – achieving more with less, reducing inefficient use of resources and taking into account impacts of products and materials across their whole lifecycle.   • *Climate Change and energy* – changing the way we generate and use energy and preparing for the inevitable climate change that cannot now be avoided.   • *Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement* – a better understanding of environmental limits, environmental enhancement and recovery where the environment is most degraded to ensure a decent environment for everyone.   • *Sustainable Communities* – creation of sustainable communities that embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level.

Objectives
• Use natural resources efficiently and encourage and enable waste minimisation;   • reuse, recycling and recovery;   • Increase use of public transport, cycling and walking;   • Encourage local sourcing of food, goods and materials;   • Achieve a sustainable economy and prosperity for the benefit of all the Borough's inhabitants, encouraging and supporting a culture of enterprise and innovation, including social enterprise;   • Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from transport, domestic, commercial and industrial sources, increase energy efficiency and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable and low carbon sources;   • Implement a managed response to the unavoidable impacts of climate change;   • Encourage land use and development that creates and sustains well-designed, high quality built environments that incorporate green space, encourage biodiversity, and promote local distinctiveness and sense of place;   • Value, protect, enhance and restore the borough's environmental assets and biodiversity;   • Minimise air, water, soil, light and noise pollution levels;   • Encourage local stewardship of local environments;   • Support the reduction of fuel poverty;   • Provide decent and affordable housing for all; *and*   • Ensure that the borough's workforce is equipped with the skills to access high quality employment opportunities whilst recognising the value and contribution of unpaid work.

---

[112] SMBC, (2012): Sustainability Matters – A Sustainability Strategy for Solihull
  http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/Sustainability_Strategy_2012.pdf

Meeting Housing Needs

8.6.10   This 2014 Supplementary Planning Document[113] identifies a need not only to improve the affordability of housing, but also to deliver:

- High quality housing that is well designed and built to a high standard;

- A mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas, both urban and rural;

- Housing developments in suitable locations which offer a good range of community facilities and provide good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.

8.6.11   The SPD records that the 2009 Strategic Housing Needs Assessment demonstrated that 1,182 'affordable' homes were required each year to reduce the backlog and provide for a proportion of newly formed households.

Solihull Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16

8.6.12   The Health and Wellbeing Strategy[114] was revised in 2014 and has the following policy objectives:

- Give Every Child the Best Start in Life;

- Enable All Children, Young People and Adults to Maximise Their Capabilities and Have Control over Their Lives;

- Create Fair Employment and Good Work for All;

- Ensure a Healthy Standard of Living for All;

- Create and Develop Healthy and Sustainable Places and Communities;

- Strengthen the Role and Impact of Ill Health Prevention; and

- Ensure People Receive the Care and Support They Need Across the Life Course.

8.6.13   Of the objectives that have a direct link to spatial planning, the provision of employment opportunities for those in North Solihull is most evident since the alleviation of poverty will contribute to better health outcomes as would provision of affordable homes and supported housing for the elderly.   Environmental improvements are also identified as being capable to support and enhance physical and mental health wellbeing.

---

[113] SMBC (2014): Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/LDF/Meeting_Housing_Needs_SPD_Final.pdf

[114] SMBC (2014) Health and Wellbeing Strategy
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/StrategiesPlansPolicies/PublicHealth/Health_and_Wellbeing_Strategy.pdf

HS2 Interchange and UK Central

8.6.14   In June 2013, the Council together with the GBSLEP[115] published the UK Central Masterplan[116], setting out a vision for economic growth and job creation. The document highlighted four key areas within the M42 Corridor including North Solihull, Solihull Town Centre, Blythe Valley Park and an area known as the Hub. The latter area provides the most significant opportunity, encompassing the Interchange station, Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Jaguar Land Rover and Birmingham Business Park.

Prospectus for a Garden City Approach

8.6.15   In June 2014, the Council published a 'Prospectus for a 'Garden City'[117] approach to the High Speed 2 Interchange east of the NEC providing a vision comprising high technology, innovation and communities zones along with the station area capable of providing a new residential community of at least 2,000 homes and 4,000 people.

8.6.16   Reflecting upon the proposed High Speed 2 Interchange and the Adjoining Area a proposed Local Area Plan[118] was published for consultation in November 2014. As part of the review of the Green Belt boundary to allocate the Interchange site for development, the Local Area Plan was to set out a spatial vision for the area, highlighting its potential for the creation of a new place incorporating high quality residential areas and green infrastructure, but also for economic growth and job creation. The key principles underpinning the development planning are identified in Table 3.6. It was subsequently determined that a more strategic approach via consolidation within the Local Plan was preferred giving opportunities to explore Borough-wide and cross boundary issues.

Figure 9.1: HS2 Vision

---

[115] Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership
[116] SMBC, (2013): UK Central Masterplan; http://www.investinukcentral.com/downloads/
[117] UK Central, (2014): The Interchange – Prospectus for a 'Garden City' Approach
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/LAP/UKC_Garden_City_Prospectus_2014.pdf
[118] SMBC, 2014: Proposed Local Area Plan for the HS2 Interchange & Adjoining Area Initial (Regulation 18) Consultation,
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/LAP/Local%20_Area_Plan_October_2014.pdf

Table 9.5: Key Principles for HS2 Interchange

- Building a shared vision for a new destination;

- Enhanced access and connectivity to facilitate enhanced modal choice and integrate the development into the wider residential and economic context;

- A hierarchy of connected streets to link key assets and overcome the severance effects of transport infrastructure;

- An effective transport strategy;

- A complementary development proposition with deliverable development plots to generate an appropriate mix of commercial and residential development;

- An appropriate development strategy in the context of the wider area and region;

- Appropriate intensity of use, density, massing and form to maximise the opportunities for high quality design and place making;

- An integrated landscape approach including softening the edges to ensure liveability;

- Creation and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape assets;

- Maximised opportunity for phased development in a dynamic commercial environment; and

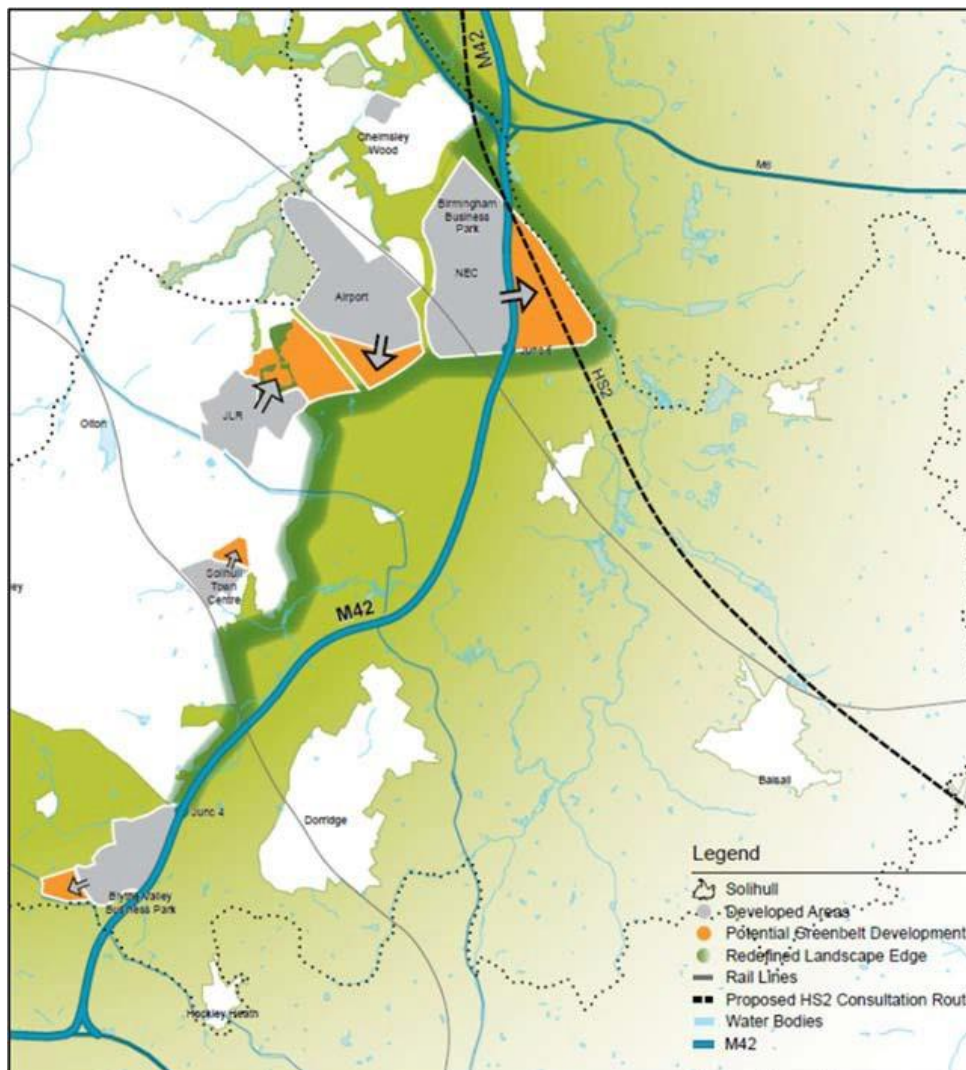- Exceptional quality architecture and sustainable design.

