

11. Statement on the difference the Sustainability Appraisal has made to the Plan Making Process

The SA process has been a fundamental tool in the development of the Site Allocation Document and Town Centre Area Action Plan. Because the SAD and AAP are intended to fit into the framework of the Black Country Core Strategy, the scope to change the objectives has been limited, except where new evidence has shown that the objectives of the BCCS are no longer appropriate. An example of the latter has been the target for new office floorspace in Walsall Town Centre. However, the SA process has helped to confirm which options would most closely fit the objectives of the BCCS. The BCCS was itself developed through a sustainability appraisal.

The SA has provided evidence to inform decision making and helped with developing options. It has also been crucial in helping us to assess any changes or suggested changes to the plan policies as they develop. It acts a way to highlight any possible negative effects and ensure that where possible the policies include mitigation of these effects.

Conclusions on how the SA process has influenced the final version of the SAD.

The SA process has been crucial in shaping the preferred options / modifications and policies that make up the submission version of the SAD. The following changes have been made to the vision and policies of the Local Plan as a result of the findings and recommendations of the sustainability appraisal.

SAD Chapter/Section	Policy	Examples of the changes made as a result of the SA
Objectives Chapter 2	N/A	The objectives were checked for accordance with the SA objectives. The wording of the waste and minerals objectives were amended between the Preferred Options and Publication stage to include references to effects on health and the environment to ensure the objectives fully align with the SA objectives.
Homes for our communities General Housing	HC1	The SA process has confirmed that none of the three options examined initially, each of which involved concentrating housing allocations on particular types of site (former employment land, other previously developed land and surplus open space, or greenfield/ green belt sites) would fully meet housing demand in a sustainable way. It has therefore been necessary to select a fourth option which is mainly a combination of the first two options, using surplus former employment land and

		<p>other previously developed land.</p> <p>A small number of sites have had to be deleted as potential housing sites or had their boundaries altered to take account of sustainability issues. These include sites affected by flood risk or proximity to potential mineral working sites.</p>
<p>Homes for our communities</p> <p>Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople</p>	HC4	<p>The SA process has identified that the most sustainable option is to allocate a limited number of sites exclusively for the travelling community or showpeople, rather than making “dual allocations” involving a larger number of sites that could be used either for general housing or as traveller sites.</p> <p>This will provide clarity both for the wider community and for travellers who are a protected group under the Equalities Act.</p>
<p>Providing for industrial jobs and prosperity</p>	IND1 to IND5	<p>The SA process has confirmed that the most appropriate solution to the need for more industrial land is to allocate some areas of poor quality open space which are surplus to requirements.</p>
<p>Strengthening our local centres</p>	SLC1 and SLC2	<p>The SA process has shown that the most sustainable option is to review local centre boundaries and development opportunities. This means that development opportunities will be allocated to meet the future needs of communities</p>
<p>Open space, leisure and community facilities</p>	OS1	<p>Most options were shown to have positive effects, however the selected option involves the release of some low quality sites to other uses. This will help in meeting the objectives of other policies, in particular the allocation of land for housing and industry.</p>
<p>Environmental networks</p>	GB1, GB2, EN1 – EN7	<p>The SA process identified uncertainties and the potential for negative effects to some SA objectives in relation to proposals, or safeguarded land for projects with the potential to impact Cannock Extension Canal SAC. These uncertainties resulted in modifications to relevant policies to ensure that proposals are assessed in accordance with the appropriate regulatory requirements as part of the development management process.</p> <p><u>Historic Environment</u></p> <p>The SA of the historic environment policies highlighted the potential for there to be indirect or consequential positive impacts on SA4 –</p>

