4. Review of 'Baseline' Evidence

4.1 Background to Review

Appendix E to the Revised SA Scoping Report (v2 May 2013) summarises the baseline evidence reviewed by the Council at the scoping stage, by SA Topic, and Chapters 5 and 6 of the report provides a summary of existing environmental, economic and social conditions and problems, how they are likely to develop, and the areas likely to be affected.

This chapter provides an updated summary of 'baseline' environmental, social and economic conditions, which is based on the most up-to-date evidence available at the time the SA Framework was reviewed in July 2015. The baseline date for the evidence used in the appraisal (unless otherwise specified) is April 2015, although more up-to-date information has been used where available.

4.2 Development of Evidence Base

Evidence Used in Appraisal and Plan Preparation

Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations states that the SA Report should include a description of:

- "*The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme*;"
- "*The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected*;" and
- "*Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, including areas of particular environmental importance,*" such as 'European Sites' designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives.[1]

This Chapter addresses these requirements (see **Appendix P)**. As the SA is an integrated assessment that includes EqIA and HIA as well as SEA, the baseline evidence must include

[1] These are sites of European importance for biodiversity, including sites which are designated or proposed to be designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites.

evidence on current economic and social conditions and problems, as well as evidence on environmental conditions and problems.

National planning policy guidance also advises that when preparing local plans, the evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area should be "*proportionate*" but "*adequate, up-to-date and relevant*" (NPPF paragraph 158). In a complex urban area like Walsall, it is unfortunately necessary to review a lot of evidence to understand existing environmental, economic and social conditions, current and probable future trends, and the differences that the SAD and AAP are likely to make.

The tables in Appendix E of the Revised SA Scoping Report (2013) summarised the most up-to-date data available at the time it was completed (around the middle of 2012), including information from the 2011 Walsall AMR. For each SA topic, the key indicators for likely effects of the Walsall SAD and Town Centre AAP were identified in bold text in the Summary of Baseline Conditions beneath the table for each SA Topic. The collection of evidence is an ongoing process, and the baseline evidence is reviewed and updated as and when new information becomes available.

The main sources of evidence reviewed by the Council to date are identified in Table 16 below. It should be noted that the table identifies the main sources of evidence reviewed only, and is not necessarily exhaustive.

Table 16: Preparation of the SAD and AAP and SA – Key Sources of Evidence

Sources	Data Sets/ Other Evidence	Relevant SA Topics
Black Country Core Strategy Evidence	See Black Country Core Strategy Evidence web page: http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/evidencesa/	SA6, SA10, SA14
Black Country Consortium	Black Country Intelligence: http://www.the-blackcountry.co.uk/intelligence	SA4, SA6, SA7
Black Country Geodiversity Partnership	Black Country Geodiversity Action Plan (2006)	SA2, SA5, SA9, SA10, SA12
Black Country Geological Society	Scorching Deserts and Icy Wastes (information leaflet) The Geology of Barr Beacon (information leaflet)	SA2, SA9, SA10, SA12
British Geological Survey (BGS)	Mineral Planning Factsheets – Alternative Fossil Fuels, Construction Aggregates, Brick Clay, Coal, Fireclay Onshore Mineral Resource Maps – West Midlands UK Minerals Yearbooks Geology of Britain Viewer (online geological mapping)	SA2, SA9, SA10
Confederation of British Industry (CBI)	Quarterly Industrial Trends Surveys Quarterly Service Sector Surveys	SA6

Sources	Data Sets/ Other Evidence	Relevant SA Topics
Coal Authority	Coalfield Plans - Walsall Interactive Map Viewer (online mapping of coalfield areas)	SA6, SA10,SA12
Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)	English Housing Surveys Housebuilding Statistics English Indices of Deprivation Statutory Homelessness Statistics	SA4, SA6, SA7, SA8
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	Air Quality Plans and Statistics Agricultural Land Classification Digest of Waste and Resource Statistics (2015) England Natural Environment Indicators Natural Environment – Adapting to Climate Change (2012) Noise Action Plans River Water Quality Statistics Soil Strategy for England Evidence Paper (2009) Waste and Recycling Statistics	SA1, SA2, SA4, SA6, SA10, SA12, SA13, SA14
Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC)	Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Reports Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES) UK/ Local Authority Carbon Emissions Statistics UK/ Local Authority Greenhouse Gas Emissions Statistics Renewable Energy Statistics Database (RESTATS)	SA3, SA11
Department for Transport (DfT)	Annual Bus Statistics National Travel Surveys Rail Statistics Road Traffic Statistics Transport Connectivity and Accessibility Statistics	SA4, SA6, SA7, SA13
Environment Agency	Environment Agency Public Register Hazardous Waste Interrogator Humber River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) The Case for Change – Current & Future Water Availability (2011) Waste Data Interrogator Waste Management for England – various data sets What's In My Backyard? Interactive Map	SA10, SA12, SA14
Historic England	Heritage At Risk Registers Heritage Counts – West Midlands National Heritage List for England Strategic Stone Study – A Building Stone Atlas of Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Walsall and Wolverhampton (2012)	SA5, SA9, SA10
Heritage Gateway	Wolverhampton and Walsall Historic Environment Record (HER)	SA5
Highways England (Highways Agency)	Improvement Plan and Monitoring Report	SA6, SA13
Local Data Company	Shopping Centre Reports Vacancy Reports	SA6

Sources	Data Sets/ Other Evidence	Relevant SA Topics
Met Office	UK Climate Change Projections (UKCP09)	SA3, SA14
Natural England	Agricultural Land Classification Map – West Midlands (ALC004) Designated Sites Database National Character Area Profiles - National Character Area 67: Cannock Chase and Cank Wood (2009) Natural Areas – 43: Midlands Plateau State of the Natural Environment – England (2008) State of the Natural Environment – West Midlands (2009) MAGIC Interactive Mapping	SA2, SA9, SA12
NOMIS	Labour Market Statistics Local Authority/ Area Profiles for Walsall	SA4, SA6, SA7
Network Rail	Network Rail Control Period Delivery Plans Network Rail Route Utilisation Strategies	SA6, SA13
Office for National Statistics (ONS)	National Statistics: • Business and Energy • Economy • Health and Social Care • Housing Affordability (data on this topics is also available from the Land Registry) • Labour Market • People and Places • Population Transport Neighbourhood Statistics for Walsall	SA4, SA6, SA7, SA8, SA11, SA13
Public Health England	Walsall Health Profiles	SA8
Severn Trent Water	Business Plan 2015 - 2020 Drought Plan Water Resources Management Plan	SA4, SA6, SA14
South Staffordshire Water	Climate Change Adaptation Report Drought Plan Water Resources Management Plan	SA4, SA6, SA14
Walsall Council	Air Quality Progress Reports Authorities' Monitoring Reports (AMRs) Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan Countryside Area Profiles (CAPs) Conserving Walsall's Natural Environment SPD (2013) Designing Walsall SPD (2013) Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (2011) Constraints Mapping: • Heritage Assets • Industrial 'Legacy' Areas • Limestone Areas • Natural Environment Assets • Strategic Noise Areas	SA1, SA2, SA3, SA4, S5, SA6, SA5, SA9, SA10, SA12

Sources	Data Sets/ Other Evidence	Relevant SA Topics
Walsall Council (continued)	Walsall SAD and AAP Evidence – on Council website: www.walsall.gov.uk/local_plans/evidence.htm	
Walsall Health & Wellbeing Board	Walsall Health & Wellbeing Strategy (2014 Refresh): www.walsall.gov.uk/healthwellbeing.htm	SA4, SA7, SA8
Walsall Partnership	Walsall Intelligence Online Resource: • Area Partnership Profiles • Ward Profiles • Walsall Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) • Other economic, population, health data http://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/WI/navigation/home.asp	SA4, SA6, SA7, SA8
Western Power Distribution	Next Generation Networks – Innovation Strategy (2014)	SA11
West Midlands Aggregates Working Party (AWP)	Annual Monitoring Reports	SA10
West Midlands Resource Technical Advisory Body (RTAB)	Monitoring Reports	SA10
Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country	Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan (2010) Birmingham and Black Country Ancient Woodland Inventory (Interim) (2008) Birmingham & Black Country - The State of the Environment Dashboard (2015)	SA2, SA9

Sources: Mainly online resources, as stated above.

Evidence Gathering - Technical and Procedural Difficulties

Section 5.4 of the Revised SA Scoping Report (v2 May 2013) identifies some of the difficulties of gathering baseline evidence data for the SA. The data used to describe baseline conditions is the best and most up-to-date the Council was able to find and collate at the time the last major stage of appraisal was carried out in 2015.

The quantity of evidence available is now much more extensive than was the case when the BCCS SA Scoping Report was prepared in 2007. However, the Council has had to be selective in the data sources used because of the requirement for a “proportionate” approach, the limited resources available to review and analyse the available data, and the need to deliver the plans and prepare the SA report within a reasonable timescale.

Some of the data identified in Appendix E of the SA Scoping Report is either no longer available or is no longer being updated. For example, Ofwat is no longer collecting data on water consumption by households and business from the water companies. Going forward, it is likely that economic pressures will result in a further reduction in the range of evidence gathered by the Council, the government and other public bodies. The capacity within the Council to collate, review and analyse the data that is available is also likely to be significantly reduced, so it is unrealistic to expect more information to become available through general monitoring. However, more detailed evidence may become available for specific sites, where supporting information is required with a planning application.

As noted in the Revised SA Scoping Report, many of the data sets that are still available have caveats attached to them, particularly where the data has been gathered by other organisations for reasons not connected to the SA of development plans. Where a data set does not tell us exactly what we want to know, we have had to use the nearest equivalent. For example, we do not know how much sand and gravel is extracted from quarries in the West Midlands, but there is data on annual sand and gravel sales, which is used as a proxy.

Certain data sets, for example, the Environment Agency's Waste Data Interrogator, are only available in a raw state or in a format that is not easy to use. Such data has to be collated and presented in a usable format, which means it is not always feasible for the Council to make best use of it, when there are insufficient resources available for data analysis. The robustness of data also varies, as some information is extrapolated from sample surveys or information from other areas. For example, the National Travel Surveys carried out by the Department for Transport are based on sampled data which is not likely to be as reliable as data obtained from a local survey.

Even where local surveys have been carried out, for example, the Walsall Business Survey (2010) and the Walsall Green Spaces Survey (2011), a significant number of responses must be received to be confident that the results will be representative. These types of surveys are resource-intensive, and will therefore also not be carried out very often, so may become out-of-date. Nevertheless, the data obtained from these sources may be the best available given the time and resource constraints, and will usually be better than nothing at all.

Sometimes there is no data available at all at a local level. For example, there is no information available on the generation of waste by businesses and by the construction and demolition process in Walsall, and there is no realistic prospect that any such data will ever become available in the foreseeable future.

A further challenge for the SA of the SAD and AAP is describing baseline conditions at the local level. Walsall is not a homogenous area and contains many different communities and neighbourhoods, with wide variations between them in terms of their population profile, housing needs, prosperity and health. There are also spatial variations, which are apparent from the different patterns of development, urban form, and the types of buildings and spaces present in different parts of the Borough.

Information for local areas (e.g. Local Government Ward, Partnership Area or Super Local Output Area) is only available for certain data sets, for example, Census data, the Indices of Deprivation and certain statistics on health.

4.3 Existing 'Baseline' Conditions

A description of **current environmental, economic and social conditions** in Walsall, which has been informed by the updated baseline evidence, is set out below. Larger versions of the Figures reproduced in this section can be found in the SAD Technical Appendices (Constraint and Assets Maps).[2] In accordance with the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the description identifies **existing environmental, economic and social problems**, not all of which can be addressed through the SAD and AAP.

Current 'State of the Environment' - April 2015

Material Assets

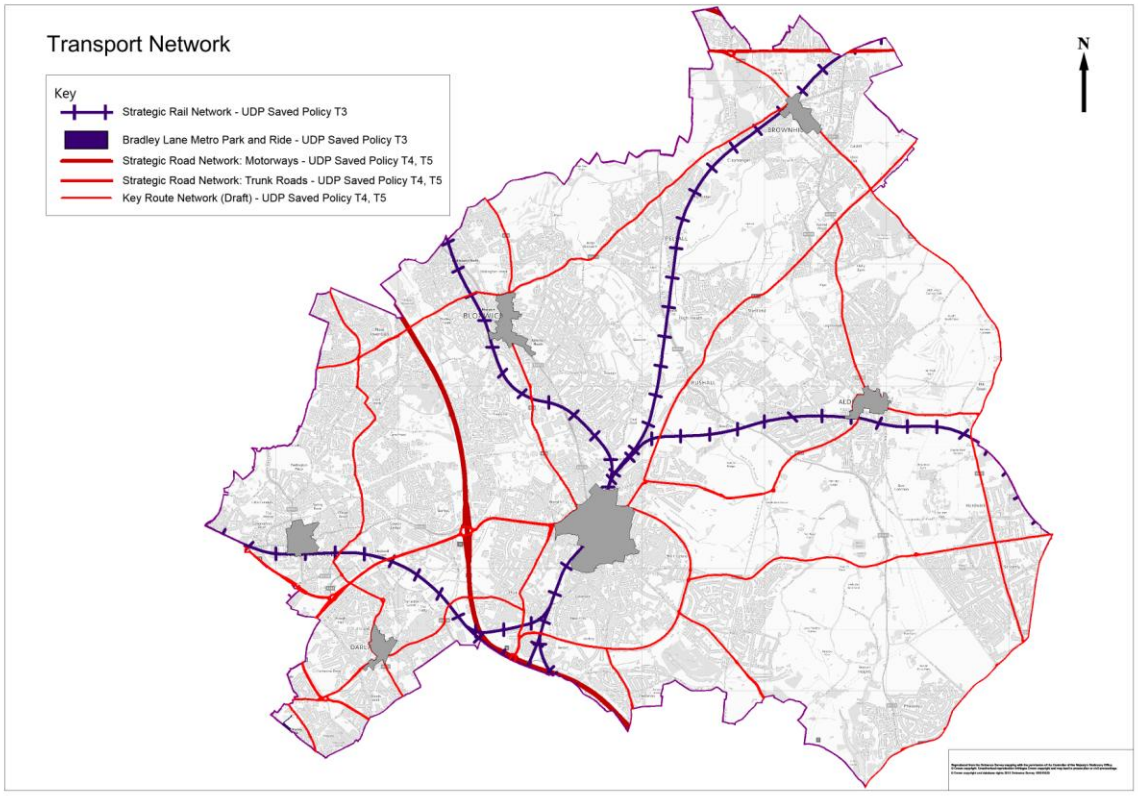
Walsall's **material assets** include land and property in a variety of land uses, including housing, employment, shopping, leisure, community facilities, transport, waste management and utilities infrastructure, and extensive areas of open land, used mainly for agriculture, outdoor recreation, mineral extraction and other uses that require an open site such as cemeteries and crematoria.

Walsall's Strategic Transport Network includes the M6 motorway, including Junctions 9 and 10, and an extensive network of 'A' roads which make up the Strategic Transport Network (SHN), as shown on Figure 10 below. A number of railway lines also run through the borough, which are mostly used for freight.

[2] Available on the Council website: www.walsall.gov.uk/site_allocation_document

Some of Walsall's land and buildings are of high quality, for example, Walsall has some of the "*best and most versatile"* agricultural land[3] and there are some high quality residential areas, mainly concentrated in the east of the borough. On the other hand, some parts of the borough are affected by industrial and mining "legacy" issues, and a significant number of sites are affected by ground contamination and land instability (see Figure 14 below). The condition and quality of some of Walsall's housing and urban open spaces is also relatively poor. Walsall is part of the Black Country, which lies at the hub of the national canal network, and a number of canals cross through the borough, including the Walsall Canal, Tame Valley Canal, and Wyrley & Essington Canal, although the canals are mainly used as walking and cycling routes and for leisure boating, and are not used to transport goods.

Figure 10: Walsall Strategic Transport Network



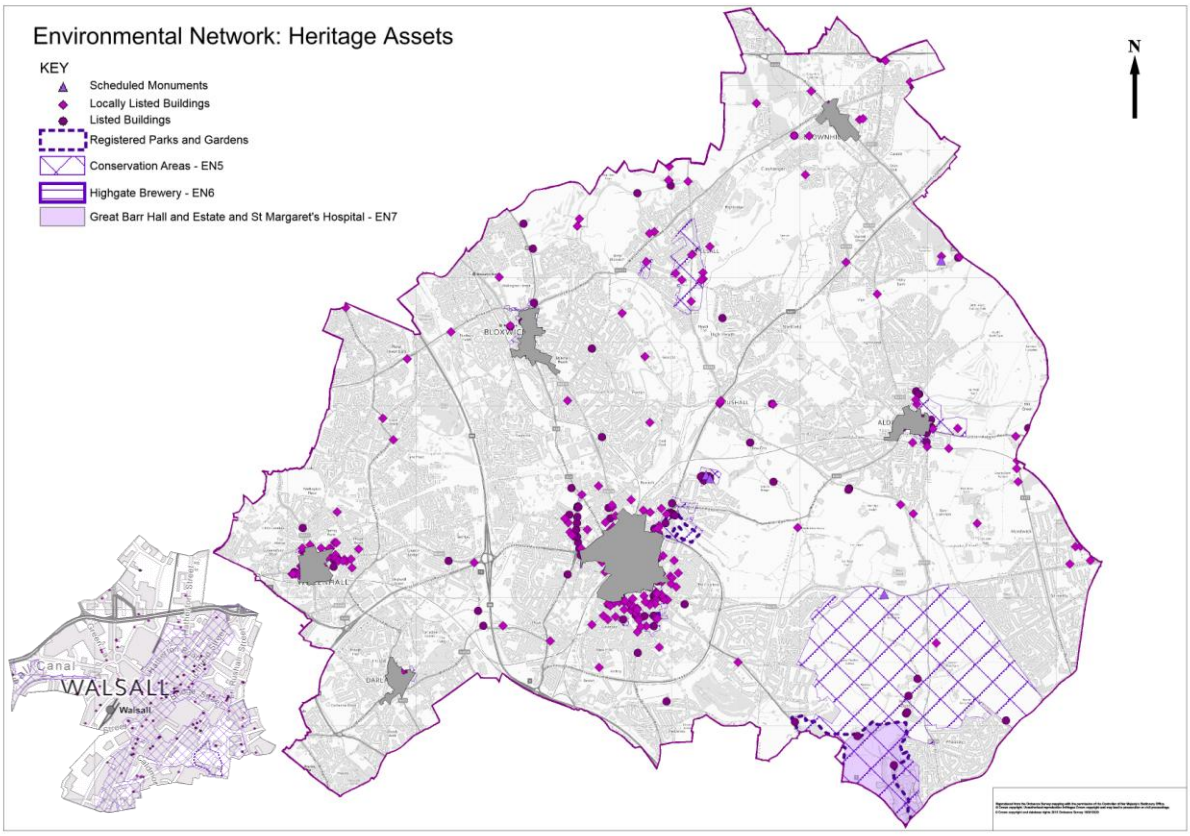
Walsall's utilities infrastructure includes facilities for the abstraction and treatment of drinking water at Bourne Vale Pumping Station in Aldridge and sewage treatment facilities at Goscote and Green Lane (Walsall Wood). Energy infrastructure is mainly limited to transmission and distribution networks and this includes a number of important overhead

[3] As defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012).

and underground power lines, as well as sub-stations. The only significant renewable energy generating facilities are currently the two landfill gas plants at Vigo/ Utopia and Highfields South. While the borough has a significant number of facilities for recycling and recovery of waste, there are gaps in provision, for example, Walsall has no facilities for composting, or for energy recovery except for small-scale plants at existing businesses or community facilities and the two landfill gas plants mentioned above.