M42 Economic Gateway – Masterplan Report

8.6.17 The M42 Economic Gateway Masterplan[119] issued in June 2013 focuses on infrastructure, spatial priorities and existing assets – both employment and transport – to create a plan to support the area's high levels of growth over the next thirty years. It suggests that large scale infrastructure investments are required at the following locations (see Figure 9.2):

- The Hub – namely, the NEC, Birmingham Airport;

- Birmingham Business Park and HS2;

- Jaguar Land Rover - a key site within The Hub;

- Solihull Town Centre;

- North Solihull; and

- Blythe Valley Business Park.

---

[119] SMBC, 2013: M42 Economic Gateway Masterplan Report, http://www.investinukcentral.com/downloads/

Figure 9.2: Areas for Growth

8.6.18 The Masterplan seeks to deliver the following objectives:

- Realise opportunities consistent with the wider GBSLEP strategy;

- Secure growth benefits for all local residents;

- Preserve the 'urbs in rure' character of Solihull, seeking to compensate any possible impacts on green space;

- Promote sustainable and convenient access between the communities and economic assets of the Borough and wider GBSLEP area;

- Ensure Solihull Town Centre shares in the growth through the enhancement of its services and accessibility;

- Strengthen the GBSLEP's ability to secure high quality development;

- Promote better use of public transport addressing the need for enhanced infrastructure; and

- Promote the improvements in digital infrastructure and the advantages this poses to new and existing businesses.

8.6.19 The area has the potential to see some 24,000 – 62,000 additional jobs under the ambitious growth scenario, compared to the Business as Usual scenario split as follows:

- 33,000 additional jobs in The Hub area (excluding job growth associated with JLR);

- Around 1,000 jobs in North Solihull; and

- Blythe Valley Business Park to provide 7,000 jobs.

Solihull Town Centre

8.6.20 The Solihull Town Centre is reported in the Masterplan as being at the lower scale of successful sub-regional centres in terms of scale as well as lacking the diversity of uses normally associated with a successful centre. In retail terms, it is also lacking in independent and niche retail provision. These characteristics are also necessary for the centre to make its contribution. The Masterplan assumes that the extension of the Town Centre, together with the redevelopment of Mell Square, could serve to maintain and enhance the quality of Solihull's future retail offer. A series of proposed measures to deliver improvements are also presented.

Blythe Valley Business Park

8.6.21 The original role of Blythe Valley Business Park was to attract high-tech, knowledge-based employment. However, demand has slowed for B1 business development in such locations. In response there has been some loosening of the planning restrictions on the business park. Planning consent is in place for 200,000m^2 of B1 development; however, this is likely to change to 175,000m2 of B1/B2/B8 development. A further application for 750 homes, an extra care facility, and up to 98,850 sq. mts of B1/B2/B3 floorspace is expected to be submitted.

8.6.22 The Council recognises that the Park needs to provide a range of ancillary services, as well as improving links with surrounding neighbourhoods. The achievement of multi-modal access is also dependent on the Park being of a sufficient scale to justify expanded public transport services. The Masterplan observes that the release of land for housing and other non-employment uses should be dependent on the provision of improved access and other communal facilities.

8.6.23 The Masterplan envisages up to 7,000 jobs based on the following assumptions/ proposals:

- The potential to attract large scale advanced manufacturing activity into the area;

- The potential to attract large scale land users such as a University or Health Campus;

- The potential for development of a hub in the centre of the park, offering smaller office suites, a hotel and a range of shops, restaurants, etc; and

- The potential for a public transport system linking railway stations and key assets.

North Solihull

8.6.24 Consistent priorities identified for North Solihull in recent years have included:

- Local jobs and improved transport access to employment areas;

- A need for housing improvements and more family housing;

- Improvements in the local service offer including retail and evening economy provision; and

- Improved access to education; health; employment; housing; and other services.

Transport

8.6.25 To accommodate the aspirations of the Masterplan, the report recognises that transport improvements are a prerequisite. Currently the average weekday flows on the M42 are in the region of 105,000-145,000 vehicles per day two-way (4,000 to 5,000 vehicles/hour in each direction, Jan–Oct 2012) and Junction 6 of the M42 is approaching capacity for which short term improvements are scheduled. The Masterplan proposes to introduce two junctions to serve The Hub area.

8.6.26 The Masterplan could lead to 70,000 additional commuter trips a day to the existing demand for travel in the area and hence the Masterplan states that it is vital that high quality and efficient transport connections are provided. It stresses the importance of a connected and coherent transport network which enables people to move between residential, employment and the hubs efficiently and effectively and which offers a real alternative to the private vehicle.

8.6.27 The Masterplan records that evidence presented at the Local Plan Inquiry indicated that average travel times on the M42 corridor (between the M40 and M6 motorways) are expected to increase by around 4% between 2006 and 2016 and 16% by 2026 in the northbound direction (an increase in travel time of around 7 minutes over this section). The increase in travel time southbound is more significant with average travel times on the M42 corridor (between the M6 and M40 motorways) expected to increase by around 11% between 2006 and 2016 and 22% by 2026, or approximately 10 minutes over this section.

8.6.28 Some 80% of all of the new jobs associated with the Masterplan are expected to be created at The Hub and this will have a significant effect on the highway network, particularly at M42 Junction 6. This junction currently carries some 5,900 vehicles per hour in peak periods and of these:

- 15%-20% of trips are associated with Birmingham Airport;

- 10%-15% of trips are associated with the NEC;

- 30% of trips are moving between the M42 and A45 towards Birmingham; and

- 35% of trips are moving between M42 and A45 towards Coventry.

8.6.29 By 2026 traffic flows are forecast to be in the order of 9,000-11,000 vehicles per hour as a result of growth including local planned growth, Birmingham Airport expansion and potentially HS2. The Masterplan has the potential to add a further 1,500 - 3,500 vehicle per hour and will add to congestion and delay at the junction.

