Annual Monitoring Report
December 2005

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Walsall Council

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Punjabi

ਜੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਔਖਿਆਈ ਲੱਗਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਟੈਲੀਫ਼ੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ 01922 652426 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ੁਬਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ 'ਤੇ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਛੱਡੋ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਹੂਲਤ ਹੈ । ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਟੈਲੀਫ਼ੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪਤਾ ਵੀ ਦੱਸੋ ਤਾਂਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਜਵਾਬ ਦੇ ਸਕੀਏ ।

Turkish

Verilen bilgileri anlamakta herhangi bir problemle karşılaşırsanız, bizi 01922 652426 numaralı telefondan arayıp telesekretere kendi dilinizde mesaj bırakabilirsiniz. Lütfen adınızı, telefon numaranızı ve adresinizi bırakmayı unutmayınız.

Bengali

যদি প্রদত্ত তথ্য আপনার বুঝতে অসুবিধা হয় তা হলে দয়া করে ০১৯২২ ৬৫২৪২৬ নাম্বারে ফোন করে আমাদের টেলিফোন রেকর্ডিং এ আপনার ফোন নাম্বার ও যোগাযোগের ঠিকানাসহ তা আপনার ভাষায় আমাদের জানান।

Urdu

اگر آپ کو مہیا کی گئی معلومات کو سمجھنے میں مشکل پیش آئے تو برائے مہربانی 01922 652426 پر فون کریں اور ہماری ٹیلیفون ریکارڈنگ کی سہولت پر اپنی زبان میں پیغام چھوڑیں۔ اور اس کے ساتھ برائے مہربانی اپنا فون نمبر اور رابطے کا ایڈریس بھی ریکارڈ کرائیں تاکہ ہم آپ سے رابطہ کر سکیں۔

Kurdish

ئه گه ر هه ر کیشه یه ك هه بوو ده ر باره ی یا ن تیگه یشتنی ئه و زانیارییی یانه ی که دابین کراون تکایه په یوه ندی بکه به م ژماره ته له فوو نه وه ۰۱۹۲۲۶۵۲۴۲۶ پا شان مه سیج جی بهیله به زمانی کوردی له ته له فوونه که ماندا که ده نگی تومارکراوی له سه ره. وه تکایه ژماره ی ته له فوون له گه ل شوینی په ییوه ندی بو ئه وه ی ئیمه په یوه ندیت پیوه بکه ینهوه.

Gujerati

આપેલી માહિતી સમજવામાં મુશ્કેલી પડતી હોય તો કૃપયા ટે.નં. ૦૧૯૨૨ ૬૫૨૪૨૬ પર ફોન કરો અને જે સંદેશો આપવો હોય તે તમારી ભાષામાં જ અમારા રેકોર્ડિંગ ફોનમાં કહો. સંદેશા સાથે તમારો ટે.નં. અને તમારા સંપર્ક માટેનું સરનામું પણ આપશો જેથી અમે તમને જવાબ આપી શકીએ.

Hindi

यदि दी गयी जानकारी को समझने में आपको कोई कठिनाई है तो कृपया टैलीफोन नम्बर 01922 652426 पर फोन करके अपनी भाषा में हमारे फोन पर संदेश छोड़ें जिस में रिकार्ड करने की व्यवस्था है । कृपया हमारे लिए अपना फोन नम्बर तथा सम्पर्क करने के लिए पता भी बतायें ताकि हम आपको उत्तर दे सकें ।

Walsall Council
Annual Monitoring Report 2005

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

For more information about any of the issues raised in this Annual Monitoring Report please contact:

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This document will also be available on the internet:
http://www.walsall.gov.uk/environment/planning/local_development_framework.htm

Contents

1   Introduction

The Requirement for Monitoring

1.1   The reform of the planning system in England, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, introduced a new development plan system. This is based on a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for each region, which replaces previous Regional Planning Guidance, and a Local Development Framework (LDF) for each local planning authority. Each local authority is required to prepare a Local Development Framework, which will comprise a folder of Local Development Documents, aiming to provide an up-to-date and flexible set of plans for its area. In future, this will replace previous plans, including the Unitary Development Plan (UDP - a single document for the whole district), which was adopted in Walsall in March 2005.