Walsall's canals, railway lines, historic town centres, industrial buildings and older housing areas are important features of the townscape and are also important elements of the borough's **cultural heritage**. Figure 11 below shows the distribution of designated heritage assets, including listed buildings and conservation areas. A significant proportion of these assets are in the Town Centre. There are also many within the District Centres, which are outside the scope of the SAD and AAP.

Figure 11: Cultural Heritage – Heritage Assets in Walsall



The main threats to Walsall's historic environment are incremental changes caused by inappropriate repairs to buildings, neglect, vandalism, and arson, which has led to the loss of several listed buildings in the Town Centre. The annual Heritage at Risk Register produced

by Historic England includes scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas. The most recent register has 11 entries within Walsall, made up of: 7 Conservation Areas (three of which are in the Town Centre and one in the SAD); two listed places of worship (including the Grade II* listed St Matthews Church in the Town Centre); the Grade II* listed Great Barr Hall and its associated Grade II registered parkland.[4] Additionally, although it is not currently included on the Heritage at Risk Register, the Grade II listed Highgate Brewery is considered to be vulnerable as it is no longer in active use and at risk of vandalism and falling into long term disuse and disrepair.

Natural Resources

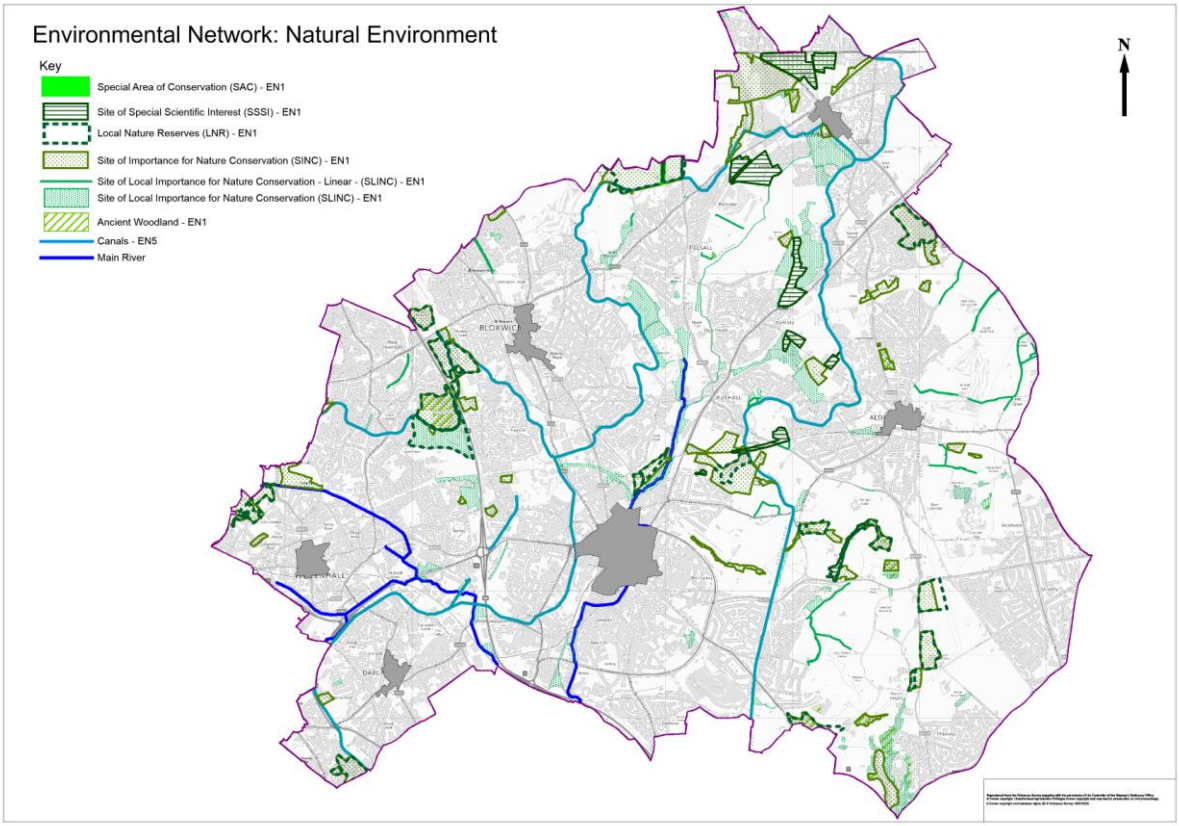
Walsall has a significant amount of natural green space, including sites of national and local importance for wild **fauna and flora** and geological conservation, and areas important for local and national **landscape** character. Figure 12 shows sites in Walsall which have been designated for their importance for biodiversity or geological conservation, including the inland waterway network of river, stream and canal corridors.

The Cannock Extension Canal is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of international importance, because it supports floating water plantain (*Luronium natans*) which is a nationally rare species. The Stage Two Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the BCCS initially identified a potential for impacts on the Cannock Extension Canal SAC as a result of planned growth. Subsequent research was carried out into the potential impact pathways affecting the site. The research enabled impacts from activities associated with the BCCS to be 'screened out.'

The Humber Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar and its qualifying features are also potentially affected by the impact pathways provided by the River Trent and Tame. However, the possibility of impacts as result of activities proposed by the AAP and SAD have also been 'screened out' on the basis that the water utilities companies have raised no issue with development proposed by either plan, and the BCCS Water Cycle Study demonstrates that there are sufficient water resources and waste water management infrastructure.

[4] See Historic England Heritage At Risk Registers: https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/

Figure 12: Natural Environment – Designated Sites and Inland Waterways in Walsall



The BCCS Stage Two Assessment and subsequent Appropriate Assessment did identify some potential for increased housing development in Walsall to increase visitor pressure on the Cannock Chase SAC.[5] However, it was considered that any negative effects could be overcome through mitigation measures, and through further HRA of any subsequent local plans. The potential for effects as a result of the allocations and policies of the SAD and AAP on both European Sites has been further considered in the HRA report of the SAD and AAP carried out by the Council, the results of which are published in a separate report. In order to comply with 12(2) (b) of the SEA Regulations, a number of 'reasonable alternatives' for mitigating the potential harm to Cannock Chase SAC have been considered, and the outcomes are summarised in Chapter 6 of this report (see Section 6.4).

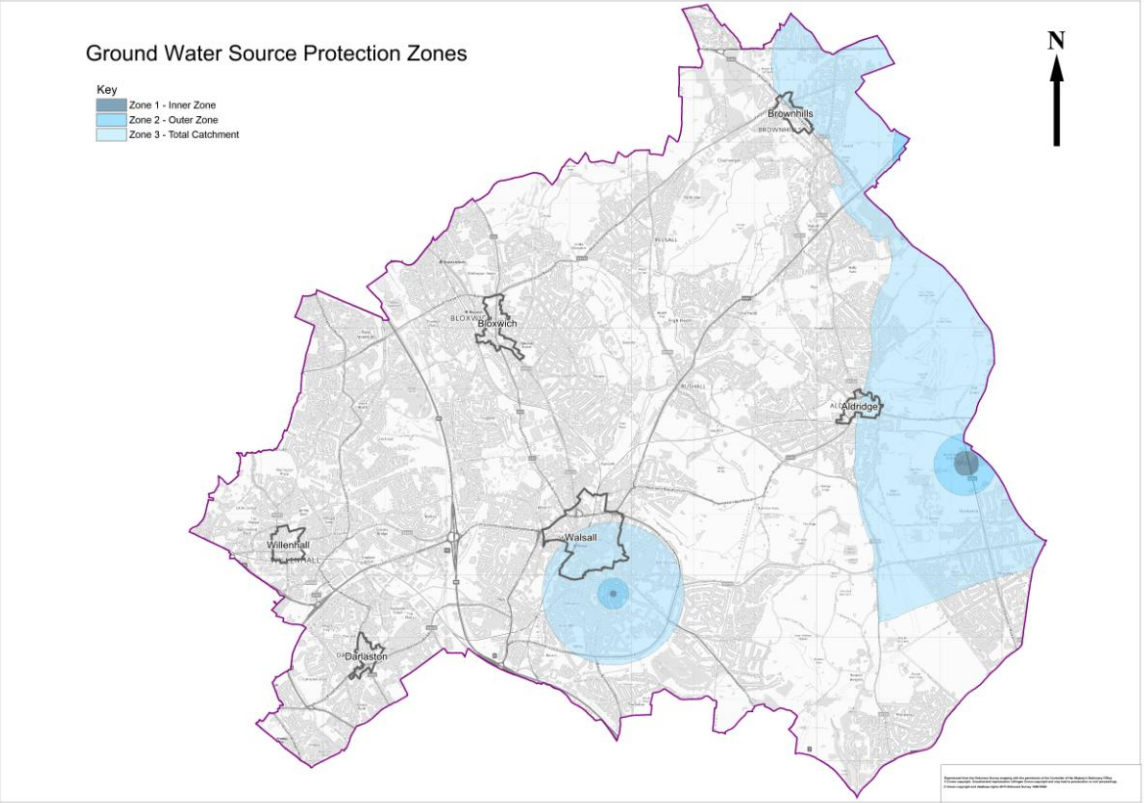
Walsall has 8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and 38 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), which include important areas of lowland heathland, woodland and wetland habitat.[6] Barr Beacon in the south of the borough is an important landscape

[5] Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Black Country Joint Core Strategy: Screening Report and Appropriate Assessment (June 2010), UE Associates (available online).

[6] See Walsall Council Nature Conservation web pages:

feature, being one of the highest points of land in the West Midlands. About a third of Walsall's administrative area is open land, which extends beyond the borough boundary into Staffordshire, and this area has been designated as Green Belt on the saved Walsall UDP Proposals Map. Much of this is still in agricultural use, and includes some of the "*best and most versatile*" agricultural land. The main threats to Walsall's natural environment are currently loss through redevelopment, incremental changes caused by inappropriate land management and neglect, and risks from pollution.

Figure 13: Groundwater Resources in Walsall



Walsall has important **water** resources, including an extensive network of inland waterways (rivers, streams and canals), as shown on Figure 12 above. The inland waterway network is an important element of the local landscape as well as being of importance for wildlife and for recreation. Walsall's main rivers and streams, the River Tame, Ford Brook and Sneyd Brook, drain northwards into the River Trent and are therefore within the Humber River

http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/conservation_and_regeneration/nature_conservation.htm
See also National Character Area Profiles - National Character Area 67: Cannock Chase and Cank Wood (2009): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles#ncas-in-west-midlands

Basin District, forming part of the Tame, Anker and Mease catchment area. Walsall also has groundwater resources which are providing a source of potable water (see Figure 13 above).

All of the groundwater bodies in Walsall have been designated by the Environment Agency as Drinking Water Protected Areas and Nitrate Vulnerable Zones. The overall quality of the water in most of the borough's rivers, streams and groundwater bodies is not currently meeting the "good" standard required by the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), and is not expected to do so until 2027, although the quality of the water in canals is already meeting the required standards (see Table 17 below). The Environment Agency, which is responsible for water quality monitoring, has identified development and pollution as the main factors affecting water quality.[7] One of the main sources is discharge of waste water into watercourses, and pollution from surface water run-off, which can be exacerbated during heavy rainfall events or flooding events.

Table 17: Water Quality in Walsall - Current and Predicted Status of Water Bodies

Water Body	EA River/ Canal/ Other Reference	EA Water Body Reference	Overall Quality Status in 2009	Overall Predicted Quality Status in 2015	Overall Quality Status Objectives by 2027
Rivers and Streams					
R Tame (Oldbury Arm) from Source to Coseley Catch	R17	GB104028042600	Moderate	Moderate	Good
Footherley Brook from Source to Black-Bourne Brook	R20	GB104028046450	Poor	Poor	Good
Crane-Burntwood Brook from Source to Footherley Brook	R22	GB104028046480	Moderate	Moderate	Good
Coseley Catchtrib of Tame (Oldbury Arm)	R34	GB104028046800	Moderate	Moderate	Good
R Tame (Wolverhampton Arm) from Sneyd Brook to Oldbury Arm	R35	GB104028046820	Moderate	Moderate	Good
Perry Park catch (trib of Tame)	R36	GB104028046830	Moderate	Moderate	Good
Tame (Oldbury Arm) from Coseley Catch to R Tame	R37	GB104028042610	Moderate	Moderate	Good
River Tame from Conf of the two arms to R Blythe	R39	GB104028046840	Moderate	Moderate	Good
R Tame (Wolverhampton Arm) from Source to Sneyd Brook	R41	GB104028046930	Moderate	Moderate	Good
Ford Brook from Source to River Tame	R42	GB104028046990	Moderate	Moderate	Good

[7] See Humber River Basin Management Plan (2009), Environment Agency: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-basin-management-plan-humber-district

Canals					
Wyrley & Essington, Daw End and Rushall Canals	Ca9	GB71210541	Good	Good Potential	Good
Walsall Canal, Northern Section	Ca13	GB70410508	Good	Good Potential	Good
Walsall Canal, Anson Branch (isolated section)	Ca21	GB70410156	Good	Good Potential	Good
Tame Valley Canal	Ca53	GB70410514	Good	Good Potential	Good
Groundwater Bodies					
Staffordshire Trent Valley - Mercia Mudstone East & Coal Measures	G7	GB40402G300300	Good	Good	Good
Tame Anker Mease - PT Sandstone Birmingham Lichfield	G8	GB40401G301000	Poor	Poor	Good
Tame Anker Mease - Secondary Combined	G34	GB40402G990800	Poor	Poor	Good

Source: Annex B, Humber River Basin Management Plan (2009), Environment Agency, see also Environment Agency Online Mapping ("What's in My Back Yard?")

Unlike many other urban areas, Walsall has significant mineral resources of "local and national importance."[8] The western two-thirds of the borough overlie the Upper Coal Measures of the South Staffordshire Coalfield. There is also an extensive area of Triassic Sandstone underlying Streetly, Aldridge and Shire Oak, which contains sand and gravel resources, and there are brick clay resources in Stubbers Green, Shelfield and Walsall Wood. In addition to this there are outcrops of limestone in Walsall Town Centre, Rushall and Daw End, and a small outcrop of dolerite at Pouk Hill. Historic exploitation of these minerals, particularly coal and limestone, has had a major influence over the pattern of development in the borough. Further information on mineral resources in Walsall can be found in a recent study into mineral resources and the viability and deliverability of mineral development[9] and in SAD Minerals Technical Appendix 2.

Existing Environmental Problems

Parts of Walsall are affected by environmental problems. In Darlaston, Willenhall, Moxley, the Town Centre and Rushall, some sites are affected by potential contamination and ground instability as a result of the legacy of historic industrial and mining activities. Figure

[8] As defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012).

[9] See Walsall SAD & AAP Minerals Study (2015), Amec Foster Wheeler: www.walsall.gov.uk/local_plans/evidence.htm

14 below shows the extent of known former landfill sites and areas which have been subject to heavy industry in the past, where contamination may be present. Recent viability and deliverability studies carried out as part of the evidence for the SAD and AAP have taken into account the existence of such problems on the sites evaluated.[10] In practice, most sites affected are likely to be capable of being remediated and developed.

Figure 14: Ground Contamination – Areas of Potential Risk in Walsall

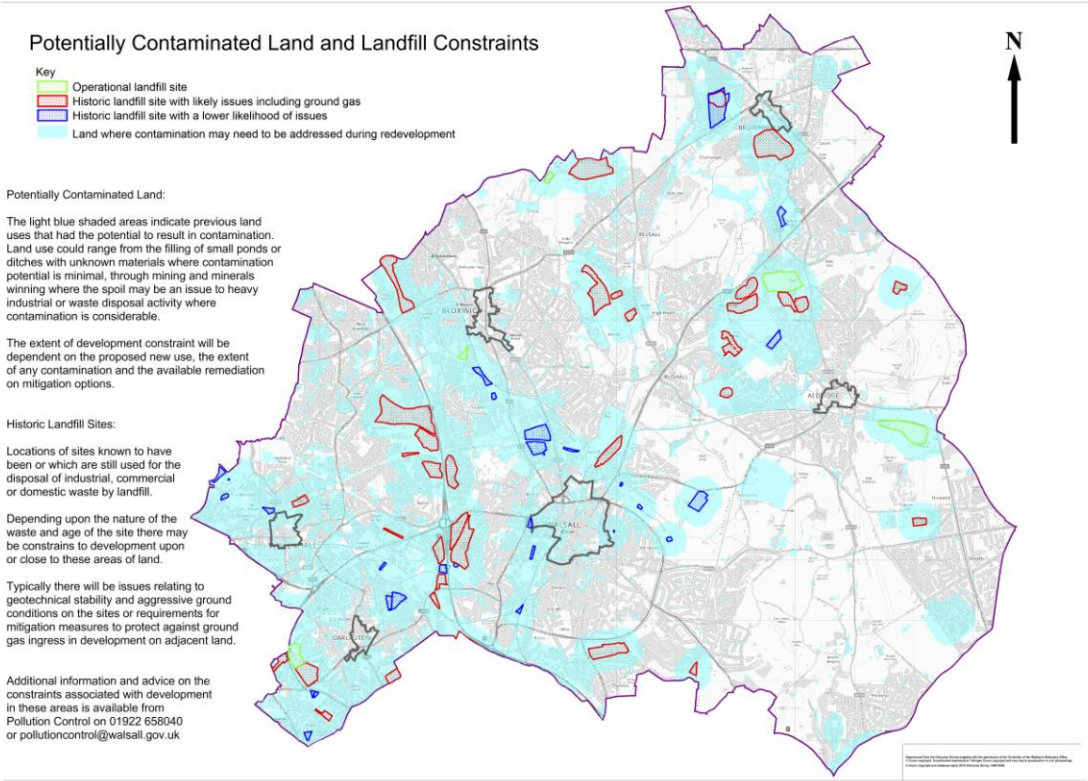


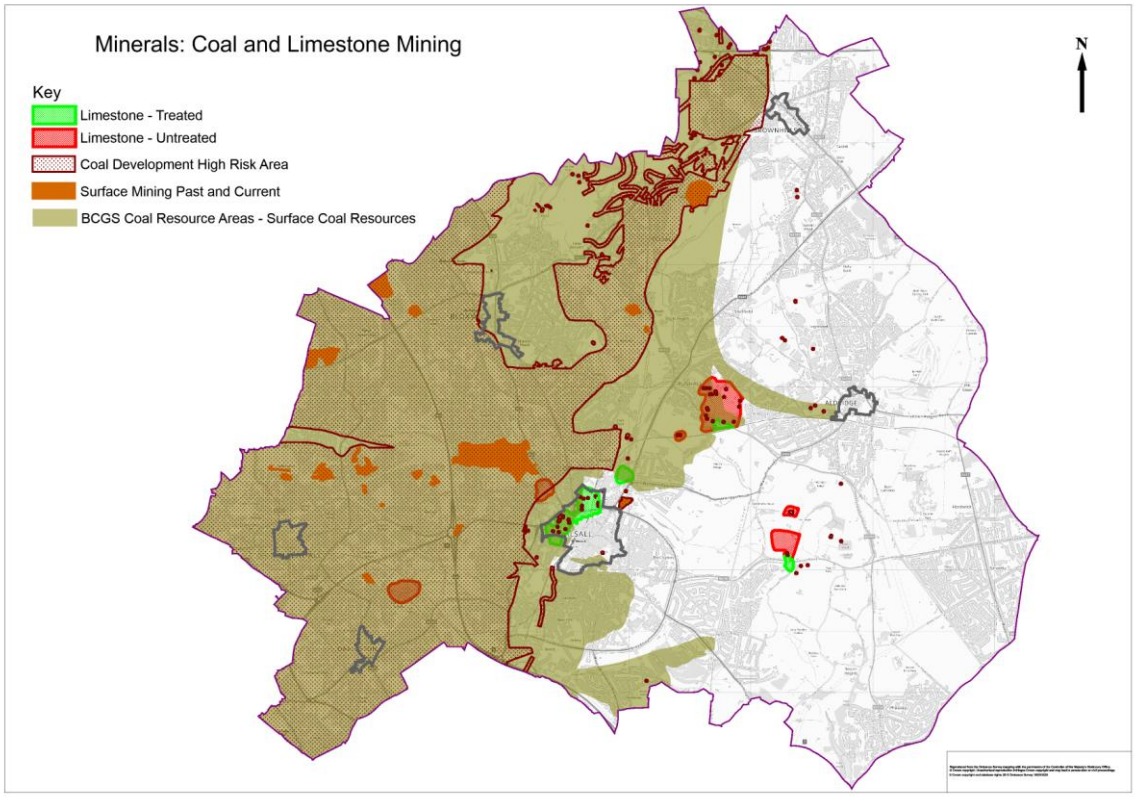
Figure 15 shows the Coal Mining High Risk Area identified by the Coal Authority in Walsall, covering the parts of the borough where their records show that surface coal mining and deep coal mining has taken place in the past.[11] This map also shows the areas known to be affected by historic Limestone mining, based on records held by the Council.[12]