		<p>Communities and Population and SA8 – Health and Wellbeing brought about by the enhancement opportunities for the heritage assets that would improve the cultural heritage and landscape and townscape of the borough.</p> <p>SA of EN6 Highgate Brewery highlighted that there were impacts on water environment that needed to be addressed through the inclusion of reference o the Ground Water Source Protection Zone at the site to ensure this does not become a negative impact on SA14.</p> <p>The SA of EN7Great Barr Hall highlighted the potential for positive impacts on SA2 Biodiversity and Geodiversity which have been reflected in the policy text and the SA themes were used when reordering the policy at the pre-submission modifications stage in order to ensure that all of the major impacts were addressed for each part of the policy.</p>
Sustainable waste management	W1 – W4	The SA process has highlighted the value of safeguarding existing waste management sites and providing guidance on suitable locations for new facilities
Sustainable use of minerals	M1 – M9	Mineral extraction by its nature often has an adverse impact on the sites worked and surrounding areas. However, minerals can only be worked where they are found. Most of the potential mineral resources in Walsall lie close to housing and/or under land that is of nature conservation importance. However, minerals are a vital resource for other industries, in particular the construction sector, and brickworks in Walsall currently provide employment. Several of the potential mineral workings in Walsall are the result of existing planning permissions granted some time ago. The SA process has therefore largely involved assessing which options will provide the best way of mitigating or minimising the impact of mineral operations.
Transport and infrastructure		The SA process has helped to show the value of safeguarding land for transport projects, in particular rail formations.

Conclusions on how the SA process has influenced the final version of the AAP.

The SA process has been crucial in shaping the preferred options and policies that make up the publication version of the AAP. The following changes have been made to the vision and policies of the Local Plan as a result of the findings and recommendations of the sustainability appraisal.

SAD Chapter/Section	Policy	Examples of the changes made as a result of the SA
Objectives		The objectives were checked for accordance with the SA objectives. This allowed for consideration to be given as to whether the objectives cover all the issues a holistic plan should including environmental, social and economic elements.
A place for shopping	AAPS2: New Retail Development	Consideration around the options as the Preferred Option stage of the SA resulted in the section of a policy that looks to identify well located sequential sites for bulky and convenience retail to ensure that they are well connected, accessible and have as limited impact on the vitality of the town centre as possible. The policy was then written in a way to allow for any impacts to be considered as part of an application and also for the range of goods to be sold in order to limit the impact of development.
A place for business	AAPB2: Social Enterprise Zone	The social enterprise zone policy has been modified as part of the pre-submission modifications to allow for the re-use of listed buildings for residential where it can be demonstrated that this will not have a detrimental impact on the delivery of the zone. This reduced the potential negative impact the zone could have of the character and cultural heritage of the centre by allowing for more flexibility which should help to keep the buildings in use and maintained.
A place for leisure	AAPPLE1: New Leisure Developments	A requirement has been included in the policy between the Preferred Option stage and the Publication Stage to ensure schemes create environments that are safe and welcoming in response to potential negative impacts from leisure uses on the safety and wellbeing of residents in the centre and to prevent negative impact on residential areas.
A place for living		As a result of the potential negative impacts identified at the start of the SA process the policy

	<p>AAPLV1: Residential Developments</p> <p>AAPLV7: Enhancing the Public Realm</p> <p>AAPLV8: Environmental Infrastructure</p>	<p>requires residential schemes to be designed to mitigate against air pollution. Also all sites that are within areas where this maybe a consideration have been identified in the plan in order to reduce the impact on this on residents health and welcoming.</p> <p>Further wording has been added to the policy between the Preferred Option stage and the Publication Stage to provide for public realm schemes that include green infrastructure to further mitigation against climate change and improvements to the nature environment in the centre.</p> <p>The approach towards renewable energy was changed from the Preferred Option when there was no supportive policy to the Publication Stage which looks to promote schemes. This was included as the original option scored well against the SA objectives but we had no evidence of the deliverability of a scheme, however after further consideration it was concluded that as the option has so many positives it would be beneficial to have supportive text in the policy.</p>
Transport, movement and accessibility	AAPT5: Road Improvements	Policy includes references to recharging facilities for low emission vehicles to mitigate some of the impact of having improved car parking in the centre and encouraging car use.
A place for investment	AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport	The policy has been adopted between the Preferred Option stage and the Publication Stage to include requirements to consider the Ford Brook River in including improving the habitat of the river and giving consideration to the water quality of any site derange going into the river to reduce any risk of impact on water quality from development at the site and to enhance the character of the character through maximising the river side location.