8.6.30 The key elements of the Transport Strategy are:

- Major highway network improvements to M42 Junction 6 involving a two junction solution separating the Hub and NCCE/HS2 from Birmingham Airport and the A45 corridor, as well as further signalisation and/or freeflow slip road capacity improvements to M42 Junctions 5 and 4;

- A high quality public transport corridor between The Hub and Blythe Valley Business Park;

- Improvement to bus services to the hubs;

- Management of car parking and promotion of measures to encourage sustainable travel and/or car sharing;

- Walking and cycling improvements; and

- Identify early opportunities with the introduction of HS2 including future connections to secure employment and growth in the surrounding area by the station.

8.6.31 The Masterplan noted that constraints, such as the capacity and capability of the motorway network need to be addressed for the region to deliver its growth potential.

8.6.32 In the context of rail, work undertaken by Centro has identified that the released capacity on the West Coast Main Line could see improved service frequency between Birmingham International Station according to the Masterplan.

8.6.33 The development of a quality public transport corridor is viewed in the Masterplan as an essential part of the Transport Strategy as it will provide:

- Quick and efficient movement between the hubs and the regional/national rail networks;

- Improved connectivity between Blythe Valley Business Park and Solihull Town Centre, Solihull Station and Birmingham International, reducing reliance on car travel;

- The opportunity to interchange with Centro's Midland Metro extension;

- The opportunity to interchange with HS2;

- Accessibility to employment opportunities for areas of East Birmingham and North Solihull; and

- The opportunity to extend the corridor to either the East Midlands and/or to potential urban extensions to the east of Birmingham. Extensions to the south could continue to residential areas such as Dickens Heath, and/or other residential catchments (subject to demand).

8.6.34 A rapid transit is proposed to pass through areas of East Birmingham and North Solihull providing potential connectivity to employment opportunities at The Hub, Solihull Town Centre and Blythe Valley Business Park helping to provide access to jobs for North Solihull residents given their lowest car ownership in the region.

8.6.35   As sites such as Blythe Valley Business Park, JLR, NEC and Birmingham Business Park all provide extensive levels of free parking there is little incentive to use public transport. Hence a review of parking policy was recommended by the Masterplan with a detailed parking management strategy that could include the investigation of existing parking ratios, parking charging strategy and Park & Ride etc. Provision for recharging plug-in vehicles was also recommended.

8.6.36   In terms of cycling and walking the Masterplan identified the need for good quality connections to public transport services and for connectivity between Solihull Town Centre and Solihull Rail Station to be improved by enhancing the environment between the two.

8.6.37   With regard to environment considerations, the Masterplan proposed the following:

- Development should contribute to sub-regional initiatives ensuring improvements to the natural environment and addressing gaps in the strategic wildlife network;
- Reduce fragmentation and improve existing landscape infrastructure asset connectivity;
- Promote education and accessibility within the landscape around key biodiversity assets;
- Ensure street tree planting and green roof initiatives replace lost environmental assets and are placed at the heart of development initiatives;
- Retain landscape infrastructure assets that support a wide range of animals and insects;
- Ensure new development meets latest government guidance and industry best practice;
- Any new development within the green belt designation zone should contribute to efforts of enhancing the biodiversity within the green belt, i.e. converting 'low grade' agricultural land along blue infrastructure to an ecologically diverse area;
- Improve overall water quality through introduction of an open water improvement framework;
- Low quality agricultural land within river corridor boundary can offer opportunities for public amenity and biodiversity improvements;
- Utilise features to integrate sustainable drainage systems, diverse landscape amenity;
- New developments shall not encroach into the flood zone, taking into account possible effects from climate change;
- Respectful integration of heritage features into new developments;
- Reinforces the sense of place;
- Ability to tell a story through landscape and built form;
- Reinforce connectivity between existing and future environmental assets;
- Encourage sustainable movement patterns between areas;
- Identify and enhance scenic views;
- New developments need to apply principles of compact and dense growth in order to make best use of land avoiding further sprawl; and
- New developments shall contribute to activities that improve bio-diversity within the green belt.

The Midlands HS2 Growth Strategy

8.6.38 This July 2015 report issued by GBSLEP[120] sets out the vision to harness the connectivity and investment of HS2 to create a step change in the Midland's economic performance, driving growth and significantly improving outcomes for its people, businesses and places. The strategy envisages:

- Delivery of a new international gateway that allows for seamless integration to local, national and global destinations;

- Enhanced access and connectivity to facilitate improved modal choice and effectively integrate the development into the wider economic context of the UK Central Hub;

- Provision of a highly connected economic 'growth hub' which is a place of design excellence and which, when development is complete, will provide an additional approximately 16,500 jobs within 245,972 sq m of office, light industrial/R&D, retail and leisure space across a range of key sectors, including advanced manufacturing, construction, utilities and ICT;

- Creation of an exemplar residential community with some 1,900 new homes;

- Creation of a linear park through the development as a key natural landscape and environmental asset; and

- The Hub@UKC is an essential component of UK Central, an established and high performing location driving national economic growth.

---

[120] GBSLEP, (2015) The Midlands HS2 Growth Strategy http://centreofenterprise.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Midlands-HS2- Growth-Strategy.pdf?bcsi_scan_e956bcbe8adbc89f=cqNO9Vtc4tv/BB6iaP40GrjdQUEaAAAAVzjxJA==&bcsi_scan_filename=Midlands-HS2-Growth-Strategy.pdf

Meeting Housing Needs SDP

8.6.39 In July 2014, the Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Meeting Housing Needs[121] recognised that that there is a high level of housing need and that the Council is committed to widening opportunities for home ownership and helping local people who cannot afford to buy or rent homes on the open market. The SPD identified a series of housing needs (see Table 9.6).

Table 9.6: Housing Needs

- Shortage of affordable and in particular social rented housing;

- Providing affordable housing across the Borough to help meet priority needs, particularly the needs of local families and children, local single person households and local first time buyers;

- Need for affordable extra care housing for older and/or disabled people (learning, mental health and physical and sensory);

- Address constraints in supply including the inability to deliver affordable housing in recent years through windfall development;

- Little opportunity to address affordable housing needs in the Rural Area as part of market development; and

- Addressing the imbalance in housing offer across the Borough.

8.6.40 The above needs were then translated into the following objectives:

- Maximise the provision of affordable housing of the right size, type and tenure and in the right location to help meet housing needs across the Borough;

- Provide an adequate amount and variety of homes which are affordable by local people including homes for rent, for purchase and intermediate tenure;

- To provide an adequate amount and variety of homes to meet the increasing demand from older people and those with disabilities and other needs;

- Help address need on the housing waiting list and through homelessness and reduce the need for local households to move out of the Borough to find suitable housing or to continue to share with other households; and

- Accommodating additional development to help meet housing needs in the Borough whiles ensuring high quality places across the Borough through continuing to improve the quality of the environment in the North Solihull Regeneration area and the mature suburbs and, conserving the qualities of the mature suburbs and rural settlements that make those places attractive areas to live.

---

[121] SMBC, (2014): Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document, http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Planning/LDF/Meeting_Housing_Needs_SPD_Final.pdf

8.6.41 The SPD notes that more housing is needed because the number of households in the Borough is increasing and the average household size is decreasing. Population is projected to increase by around 20,000 between 2011 and 2028. The number of households is projected to increase by 14,000 over the period 2006 to 2028 with more people staying single longer; more couples/families separating and people living longer and continuing to live in their own home, often alone. National Household Projections forecast that by 2028 around one third of all households will be single people including those over pensionable age, people with disabilities and households splitting. Many of these households are likely to require affordable rather than market housing.

8.6.42 The number of households represented by the over 75s is, according to the SPD, projected to increase by 7,000 between 2008 and 2023 to comprise 21% of all the Borough's households. This leads to market demand for specialist and supported housing together with homes which can provide opportunities for households to 'downsize'.