[10] See Walsall SAD, CIL Deliverability and Viability Study (2015) and Walsall Town Centre Demand Study & Development Sites Assessment (2015) DTZ, available on Council website: www.walsall.gov.uk/local_plans/evidence.htm

[11] Available on the gov.uk website: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coalfield-plans-walsall-area

[12] Available on the gov.uk website: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coalfield-plans-walsall-area

Figure 15: Mining Legacy – Areas of Coal and Limestone Mining Risk in Walsall



Air quality is also an important issue in Walsall. There are high levels of air pollution in several of the road corridors in Walsall, and the main cause of this is emissions from road traffic, particularly in road corridors affected by congestion. As a result of this, the statutory limit values for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) are being exceeded in the M6 corridor, including Junctions 9 and 10, in the main road corridors connecting to the motorway junctions, along the Town Centre Ring Road, and along other major routes, such as the A461 Walsall Road/ Lichfield Road (see Figure 16 below). There is increasing concern at a national and local level about emissions of particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}) which can also be harmful to health.[13] Road traffic emissions are a significant source of particulate matter but it can also be generated at a local level by industry and mineral extraction.

Road traffic is also the main generator of noise in Walsall - the road corridors exposed to air pollution are also exposed to high levels of noise (see Figure 17 below). Any strategy for future development in these corridors will need to take into account the extent to which the effects of air and noise pollution could be reduced to minimise any harm to occupiers, in particular, "sensitive receptors" such as housing.

[13] See Defra National Statistics Release: Air Quality (23 April 2015): https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/air-quality-statistics

Figure 16: Air Pollution – Nitrogen Dioxide Areas of Exceedance in Walsall

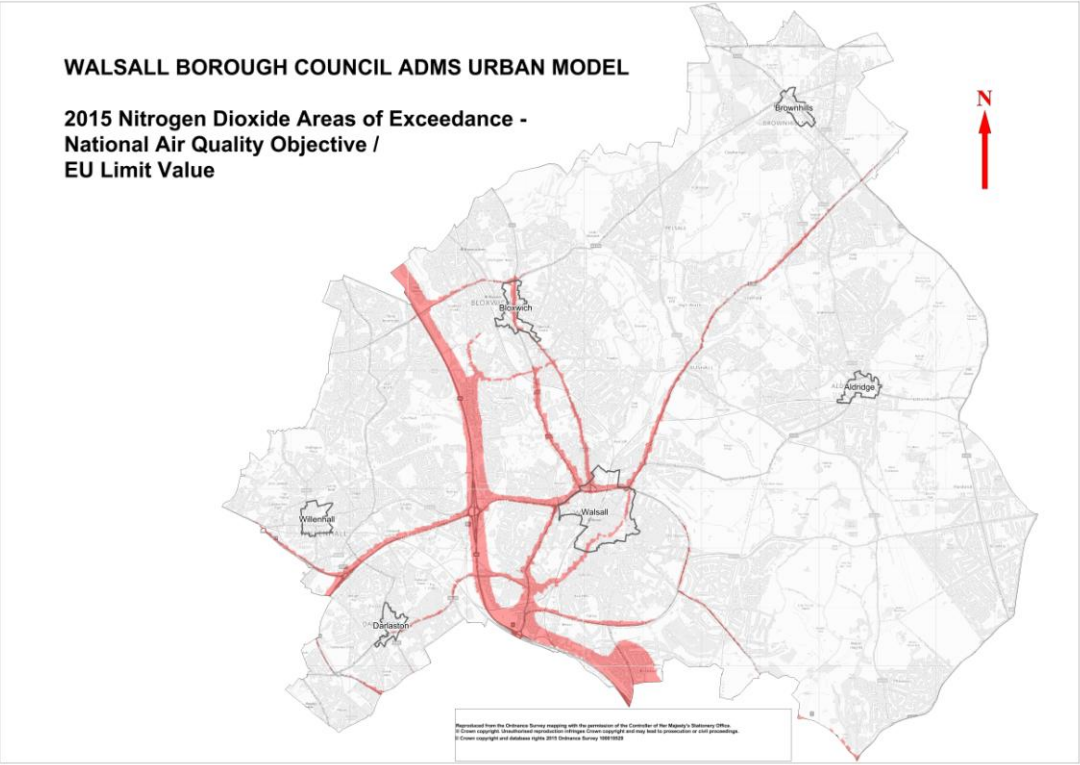
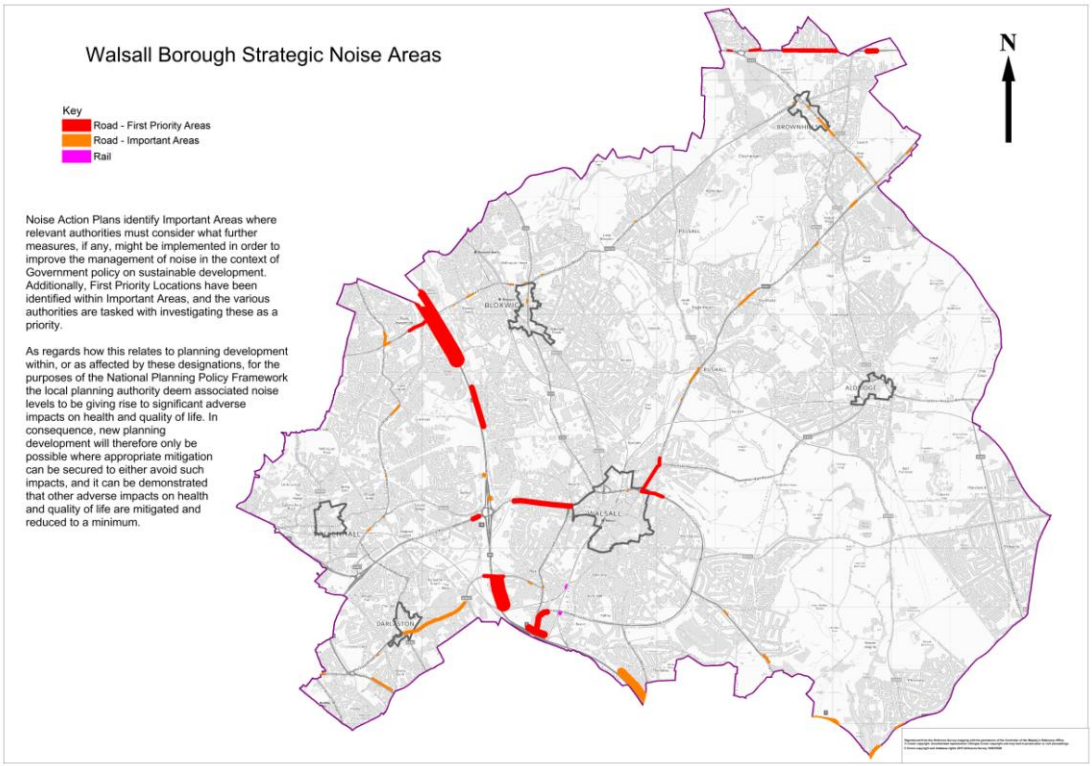


Figure 17: Noise – Strategic Noise Areas in Walsall



Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

The UKCP09 projections published by the Meteorological Office[14] show that in the 2080s, under the "medium" emissions scenario, all areas of the UK are likely to become warmer on average relative to the 1961-90 baseline. Mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures are projected to increase across the UK in both summer and winter. Average annual precipitation is expected to change little across the UK, but winter precipitation is expected to increase in western regions while summer precipitation decreases in many, but not all, parts of the UK.

In the West Midlands, under the "medium" emissions scenario, average (mean) winter temperature is projected to increase by up to 3.2° and average (mean) summer temperature by up to 4.4° by the 2050s (90% probability level). Average annual rainfall is also projected to increase in the West Midlands, by up to 27% in the winter and up to 6% in the summer. Table 18 below summarises the projected seasonal increases in temperature and rainfall under each scenario.

Table 18: Climate Change Projections for the West Midlands

Indicator	Predicted Increase - 90% Probability					
	Low Emissions Scenario		Medium Emissions Scenario		High Emissions Scenario	
	2020s	2050s	2020s	2050s	2020s	2050s
Change in mean winter temperature (ºC)	2.0°	2.9°	2.1°	3.2°	2.1°	3.5°
Change in mean summer temperature (ºC)	2.6°	3.9°	2.6°	4.4°	2.5°	4.8°
Change in mean winter precipitation (rainfall) (%)	+15	+23	+14	+27	+15	+30
Change in mean summer precipitation (rainfall) (%)	+11	+14	+12	+6	+15	+7

Source: UK Climate Change Projections (UKCP09), Meteorological Office

A wide range of advice is available on designing developments to be resilient to these projected effects, such as the "toolkit" produced by the Modern Built Environment Transfer

[14] See: http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/21708

Knowledge Network (MBETKN) Climate Change Adaptation Group in collaboration with the Environment Agency and Climate Ready.[15] Risks to the built environment identified include:

- Declining levels of comfort due to temperature changes;
- Risks to foundations from shrinkage of clay soils;
- Risks to stability of slopes, embankments and other earth structures;
- Risks to structural stability due to increased wind loading;
- Impacts on long-term serviceability of construction materials;
- Risks to safety of construction workers due to extreme weather events;
- Impacts on capacity of drainage and sewerage systems from increased rainfall;
- Increased risk of fluvial flooding and flash-flooding during heavy rainfall events.

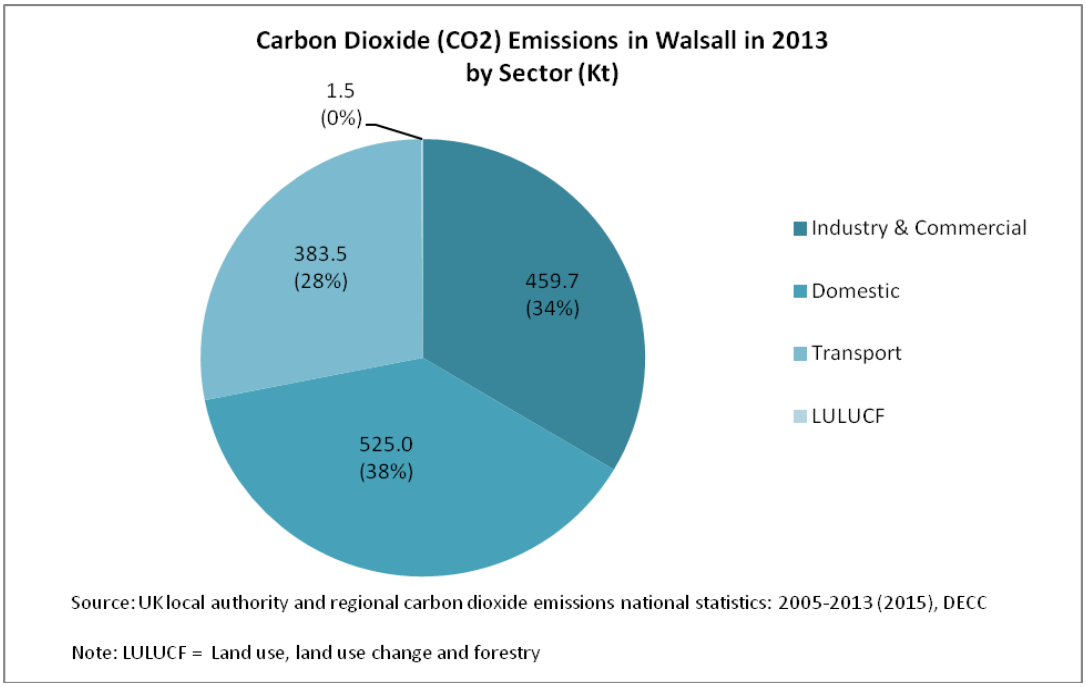
Like every other urban area, existing development in Walsall is contributing to the emission of "greenhouse gases" which are the main factors driving climate change, Nationally, as well as locally, the main greenhouse gas that contributes towards climate change is carbon dioxide (CO_2), the main sources of which are energy consumption and transport (see Figure 18 below).[16] This indicates that a very small proportion of emissions can be attributed to recent land use change. Trend data indicates that while emissions in Walsall have fallen since 2005, there has been no further decline in emissions since 2009.

Businesses and households in Walsall are still relying on non-renewable gas and electricity supplies to a significant extent. The West Midlands Renewable Energy Study (2011) found that there is little scope to reduce CO_2 emissions through increased generation of electricity from renewable and low carbon sources in Walsall. However, the study did identify some potential to generate electricity from "biomass" (including waste) and from wind power, and potential to make more efficient use of residual heat generated by existing development through "district" heat, power and cooling.

[15] Guidance for Making the Case for Climate Change Adaptation in the Built Environment: https://connect.innovateuk.org/web/climate-change-adaptation/article-view/-/blogs/guidance-for-making-the-case-for-climate-change-adaptation-in-the-built-environment

[16] See National Statistics on UK Carbon Dioxide Emissions published by DECC: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics

Figure 18: Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) Emissions in Walsall in 2013 by Sector



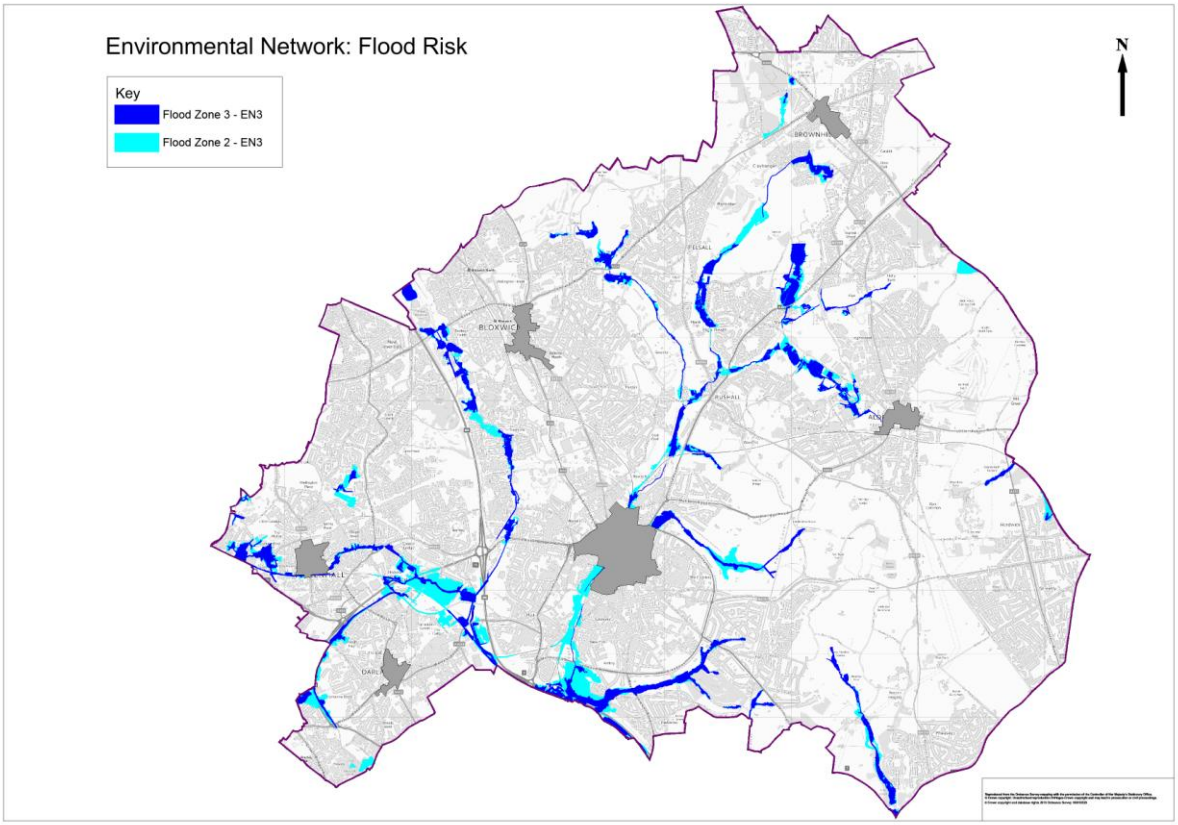
Road transport is another important source of CO_2. Current transport strategies and programmes for Walsall, such as the Black Country Core Strategy (2011), the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (2011), and the Walsall Transport Strategy (2011) include a range of actions and projects aimed at reducing emissions from transport, by promoting walking, cycling and rail transport. The Black Country Spatial Strategy (see Chapter 1, Figure 3) promotes a pattern of development that makes best use of existing transport networks, to minimise the need for people to travel by road to work, to shop or for leisure. This approach is also supported by the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4).

Some former landfill sites and coal mines are also generating methane (CH_4), which is another potent "greenhouse gas." As is noted above, measures are in place to mitigate this at existing/ recently infilled landfill sites (Vigo/ Utopia and Highfields South), by capturing landfill gas for energy. It is unlikely to be feasible to do this at older former landfill sites that were not designed to capture landfill gas. However, former landfill sites and mines that are known to be generating gas are subject to monitoring by the Coal Authority and by the Council. Risk assessments are required with proposals for development on or near to such sites, and there are remedies available that will often allow development to take place.