1.2   It is intended that each planning authority's Local Development Framework should be continually reviewed and revised and that this should be informed by monitoring. To support this, the 2004 Act introduced a requirement for each local planning authority to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to be submitted to the Secretary of State by 31st December each year.

1.3   The purpose of the AMR is to assess and review:

- whether the timetable and milestones are being met for the preparation of documents set out in the Local Development Scheme (the project plan, which sets out the timescales for the preparation of the documents that will comprise the Local Development Framework);

- The extent to which policies in Local Development Documents are being implemented and related targets are being achieved;

- Where policies are not being implemented, including with an explanation why and an outline of the steps being taken to ensure such policies will be implemented in the future, or where they are to be amended or replaced;

- The significant effects of implementing policies in local development documents, whether they are as intended, or whether policies are to be amended or replaced; and

- What impact policies are having in respect of national and regional or any other identified targets and whether policies need changing to reflect changes in national and regional policy.

The Content of this Monitoring Report

1.4   This is Walsall Council's first annual monitoring report under the reformed planning system. It covers the period from 1st April 2004 to 31st March 2005, during which time the council adopted the review of its Unitary Development Plan and started work on its Local Development Framework. Thus, this report provides information on progress with both the 'old' and the 'new' development plan systems. The AMR is also required to consider how the LDF will relate to other strategies, notably the borough's Community Strategy prepared by the Borough Strategic Partnership. Progress on the council's UDP and LDF and the relationship with Community Strategy are considered in Chapter 3, after the chapter that has considered the nature of the borough in broad terms and before the chapter concerned with change and development during the past year.

1.5 This AMR seeks to provide information to monitor the policies of both Walsall's UDP and indicators that have been promoted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in respect of the LDF system. The ODPM has produced 'A Good Practice Guide' on Local Development Framework Monitoring (March 2005, updated October 2005), which advises on the indicators to be used for monitoring. These fall into several categories:

i) *Contextual Indicators*, which give a description of particular aspects of the borough and can be used to identify particular issues and perhaps show major changes over time. The indicators chosen by the council are considered in Chapter 2.

ii) Output Indicators, which seek to monitor the application of the council's development planning policies and whether or not these are having the desired consequences. There are two types of output indicators -
a) those recommended by the ODPM – *Core Output Indicators*
b) *Local Output Indicators*, which have been chosen to seek to monitor the effects of local policies, and have been based on the monitoring indicators set out in Walsall's UDP. The output indicators have been put forward as things the council has been asked to, or said it would try to, measure. However, the introduction of these two new requirements has meant the Council's resources have had to be concentrated on those indicators for which information has been most readily available. Further consideration will be given to monitoring requirements and capabilities in future years. The available results for the core and local output indicators are set out in Chapter 4 in a structure that reflects that of Walsall's UDP. The conclusion to this chapter seeks to identify the main issues raised by the results of the monitoring and by the monitoring exercise itself. The Appendix to this report lists the ODPM Core Output Indicators and the Walsall UDP (Local Output Indicators) and identifies those that have been monitored and those that have not.

iii) *Significant Effects Indicators*, which the good practice guidance states are advisable to assess the significant social, environmental and economic effects of policies and enable a comparison to be made between the predicted effects and the actual effects measured during implementation of the policies. It is recognised that other indicators may serve as significant effects indicators, although the guidance advises that significant effects indicators should generally be identified through work on sustainability appraisals into Local Development Documents. The Council has not undertaken any major sustainability appraisals[1] during 2004-2005, and it will explore in future whether future appraisals will identify significant effects indicators that should be the subject of monitoring, or whether any indicators developed so far should serve as significant effects indicators.