8.6.43 Affordable housing need is exceptionally high and Solihull has one of the most severe affordability problems in the West Midlands Region. The shortage of affordable housing is particularly acute in parts of the mature suburbs and the rural area.

The GBSLEP Housing Needs Study

8.6.44 The GBSLEP Housing Needs Study[122] a shortfall of some 27,000-61,000 dwellings for Greater Birmingham (the difference between objectively assessed housing need for 204,000-238,000 net new dwellings and identified land supply for 177,000 dwellings). Spatial options (scenarios) for distributing this shortfall between local authority areas, which were initially defined by the study brief as follows:

- Scenario 1: Intensification – deliver extra dwellings through increased densities and / or intensification of existing urban areas;

- Scenario 2: Peripheral Urban Extensions – distribute the shortfall to the urban periphery of the conurbation, close to areas where growth pressures are greatest;

- Scenario 3: Public Transport Corridors – distribute the shortfall according to spare capacity and growth potential in the rail network;

- Scenario 4: Enterprise – base the distribution on future employment growth, to ensure a broad balance between housing and employment;

- Scenario 5: Dispersed Growth – distribute the growth to shire districts, in proportion to the population of main urban settlements; and

- Scenario 6: New Towns / Settlements – distribute the shortfall to expansion of existing New Towns at Redditch and Telford, together with potential new settlements.

8.6.45 The study identified an annual housing deficit of 1,921 dpa[123] over 20 years for Birmingham and 133 dpa for Solihull over the same period. It also confirmed that it will not be possible to provide significant numbers of dwellings, over and above current plans, through brownfield development, estate regeneration or increasing densities on sites already identified for development.

---

[122] GBSLEP (2015) Strategic Housing Needs Study Stage 3 Report, http://centreofenterprise.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SHNS-Phase-3.pdf
[123] Dwellings Per Acre

8.6.46 Solihull has several active proposals for urban extensions. All are in the Green Belt, and the Council advises that, because of the geography of the Borough, most would erode settlement gaps and would have a severe impact on the already fragmented landscape. There is also a concern about the lack of secondary school capacity in that part of the Borough, with limited scope to extend the existing school because of a lack of land. This makes proposals outside Solihull town difficult to accommodate.

8.6.47 Known proposals awaiting to be assessed include:

- Small (circa 500 units) east of Knowle, west of Dorridge and a further proposal east of Dorridge.

- Larger proposals (1,000 units) south of Solihull town and a further proposal east of the town. There is also a proposal for a large extension to the west of Bentley Heath.

8.6.48 In considering scenario 3, Solihull has 10 rail stations within its area with the potential supply of 1,327ha within 1.2km radius of the stations once HS2 safeguarded land, SSSI and Ancient Monuments are considered but this is reduced to 63ha within 1.2km of the stations due to policy constraints such as Green Belt. The Solihull stations, including Dorridge and land to the west of Widney Manor (land to the east of the station is undeveloped) have accommodated large-scale housing growth that is out of scale with the original post-war settlement pattern. If these stations are to play a part in meeting any strategic housing need, the most likely option is via the new settlement route as any sizeable development would be out of scale and proportion to their existing size and function. Their small size also makes it unlikely they have the infrastructure to accommodate any significant strategic housing need through a sustainable urban extension.

8.6.49 The report observes that for scenario 3, the provision of a sufficient quantity of development can result in changes to public transport accessibility (by for instance allowing routes to become more viable and/or at greater frequency). Therefore, it should not necessarily be the case that this option should only consider existing accessible locations, but also those that could be made more accessible through the provision of additional development or other initiatives. However this approach was noted as only being considered as a realistic option when robust evidence can demonstrate its deliverability. Development potential under this scenario may present an opportunity to address the quality of public transport links between North Solihull and the south of the Borough. The SHLAA[124] 2012 shows potential sites in the Green Belt, notably around Berkswell, Dorridge, Hampton-in-Arden, Shirley, Whitlock's End, Widney Manor and Wythall stations.

8.6.50 An enterprise based scenario was envisaged with up to 9,286 jobs being established at UK Central starting four years before the end of the current plan period in 2031 giving rise to approximately 500 jobs per year and an additional 7.5% to Solihull's employment related housing demand. Beyond 2031, and if the UK Central goes forward, the likely impact would be to strengthen the relative position of Solihull and increase sustainable commuting from parts of Coventry and Warwickshire as well as the Greater Birmingham. The study acknowledges that a dispersed housing scenario would require increased commuter flows into the core urban area potentially triggering a need for additional transport investment.

8.6.51 Solihull was identified as having very limited land to develop the dispersed scenario. Settlements that may be considered are those that are either inset from the Green Belt, or have significant parts of them excluded from it, ie Balsall Common, Catherine de Barnes,

---

[124] Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath, Hampton-in-Arden, Hockley Heath, Knowle/Dorridge, Meriden and Tidbury Green. It is recognised that these in most rural locations have limited public transport accessibility which are very unlikely to offer a genuine choice of transport modes.

8.6.52 With regard to new settlements, the Housing Needs study identified that north east of Solihull could physically accommodate a new settlement but that the land is designated as Green Belt. It highlights large 1,000 dwelling proposals south of Shirley/A34, east of the Solihull town centre and north-west of Bentley Heath, with smaller up to 500 dwellings proposals around Knowle and Dorridge.

8.6.53 The report considered that up to 3,000 new homes could be provided, but with Green Belt and other constraints. Larger scale expansion of rural settlements offers the increased and significant opportunity later in the Plan to seek additional infrastructure. It was reported that HS2 investment and associated local transport improvements may present the market with a step change in demand for additional homes. However, the timing of such provision would depend on when the infrastructure is delivered.

Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth

8.6.54 GBSLEP published in September 2013 a consultation draft of a spatial plan[125] setting out a context for Local Plans and Core Strategies through series of spatial objectives within a 20 year horizon. The Plan is intended to establish the broad scale and distribution of housing and employment sites with the following ten routes to accommodate growth:

- Urban consolidation;
- Enterprise Belt including the M42 Gateway;
- New Towns/Settlements;
- Extend Existing Major Urban Areas;
- Dispersed Growth;
- Corridors of Growth – Rail;
- Corridors of Growth – Road;
- Multi Centred Targeted Approach;
- Dormitory Settlements; and
- Accommodate growth elsewhere.

8.6.55 A set of spatial objectives and policies were recorded in Appendices 3 and 4 of the Spatial Plan.

---

[125] GBSLEP, 2013: Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth Consultation Draft, http://centreofenterprise.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SPRG-Final-version.pdf

Towards a World Class Transport Network

8.6.56 In April 2013, Centro issued 'Towards a World Class Transport Network'[126], setting out the long term vision and strategy framework which will help transform the transport system serving the West Midlands. The strategy noted that travel demand across the West Midlands is forecast to increase by 22% over the next twenty years due to increased population and higher employment levels. This, combined with a long term trend for longer journeys, particularly for work, gives a 34% forecast increase in the number of car kilometres travelled equivalent to an extra 1.2 million extra car journeys per weekday.

8.6.57 The draft prospectus identifies corridors for new rail or rapid transit connecting key employment areas to residential areas in the Solihull area. A preferred LRT route would connect Birmingham City Centre through East Birmingham and North Solihull to Birmingham Business Park with a potential extension to the NEC/Birmingham Airport area. The A45 Coventry Road would be upgraded through improved bus provision connecting Birmingham, Birmingham Airport/NEC/ proposed HS2 Interchange area and onwards to Coventry. A second phase would connect to Blythe Valley Business Park (see Figure 9.3).

Movement for Growth – Strategic Transport Plan

8.6.58 West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan 'Movement for Growth'[127]was issued by the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority, for public consultation between July and October 2015. The strategy document promotes its transport vision for the following reasons set out in Table 9.7 below.