Parts of Walsall are potentially vulnerable to unavoidable climate change effects which the evidence suggests are already starting to happen, such as heavy rainfall events which are exacerbating the risks from fluvial and/ or surface water flooding. Figure 19 below shows

the areas currently at risk from fluvial flooding and the Environment Agency has published maps of areas at potential risk from surface water flooding. Land near the River Tame, Ford Brook, Sneyd Brook (including culverts and tunnels) is most at risk from fluvial flooding, in particular, parts of the Town Centre, parts of Darlaston, and the Willenhall area.[17]

Figure 19: Flood Risk – Areas at Risk from Fluvial Flooding in Walsall



Other possible effects of climate change that could affect Walsall include 'heat island effects' - the tendency for built-up areas to be hotter than their rural surroundings. Changes to precipitation (rainfall) are also likely to have implications for future water supply in the longer-term, although the impacts on the West Midlands vary according to the climate change projection scenarios.[18] These changes are likely to affect nature reserves and

[17] See BCCS evidence on flood risk and water management - Black Country Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (2009), Jacobs, Ford Brook Strategic Flood Risk Mapping (2009), Halcrow Group Ltd, Black Country Water Cycle Study and Scoping Surface Water Management Plan (2009), URS Scott Wilson: http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/evidencesa/
See also Walsall Council Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) (2011) and Environment Agency Interactive Mapping (What's in Your Backyard?):
http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment.htm
http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?x=357683&y=355134&scale=1&layerGroups=default&ep=map&textonly=off&lang=_e&topic=floodmap

ecological networks, other open spaces and agricultural land as well as the built environment.[19]

There is evidence suggesting that the environmental conditions in some parts of Walsall are having harmful effects on **health** (see summary of Current Social Conditions below). For example, the parts of the borough where environmental problems are concentrated, such as derelict land, exposure to air pollution and noise, also have the highest concentrations of people with related health problems, such as respiratory disorders. In areas where the overall environmental quality is generally poor and access to open space is limited, this is also likely to be having effects on the health and wellbeing of people living there.

Current Economic Conditions - April 2015

Economic Base and Key Business Sectors

Walsall's economic base is largely dependent on traditional manufacturing industry, which for many years has been in decline. While there was a modest upturn in manufacturing in the UK in 2013 and 2014, the last 12 months has seen a slowdown in activity, mainly as a result of global market conditions which have led to a fall in export demand. The early part of 2015 has therefore seen lower rates of growth in the manufacturing sector than in 2013 and 2014.[20] Despite this, the number of people employed in the manufacturing sector has continued to grow at a national level, although the rate of growth has slowed.[21]

A Service Sector Survey carried out by the CBI during April and May 2015 indicates continued strong growth in this sector in the UK in the early part of 2015, although concerns are increasing about the availability of skills and labour.[22] Growth in consumer services

[18] The Case for Change – Current and Future Water Availability (2011), Environment Agency – no longer available online, has been archived and web link broken

[19] Natural Environment – Adapting to Climate Change (2012), Defra:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-environment-adapting-to-climate-change

[20] Quarterly Industrial Trends Survey and Economic Update (June 2015), CBI:

http://news.cbi.org.uk/news/economic-update5/

[21] Labour Market Statistical Bulletin (June 2015), Office of National Statistics

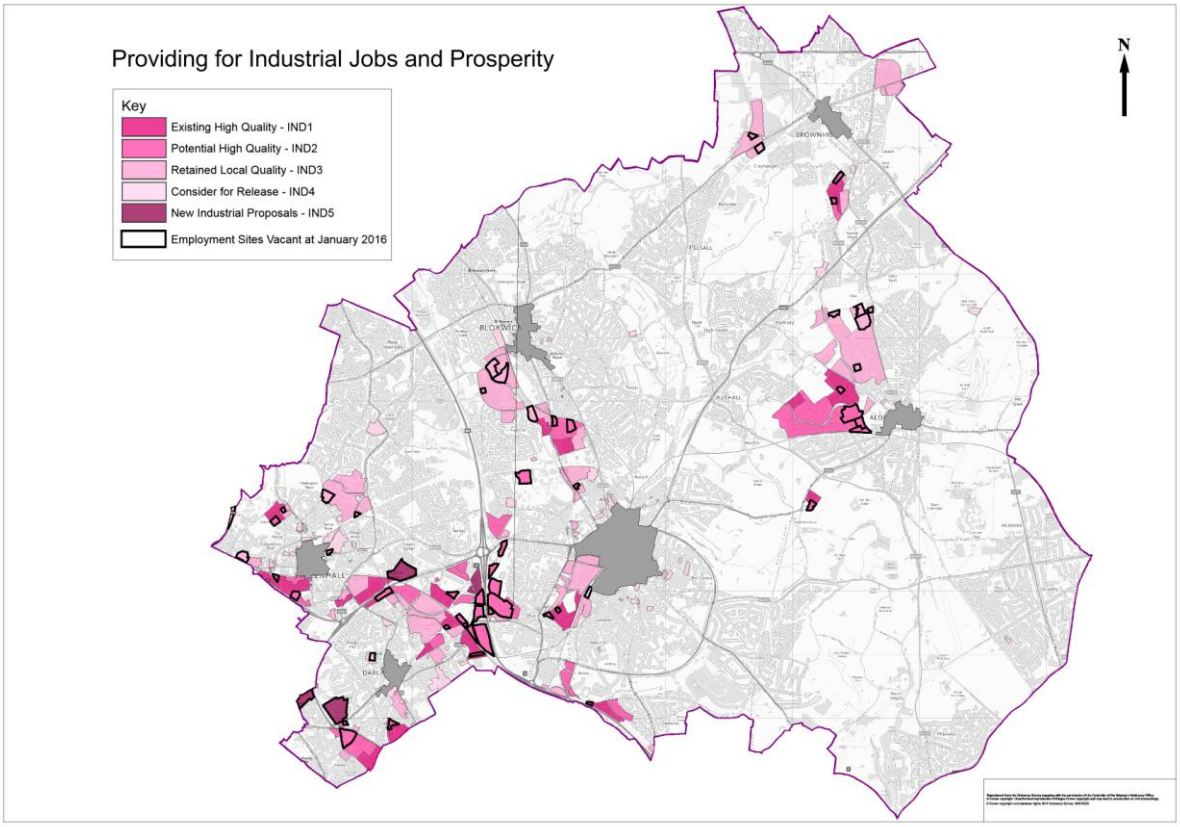
[22] Quarterly Service Sector Survey (May 2015), CBI:

http://news.cbi.org.uk/news/boon-for-businesses-and-professional-services-as-growth-speeds-up/

(which includes hotels, bars, restaurants, travel and leisure firms) was more modest. However, a high proportion of the service sector businesses surveyed reported that the number of people they employ had risen recently, and there was also a high degree of optimism about future growth among the businesses surveyed.

Most business activity in Walsall takes place in established industrial areas, of which the most important are Darlaston, Pleck, Wednesbury, Willenhall, Bloxwich, Aldridge and Brownhills (see Figure 20 below). Walsall Town Centre is also a major focus for economic activity, and contains the most important concentration of shops and commercial leisure facilities in the borough.

Figure 20: Existing Industrial Areas in Walsall



Employment and Economic Activity

Walsall's unemployment rate is higher than the national and regional average and wages are lower. According to the NOMIS local authority profile employment and unemployment figures for 2014/15, Walsall's unemployment rate is higher than the national and sub-national average. The median earnings in pounds for employees living in the area, in terms

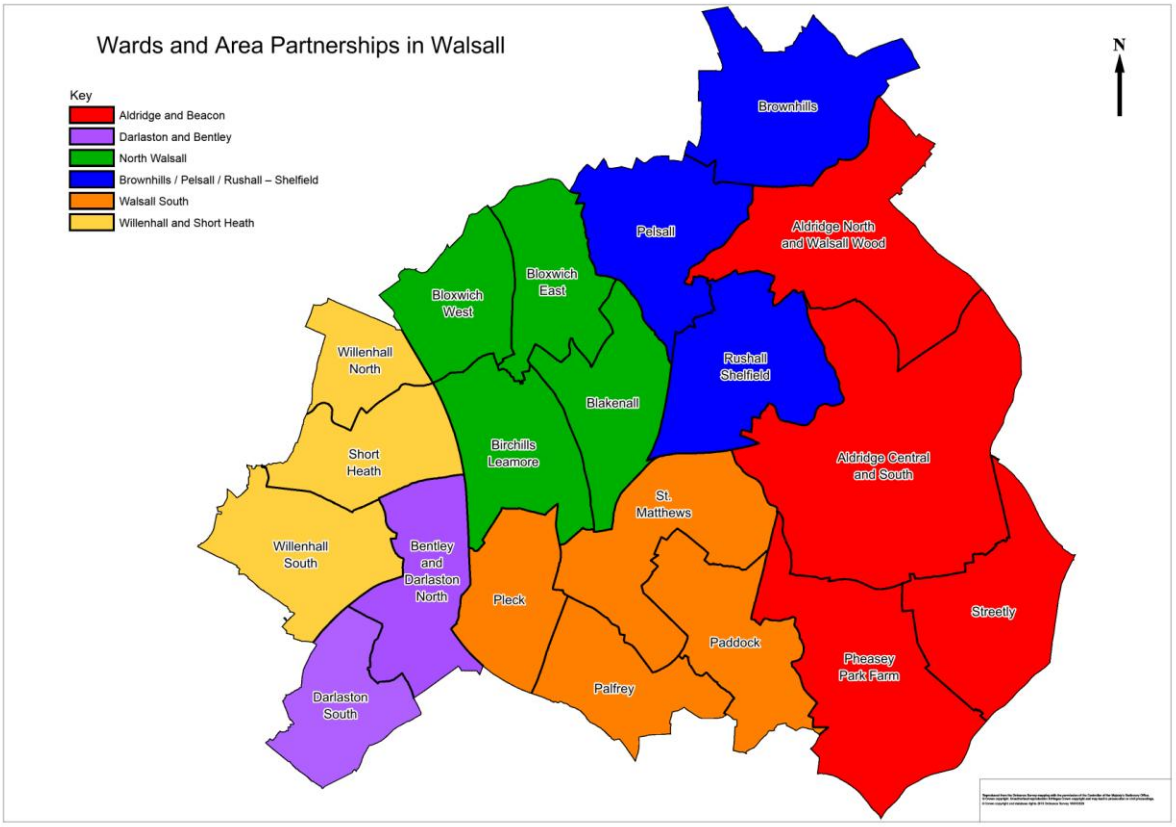
of gross weekly pay, are 475.9 for Walsall residents, compared with 492.5 for residents in the West Midlands as a whole, and 529.6 for residents in Great Britain. The relevant data on employment and unemployment is reproduced in Table 19 below.

Table 19: Employment and Unemployment in Walsall in 2014/15 – Comparison with Employment and Unemployment in the West Midlands and Great Britain

Data	Walsall Number	Walsall %	West Midlands %	Great Britain %
Economically Active	122,000	70.9	75.1	77.7
In Employment	112,900	65.6	70.7	73.4
Unemployed	8,800	7.2	5.7	5.4

Source: NOMIS Local Authority Profile for Walsall, 2014/15 data

Figure 21: Local Government Wards and Partnership Areas in Walsall



However, economic conditions are not the same in all parts of the borough. Analysis of socio-economic data at the level of Area Partnerships or Local Government Wards (see Figure 21 above) shows marked differences in socio-economic conditions across the borough. The highest concentrations of unemployment and low incomes are found in south

Willenhall, Bloxwich and central Walsall, which also tend to have the highest concentrations of environmental and social problems (see Table 20 and summary of Current Social Conditions below). By contrast, the areas with the highest levels of employment and high incomes are found in north Bloxwich, Aldridge, and Streetly which are also the areas with the fewest environmental and social problems.

There has been no growth in employment in Walsall during the last ten years, and the proportion of those in employment within the workforce have actually declined slightly from 67.3% to 65.6% in the ten years to October 2014-September 2015, similar to the West Midlands as a whole (71.7% to 70.7%), by against a national rise from 72.8 to 73.4%. The service sectors are not well represented and have not expanded enough to replace the manufacturing jobs that have been lost. The relatively low level of skills among the working population is one factor likely to be affecting economic performance.

Employment Land Supply

Figure 20 above shows the location of existing employment areas in Walsall. The shortage of employment land available for development compared with demand makes it more difficult to attract economic investment into the borough, and to retain expanding industrial companies. Although Walsall Borough is well located in relation to the national motorway network (see Figure 10), and also is part of a large manufacturing focussed area with a large labour force with the right characteristics to attract investment, there are local access issues and traffic congestion, especially around M6 Junctions 9 and 10.

The quality and location of the land available is also an issue. Many sites are known or suspected to have problems with ground conditions (see Figures 14 and 15). Although there are policies in the BCCS to control changes of use of employment land, some of the borough's best employment sites have recently come under pressure for redevelopment with housing. Action is being taken to improve this through projects such as the Darlaston Strategic Development Area (DSDA) Access Project, and the M6 Junction 10 improvements.

Walsall Town Centre and Other Shopping Areas

Figure 22 below shows the existing network of shopping areas in Walsall, which comprise Walsall Town Centre, the five District Centres of Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall, the Local Centres, and out-of-centre developments.

Table 20: Key Economic Indicators – Walsall Borough and Walsall Partnership Areas

Area Partnership	Employment	Businesses[23]	Business Density	Industrial Sectors
Walsall Borough	**Two thirds (66.1%) of Walsall's adult population were economically active in 2011, compared with 69.7% nationally, and 6.8% of adults were unemployed compared to 4.4% in England and Wales.**	**There were estimated to be 7,725 workplaces in Walsall in 2014, the vast majority of which (78.3%) were "micro" businesses of 0-9 employees, and a further 17.4% were "small" businesses of 10 – 49 employees**	**There are 46 businesses per 1,000 population in Walsall, compared to 68 businesses per 1,000 population in England**	**The main business sectors in Walsall in 2014 were:** **Construction (11.8% jobs)** **Retail (% jobs)** **Manufacturing (% jobs)**
1. Brownhills, Pelsall, Rushall/ Shelfield	77.8% of adult population were economically active in 2011, higher than the Walsall average, and unemployment rate was 6.7%, similar to Walsall average. In 2014, 2,505 adults were dependent on an out-of-work benefit, which was below Walsall average but higher than national average, largest group are on employment support allowance/ incapacity benefit (1,475 people).	There were estimated to be 935 workplaces in the area in 2014, of which 81% were "micro" businesses (0 – 9 employees), higher than the borough average	There are 42 businesses per 1,000 population in this area which is lower than the borough and national average	Main business sectors are construction (17.6% jobs), retail (11.2% jobs), manufacturing (11.2% jobs), professional, scientific and technical (8.6% jobs) and transport and storage (7.0% jobs). Important businesses include One Stop Stores Ltd (Wholesale & Retail), Castings Plc (Manufacturing) and Shaylor Group Plc (Construction).
2. Aldridge & Beacon	80.9% of adult population were economically active in 2011, significantly higher than the Walsall average, and the unemployment rate was 5.2%, lower than the Walsall average. In 2014, 1,975 of adults were dependent on an out-of-work benefit, significantly below borough and national average, largest group are on employment support allowance/ incapacity benefit (1,170 people).	There were estimated to be 1,735 workplaces in the area in 2014, of which 83% were "micro" businesses (0 – 9 employees), higher than the borough average	There are 56 businesses per 1,000 population in this area, which is higher than the borough average but lower than the national average	Main business sectors are construction (14.4% jobs), professional, scientific and technical (13.8% jobs) retail (10.4% jobs), manufacturing (8.4% jobs), and business, administration and support services (7.8% jobs). Important businesses include Bullock (Construction), Azzuri (Communications) and RMD Kwikform (Construction) (N.B. RMD Kwikform is proposing to relocate to Solihull).

[23] Source = NOMIS UK Business Counts 2014 – the "workplace" data in this table relates to "local units"

Area Partnership	Employment	Businesses[24]	Business Density	Industrial Sectors
3. North Walsall	70.5% of adult population were economically active in 2011, higher than the Walsall average, and the unemployment rate was 11.3%, also higher than the Walsall average. In 2014, 1 in 5 adults (6,570 people) were dependent on an out-of-work benefit, which was well above borough and national level of claimants, largest group are on employment support allowance/ incapacity benefit, representing 1 in 10 of adult workforce (3,355 people).	There were estimated to be 1,095 workplaces in the area in 2014, of which 76% were "micro" businesses (0 – 9 employees), lower than the borough average, and 14% were "small" (10 - 49 employees), also lower than the borough average	There are 33 businesses per 1,000 population in this area which is much lower than the borough and national average	Main business sectors are construction (13.2% jobs), retail (13.2% jobs), manufacturing (11.9% jobs) and health (8.7%). Important businesses include Homeserve Plc (Services), South Staffordshire Plc (Utilities) and S Macneillie & Sons Ltd (Manufacturing).
4. Walsall South	68.7% of adult population were economically active in 2011, slightly higher than the Walsall average, and unemployment rate was 10.0%, also higher than Walsall average. In 2014, 1 in 7 adults (5,750 people) were dependent on an out-of-work benefit, which was slightly above the borough level and well above national level of claimants, largest group are on employment support allowance/ incapacity benefit, representing 3,100 people.	There were estimated to be 2,275 workplaces in the area in 2014, of which 76% were "micro" businesses (0 – 9 employees), lower than the borough average, and 19% were "small" (10 - 49 employees), higher than the borough average	There are 60 businesses per 1,000 population in this area which is higher than the borough average and close to the national average, this is likely to reflect that the area includes part of the Town Centre	Main business sectors are retail (16.5% jobs), professional, scientific and technical (10.8% jobs), health (9.7% jobs), manufacturing (8.8% jobs) and business and support services (7.7% jobs). The sectors represented reflect that part of the area is in the Town Centre, and it also includes the Manor Hospital. Important businesses include Barhale (Construction) European Food Brokers (Wholesale, Retail, Trade) and The Staffing Group (Professional Services).