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[1] A sustainability appraisal for a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the UDP policy for affordable housing was published in February 2005 (see Chapter 3), but it simply concluded that the SPD would support the implementation of the relevant UDP policy.

2   The Walsall Context

2.1   Walsall Metropolitan Borough is one of 4 Black Country Districts (the others being Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton) and is to the north-west of Birmingham. The borough has a population of about 252,810 (mid 2004) and an area of some 41 square miles. It is made up of a number of distinct settlements, each with its own unique history of development, which came together through successive local government reorganisations in the 1960s and 1970s. These settlements have to a degree retained their own separate identities, and the council has consistently aimed to maintain and foster the advantages that this brings in terms of local identity and a 'sense of belonging' , whilst also seeking to engender an awareness of strategic issues at the borough level. The main settlements in the borough are:

- Walsall, still famous for its saddlery and leather goods industry that dates back to medieval times; and Bloxwich (metal goods)

- The Black Country towns of Willenhall (specialising in lock making) and Darlaston (formerly famous for nuts and bolts and other metal industries)

- The Brownhills area, comprising several settlements (Brownhills, Pelsall, Shelfield, Walsall Wood and Rushall), which have developed from mining villages

- Aldridge, a medieval town that expanded in the 1960s and 1970s through overspill from the conurbation; and Streetly and Pheasey which have developed as residential suburbs over the years.

Fig 2.1 Walsall Urban Form
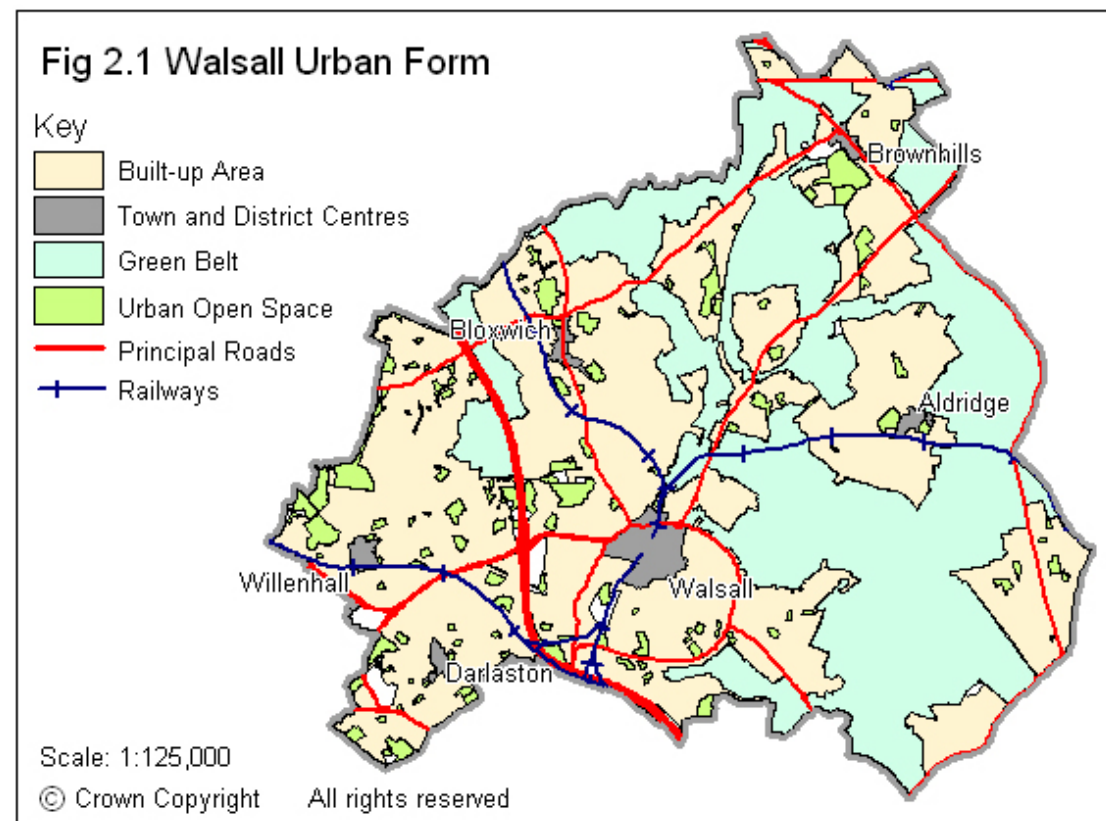
2.2 Walsall's settlement pattern is a very sustainable one, with a well-spaced hierarchy of centres that includes Walsall town centre, which has a sub-regional role; the district centres of Bloxwich, Brownhills, Aldridge, Willenhall and Darlaston, which serve more localised roles; and a large number of local centres whose main function is to meet the day to day convenience shopping and local service needs of the immediate community. Unlike in many other towns of its size, Walsall can offer a good distribution of facilities within easy reach of its residents. The Council aims to uphold and improve still further this beneficial settlement pattern.