---

[126] Centro, (2013) Towards a World Class Transport Network
http://www.centro.org.uk/media/11162/exec_summary- Apr2013_smaller.pdf
[127] http://www.wmita.org.uk/media/8701/large-document-layout-final-draft-low-res-seperate.pdf

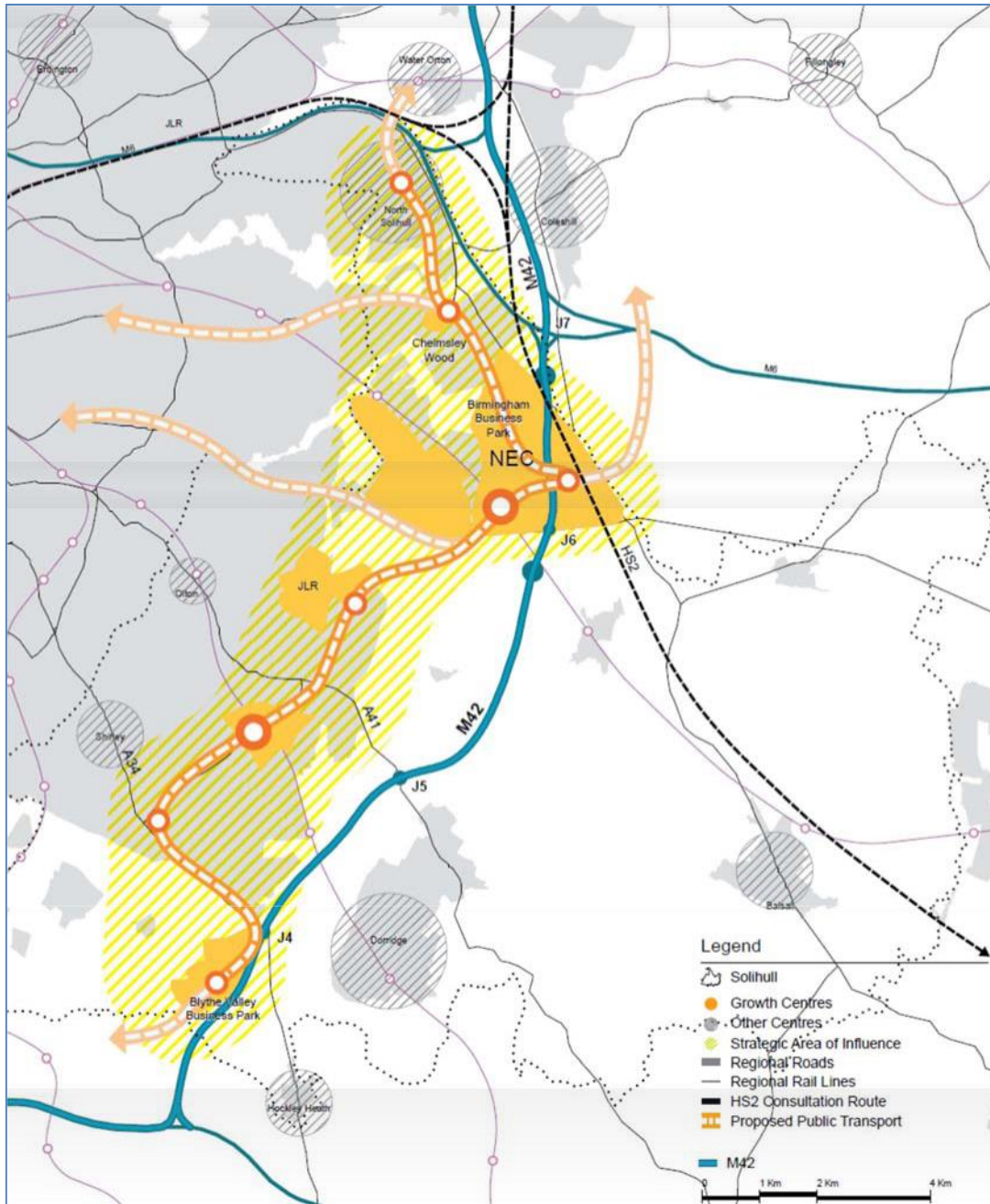*Figure 9.3 Transport Connectivity*

Table 9.7 West Midlands ITA Transport Objectives

Economic

- ECON1 - Support growth in wealth creation (GVA) and employment (jobs) in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, as a prized national economic asset.
- ECON2 - Support improved levels of economic well-being for people with low incomes in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area to help make it a successful, inclusive, European city region economy.

Environment and Public Health

- ENV1 - To significantly improve the quality of the local environment in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area.
- ENV2 - To help tackle global warming by ensuring large decreases in greenhouse gas emissions from the West Midlands Metropolitan Area.
- ENV3 - To significantly reduce diabetes, obesity, respiratory and cardio-vascular problems in the West Midlands Area;
- ENV4 – To significantly reduce the number and severity or road traffic casualties in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area.

Population Growth and Housing Development

- POP1 - In order to help meet future housing needs, support new housing development in locations deemed appropriate by local planning authorities, following their consideration of sustainable development criteria.

Social

- SOC1 - To radically improve the well-being of socially excluded people.

8.6.59 The long term transport strategy is recognised as needing to focus upon:

- Maximising the benefits of HS2 through effective local connections to stations and careful use of released rail capacity for regional and suburban rail services;
- Facilitate the role of Birmingham Airport through high quality surface access;
- Increasing rail and rapid transit capacity of public transport, particularly for journeys across the conurbation to employment growth areas;
- Providing a more joined up public transport system to cater for the huge number of origin-destination combinations across the West Midlands;
- Making better, safer, use of existing transport assets, through measures such as "Smart Routes" to give smoother, more reliable traffic and road safety strategies;
- Providing for more efficient freight and logistics movements;
- Improving the attractiveness of the West Midlands' centres, as places of employment, shopping and creativity;
- Increasing environmentally benign walking and cycling;
- Transferring some car use to public transport, cycling and walking through smarter choices for some journeys, particularly at congested times;

- Increasing use of public transport to access job opportunities, skills and services, for people without access to a car;

- Continuing to develop a public transport network which is accessible to all sections of the population, through such measures as accessible information provision, infrastructure design, comprehensive local network coverage, disability awareness and supporting services such as Ring and Ride and Community Transport;

- Recognising the importance of attention to detail, so that all aspects of provision are considered, with many small improvements alongside larger scale schemes.

Solihull Connected

8.6.60 'Solihull Connected'[128] offers a perspective on the ambition to create balanced investment in transport infrastructure over the next 20 years that recognises the need to care for cars and places appropriate and increasing emphasis upon alternatives such as:

- Game changing public transport schemes;

- High quality cycling networks; and

- Community focused initiatives to encourage healthier transport choices.

8.6.61 Intended to stimulate discussion, this Green Paper will be followed by a White Paper strategy in early 2016 which will provide a ranked list of investment priorities and a programme of interventions. The objectives for the transport strategy are that, Solihull Connected will:

- Ensure that transport capacity and congestion are not a constraint to growth and that major transport investment helps drive growth effectively;

- Promote and support sustainable and efficient transport and investment;

- Aim to support people's daily lives and well-being by providing door to door transport choices. Wherever possible these will include the opportunity to walk or cycle/use public transport whilst recognising the constraints to travel choice that exist within parts of the rural area; and

- Identify a prioritised short, medium and long term delivery plan to achieve the overarching vision and objectives whilst recognising and balancing the specific needs of the different parts of the Borough.