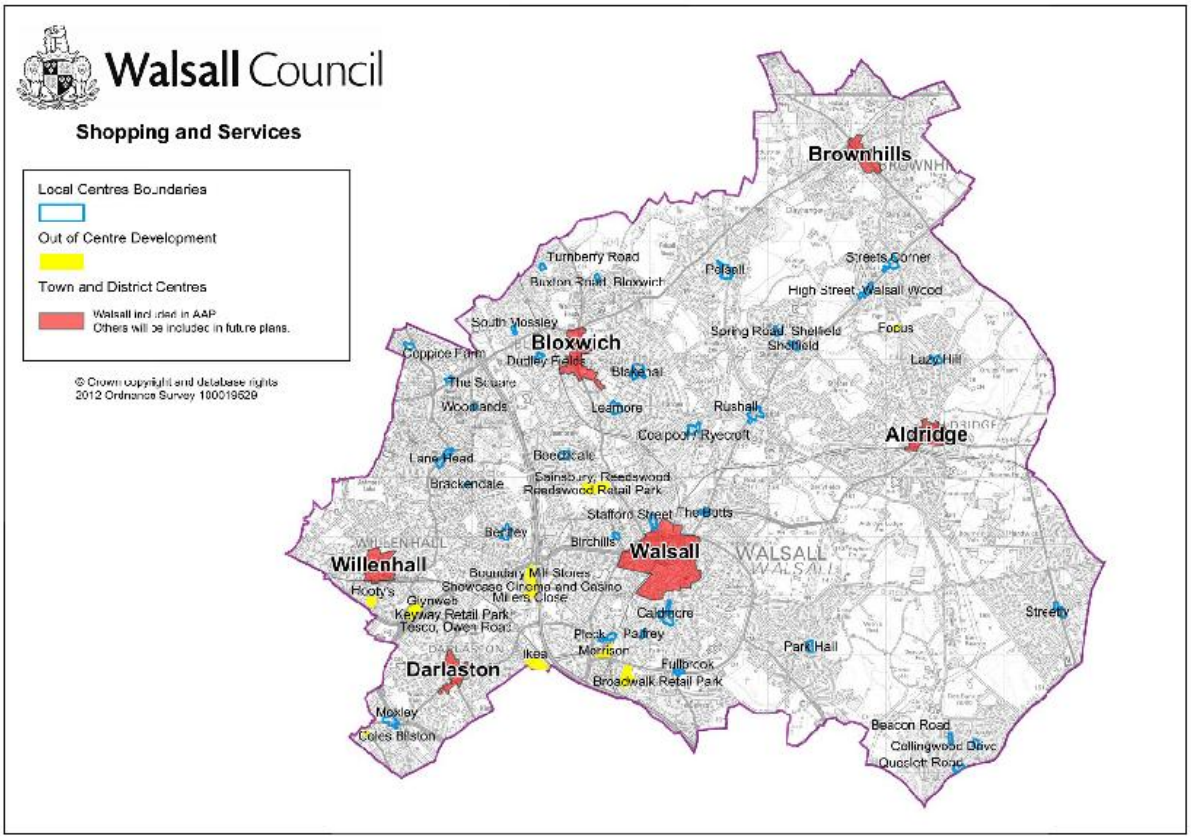
[24] Source = NOMIS UK Business Counts 2014 – the "workplace" data in this table relates to "local units"

Area Partnership	Employment	Businesses[25]	Business Density	Industrial Sectors
5. Darlaston & Bentley	71.0% of adult population were economically active in 2011, higher than the Walsall average, and unemployment rate was 10.1%, also higher than the Walsall average. In 2014, nearly 1 in 5 adults (3,215 people) were dependent on an out-of-work benefit, which was higher than the borough level and more than double the national level of claimants, largest group are on employment support allowance/ incapacity benefit, representing 1,570 people.	There were estimated to be 625 workplaces in the area in 2014, of which 75% were "micro" businesses (0 – 9 employees), lower than the borough average, although the proportion of "small" businesses (10 – 49 employees) was 19%, higher than the borough average	There are 36 businesses per 1,000 population in this area, which is much lower than the average business density for the borough and the national average	Main business sectors are manufacturing and retailing (each accounting for 15.2% jobs), which is higher than the borough average, other important sectors are construction (9.6% jobs), health, transport and storage, and motor trade (7.2% jobs each). Important businesses include ZF Lemforder UK Ltd (Manufacturing), Acerinox (UK) Ltd (Retail & Distribution) and Seconique Plc (Distribution & Warehousing).
6. Willenhall & Short Heath	76.8% of adult population were economically active in 2011, significantly higher than the Walsall average, unemployment rate was 8.2%, also higher than Walsall average. In 2014, almost 1 in 7 adults (3,560 people) were dependent on an out-of-work benefit, similar to borough level but higher than the national level of claimants, largest group are on employment support allowance/ incapacity benefit, representing 1790 people.	There were estimated to be 1,055 workplaces in the area in 2014, of which 78% were "micro" businesses (0 – 9 employees), similar to the borough average, although the proportion of "small" businesses (10 – 49 employees) was 18%, which is higher than the borough average	There are 41 businesses per 1,000 population in this area, which is a similar density of businesses per resident to the borough average, but is below national average	Main business sectors are manufacturing (16.1% jobs) and construction (14.7% jobs), which is significantly higher than the borough average for these sectors, other important sectors are retail (12.3% jobs) and wholesale (7.1% jobs). Important businesses in the area include AF Blakemore & Son Ltd (Wholesale & Retail), Assa Abloy Ltd (Manufacturing) and Nightfreight (GB) Ltd (Transport).

Source: Walsall Intelligence, 2011 Census – Walsall Summary Report (2013) and Area Partnership Profiles (2015) which include 2014 provisional data from the ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), 2014 DWP Working Age Client Group data, and other unspecified sources. See Figure 20 for coverage of Partnership Areas.

[25] Source = NOMIS UK Business Counts 2014 – the "workplace" data in this table relates to "local units"

Figure 22: Shopping Areas in Walsall



The Figure shows that Walsall has an extensive network of centres which are well related to the catchment areas they serve, meeting both day-to-day needs and more substantial shopping and leisure requirements. However, some are underperforming compared to other centres of a comparable size and scale in the surrounding area.

At the top of the hierarchy is Walsall Town Centre, the strategic centre for Walsall in the Core Strategy, where most of the retail, office and leisure development is expected to take place between now and 2026. It has proved difficult to attract investment into the Town Centre in Walsall in recent years: monitoring shows that since 2009, nearly 70% of the retail, office and leisure floorspace developed in the borough has been in edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations. There is also clear evidence from vacancy rates, footfall and rental levels, and the significant fall in the number of morning peak trips into the centre since 2007 that the diversion of investment into edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations has affected the overall health of the Town Centre.

One of the main factors affecting the Town Centre's health are the range and choice of facilities available (for example, there is currently no cinema or major venue for the

performing arts), competition from larger and stronger centres such as Birmingham and Wolverhampton, and competition from large-scale out-of-centre retail and leisure developments. Because of this the Town Centre has struggled to attract investment in recent years, and this has probably contributed to the risks to listed buildings and conservation areas.

Although Walsall Town Centre is still a relatively attractive place, and retains many good quality buildings and spaces, a range of convenience and comparison shops (including major multiples such as Marks & Spencer, BHS and Debenhams) and an outdoor market, the lack of investment in the centre may have contributed towards the erosion of character within some of the conservation areas (see Environmental Conditions above). While the Town Centre has a range of visitor and leisure facilities such as the Central Library and Museum, Town Hall, New Art Gallery, Leather Museum, Gala Baths, Arboretum, Grange Playhouse, and the Vine Centre for young people, there are some notable gaps in provision.

However, there are clear signs that the current regeneration strategy is working, as the Town Centre has seen some significant investment in recent years. For example, a new Primark store opened in 2015 and a new cinema will be opening in March 2016 bringing with it a number of family orientated restaurants. The office market is also showing signs of rejuvenation with some new sites being developed in the Gigaport area.

The middle tier in the hierarchy is represented by the five District Centres of Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall. The District Centres have struggled to maintain the level of investment in recent years due to out-of-centre competition and changing shopping habits. This is why detailed plans – separate to the SAD and AAP - are needed to address the fundamental issues in each of the centres, including the demand for retail floorpsace and the need for investment in the built environment and public realm in order to secure the future vitality of these centres.

At the bottom of the hierarchy are the 35 Local Centres, all of which reflect the surrounding communities they serve and vary in size and health throughout the borough. Some are strong such as Caldmore which has few vacancies and has been extended in size through the SAD to reflect its growth since the 2005 UDP. Others however, have declined such as Spring Lane which has been contracted in size through the SAD due to loss of community facilities and the development of housing.

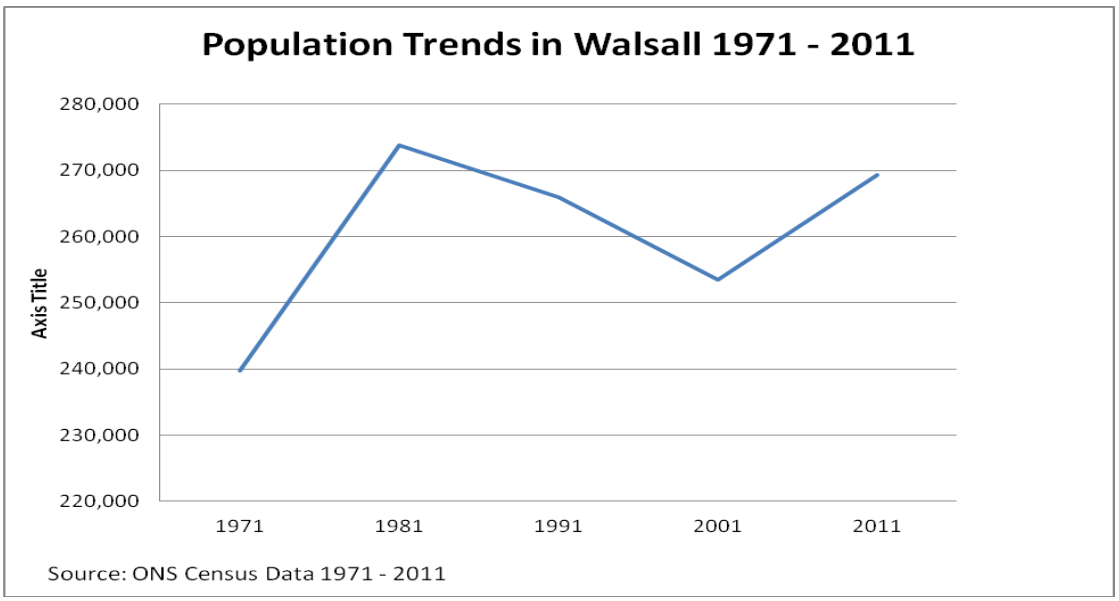
A key risk in terms of the future health of all the centres is changes to local authority budgets and the loss of facilities such as libraries. Many centres provide a community function and the loss of such facilities could result in their decline.

Current Social Conditions - April 2015

Population Profile

The Metropolitan Borough of Walsall currently has a population of more than a quarter of a million people. The latest Census information from 2011 indicates that the previous trend for population decline has now reversed, and the population is growing (see Figure 23 below), although the number of households is not expected to increase beyond the levels anticipated in the BCCS.

Figure 23: Walsall Population Trends

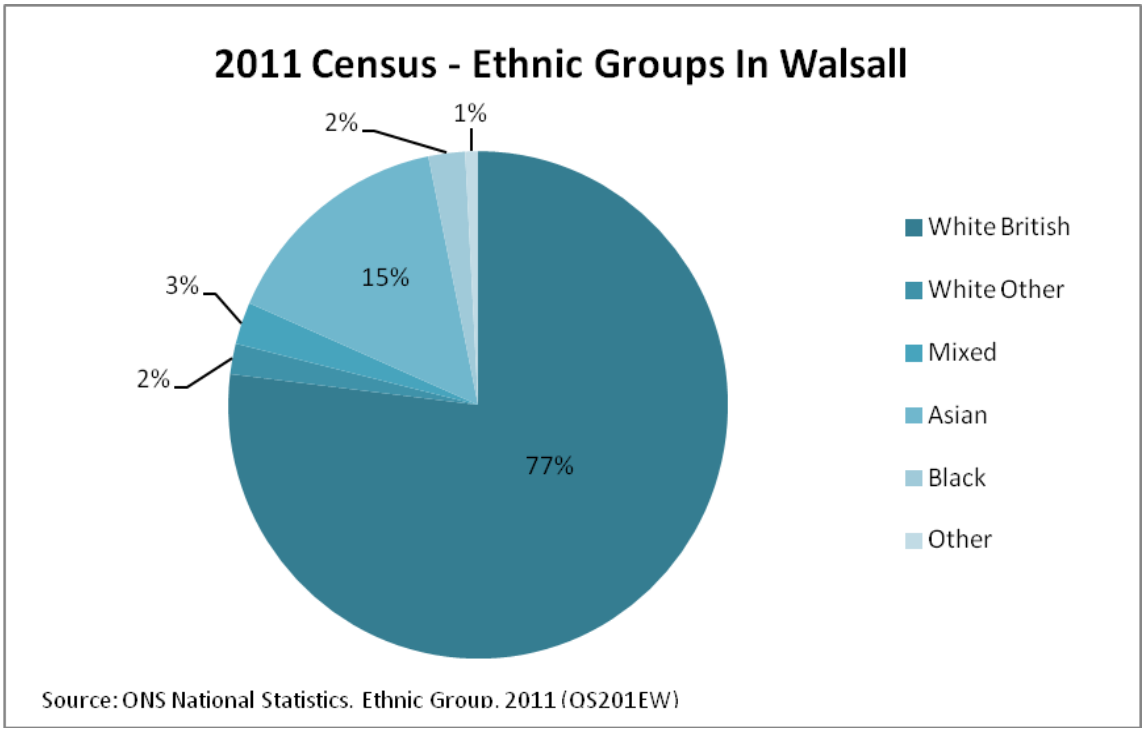


The average (mean) age of people in Walsall (38.8 years) in 2011 was slightly lower than the regional and national average. The borough has a higher proportion of children and young people aged 0 – 19 (26.1%) and older people aged 65 – 84 (14.9%) than the average in England and Wales (23.9% and 14.3% respectively). Consequently, the proportion of working age residents aged 16 – 64 in Walsall (61.5%) in Walsall is also lower than the national average.

The numbers of people aged 84+ are increasing, but at a lower rate than nationally, which may in part reflect lower than average life expectation rates.[26]

Walsall is home to a diverse range of different communities. The 2011 Census indicates that black people and people of minority ethnic origin currently make up around 17% of the population (see Figure 24 below). People of Asian origin are the largest minority group, accounting for around 15% of the population. People in Walsall have a greater level of religious affiliation than in England and Wales overall, with almost three quarters (73.9%) identifying with a religion compared with only two thirds (67.7%) nationally. While the majority of Walsall people still view themselves as Christian (59.0%), the proportion has fallen substantially since 2001 as it has nationally, and people of Muslim faith are the next biggest group (8.2%).

Figure 24: Ethnicity of Walsall Population



The borough-wide figures mask considerable differences in the population profiles in different parts of the borough. For example, the Brownhills, Pelsall, Rushall/Shelfield and Aldridge and Beacon areas have relatively high populations of older people, and the highest proportion of minority ethnic groups are found in Walsall South. Table 21 below identifies

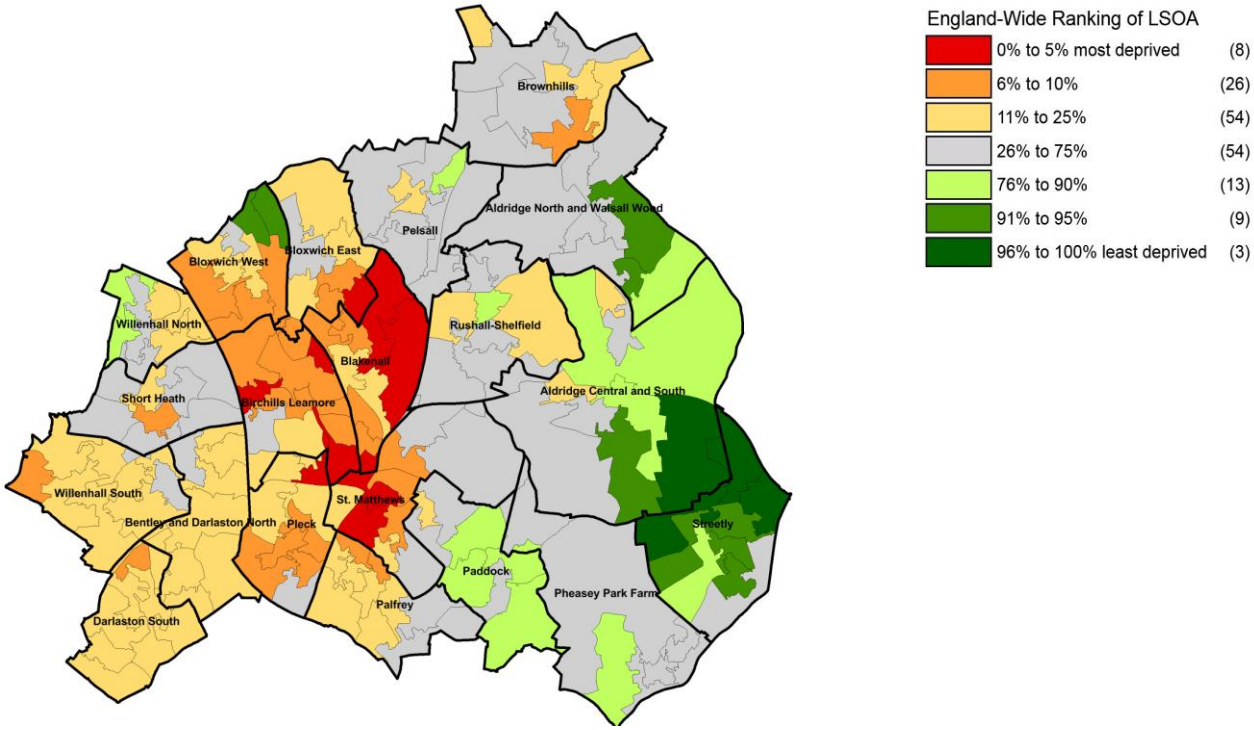
[26] 2011 Census – Walsall Profile (2013), Walsall Council – available on Walsall Intelligence website: http://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/WI/navigation/bn_briefing.asp?page=5

some of the main differences in the make-up of the population in the six Walsall Partnership Areas, under the key indicators of age, ethnicity, religion/ faith and household profile.

Poverty and Deprivation

Walsall includes some of the most deprived areas in the country but there are significant differences across the borough. The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that the western and central areas of the borough are amongst the most deprived areas in the country. Figure 25 below shows the areas of relative deprivation identified by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) with Ward boundaries superimposed.

Figure 25: Areas of Deprivation in Walsall



Source: DCLG, Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2015

The main areas of deprivation are generally the more densely populated and urbanised areas of the borough. Blakenall Ward contains a high proportion of former local authority social housing, although much of this is currently being redeveloped. St Matthews Ward, and adjoining parts of Birchills Leamore and Pleck, are areas in and close to Walsall Town Centre that contain large numbers of flats and housing in multiple occupation which tend to house short term residents and others who have been unable to join the “flight to the suburbs”.

Table 21: Population Profile – Walsall Borough and Walsall Partnership Areas

Area Partnership	Age	Ethnicity	Religion/ Faith	Households
Walsall Borough	**There is a greater proportion of young people aged 0 – 19 (26.1%) and people aged 65-84 (14.9%) in Walsall than in England and Wales overall (23.9% and 14.3% respectively), there are fewer working age residents aged 16 – 64 (61.5%) in Walsall compared to nationally (%), numbers of people aged 84+ are increasing, but at lower rate than national average**	**23.1% of Walsall residents are from minority ethnic groups, proportion has significantly increased since 2001, and is higher than average in England and Wales (19.5%), people of Asian origin are largest minority group making up 15.2% of population, which is also higher than national average (7.5%)**	**People in Walsall have a greater level of religious affiliation than in England and Wales overall, with almost three quarters (73.9%) identifying with a religion compared with only two thirds (67.7%) nationally, while the majority of Walsall people still view themselves as Christian (59.0%) the proportion has fallen substantially since 2001 as it has nationally, people of Muslim faith are the next biggest group (8.2%)**	**Number of households increased by 6.0% between 2001 and 2011. Average household size (2.5 people) is similar to average for England and Wales, most people (64.2%) live as part of a family, most common family type is families with married/ civil partnership/ co-habiting couple (43.3% - similar to national average), proportion of lone parent households (12.0%) higher than national average (10.7%), as is proportion of households comprising a single person aged 85+ (12.8% compared to 12.4%)**
1. Brownhills, Pelsall, Rushall/ Shelfield	Relatively older population profile, proportion of residents in 40s and 60+ significantly higher than borough average (20.9%), also fewer children and more older working age adults (40+) than borough average	Very low levels of ethnic diversity, lowest proportion of residents from minority groups of all Area Partnerships (3.3% compared to borough average of 23.1%)	Information not readily available	Number of households increased by 2.5% between 2001 and 2011 significantly lower than borough average. Area has above average proportion of households with couples (44.6%) and two-parent families, and single-person households with people over 65 years (13.6%), compared to borough as a whole (12.8%).
2. Aldridge & Beacon	Relatively older population profile, higher than borough average proportion of adults above retirement age (65+) (23.8% compared to borough average of 17.6%), fewer young children and young working age adults	Low levels of ethnic diversity compared to borough average, only 5.5% from minority groups, which is second lowest proportion of all Area Partnerships	Information not readily available	Number of households increased by 8.2% between 2001 and 2011, higher than the borough average. Area has above average proportion of households with couples (45.5%) and older people (65+) living alone (15.2%) compared to the borough average.