2.3 About one third of the land area of the borough is open, mainly in agricultural use, and much of this is protected as Green Belt. The Green Belt and areas of urban open space, including canal corridors, help to maintain the identity of the constituent communities, as well as preventing the outward expansion of the conurbation.

2.4 Walsall has a vibrant, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural population. 14% of its population are from black and minority ethnic groups. The proportion of young people is higher in Walsall than the UK average according to the 2001 Census.

2.5 Walsall remains a traditional manufacturing economy, with proportionately far more employment in production sectors than the UK as a whole, and far fewer in services. Output from manufacturing, at 37% of the economy, is nearly twice the proportion in the UK as a whole. Walsall's generally low output growth, when compared regionally and nationally, is reflected in lower employment growth. Typically for a manufacturing-led economy, full time male employment is proportionately higher than in the West Midlands region or the UK (Prism, Local Economic Prospects for Walsall, 2002, p65, 66).

2.6 Walsall as a whole suffers from a relative lack of economic demand; and this fundamental problem tends to trap the Borough in a low wealth creating cycle. Low aggregate demand means that there will be fewer job opportunities and lower incomes; in turn this reduces household expenditure. Levels of unemployment in the Borough are 1% higher than both regional and national rates[2]. Male unemployment is a particular problem with Walsall having a rate of 4.9% compared to an average of 4.0% for the West Midland Region and 3.4% nationally. As a consequence, there is relatively high and continuing deprivation. Walsall, out of 354 local authorities in England, ranks in the top 51 in the overall Indices of Deprivation 2004, coming 32nd for income deprivation.

2.7 Educational attainment persistently lags behind that for England as a whole, which is shown in the table below:

Table 2.1 Educational Attainment in Walsall
Walsall MD, GCSEs: 5+ A*-C, comparison with average for England

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Walsall	34.6	36.1	37.0	40.6	42.4	42.6	43.4
England Average	46.3	47.9	49.2	50.0	51.5	52.9	53.7

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[2] Rates are estimates for March 2005 based on claimant count as a proportion of the resident working age population

2.8   There are however sharp contrasts between the older areas in the central and western parts of the borough and the easterly areas. The west and centre have inner-city characteristics of poor housing, higher unemployment, high concentration of social deprivation and a poor environment; whereas much (though not all) of the eastern parts are relatively wealthy and enjoy better housing and social conditions. The geographical pattern of deprivation in the Borough is shown in figure 2.2 overleaf.

2.9   The Borough does have the advantage of being close to the hub of the national motorway network and the rail network. However, many of the local connections into this road and rail network need to be improved so that the Borough can reap the benefits of this potentially advantageous geographical position.

2.10   Despite relatively high level of deprivation and joblessness in the Borough, residents express generally high levels of satisfaction with living in Walsall. A Tracker Survey which took place in April 2005 revealed that 71.38% of residents interviewed were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with Walsall as a place to live.