8.6.62 Solihull residents generate around 572,000 daily trips by all modes (walking, cycling, car and public transport). The Green Paper notes that this figure could rise to 675,000 within 20 years with the increase in households. In addition, there are around 50,000 people who come into the Borough each day to work, representing approximately 50% of local jobs being taken up by people travelling in from elsewhere. Coincidently around 60% of Solihull commuters travel out of the Borough for work each day. Continuation of this pattern could result in as many as 120,000 people travelling in and out of the Borough each day for work, making 240,000 trips; of which 164,000 will be by car. The different travel to work journey distances across the Borough is presented in Figure 3.6 below.

---

[128] SMBC (2015) Solihull Connected, Green Paper Report
http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/ParkingTravelRoads/SolihullConnected/Solihull_Connected_LRP.pdf

8.6.63 The Green Paper records that more than 60% of all journeys to work made by Solihull commuters are made by car and whilst many authorities in the UK have seen a decline in car commuting between 2001 and 2011; in Solihull it has increased.

8.6.64 The Council have identified a series of transport needs they envisage for different parts of the Borough as shown in Table 3.9. Among the needs are better north/south connections through public transport linking the three growth areas from Blythe Valley in the south to the airport/NEC/HS2 Interchange via Solihull Town Centre. There may also be demand for a connection towards Coventry to access The Hub area or connect in with HS2. Another opportunity is to connect Solihull into a West Midlands mass-transit network via:

- A Metro link between the Airport and Birmingham City Centre;

- 'Sprint' bus routes along the A45 and right in the north of the Borough running between Coleshill Parkway and Birmingham City Centre;

- Potentially a 'Sprint' link out to Coventry from the HS2 Interchange, which could form an extension of the A45 route;

- 'Sprint' bus routes connecting Solihull Town Centre with Birmingham City Centre along the Stratford and Warwick Roads;

- A Solihull focused 'Sprint' route eventually linking Chester Road with Solihull Town Centre, via Chelmsley Wood and the Airport via the JLR Factory to provide or via Damson Parkway which could provide a faster link;

- Improved interchanges and connectivity at rail stations across the Borough to link passengers into the rest of the mass-transit network

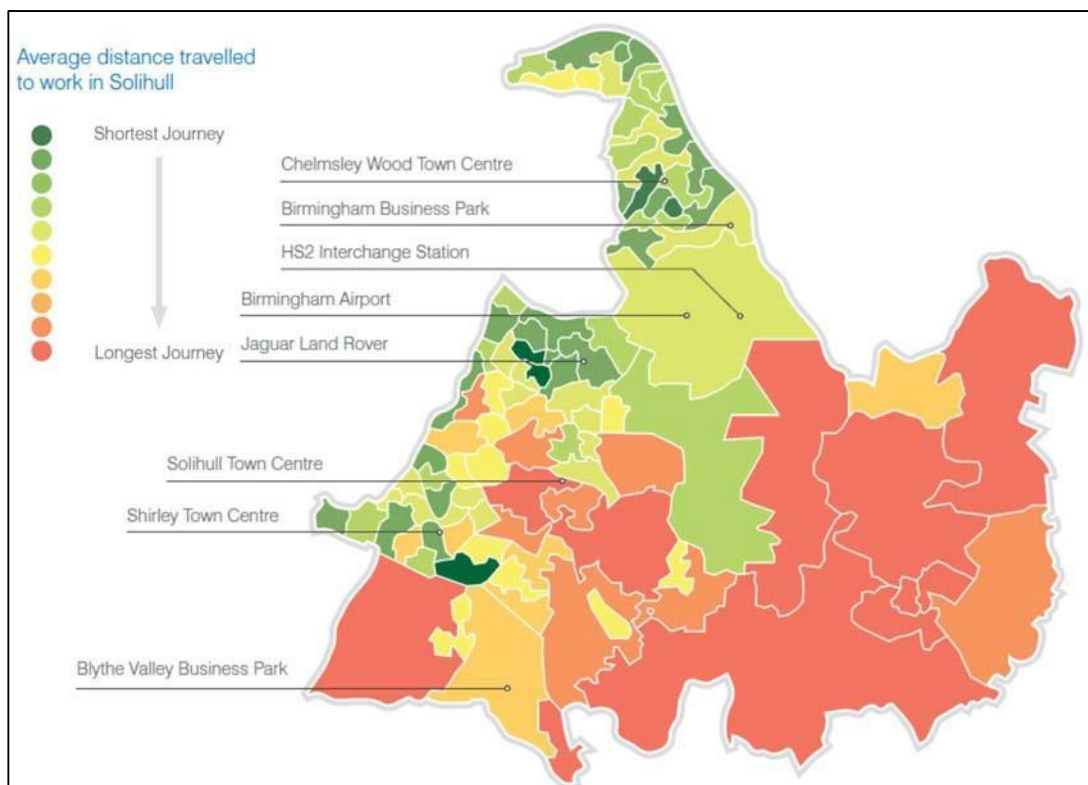*Figure 9.4: Average Distance Travelled to Work across the Borough*

Table 9.8: Anticipated Transport Needs Across the Borough North Solihull

1. Better public transport connectivity to Solihull town centre and central area of the Borough
2. Ensure that the public transport aspirations of Birmingham and the West Midlands that run through the area meet the needs of our residents
3. An even greater focus on providing safe and attractive cycle links
4. A strategy for reducing the barrier effect of the A45 Coventry Road for all users
5. A greater focus on improving local streets and reducing severance from busy roads so that people are encouraged to walk and cycle and are happy to let their children do so.

Urban Core

1. Change the perception of public transport in order for it to compete with the car; for peak time commuter journeys in particular. This will require a step-change in the service offer currently on-street; such as: a) Vehicle quality: b) Journey reliability and c) Flexible payment systems
2. Provide improved accessibility to rail stations by public transport and cycling to enable commuters to get into the rail system quicker and easier
3. Provide more frequent and reliable public transport connections to the north and south of the Borough
4. Take advantage of the latent demand for cycling from the resident population who already own and use bikes for leisure purposes. Provide a network of cycle facilities which lie along peak demand lines for commuting purposes but also connect parks and rural areas; taking advantage of the 'green lungs' of the Borough
5. Improving local streets and reducing severance from busy roads so that people are encouraged to walk and cycle and are happy to let their children do so to school. In doing so we can alleviate traffic congestion caused by the morning school-run

Rural East

1. Better cycling connectivity between and within villages for both leisure purposes but also to provide an alternative to driving for short distance trips
2. Investigation into the best way to serve the area by public transport. Clearly there is insufficient demand to operate high-frequency buses and yet we need to provide accessibility for those who either don't own a car or don't wish to drive particular journeys. Connectivity to Solihull Town Centre, the Airport/NEC and over towards Coventry and Warwickshire is and will be important to this area
3. The effect of traffic and speeds in villages needs to be considered and treated appropriately
4. Ensure that there is sufficient capacity at rail station Park & Ride facilities to provide this area with a viable option to driving to work
5. A greater focus on improving local streets and reducing severance from busy roads so that people are encouraged to walk and cycle and are happy to let their children do so

Southern Fringe

1. As further development occurs, Blythe Valley Business Park needs vastly improved connections, by public transport and cycling, to the wider Borough and beyond
2. Create alternative southern access to Blythe Valley Park to alleviate congestion
3. Improve the public transport and cycling connections between Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath with Stratford Railway Line, Shirley, Dorridge/Knowle and Solihull Town Centre. Determine the potential for a new orbital bus service linking the communities
4. Ensure that there is sufficient capacity at rail station Park & Ride facilities to provide this area with a viable option to driving to work
5. Integrated active travel choices with environmental assets including a network of country parks

6. Safe Routes to schools programme within the area to include safer/quiet lanes and cycle lanes
7. A greater focus on improving local streets and reducing severance from busy roads so that people are encouraged to walk and cycle and are happy to let their children do so