Area Partnership	Age	Ethnicity	Religion/ Faith	Households
3. North Walsall	Younger age profile than borough overall, more young children aged 0 – 15 (23.1%) than borough average (20.9%), and fewer older working age people and older people aged 55+	Lower proportion of minority ethnic residents than average for the borough (8.7%)	Information not readily available	Number of households increased by 3.7% between 2001 and 2011, significantly lower than borough average. Area has below average proportion of households with couples (41.3%), and above average proportion of lone parent households (14.6%) and lone pensioner households (13.1%), compared to borough as a whole.
4. Walsall South	Younger age profile than borough overall, more young children aged 0 – 15 (23.4%) and people of younger working age, and much fewer older people aged 45+	Minority ethnic groups (Asian in particular) account for a majority of residents (55.5%), almost double the borough average, a very high proportion of population (42.2%) is of Asian origin, largest group is people of Pakistani origin (17.6%) followed by people of Indian origin (13.9%) and people of Bangladeshi origin (6.4%)	Information not readily available	Number of households increased by 8.0% between 2001 and 2011, higher than average increase for borough as a whole. Area has below average proportion of households with couples (39.4%) and above average levels of adults under 65 living alone (19.7%), compared to borough as a whole.
5. Darlaston & Bentley	Younger age profile than borough overall, more children (especially under 10s) and younger working age adults, and fewer older people (45 and above)	Similar proportion of minority ethnic residents as borough overall (24.1%), Asian groups represent 15.6% of total population, largest group is people of Indian origin (7.8%)	Information not readily available	Number of households increased by 5.3% between 2001 and 2011, lower than average increase for borough as a whole. Area has above average proportion of lone parent households (15.7%) and fewer lone pensioner households (12.1%) than borough as a whole, although proportion of households with couples is similar to the borough average (43.0%).

Area Partnership	Age	Ethnicity	Religion/ Faith	Households
6. Willenhall & Short Heath	Similar age profile to average for borough overall, slightly lower proportion of 'dependent' residents than borough average – fewer children and elderly	Lower proportion of minority ethnic residents than average for borough overall (16.8%), largest group is people of Indian origin (7.1%)	Information not readily available	Number of households increased by 7.4% between 2001 and 2011, higher than the borough average. Area has above average proportion of households with couples (46.1%) and a lower proportion of lone pensioner households (11.1%) than the borough as a whole.

Source: Walsall Intelligence, 2011 Census – Walsall Summary Report (2013) and Area Partnership Profiles (2015). See Figure 20 for coverage of Partnership Areas.

These areas tend to have the highest concentrations of non-decent and overcrowded homes, relatively low levels of open space, more derelict land, greater exposure to air pollution and noise, and higher levels of unemployment and poor health (see Figures 14, 15, 16, 17 and 26 and Tables 20, 22 and 23). On the other hand, these areas tend to be better connected to public transport networks, jobs, shops, schools, health care facilities than the more prosperous eastern areas (see Figures 10, 20, 22 and 26).

Area Partnership Profiles produced in 2015 identify the most significant socio-economic issues in each Partnership Area, based on 2011 Census data and data from the previous (2010) Index of Multiple Deprivation, which shows a similar pattern of deprivation to the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation shown in Figure 25 above, except that in 2010, more areas of the borough were included in the most deprived 5% neighbourhoods. This does not necessarily mean that deprivation has reduced, and may be a result of changes to the indicators used in the Index. The key social indicators that highlight the main differences in deprivation across the borough are summarised in Table 22 below.

Walsall also has higher than average rates of "fuel poverty" - 14.3% of households in Walsall in 2013 compared to 10.4% nationally.[27] This is noted in the JSNA as being a potentially important health issue, as failure to heat homes adequately could be contributing towards excess winter deaths. However, there has been a significant reduction in fuel poverty since 2010 nationally and locally, as a result of rising incomes and falling fuel prices, and action to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of some of the most vulnerable groups of people, such as older people and families with children, through the "Warm Front" scheme.

Social Infrastructure

Walsall's open space network is shown on Figure 26 below, and Table 23 summarises the extent of provision in each Partnership Area. Walsall has been described as "the place where the Black Country turns green" and, as a whole, benefits from generous open space provision of various types. Unfortunately, due to the urban fabric of the area, not all of the open space supply is accessible or located in areas that would best serve communities. Also, some of the supply is not of a desirable standard to deliver the multi-functional benefits associated with open space. Within some areas of Walsall the open space supply indicates social inequality exists, particularly in terms of quantitative provision.

[27] Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report, 2015 (May 2015) and , DECC – see: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-fuel-poverty-statistics-report-2015

Table 22: Key Social Indicators – Walsall Borough and Walsall Partnership Areas

Area Partnership	Housing Tenure	Overcrowding[28]	Deprivation[29]	Social Segmentation
Walsall Borough	**Home ownership in Walsall is slightly lower than the national average, 62.9% of households live in owner-occupied properties, compared to 64.3% in England and Wales. However, 24.1% of people in Walsall live in social rented accommodation, significantly higher than the national average (17.6%). Only 11.7% live in private rented accommodation compared to 15.3% nationally.**	**Around 6.5% of households in Walsall are "overcrowded," which is lower than the average in England (8.4%)**	**44% of households in Walsall experience severe multiple deprivation, 12% of Walsall residents live in the least deprived neighbourhoods**	**Borough-wide data not readily available.**
1. Brownhills, Pelsall, Rushall/ Shelfield	Home ownership higher than borough average (71.1%), low proportion of households living in rented accommodation.	Low levels of overcrowding - only around 4.0% of households are "overcrowded," lower than the borough and national average	A much lower proportion of residents in this area (16%) experience levels of severe multiple deprivation than the borough average, however, a lower proportion of residents in the area (4%) live in the least deprived neighbourhoods.	The largest group of households (20%) are classified in the Experian "Mosaic" as group H (Aspiring Homemakers): 'Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means' Group K (Modest Traditions) is also common (17%): 'Mature homeowners of value homes enjoying stable lifestyles.'
2. Aldridge & Beacon	Very high levels of home ownership (82.5%), significantly higher than the borough and national average, very low proportion of households living in social or other rented accommodation.	Very low levels of overcrowding - only 3.3% of households are "overcrowded," significantly lower than borough and national average	Very low levels of deprivation - only 3% of residents in this area experience levels of severe multiple deprivation, and 39% of residents live in the least deprived neighbourhoods in England, although some areas have higher levels of deprivation (Redhouse and Leighswood North).	A quarter of households (25.5%) are classified in the Experian "Mosaic" as group F – Senior Security: 'Elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement.'

[28] Based on ONS definition of "overcrowded" = room occupancy rating of -1 or less.
[29] Severe multiple deprivation = living in the worst 20% deprived neighbourhoods in the country (N.B. data obtained from Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010).

Area Partnership	Housing Tenure	Overcrowding[30]	Deprivation[31]	Social Segmentation
3. North Walsall	Very high levels of socially rented properties (37.8%) compared to national and borough average, relatively low levels of owner occupation (48.4%).	Relatively high levels of overcrowding - 7.5% of households are "overcrowded," which is higher than the average for Walsall but lower than the national average.	Very high levels of deprivation – around 80% of residents in this area experience levels of severe multiple deprivation (in the worst 20% in country), although 6% live in neighbourhoods that are amongst the least deprived, (mainly in Turnberry).	High proportion of families with young children, the largest group of households (30.19%) are classified by Experian "Mosaic" as group M – Family Basics: 'Families with limited resources who have to budget to make ends meet'
4. Walsall South	High proportion of privately rented properties (17.7%) compared to national and borough average, level of socially rented properties similar to borough average (24.2%), owner occupation is below borough and national average (56.5%).	High levels of overcrowding – 10.7% of households are "overcrowded," which is higher than the average for Walsall and also higher than the national average.	High levels of deprivation – 55% of residents experience levels of severe multiple deprivation, higher than borough average, however, there is an east/ west split, with areas to the west, close to the Town Centre (e.g. Caldmore and Pleck) experiencing very high levels of deprivation, and areas to the east (e.g. Gillity and Park Hall) being among the least deprived.	The largest group of households (32.4%) are classified by Experian "Mosaic" as group I – Urban Cohesion: 'Residents of settled urban communities with a strong sense of identity'
5. Darlaston & Bentley	Very high proportion of socially rented properties (37.0%) and low levels of owner occupation (50.4%) compared to borough and national average, and lower proportion of privately rented properties (11.0%).	Relatively high levels of overcrowding – 8.3% of households are "overcrowded" which is higher than the average for Walsall but slightly below the national average.	Very high levels of deprivation -much more deprived than national and borough average, almost 90% of residents experience levels of severe multiple deprivation, nearly all areas within the 25% most deprived and all within the most deprived 40% nationally, no areas of low deprivation.	High proportion of families with children and people aged 25-40 with limited resources, 32.2% of households are classified by Experian "Mosaic" as group M – Family Basics: 'Families with limited resources who have to budget to make ends meet'

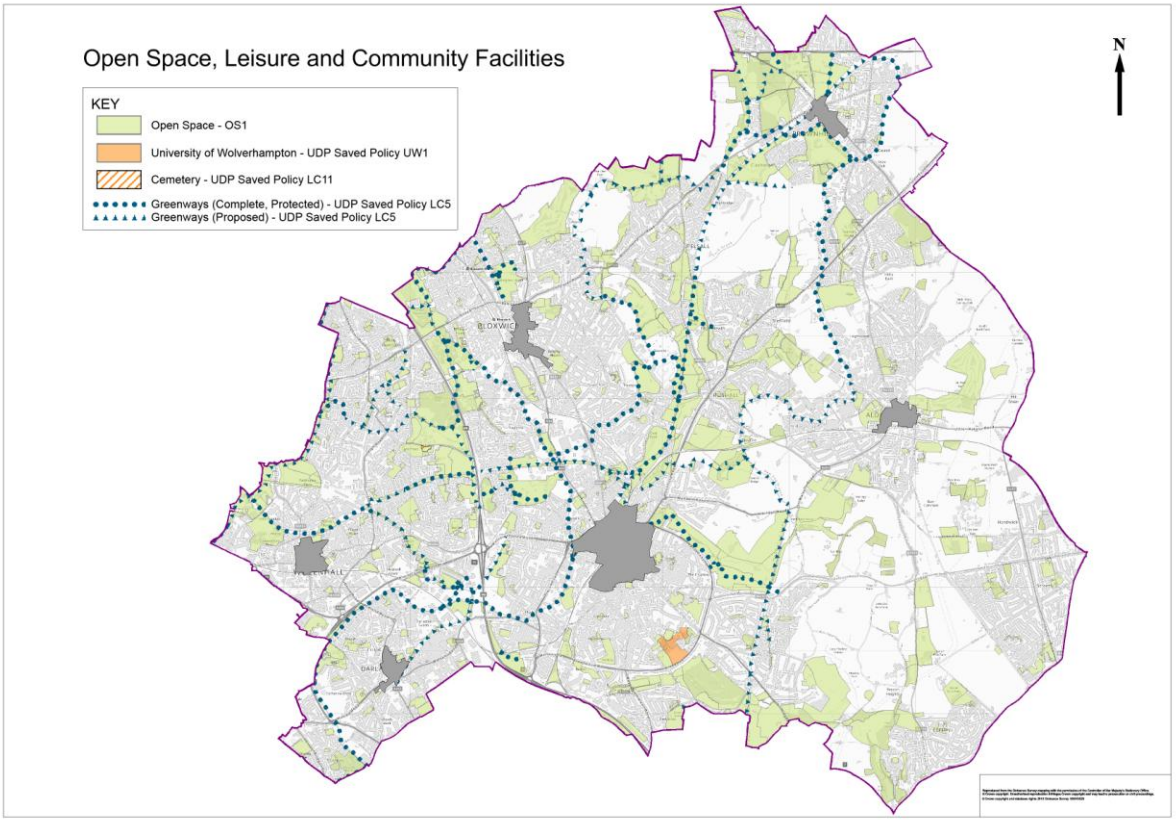
[30] Based on ONS definition of "overcrowded" = room occupancy rating of -1 or less.
[31] Severe multiple deprivation = living in the worst 20% deprived neighbourhoods in the country (N.B. data obtained from Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010).

Area Partnership	Housing Tenure	Overcrowding[32]	Deprivation[33]	Social Segmentation
6. Willenhall & Short Heath	Home ownership is slightly above the borough and national average (65.8%), slightly higher than average proportion of homes owned with a mortgage (34.6% compared to 31.9 % in Walsall and 33.5% in England and Wales).	Relatively low levels of overcrowding - 5.2% of households are "overcrowded" which is lower than the borough and national average.	More deprived than national average but less than borough average, highest levels of deprivation around Willenhall District Centre and New Invention, around 30% residents experience levels of severe multiple deprivation, although Coppice Farm is among least deprived 25% neighbourhoods in England.	High proportion of younger households, people in full-time employment, low salaries but housing relatively affordable, 18.4% of households in Area classified by Experian "Mosaic" as group H – Aspiring Homemakers: 'Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means'

Source: Walsall Intelligence, 2011 Census – Walsall Summary Report (2013) and Area Partnership Profiles (2015), ONS Neighbourhood Statistics for Walsall, and Experian "Mosaic" Public Sector 2014 social segmentation classification - see Figure 20 for coverage of Partnership Areas.

[32] Based on ONS definition of "overcrowded" = room occupancy rating of -1 or less.
[33] Severe multiple deprivation = living in the worst 20% deprived neighbourhoods in the country (N.B. data obtained from Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010).

Figure 26: Key Social Infrastructure in Walsall



It is anticipated that Walsall's Green Space Strategy will prioritise what limited resources are available for investment towards protecting and improving strategically valuable assets within the open space network.

The ranges of communities' potential needs and the variety of existing provision mean that the issues in planning for indoor sports facilities and other types of community facilities are complex. Whilst in quantitative terms there might be sufficient indoor sports facilities (especially with investment in leisure centres at Oak Park and at Bloxwich), it is difficult to ascertain what the needs for community facilities might be. Facilities exist in various locations, but not all are best-placed to serve their communities or to maximise their potential. Many existing leisure facilities can be found in schools and have traditionally been open to other members of the community, but changes to the organisation and funding of schools mean that these are sometimes no longer available. The organisation of health services has also changed, with a reduction in central planning.

Table 23: Open Space Accessibility Indicators – Walsall Borough and Walsall Partnership Areas

Area Partnership	Access to Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace				Access to Outdoor Sports Facilities				Access to Children's Play Facilities			
	Area (ha)	No. Sites	Average Quality Rating (%)	Provision per 1,000 Popl'n	Area (ha)	No. Sites	Average Quality Rating (%)	Provision per 1,000 Popl'n	Area (ha)	No. Sites	Average Quality Rating (%)	Provision per 1,000 Popl'n
Walsall Borough	**685.90**	**64**	32%	**2.70**	**398.42**	**49**	48%	**1.57**	**10.31**	**65**	47%	**0.17**
1. Brownhills, Pelsall, Rushall/ Shelfield	269.62	18	34%	7.50	18.66	7	57%	0.47	2.49	12	45%	0.29
2. Aldridge & Beacon	101.98	13	31%	2.06	122.87	12	52%	2.48	2.37	12	48%	0.21
3. North Walsall	149.38	15	32%	2.90	48.12	4	38%	0.93	1.66	10	50%	0.11
4. Walsall South	55.91	6	29%	1.05	172.00	13	48%	3.22	2.32	13	53%	0.15
5. Darlaston & Bentley	13.31	2	37%	0.52	23.35	6	42%	0.91	0.72	10	48%	0.10
6. Willenhall & Short Heath	95.70	10	29%	2.49	13.42	7	45%	0.35	0.75	8	44%	0.18

Source: Walsall PPG17 Audit & Assessment (2011), URS Scott Wilson, population data from ONS mid-year estimates 2007. See Figure 20 for coverage of Partnership Areas.

Although there has been recent investment, some social facilities are also of poor quality. With limits to the public resources that are available and many communities experiencing deprivation and going through economic changes, the continuing viability of facilities might be an issue, although the voluntary sector is being encouraged to take an increasing role in providing and/ or managing community spaces and activities. The private sector can have a role in providing places where people can meet (including in public houses and cafes for example) and gyms and health and fitness clubs, but these have to depend on the ability to be profitable. It follows that the affordability of some of these facilities is likely to be to an issue for some residents.

Health and Wellbeing

Walsall has some of the worst indicators of health in the country. For example, average life expectancy at birth (LE), and healthy life expectancy (HLE) – the number of years lived in good health over the lifespan - are lower than the national average. Table 24 below provides a comparison of LE and HLE in Walsall with the average for the former West Midlands and for England as a whole, for men and women.[34] Comparison of data from previous years suggests that the gaps between LE and HLE in Walsall and the national average are closing but they are still well below the national average.

Table 24: Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy in Walsall

Area	Males		Females	
	LE	HLE	LE	HLE
Walsall	78.1	60.0	82.8	59.7
West Midlands	78.8	62.4	82.8	62.8
England	79.4	63.3	83.1	63.9

Source: ONS Life Expectancy (LE) and Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) for males and females at birth by upper tier local authority in England, 2011 to 2013.

The overall health of people in Walsall is also poor compared to the national average. In the 2011 Census, 77.3% of Walsall residents said their health was good or very good, which was lower than the national average for England (81.2%), and 7.3% of respondents said they were experiencing bad or very bad health, compared to 5.6% nationally. The 2011 Census

[34] This is an update of the information in Figure 10 of the Walsall Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Refresh (2013), Walsall Health and Wellbeing Board, which is based on ONS 2009 to 2011 data.

results also suggest that a high proportion of households in Walsall (39.4%) have at least one person with a disability or long term illness, a higher proportion than the regional and national average (35.7% and 33.6% respectively). More than one in five people in Walsall (20.7%) said they had a health condition that limits their day to day activities, of which 10.4% said they were limited a lot, and 10.3% said they were limited a little.[35]

The Walsall Health Profiles published by Public Health England provide further evidence of the relatively poor health of the local population, and the extent of problems likely to be linked to inactivity and poor environment.[36] For example, the proportion of obese adults and children in Walsall is higher than the national average.

Table 25 below identifies significant differences in the general health and prevalence of health problems of communities living in the most deprived areas, compared to people living in the least deprived areas when measured against key health indicators. This shows that there are major health inequalities within the borough, and that certain types of health problems are concentrated in specific areas.