Figure 2.3   Satisfaction with living in Walsall
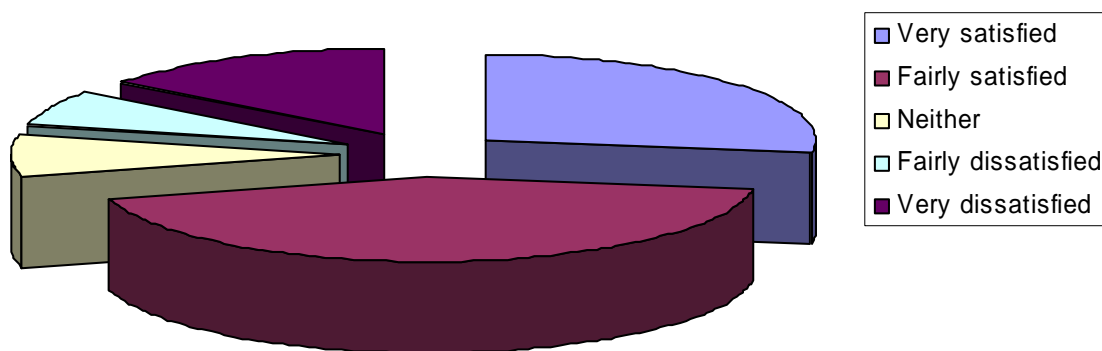
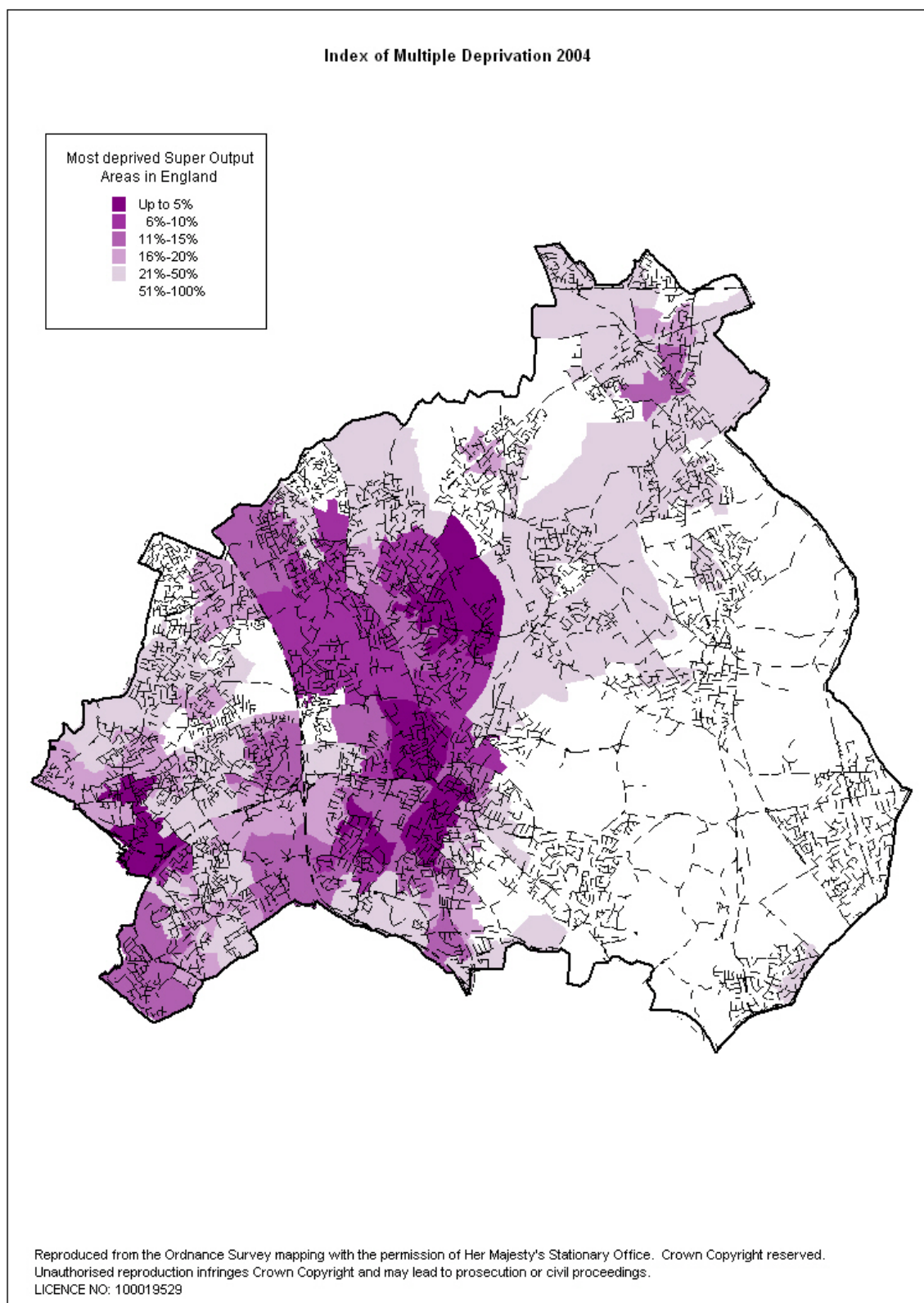2.11   Besides satisfaction with living in Walsall, skill levels and educational attainment, and multiple deprivation are used as indicators for Walsall's Community Plan. Other indicators that are used or are being developed by Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership include earnings, gross domestic product, employment rate, business formation, residents' health and the perceived ability to influence local decisions. As the data on these issues is assembled the Council will consider which of these indicators may be included most usefully in future monitoring reports. Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership is also seeking to measure access to services, and the work done on accessibility for this report (in Chapter 4) should contribute to future monitoring for the Community Plan.