Solihull Town Centre

There is a need for a comprehensive master plan for Solihull Town Centre. This study should take a detailed look at the land use plans and bring together a staged approach to:

1. Identify the best land use mix and location
2. More fully understand the current and future car parking need and develop a considered strategy for pricing, locations and making the best use of technology
3. Ask and answer the question as to whether moving the railway station could result in an improved overall land use pattern for the centre
4. Improve the interchange between modes of transport
5. Improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists into and across the centre
6. Public realm design and the relationship between walking and cycling networks and green space
7. Can businesses in the centre collectively encourage more sustainable transport use by their employees; helping to alleviate peak time congestion
8. Investigating the possibility of opening the High Street to vehicles in the evening in order to 'activate' the area for the evening economy

Birmingham Airport/NEC/HS2 Interchange

1. Improved public transport connections, both to places within the Borough and beyond
2. A land use mix and design that encourages walking, cycling and public transport access and interchange within the area. Specifically infrastructure is needed to overcome severance caused by the M42, the West Coast Main Line and in the future HS2 rail line
3. Enhanced and new cycle and pedestrian links to connect the area with the urban and rural parts of Solihull
4. A high quality strategic multi-modal interchange
5. Improvements to highways infrastructure (both strategic and local) to accommodate access by car
6. A collaborative approach to dealing with the varied parking needs and provision of businesses in the area

8.6.65 The following highway investment s are identified in the Green Report:

- M42 Junction 6 is a significant congestion issue and a scheme has been approved to start within the next 5 years;

- New road infrastructure will be needed to support the housing and employment growth at the development around the HS2 Interchange;

- Improved access to business parks, such as Birmingham Business Park and Blythe Valley; and

- Congestion hot-spots on arterials approaching Solihull Town Centre and other local centres.

8.6.66 A master plan for the future of Solihull's Town Centre is a prospect which will examine movement needs as well as an investigation into the opportunities to better integrate the rail station into the central area including relocating the station.

8.7 Projects & Proposals

8.7.1 There are several transport proposals affecting the Borough. These include:

- Birmingham City Centre Airport Rapid Transit: This is a proposed metro route which would connect Birmingham city centre to Birmingham International Airport. Such route will connect with local stations and would also serve the proposed High Speed Rail station.

- East Birmingham/North Solihull: This proposed scheme will help enhance public transport accessibility and connectivity for areas such as East Birmingham and North Solihull, which currently have poor levels of public transport accessibility.

- A45 Transport Corridor Improvement Scheme: The A45 Coventry Road between its junctions with Damson Parkway and the M42 at junction 6 has an important access and connectivity role linking the motorway network with Birmingham city centre and Solihull. It is also part of the national primary route network linking Birmingham and Coventry and carries over 50,000 vehicles per day including a significant proportion of freight related movements. Existing junctions at Damson Parkway and M42 Junction 6 operate at close to capacity and can at times impact on the flow of traffic on the A45

- ANITA: Birmingham Airport and NEC have committed to enhancing local bus services serving BA/NEC also providing links to East Birmingham North Solihull Regeneration Strategy thereby increasing accessibility to residential and employment areas.

9.   The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

9.1   Introduction

9.1.1   The Sustainability Appraisal framework provides a means to ascertain whether and how specific sustainability issues (established through scoping) are being addressed, and to understand the social, economic and environmental implications of options, policies and proposals.

9.1.2   The framework consists of a set of sustainability objectives and ancillary questions, grouped by UK Sustainable Development Strategy priorities. This framework is used to assist in the prediction and measurement of the effects of the Plan (and alternatives) and the monitoring of effects. The objectives and supporting questions are set out below, demonstrating how they link to key issues identified through scoping. The objectives incorporate the requirements of an equality impact assessment, which will be undertaken as part of the appraisal process, although a separate report on the assessment will be prepared.

9.1.3   An appropriate starting point for establishing the SA Framework was to use the framework set out in the Interim SA Report 2015. This has been updated as appropriate in light of updates to the scope.

9.2   The SA Framework

Sustainable consumption and production		
SA objective	**Supporting details**	**Key issues**
1. To contribute to regeneration and economic development initiatives targeted towards specific community groups.	a) Provide a quality of life able to help retain well-educated members of the work force b) To enable the provision of offices and premises able to meet the needs of business start-ups as well as larger businesses attracted by the transport-hub and knowledge-hub that exists. c) Ensure that communities of need benefit from opportunities brought by HS2 and UK Central	Performance indicators in the regeneration zone for North Solihull are lower the rest of the Borough. There is a relatively high level of small business start- ups. Continued growth and investment is expected to be experienced within Solihull over the Plan period
2. To reduce the number of people experiencing difficulties in accessing employment, education and training opportunities.		There is a need to support people with low levels of skills into employment.
3. To ensure that the location of development makes efficient use of existing physical infrastructure and reduces the need to travel.		Despite some good public transport links, levels of car usage are higher than the national average.
4. Minimise the use of natural resources such as land, water and minerals, and minimise waste, whilst increasing reuse and recycling.	a) Deliver reductions in the quantity of water used in the borough. b) Reduce waste generation and manage waste as far up the waste hierarchy as possible. c) Use previously developed sites where appropriate and ensure no net loss of ecological value.	There is a need to reduce waste and increase reuse and recycling. However, the borough has relatively high rates of household waste. Abstraction of water is controlled; coupled with the need to reduce carbon emissions; there is a need to improve water efficiency.

Climate change and energy		
SA objective	*Supporting details*	*Key Issues*
5. Minimise greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy generation	a) Deliver reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to contribute to the achievement of national and local targets. b) Encourage reduced energy use, use of low carbon distributive energy systems and renewable energy.	Tackling climate change is a national and local priority. There is potential to increase the use of certain renewable and low carbon energy technologies.
6. To assist businesses in the adaptation they need to become more resource efficient and resilient to the effects of a changing climate.		Businesses are at risk from the effects of climate change and energy security.
7. Manage, maintain and where necessary improve the drainage network to reduce economic losses from flooding.		There is potential for flooding from various sources including watercourses, surface water and groundwater.
8. To ensure that development provides for adaptation to urban heating, the effects of high winds and assists in promoting positive behaviour change.		Climate change is predicted to lead to hotter summers and more extreme weather such as high winds.

Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement

SA objective	Supporting detail	Key Issues
9. To enhance the connectivity of ecological sites and enhance LBAP priority habitats and species.		It is possible that local wildlife species and habitats could be affected by development and opportunities for enhancement not realised.
10. To manage the landscape effects of development in recognition of the European Landscape Convention as well as the risks and opportunities associated with measures to address climate change.		The distinctiveness of the Arden landscape is being eroded, and traditional buildings and agricultural features like hedgerows are declining.
11. To facilitate the delivery and enhance the quality of areas providing green infrastructure.		There is a need to improve the quality and/or quantity of green and open space to better meet the recreational needs of the population.
12. To enhance, conserve and protect buildings, sites and the setting of historic assets as part of development projects		There is a need to protect and better reveal the significance of heritage assets. The character of historic farmland needs to be protected and restored.
13. To deliver improvements in townscape and enhance local distinctiveness.		Creating a high quality and distinct built environment is a key objective.
14. Minimise air, soil, water, light and noise pollution.	a) Continue to deliver reductions in particulate and nitrogen dioxide levels. b) Manage the drainage network to ensure no detriment to surface water quality. c) Reduce the intrusion of urban and highway lighting. d) Deliver reductions in road traffic noise focusing on those areas identified as First Priority Locations by Defra under the Environmental Noise Directive. e) To conserve the best and most versatile agricultural land.	Local Plans have a key role to play in helping to ensure that air quality improves and exposure to pollution is minimised and reduced. Parts of the Borough are more exposed and vulnerable to sources of noise such as the Airport. There are areas of grade 2 agricultural land that should be protected from development.

Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement

SA objective	Supporting detail	Key Issues
15. Reduce social exclusion and disparities within the Borough	a) Ensure that the pattern of development helps reduce imbalances across the borough. b) Promote employment opportunities and improve access to employment, education and health services c) Improve the public realm and community facilities.	Although Solihull is a broadly affluent, the Borough is relatively polarised. There are pockets of deprivation with some LSOAs (to the north in particular) being within the most deprived 10% of the country.
16. Improve the supply and affordability of housing (particularly in the areas of greatest need)	a) Ensure a supply of housing appropriate to local needs, especially in relation to affordability. b) Ensure urban design and layout contributes towards reducing the potential for crime. c) Make provision for the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.	There is a need to meet identified housing needs for the full range of community groups.
17. To fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, cultural, recreational, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality to reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles.	a) Design the urban fabric and services to meet the needs of an elderly population, particularly one less able to rely upon private transport.	The population is predicted to live longer, which will result in a greater amount of elderly people living in the borough.
18. Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.		Rates of crime are fairly low, but there are hotspots of crime to the north and in urban centres.
19. Encourage development with a better balance between jobs, housing and services, and provide easy and equitable access to opportunities, basic services and amenities for all.		The Local Plan should seek to tackle any inequalities in access to employment, affordable housing, recreation and public services.

9.3 Site Appraisal Methodology

SA Topics and corresponding SA Objectives	Site appraisal criteria and thresholds
Deprivation and equality SA1: To contribute to regeneration and economic development initiatives targeted towards specific community groups. SA15. Reduce social exclusion and disparities within the Borough	**Development located within top 10% most deprived** Located within top 20% most deprived Located within top 40% most deprived Located within 60% least deprived
2. To reduce the number of people experiencing difficulties in accessing employment, education and training opportunities.	**Access to primary school** **<400m** <800m 800-1200m (acceptable walking distance) 1.2km - 3km >3km **Access to secondary school** <1200m 1200m – 5km >5km
3. To ensure that the location of development makes efficient use of existing physical infrastructure and reduces the need to travel.	**Proximity to bus and train services** **Within 400m of a frequent bus or train service** (more than three bus services or 2 train services per hour) Within 400m of an infrequent bus or train service (less than 3 bus services or 2 train services per hour) Within 800m of a frequent bus or train service Within 800m, of an infrequent bus or train service Within 1400 m of an infrequent bus or train service More than 1400m of a bus stop or train station **Proximity to principal road network for employment sites** Less than 1km Less than 3km More than 3km

SA Topics and corresponding SA Objectives	Site appraisal criteria and thresholds
4. Minimise the use of natural resources such as land, water and minerals, and minimise waste, whilst increasing reuse and recycling.	**Soil** Does not contain any agricultural land Grade 1-3b Contains less than 10 ha of agricultural land 1-3b Contains more than 10 ha of agricultural land 1-2 or >20ha of 1-3b land. Contains more than 20ha of agricultural land 1-2 or >50ha 1-3b **Minerals** Site within minerals safeguard area Site outside of minerals safeguard area
5. Minimise greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy generation	Development within proximity of heat demand / anchor loads Development not within proximity of heat demand / anchor loads
SA6. To assist businesses in the adaptation they need to become more resource efficient and resilient to the effects of a changing climate. SA8. To ensure that development provides for adaptation to urban heating, the effects of high winds and assists in promoting positive behaviour change.	Design features will play a more important role than location in the achievement of this objective. Therefore, no criteria have been established.
SA7. Manage, maintain and where necessary improve the drainage network to reduce economic losses from flooding.	**Flood risk** Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and / or Surface water flooding 1000 years Some of the site is in Flood Zones 2 or 3 (up to 50%) and / or Surface water flooding 100 years Most of the site is in Flood Zones 2 or 3 (more than 50%) and / or surface water flooding 30 years
SA9. To enhance the connectivity of ecological sites and enhance LBAP priority habitats and species.	Overlaps or contains a local wildlife site and / or records of priority species and habitats. Site not of the scale to avoid sensitive habitats or to deliver strategic improvements to ecological networks and so development would likely lead to loss. Site does not contain local wildlife sites and .or records of LBAP priority habitats and species Overlaps or contains a local wildlife site and / or records of priority species and habitats. Site is of strategic scale to enhance ecological networks.

SA Topics and corresponding SA Objectives	Site appraisal criteria and thresholds
SA10. To manage the landscape effects of development in recognition of the European Landscape Convention as well as the risks and opportunities associated with measures to address climate change.	**Landscape with low sensitivity to change** Landscape with low-medium sensitivity to change Landscape with medium sensitivity to change Landscape with medium-high sensitivity to change Landscape with high sensitivity to change
SA11: To facilitate the delivery and enhance the quality of areas providing green infrastructure.	**Access to greenspace** (*amenity open space, natural open space*) • *400m from public open space or natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size* • *2km from public open space or natural greenspace of at least 20 ha in size* Meets both standards Meets one standard Meets neither standard
SA12. To enhance, conserve and protect buildings, sites and the setting of historic assets as part of development projects	**Proximity to heritage assets and impact upon Setting** Heritage asset *(listed building, ancient monument, registered parks and gardens, historic parkland, building of local interest)* on site and likely to be lost as part of development. Heritage assets within 100m of site:
SA13. To deliver improvements in townscape and enhance local distinctiveness.	Setting likely to be adversely affected as the site is unscreened / visually prominent Setting unlikely to be adversely affected as the site is well screened Heritage assets more than 100m from site **Heritage assets on site that are underused or deteriorating that could be enhanced as part of development**

SA Topics and corresponding SA Objectives	Site appraisal criteria and thresholds
SA14. Minimise air, soil, water, light and noise pollution.	**Amenity** Sources of noise adjacent to site that could affect amenity *(A/B road, industrial park, agricultural processes)*. No sources of noise adjacent to site **Air quality** Assessment of potential effects of development upon air quality in areas with sensitive receptors *To be confirmed.*
SA16. Improve the supply and affordability of housing (particularly in the areas of greatest need) *Housing sites only*	**Housing site deliverable within 0-5 years** Deliverable within the plan period Deliverability uncertain
SA17. To fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, cultural, recreational, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality to reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles.	**Access to healthcare** **Within 400m of a GP or health centre** Within 1200m of a GP or health centre Within 2.5km of a GP or health centre Within 5km of a GP or health centre More than 5km from a GP **Access to leisure and play facilities** *(allotments, parks, sports centres, play areas, cycle routes)* **Within 400m of at least two facilities** Within 400m of at least one facility Within 800m of at least two facilities Within 800m of at least one facility Within 1200m of at least two facilities Within 1200m of at least one facility More than 1200m of any facilities
SA18. Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.	Development in any location can be designed so as to effectively reduce crime and the fear of crime. Therefore, it is not proposed to include this as a criteria for comparing site options. However, development on derelict sites or open space that are a known target of fly-tipping or antisocial behaviour could help to tackle such issues. If consistent information is available for all sites we will establish if there are any such issues on site options.

SA Topics and corresponding SA Objectives	Site appraisal criteria and thresholds
SA19. Encourage development with a better balance between jobs, housing and services, and provide easy and equitable access to opportunities, basic services and amenities for all.	**Access to jobs** *(key economic assets)* **<1200m** <2.5km <5km <7.5km >7.5km **Access to local convenience store or supermarket** **<400m** <800m 800-1200m 1.2km - 3km >3km