For example, in areas with a relatively high population of older people, the main adult health issues are trauma related to hip fractures (people aged 65 or over), respiratory mortality, prevention and early detection of long-term conditions such as cancer, stroke and coronary heart disease. There are also differences in the pattern of health within different ethnic groups, as people from South Asian and African Caribbean backgrounds tend to have higher rates of diabetes, strokes and coronary heart disease than white communities. The Walsall JSNA has identified poverty, unemployment, education, environmental conditions, and unhealthy lifestyles as contributory factors to the health problems in the borough.

[35] 2011 Census – Walsall Profile (2013) – see footnote above – supplemented by other ONS Census data.

[36] Walsall Health Profile 2015 (June 2015), Public Health England - see: http://www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?RID=49802

Table 25: Key Health Indicators – Walsall Borough and Walsall Partnership Areas

Area Partnership	Life Expectancy	General Health	Obesity	Diabetes, Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke, Cancer
Walsall Borough	**Average life expectancy at birth for women in Walsall is 82.7 years compared to the average of 82.7 years in England, and average life expectancy at birth for men is 77.8 years compared to the average of 78.9 years in England. Life expectancy is 10.1 years lower for men and 7.5 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Walsall than in the least deprived areas.**	**In the 2011 Census, 20.7% of respondents in Walsall said their day-to-day activities were limited by a long-term health problem or disability, compared to 17.6% in England. 77.3% of Walsall residents said their health was good or very good, lower than the average in England (81.2%), and 7.3% said they were experiencing bad or very bad health compared to 5.6% nationally.**	**24.4% of Year 6 children in Walsall (children aged 10 – 11 years) were classified as obese in 2013/14, worse than the average for England (19.1%). In 2012, 30.4% of adults in Walsall were classified as obese, also worse than the national average for England (23.0%).**	**Average prevalence of diabetes in Walsall was 8.7% in 2013/14 compared to 6.2% nationally, average prevalence of coronary heart disease in Walsall was 4.1% in2013/14, higher than the national rate of 3.3%, and average prevalence of stroke in Walsall was 1.8% in 2013/14, slightly higher than the national rate of 1.7%. Early deaths[37] from all causes are higher for both men and women in Walsall than the national average for England, although in the least deprived areas early deaths are lower than the national average, and in the most deprived areas, they are significantly higher, particularly for men. Early deaths from heart disease, stroke and cancer in Walsall are also significantly higher in Walsall than the national average, for example, the mortality rate from cancer in Walsall in 2010 – 2012 was estimated to be 7.5 per 1,000 population, compared to around 2.5 per 1,000 in England in 2012 (ONS Mortality Statistics).**

[37] Early deaths = deaths of people aged under 75 years.

Area Partnership	Life Expectancy	General Health	Obesity	Diabetes, Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke, Cancer
1. Brownhills, Pelsall, Rushall/ Shelfield	Life expectancy for women in Rushall/Shelfield (80.5 years) and life expectancy for men in Brownhills (77.1 years) is lower than the Walsall average, life expectancy for men in Pelsall (80.5 years) is significantly higher than the Walsall average	Relatively low levels of poor health in this area. Main child health issues include childhood obesity, also relatively high rates of perinatal mortality. Main adult health issues are trauma related to hip fractures (people aged 65 or over), respiratory mortality, prevention and early detection of long-term conditions (cancer, stroke, coronary heart disease), and alcohol related issues.	The proportion of obesity in Reception (aged from 4 to 5) children and older children (aged from 8 to 11) was significantly worse than the Walsall average in 2013/14.	Brownhills Central and Rushall have higher estimated prevalence of diabetes and a statistically significantly higher estimated prevalence of stroke than the borough and national average. Rushall also has statistically significantly higher prevalence of coronary heart disease than borough and national average, and Brownhills Central, Rushall and Shelfield also have cancer mortality rates statistically significantly higher than the Walsall average.
2. Aldridge & Beacon	All Wards have higher life expectancy for women and men than the borough average.	Main child health issues include childhood obesity (Year 6 children), also relatively high rates of perinatal mortality. Main adult health issues are trauma related to hip fractures (people aged 65 or over), prevention and early detection of long-term conditions (cancer, stroke, coronary heart disease), circulatory mortality, and smoking.	The proportion of obesity in Reception (aged from 4 to 5) and Year 4 (aged from 8 to 9) children is lower than the Walsall average, however, in Year 6 children (aged 10 to 11) obesity levels have continued to increase, and remain above Walsall average in 2013/14.	All communities within this area have statistically significantly lower estimated prevalence of diabetes than the borough and national average, although all communities except Pheasey have higher than average estimated prevalence of stroke. Aldridge community has a statistically significantly higher estimated prevalence of coronary heart disease, and Aldridge and Aldridge North communities also have a cancer mortality rate statistically significantly higher than the Walsall average.

Area Partnership	Life Expectancy	General Health	Obesity	Diabetes, Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke, Cancer
3. North Walsall	All Wards have significantly lower life expectancy for women than the borough average except for Bloxwich West, where it is slightly higher (83.2 years), and all Wards have significantly lower life expectancy for men than the borough average	Very high proportion of children living in poverty, giving rise to multiple child health issues including childhood obesity, also relatively high rates of infant and perinatal mortality and injuries to infants aged 0 – 5 years. Main adult health issues are trauma related to hip fractures (people aged 65 or over), respiratory mortality, prevention and early detection of long-term conditions (coronary heart disease), circulatory mortality, and alcohol related issues.	The proportion of obesity in Reception (aged from 4 to 5) and Year 4 & 6 (aged from 8 to 11) children have been statistically significantly higher than the Walsall average since 2011/12.	Most community areas have higher estimated prevalence for diabetes than Walsall average except for Birchills/ Reedswood and North Blakenall which are statistically significantly lower. Leamore has a statistically significantly higher estimated prevalence of coronary heart disease than Walsall and national average, and Bloxwich has higher than average estimated prevalence of cancer, although in all other communities it is lower. Bloxwich, Leamore and North Walsall have cancer and coronary heart disease mortality rates statistically significantly higher than the Walsall average.
4. Walsall South	All Wards have significantly lower life expectancy for women and men than the borough average, with the exception of Paddock, where life expectancy is 84.0 years for women, 79.4 years for men.	Multiple child health issues in this area, including childhood obesity, also relatively high rates of infant and perinatal mortality, low birth weight and injuries to infants aged 0 – 5 years. Main adult health issues are prevention and early detection of long-term conditions (including diabetes), trauma related to hip fractures (people aged 65 or over), and alcohol related issues.	The proportion of obesity in Reception (aged 4/5) children and older (aged 8 to 11) children is statistically significantly higher than the Walsall average. Prevalence of obesity in Year 4 and 6 children has increased between 2012/13 and 2013/14.	Most community areas have higher estimated prevalence of diabetes than Walsall average, with the exception of Caldmore and Delves which are statistically significantly lower than average. Most areas have similar or lower estimated prevalence of stroke and coronary heart disease than the borough average, except for Pleck and Walsall Central, where prevalence of coronary heart disease is slightly higher.

Area Partnership	Life Expectancy	General Health	Obesity	Diabetes, Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke, Cancer
5. Darlaston & Bentley	Life expectancy for both women and men is below the borough average, while it is not much lower than the Walsall average in Bentley & Darlaston North (82.0 years for women and 77.0 years for men), in Darlaston South it is significantly lower (80.3 years for women and 75.0 years for men).	Multiple child health issues in this area, including childhood obesity, also relatively high rates of infant and perinatal mortality, low birth weight and injuries to infants aged 0 – 5 years. Main adult health issues are trauma related to hip fractures (people aged 65 or over), respiratory mortality, prevention and early detection of long-term conditions (cancer), circulatory mortality, and alcohol related issues.	The proportion of obesity in Reception (aged 4/5) children is higher than Walsall average, and in older children (aged 8 to 11) obesity levels have been statistically significantly higher than the Walsall average since 2011/12.	Bentley and Dangerfield have higher estimated prevalence for diabetes than Walsall average. All communities have lower estimated prevalence of coronary heart disease than Walsall average except for Dangerfield where it is slightly higher. Bentley has a statistically significantly higher estimated prevalence for cancer than Walsall and national average. Bentley, Moxley and Rough Hay also have higher mortality rates from circulatory and respiratory disease than Walsall average.
6. Willenhall & Short Heath	Life expectancy for both women and men varies considerably across the area, whereas in Short Heath it is above the national and borough average (85.9 years for women and 79.6 years for men), in Willenhall South it is significantly lower than the average for Walsall (74.9 years for women and 76.2 years for men),	Main child health issues include childhood obesity, also relatively high rates of infant mortality. Main adult health issues are trauma related to hip fractures (people aged 65 or over), prevention and early detection of long-term conditions (circulatory disease, cancer, and coronary heart disease), and alcohol related issues.	The proportion of obesity in Reception (aged 4/5) children has been higher than the Walsall average since 2011/12. In the older children (aged 8 to 11), obesity levels are statistically significantly higher than the Walsall average.	Prevalence of diabetes in South Willenhall is higher than Walsall average, although in New invention it is significantly lower. All communities have similar or lower prevalence of coronary heart disease than Walsall and national average, but New Invention has a statistically significantly higher prevalence of cancer. All communities have circulatory and respiratory disease mortality rates lower than average for Walsall, except for Short Heath which has statistically significantly higher rates for both.

Source: Walsall Health Profile 2015, Public Health England, and Walsall Area Partnership Profiles (2015), data derived from ONS National Life Tables 2011 – 2013, 2011 Census, data obtained from local GPs, and other public health data. See Figure 20 for coverage of Partnership Areas.

Housing Types and Tenures

Data obtained from the 2011 Census indicates that home ownership in Walsall is similar to the national average - nearly two thirds of households in Walsall (62.9%) are living in owner-occupied properties (either owned outright or with a mortgage).[38] However, the socially rented sector in Walsall is stronger, with a lower than average number of private rented properties. A quarter of households (24.1%) are living in socially rented accommodation,[39] compared with just 17.6% across England and Wales. Conversely, households living in privately-rented accommodation account for 11.7% in Walsall, but 15.3% nationally.

Table 22 above identifies the main differences in tenure across the borough. For example, in Brownhills, Pelsall and Rushall/ Shelfield and Aldridge and Beacon, rates of home ownership are higher than the national average, whereas a high proportion of households living in North Walsall and Darlaston and Bentley are dependent on the social rented sector.

Almost all households in Walsall live in unshared accommodation (99.9%) and more than 80% of households in Walsall live in whole houses or bungalows. The borough has a much greater proportion of households living in semi-detached properties than nationally, with relatively fewer living in detached homes. Fewer households are living in flats, maisonettes and apartments in the borough (17.3%) compared with England and Wales (21.6%).[40] Although Walsall has established communities of gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people, many people from these communities now live in settled accommodation. Hence, a very low proportion of households in Walsall were recorded as living in caravans or other mobile or temporary structures in the 2011 Census (300 people and 0.2% of households).

[38] 2011 Census – Walsall Profile (2013), Walsall Council – available on Walsall Intelligence website:

http://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/WI/navigation/bn_briefing.asp?page=5

Related data for Walsall and comparator data is also available on ONS Neighbourhood Statistics website:

http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadHome.do%3Fa%3D3%26i%3D1001%26m%3D0%26r%3D1%26s%3D1298463767007%26enc%3D1%26extendedList%3Dtrue%26nav%3DA

[39] This includes the 10% of people who identified themselves in the 2011 Census as living in a property for which the Council is the landlord. This was incorrect, given that the former Council housing stock has been transferred to other social landlords, in most cases Walsall Housing Group (WHG).

[40] Figures quoted in 2011 Census – Walsall Profile (2013), Walsall Council. However, published ONS data appears to show slight differences, indicating that 83.1% of households in Walsall live in unshared whole houses or bungalows, higher than the average in England (78.1%), and that 16.6% of households in Walsall live in unshared flats, maisonettes and apartments (16.6%), lower than the average in England (21.2%).

There is evidence that poverty and poor health are affecting some groups more than others. For example, many black and minority ethnic people, families with children and people with long-term illness live in areas where there are concentrations of unemployment, overcrowded housing, and health problems. Young people are also more likely to be unemployed than older people of working age. The supply of affordable homes and special needs homes is also not sufficient to meet current or future needs, and there are not enough pitches and plots for gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people.

Recent Housing Growth

The BCCS seeks to achieve a net increase in the borough's housing stock over 20 years of about 10% (11,973 dwellings). We are on target to meet this target, with approximately 5,600 new homes having been completed already. Over 90% of these new homes are on previously developed land, with the majority in the west and central areas of the borough. Most of the largest housing developments proposed in the SAD seek to continue this trend: over 1,000 new homes, including a large proportion of social housing to meet identified needs, are currently either under construction or funded for completion by 2018 in the Goscote and Blakenall area.

4.4 Likely Evolution of Conditions without the SAD and AAP

The baseline evidence gathered at the Issues & Options stage, and updated in 2015, also provides indications of how conditions are likely to evolve and change over the plan period without the SAD and AAP, and taking into account the effects of existing policy drivers, such as the existing planning policy framework and other policies influencing development.

Likely Evolution of Environmental Conditions

The baseline evidence, trend data and other information currently available suggest that environmental conditions in Walsall are likely to develop in the following ways if the Council does not prepare the SAD and AAP:

- Existing pressures for housing development on peripheral greenfield sites is likely to continue, irrespective of whether there is sufficient previously-developed land available to meet the requirements identified in the BCCS;

- Existing ground condition problems arising from mining and industrial "legacy" are likely to continue, and could become worse in some cases, if remediation does not take place on the sites affected;

- Environmental improvements are likely to be sporadic, localised and site-specific, and may not achieve the BCCS aspirations towards comprehensive development, furthermore, the risk of further damage to areas already affected by multiple environmental problems is likely to be greater if piecemeal development takes place which does not consider combined or cumulative effects;

- Existing environmental conditions could deteriorate and risks could increase, if development takes place in unsuitable locations not identified as such in the BCCS, such as areas at risk from air pollution, high levels of noise, and flooding, and areas where there is a potential risk of impacts on water quality from pollutants;

- Existing threats of significant harm to wildlife habitats, ecological networks, hydrology and archaeology will continue to exist on a number of sites where planning permission already exists for mineral extraction;

- Nature conservation sites and heritage assets are likely to be more vulnerable to loss or harm, and there is likely to be further erosion of landscape and townscape quality, due to economic pressures which are likely to further constrain the resources available for maintenance and management; and

- Going forward, the borough's infrastructure, buildings and open spaces are likely to become more vulnerable to the unavoidable effects of climate change, such as flooding, drought and "heat island" effects, unless more adaptation measures are put in place to protect existing and new development from these threats.

Likely Evolution of Economic Conditions

The baseline evidence, trend data and other information currently available suggest that economic conditions in Walsall are likely to develop in the following ways if the Council does not prepare the SAD and AAP:

- Although the manufacturing sector has recovered in recent years, the underlying trend towards gradual decline is likely to continue, this is likely to mean further decline in the local economy, and higher rates of unemployment, without further investment in new businesses and jobs and more diversification into other sectors;

- While the current demand for employment land in Walsall is expected to continue, opportunities for new investment and job creation and possibly also existing jobs could be lost, if existing businesses are unable to expand, and the new investors seeking to locate in Walsall are unable to do so for lack of enough suitable, readily-available employment land to meet their requirements;

- The health of Walsall Town Centre, the quality of the environment of the centre, and its role as the Strategic Centre for the borough and as a major destination for shopping, leisure and employment could deteriorate, if the action already being taken by the Council to identify opportunities for new development and environmental improvement, and promote the centre as a place for investment, is not sustained;

- The health of some of Walsall's Local Centres, and their role in providing opportunities for employment and job creation, are likely to deteriorate, if there are not enough opportunities for new investment in these centres;

- The raw materials needed for building and engineering, such as construction aggregates, will continue to be sourced from outside Walsall, adding to the distance materials need to travel and to costs, if provision is not made for mineral production in Walsall;

- There is a risk that the infrastructure needed to support economic growth, such as transport infrastructure, waste management infrastructure, and education and training facilities, will not be developed if the requirements are not identified, and the land needed is not safeguarded from other development, which is likely to have harmful effects on local businesses and make Walsall a less attractive area to invest.

Likely Evolution of Social Conditions

The baseline evidence, trend data and other information currently available suggest that social conditions in Walsall are likely to develop in the following ways if the Council does not prepare the SAD and AAP:

- There is unlikely to be scope for significant improvement in the rates of deprivation in some areas of the borough, unless the underlying social, economic and environmental

problems are addressed, including those relating to the quality of the environment and access to employment, housing and key facilities and services;

- Trends in future employment in Walsall are difficult to predict, but it is unlikely be possible to reduce the very high unemployment rates in some parts of the borough if Walsall is unable to attract further investment in existing and new businesses, which will create the types of jobs that will be accessible to local people, in terms of their location and the levels of education, skills and training needed;

- Housing completions since 2006 have been in accordance with the trajectory set out in the BCCS and therefore in line with the projected requirements for the area, and there is a funded programme of housing development by Walsall Housing Group which is expected to sustain the same rate of building for the next few years. However, the supply of suitable housing land will begin to run out if further sites are not identified and safeguarded: this is likely to result in housing needs either not being met at all, or new housing being provided in less sustainable locations such as the Green Belt or further away from jobs, education and other facilities used by residents.

- There remains a considerable need for affordable homes, homes for older people and also some need for other specialised accommodation such as for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, and mechanisms for funding of these types of housing are uncertain. Failure to provide for these needs is likely to result in residents being forced to live in sub-standard, unauthorised or otherwise unsatisfactory accommodation;

- Access to employment, services and social infrastructure could become more difficult for local communities in Walsall without continued investment in public transport, and if the role of the Town Centre and Local Centres declines, as these are important locations for key facilities and services near to where people live. Moreover, if housing development were to be pursued at greenfield and Green Belt locations on the periphery rather than on sites that are close to existing facilities, this would be more likely to increase car dependence while reducing accessibility for people who do not have access to a car.

- Although there is evidence that the health of people in Walsall is improving, due to interventions by health care providers, it is still significantly worse than the national average in some parts of the borough, and it is less likely that the recent improvements can be sustained if people are discouraged from leading active and healthy lifestyles because they are unable to move around easily on foot or by bicycle, or do not have access to opportunities for outdoor recreation.

4.5 Characteristics of Effects of SAD and AAP and Areas Affected

Although it is not a requirement to include this information in a SEA Environmental Report, Schedule 1 (2) of the SEA Regulations requires the SA to consider the main characteristics of the potential effects of the SAD and AAP, and the areas affected by them. The following paragraphs explain how these effects have been taken into account in the SA. Chapters 7 and 8 provide further details of the effects identified in the SA of the SAD and AAP Policies.

Characteristics of Effects of the SAD and AAP

Probability of Effects

In many cases the potential effects of SAD and AAP Policies on the SA Objectives are uncertain, as they depend on factors outside the control of the plans, such as whether planning applications for development will actually come forward on the sites identified, the effectiveness of existing national policy guidance and local plan policies in preventing significant harmful effects where they do, and the effectiveness of environmental regulation in managing the effects of the developments, once they are implemented.

The SAD and AAP need to be robust enough to respond to potential future changes, so both plans include a degree of flexibility to meet market demands whilst giving clear guidance to developers where this is necessary to ensure that high quality schemes are delivered. This means that in some cases it not always possible to identify all the potential impacts.