Figure 2.2 Deprivation in Walsall

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004

Most deprived Super Output
Areas in England

Up to 5%
6%-10%
11%-15%
16%-20%
21%-50%
51%-100%

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3 Progress with Walsall Unitary Development Plan and Local Development Framework

Walsall Unitary Development Plan

3.1 The reformed development planning system was introduced at a time when Walsall was at an advanced stage with the review of its UDP, prepared under the previous development plan system. Following a public inquiry in the summer of 2003, the Inspector's Report was received in July 2004. After consideration by the council, which was able to accept most of the recommendations made, proposed modifications were published for consultation and it was not considered that representations received raised issues that would justify further modifications to the plan. Thus, the council was able to adopt the UDP on 7th March 2005.

3.2 This means that Walsall has an up-to-date development plan and – because work on large parts of the Local Development Framework (LDF) will be affected by work at the Black Country and regional levels, (see below) - the case has been made to the ODPM that many of its policies should be 'saved' beyond the three years automatically allowed for 'old' style plans following the introduction of the new system. The Council is seeking to ensure that all of the policies in the UDP are implemented.

3.3 It was always intended that, following adoption of the UDP, documents would be prepared to explain how some of its policies would be implemented and to provide elaboration of those policies. Previously known as Supplementary Planning Guidance, these are now Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and although they relate to the UDP they have to be prepared under the LDF arrangements.

Walsall Local Development Framework

3.4 The initial element of the LDF is the *Local Development Scheme* (LDS), which sets out the Local Development Documents the Council intends to prepare for the LDF. It serves as a project plan, establishing the programming, status and links between the different documents. This should mean the local community and other interested people and organisations can be informed as to the planning policy documents the council has now and intends to prepare in future. Walsall's LDS was submitted to the Deputy Prime Minister before the end of March 2005. The LDS can be viewed on the Council's website at:
http://www.walsall.gov.uk/local_development_framework.htm

3.5 The first document proposed to be part of the new LDF is the *Statement of Community Involvement* (SCI), showing how the council will involve local communities in the preparation of Local Development Documents and the consideration of planning applications. Whilst the LDS showed work on the SCI starting in April, the council was able to launch the concept of an SCI at an event on 19th March 2005, which involved representatives of the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership and community groups, including the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships established by the council to help represent the views of residents (and others) on local issues.