There is a limit to the extent to which the effects of development can be identified in the SA of a local plan, because some effects can only be determined with confidence at the planning application stage. To assist prospective applicants, the environmental and physical constraints affecting the sites designated or allocated in particular SAD and AAP Policies have been identified.

Duration, Frequency and Reversibility of Effects

The SAD and AAP are long-term plans and cover the same period as the BCCS. The policies and site allocations in each plan will therefore be in effect until 2026 or until such time as

they are replaced by new local plan policies. Most of the development sites identified in the SAD and AAP are expected to be delivered by the end of the plan period, except for areas identified for mineral extraction, which will take longer to implement. The duration and frequency of the effects of the plans will therefore vary, according to the type of development and the timescale for delivery in each case.

As the SAD and AAP will allocate land for permanent or long-term development, in most cases, the effects will be irreversible once they are built, although the effects of the construction process, and land remediation (where required) will be temporary. The only exceptions are likely to be mineral extraction and waste disposal operations which will be temporary, and reversible to an extent provided that restoration is carried out to appropriate standards. However, these operations could be carried out over a long period of time, extending beyond the plan period in some cases.

Cumulative Nature of Effects

As the main purpose of the SAD is to deliver the requirements of the BCCS at a local level, there will be cumulative effects from the application of the SAD policies together with the BCCS policies to which they relate. The scale of development has already been established through the BCCS, so the main effect of the SAD is identifying the sites where development will take place in Walsall. The sites allocated for new development in the SAD are mostly concentrated within the BCCS 'growth network,' and are therefore unlikely to have further effects over and above the effects already identified in the SA of the BCCS.

Trans-Boundary Nature of Effects

Where development is proposed near to the boundary with other planning authorities, there is potential for this to have effects on adjoining areas. Large-scale development in Walsall could also have effects on other areas. Whereas some effects may be negative, others could be positive. The main examples of cross-boundary effects identified in the SA of the SAD and AAP Options and Policies are as follows:

- Several large new industrial opportunities identified in the SAD that were not originally included in the existing industrial supply are located close to the boundary with Wolverhampton and Sandwell. It can be expected that residents close to the Walsall boundary will share the employment related benefits, as well as the potential effects from increased traffic generation.

- Potential for developments at Great Barr Hall and Estate and the former St. Margaret's Hospital, which are near to the boundary with Sandwell and Birmingham, to impact on the setting of designated heritage assets outside the borough boundary, as well as leading to increased traffic in adjoining areas, however, the effects can be mitigated through the development management process as they depend on where development is proposed.

- Potential harmful effects from further mineral extraction in Aldridge on local communities, businesses and highway infrastructure in adjoining parts of Lichfield District in Staffordshire, as haulage routes for exported sand and gravel could include roads in Staffordshire.

- Potential beneficial effects from identifying further sources of sand and gravel and brick clay in Walsall, which may reduce the need to import these materials from other areas, in particular, from Staffordshire, which currently supplies more than 60% of the quarried sand and gravel used in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, and most of the imported clay at Sandown Brickworks.

- Potential effects from fireclay and coal extraction in Brownhills on local communities, businesses and highway infrastructure in adjoining areas of Cannock Chase District in Staffordshire, as coal and fireclay extraction could take place on both sides of the boundary in the 'Yorks Bridge' Area of Search identified in the BCCS and haulage routes for exported coal and fireclay could include roads in Staffordshire.

- Transport schemes will by their nature have cross boundary effects. The two examples of this are the raid transit network, connecting Walsall to Wolverhampton and Wednesbury, and the Walsall - Brownhills rail line, which if reinstated could provide cross boundary services to Lichfield in Staffordshire.

- Proposals for 'town centre' development in the AAP will provide opportunities for further investment in the strategic centre, including in areas where there is likely to be space for new development and more market demand, enabling Walsall Town Centre to compete more effectively with other strategic centres in the area such as Cannock, Wolverhampton, West Bromwich and Sutton Coldfield.

- Development in the Town Centre could also have environmental impacts outside of the AAP boundary, for example potential impacts on air quality, biodiversity and climate change could extend beyond the town centre boundary.

Potential Risks to Human Health and the Environment

The extent of existing risks to health and the environment in Walsall, such as industrial and coal mining legacy, pollution, and risks from flooding, are summarised in Section 4.3 above.

Potential risks to health and the environment have been taken into account when evaluating proposals to allocate sites for 'sensitive' uses in the SAD, in particular housing allocations identified in SAD Policy HC1. These have been chosen to avoid sites that are subject to risks that cannot be easily mitigated, for example, sites near to major road corridors which have been identified as NO2 Areas of Exceedance and/ or Noise Priority Areas, and sites within or near to Flood Zones.

New industrial developments, waste management developments and mineral developments have the potential to generate further risks to health and the environment, from increased traffic generation and associated air and noise pollution, as well as other effects from the processes that may be carried out. However, the effects of many of these processes are controlled through environmental regulation and/ or waste permitting as well as through application of existing local plan policies.

For example, UDP Policy ENV10 requires development likely to generate pollution to evaluate and address the potential risks, UDP Policy ENV14 requires development on derelict and previously-developed sites to evaluate and address any risks from ground instability or contamination, and UDP Policy ENV40 and BCCS Policy ENV5 requires flood risk assessments and surface water management strategies to be provided with applications for development on sites at risk. Where these risks exist, a grant of planning permission may also be subject to conditions requiring appropriate measures to be put into place, to prevent, reduce, manage or mitigate them.

The extent of existing environmental risks in the Town Centre, such as potential risks from previous limestone mining, air pollution and risks from flooding, have also been considered in the SA of the AAP. They have been addressed in Chapter 8 of the AAP which includes a policy on addressing potential site constraints (AAPINV7), and identifies the constraints that exist in the Town Centre, which new developments are required to address.

Where the SA has identified potential risks to health or the environment that are not already addressed by existing local plan policies or could be reasonably expected to be addressed through environmental regulation and waste permitting, these have been mitigated as far as possible through the SAD and AAP Policies.

Characteristics of Areas Likely to be Affected by the SAD and AAP

Magnitude and Spatial Extent of the Effects

The SA has considered the likely **magnitude** of the effects of the Options for the SAD and AAP and the SAD and AAP Policies on the SA Objectives. The scoring system used in the High Level SA (see Chapter 2, Section 2.6 above) has distinguished between effects that are likely to be positive or negative, which are scored in green with a single plus sign (+) or red with a single minus sign (-), and effects that could be significantly positive or negative, which are scored in dark green with two plus signs (++) or dark red with two minus signs (--). Where significant negative effects have been identified (such as in the case of Policies M8 and M9), the magnitude of the effects on each SA Objective has been evaluated in further detail through the Detailed SA of these policies.

The SA has also considered the potential **spatial extent** of the effects of the SAD and AAP Options and Policies. While most of the effects are expected to be local, the plans are expected to contribute towards the regeneration of the Black Country so overall, they are expected to have positive effects beyond the borough boundary. However, the spatial extent of the effects will also depend on the type and scale of development proposed in specific locations, and in some cases could be influenced by existing physical and environmental constraints. The following paragraphs explain the potential effects on Walsall Borough, Walsall Town Centre, and areas outside the borough.

<u>Potential Effects on Walsall Borough</u>

There is potential for the SAD to have significant harmful effects on biodiversity, the landscape and agricultural land in Walsall (SA2, SA9, SA12) if it proposes large-scale development on greenfield sites. Evidence gathered to inform the preparation of the SAD confirms that it is not necessary to allocate any sites in the Green Belt to meet the requirements for housing and employment land up to 2026 identified in the BCCS, because

nearly all of the requirements can be met from previously-developed sites.[41] However, the SAD is proposing limited development on greenfield land (mostly low quality open space) to provide some flexibility. As the losses of open space would be limited, this is not expected to have a significant negative effect on the overall value of the open space network, or on the landscape, although some negative effects are possible (SA4, SA8, SA9).

While the BCCS proposes a sustainable pattern of development, some development in Walsall is expected to take place outside the main urban areas. If the SAD proposed such development in more dispersed locations, remote from transport links, it would be likely to have negative effects on accessibility (SA13), as would development that would hinder delivery of key transport projects identified in the BCCS and West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan. The main effects would be felt by people who do not have access to a car, who are concentrated in the central, southern and western parts of the borough. These areas are already experiencing high levels of socio-economic deprivation, and the effects are likely to lead to further inequality, particularly if continued economic pressure on public services leads to a reduction in provision of public transport (SA7). By encouraging further increases in trips by road, it is also likely to undermine objectives to improve conditions in areas affected by air and noise pollution (SA1, SA4).

This would be contrary to the strategy in the BCCS, which proposes that most shopping, office and leisure development in Walsall between now and 2026 should take place in the Town Centre, which is the most accessible place in the borough, being well connected by train or bus to most other areas. Improvements to transport facilities, including the railway station and bus station, are also proposed in the BCCS. Some of these improvements aim to tackle congestion and improve bus circulation in the Town Centre, which is one of the main factors contributing to poor air quality. If these improvements happen, they would have significant positive effects on the Town Centre as well as on the borough as a whole in reducing pollution and ensuring that key services in the Town Centre are accessible to as many people as possible (SA1, SA4, SA7, SA13).

The AAP is needed to help deliver these proposals because if these investments do not take place, the Town Centre will decline further. This would have significant negative effects on the borough's economy, on access to key facilities and services, and possibly also on air quality, as it is likely to encourage shopping, offices and leisure facilities to be developed in locations only accessible by car. People are also less likely to want to invest in the Town Centre, leading to further erosion of character and loss of important buildings.

[41] Walsall SAD CIL Deliverability and Viability Study (2015), DTZ, Walsall Employment Land Review September 2015, Walsall Council, and Walsall Housing Land Supply and SHLAA Update 2014, Walsall Council

Potential Effects on Other Areas

It is recognised that the SAD and AAP could have effects on land and people outside Walsall Borough, because Walsall is not an island, and forms part of the West Midlands conurbation. However, the northern and eastern fringes of the borough include extensive areas of open land which are similar in character to adjoining agricultural and 'urban fringe' areas. Development proposed in the SAD and AAP could therefore have effects on land and people in neighbouring areas of the Black Country, Birmingham and Staffordshire.

The overall level of development proposed in the SAD and AAP is not likely to exceed the indicative targets identified in the BCCS, which has already been subject to sustainability appraisal, and the effects have been found not to be significant. However, as noted above (Trans-Boundary Nature of Effects), localised effects on land and people outside Walsall could arise as a result of new development proposed near the boundary with other authority areas in the SAD.

The SAD and AAP could also have significant positive or negative effects on other areas, depending on the circumstances. For example, there could be negative effects on cross-boundary ecological and hydrological networks and landscapes where development is proposed near to designated sites in other areas (SA2, SA9, SA14), although where this is the case, it may be possible to manage the effects and even to enhance the existing networks, through careful design and landscaping.

However, where the SAD includes proposals that would contribute towards programmes being pursued jointly by the Council and other authorities, positive effects are likely. For example, transport projects in the SAD and AAP will contribute towards the delivery of the transport strategies and programmes for the Black Country and the wider West Midlands Metropolitan Area such as the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (2015) (SA13). Similarly, any proposals in the SAD and AAP that would help to reduce harmful road traffic emissions in Walsall is likely to have positive effects on neighbouring areas and to contribute towards the West Midlands Low Emissions Strategy (SA1).

The proposals in the AAP to regenerate Walsall Town Centre will also benefit people outside the borough who visit the Town Centre to work, to shop or for leisure (SA6). Similarly, where the SAD is proposing to allocate land for industry, or for new open spaces and other

amenities near to the boundary, this is also likely to benefit people living in adjacent areas who would be able to access the jobs created or use the amenities provided.

Value and Vulnerability of Area Likely to be Affected

The SA has considered the likely **value and vulnerability** of the areas likely to be affected by the Options for the SAD and AAP and the SAD and AAP Policies. The paragraphs below summarise the types of effects likely to arise and how these effects have been taken into account in the appraisal.

Effects on Special Natural Characteristics and Cultural Heritage

The baseline evidence outlined in Section 4.3 above shows that Walsall Borough has an extensive range of environmental assets, including sites of importance for biodiversity, heritage assets, mineral resources, groundwater resources, areas of local and sub-national landscape importance, open spaces, and some of the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land (see Figures 11, 12, 13, 19 and 26). The appraisal has considered the potential effects of the SAD and AAP Options and Policies on these assets. The SA has also considered the potential vulnerability of these assets to the effects of the existing environmental problems identified in Section 4.3, where they could be made worse by new development, in addition to the more direct effects of development on or near to such sites.

The SAD and AAP aim to protect the most important assets through the development of an integrated 'environmental network,' in accordance with the BCCS spatial strategy, which links to similar networks in adjoining areas of the Black Country, Birmingham and Staffordshire. Existing local plan policies for protection of the environment will also continue to apply, and opportunities have been taken to update some of the existing 'saved' UDP environmental policies through the SAD, where appropriate (see Chapter 7). Environmental assets in the Town Centre which could be affected by new development, or would benefit from enhancement, are also identified in the AAP (see Chapter 8). It is anticipated that application of local plan policies alongside national policy guidance will prevent unacceptable harm to important environmental assets, and will encourage enhancement and mitigation of existing problems where feasible.

However, even with the existing policy framework in place, localised negative effects are still possible because of factors outside of the control of land use planning, such as economic constraints which are likely to result in further cuts to public services. This could

limit the ability of the Council to control development in the future, and could encourage development on greenfield sites that have fewer physical constraints, but are not well-located in relation to public transport networks and social infrastructure, which in some cases may also be important for biodiversity, agriculture or outdoor recreation.

Effects on Relevant Quality Standards and Limit Values

The main purpose of the SAD and AAP is to deliver the targets for new development in Walsall already set out in the BCCS (see Chapters 1 and 3). Delivery of these targets is therefore one of the most important benchmarks for measuring their effectiveness.

As the BCCS is not site-specific, it did not necessarily identify all of the potential effects of development proposed in Walsall on environmental quality standards or limit values. For example, there is potential for development in specific locations on sites allocated in the SAD and AAP to have effects on national or international quality standards and limit values that could not be identified through the high level appraisal carried out for the BCCS. It is also possible that new effects or standards might have been identified or introduced since the BCCS was prepared. The review of baseline evidence in Section 4.3 has therefore included a comprehensive and up-to-date review of existing environmental quality standards and limit values, and has also identified indicators of economic and social conditions in Walsall compared to conditions elsewhere.

The review of baseline evidence shows that there are a number of major road corridors in Walsall where the limit values for NO2 in the Air Quality Directive are being exceeded and/ or there is exposure to high levels of noise, that most of the borough's water bodies are not currently meeting the water quality standards in the Water Framework Directive and Humber River Basin Management Plan, and that there are also river corridors at significant risk from flooding (see Table 17 and Figures 14, 15 and 19). Although there is only one site currently on the Walsall Contaminated Land Register, other urban sites are affected by mining and industrial 'legacy' and require remediation to address contamination and ground stability problems before they can be developed (see Figures 16 and 17).

Current evidence also shows that Walsall's economy is comparatively weak, and that in some areas of the borough there are concentrations of economic and social deprivation, with higher than average unemployment, poor housing conditions and prevalence of health problems (see Figure 25). This is already having significant negative effects on the health and quality of life of many of the people living in the central, southern and western parts of

the borough, including black and minority ethnic people and people with disabilities who live mainly in these areas (see Figure 24 and Table 21). The situation is likely to persist and even worsen if Walsall is unable to provide for manufacturing investment because of a continuing shortage of readily-available employment land (see Figure 20).

The SA of the SAD and AAP Options and Policies has taken into account the potential effects of development where the evidence shows that quality standards, limit values, targets or thresholds in existing plans and programmes are not being met or could be compromised. Where potential effects have been identified that are not already addressed by existing local plan policies, these have been mitigated as far as possible through the SAD and AAP Policies.

Effects on Intensity of Land Use

The scale of development proposed in the SAD and AAP, and the general locations identified for new development or designated for protection, have already been established through the BCCS (see Chapters 1 and 3). The effects of concentrating development in the locations identified in the BCCS have already been assessed at a strategic level through the SA of that plan, and the only significant effects identified were in relation to transport proposals, which were mitigated through changes to the Transport policies.

It is not proposed to depart from the overall pattern of development proposed in the BCCS 'spatial strategy' in the SAD and AAP, and the results of the Options Appraisal have confirmed that this is likely to provide the most sustainable pattern of development (see Chapter 6). Accordingly, most development in Walsall is expected to take place in Walsall Strategic Centre (Town Centre), and in the Regeneration Corridors that form part of the Black Country 'growth network.'

For example, in line with the BCCS, the SAD will be expected to safeguard existing industrial land in the regeneration corridors and in other major employment locations such as Aldridge, to support existing industry and further economic growth, while enabling the poorest quality industrial land to be released for housing and other development, where it is not likely to be attractive for future industrial investment.

As the BCCS does not identify specific sites, the SAD will need to identify the sites where new development is expected to take place and the sites which are to be safeguarded for specific purposes, such as the environmental assets that will form part of the environmental network. It is envisaged that this approach will help to retain businesses and jobs within the

urban areas of the borough, so that it is less likely that they will be lost or will move out of the urban areas into more peripheral locations outside Walsall, and will also promote housing development in accessible locations, which will have positive effects on the local economy and on local communities. People living in the central, southern and western parts of the borough are likely to benefit most from this, as they are less likely to have access to a car and are more dependent on employment in the borough.

The baseline evidence shows that Walsall Town Centre is facing significant competition from other centres of a similar size outside the borough. The AAP will therefore need to provide an effective strategy to regenerate the Town Centre, and to deliver the shopping, office and leisure floorspace proposed in the BCCS. It will also need to identify opportunities for other development in the Town Centre that will complement and enhance its role as the Strategic Centre for Walsall. The SAD could also have positive effects on the Town Centre, if it identifies sufficient land for housing and industry in other parts of the borough to meet future requirements, as this is likely to improve the attractiveness of Walsall as a place to live and work, and support the Town Centre as a destination for business, shopping and leisure, contributing to its vitality and viability.

Effects on Areas or Landscapes with International or National Protection Status

The SA has taken into account the potential effects of the SAD and AAP Options and Policies on sites of international or national importance.

The only sites with international status that could be affected by the SAD and AAP are 'European Sites' protected under the Habitats Directive/ Habitats Regulations. Section 4.3 above identifies that the only such site in Walsall is the Cannock Extension Canal SAC, although the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the BCCS identified potential for development in Walsall to affect sites outside the borough, in particular the Cannock Chase SAC in Staffordshire. The potential effects on these SACs have been evaluated through a separate HRA of the SAD and AAP, and options for mitigating effects on the Cannock Chase SAC have been evaluated (see Chapter 6 for details).

The baseline evidence outlined at 4.3 above identifies that Walsall has a number of heritage assets and nature conservation sites of national importance (see Figures 11 and 12). The borough has 5 Scheduled Monuments and 8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), including important areas of lowland heathland habitat that form part of the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood National Character Area, which extends beyond the borough boundary into

Staffordshire. The appraisal has evaluated the effects of SAD and AAP Options and Policies on these important sites and landscapes. Where potential effects were identified – mainly from mineral extraction proposals identified in the SAD - these have been mitigated to the extent possible through the relevant SAD Policies (see Chapter 7 for details).