3.6 The LDS proposes several *Development Plan Documents* (DPDs), which will provide the policies of the 'plan' across to Borough as a whole. These comprise:

- The Core Strategy, setting out strategic policies
- Housing & Economic Development DPD
- Waste Management DPD
- Transport & Accessibility DPD
- Shopping and Centres DPD
- Recreation, Leisure & Community DPD
- Environment (inc Minerals) DPD

3.7   The Core Strategy is a key DPD and should normally precede, and set the context for, work on other planning policy documents. However, its content, and consequently its timing, will be critically dependent on progress with the submission and examination of a study of the Black Country Study, which is to inform a partial review of the Regional Spatial Strategy as well as the LDFs for Walsall and the other Black Country Boroughs[3]. As of March 2005, the LDS planned that work on the Core Strategy should start in April 2006 with adoption intended to be in January 2009. The other topic-based DPDs are intended to follow the Core Strategy, so work on the first documents is programmed to start in April 2007 (at about which time it is intended there will be a further partial review of the RSS). Thus, progress on these documents will be matters to be considered through future AMRs.

3.8   The LDS also proposes *Area Action Plans* (AAPs, which also have the status DPDs) for two areas where significant change is anticipated. Generally such plans are (again) expected to follow the Core Strategy and work on one of the AAPs, for Central Willenhall is programmed to start in April 2007. However, the other AAP (for the WRC Area including Walsall Town Centre) was proposed in the LDS to be progressed as a matter of urgency, with work starting in April 2005, to seek to reflect the strategy of Walsall Regeneration Company (WRC), which was commissioning work to produce an 'area framework plan', setting out its proposals for major developments. However, by the submission of the LDS in March 2005 it was becoming apparent that the timescale and approach for the commissioning of work for the WRC framework might not reflect the requirements of the new development plan system, particularly with regard to the need to 'screen' and 'scope' the recently-introduced requirements for sustainability appraisal / strategic environmental assessment[4]. It is likely that the LDS will have to be reviewed to provide either an alternative timescale or an alternative approach to the development planning for the WRC area.

3.9   As referred to above, the LDS contains proposals for *Supplementary Planning Documents* (SPDs) to elaborate upon UDP policies. The LDS submission proposed that all of these were to have started in January 2005 and the progress (to April 2005) on each SPD has been as follows.

   i)   Affordable Housing SPD
        With substantial support from the council's Housing Services, this was progressed through all of the necessary preliminaries to enable consultation to be undertaken in February – March 2005, as indicated in the LDS. Subsequently the SPD was approved by Cabinet in May

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[3] The possibility of preparing a single joint core strategy for the four Black Country Boroughs has been under consideration since January 2005.
[4] It is understood from press reports that the Regeneration Company in Hull suffered similar difficulties.

2005 and by a meeting of full Council[5] at the start of July 2005, just after the date of June anticipated in the LDS.

ii)   Open Space & Recreation SPD
This has been dependent on a survey of open space, commissioned by the council's Lifelong Learning and Community service. However, the commission was delayed by approximately 6 months (to June 2005) and the LDS will have to be reviewed to take account of the effect of this slippage on the preparation process.

iii)   Health Care SPD
Work was meant to commence in collaboration with Walsall Teaching Primary Care Trust but has been substantially delayed, so that it has not yet started. The LDS will have to be reviewed to reflect this.

iv)   Education Provision SPD
Again, work was meant to start on a collaborative basis, with Education Walsall, but is only now about to commence. The LDS will have to be reviewed to reflect this.

v)   Waterfront Development SPD
Work on this proceeded up to April 2005, although it was 2 months behind the LDS timetable when the consultation was undertaken in September-October 2005. However, the consultation raised serious issues relating to the possible need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment, and the LDS will have to be revised to reflect this. consultation

vi)   'Design Guide' SPD
Work is continuing on this substantial document, but progress against the timetable will need to be kept under review.

3.10   Although this report is for the period up to the end of March 2005, it is clear – particularly from progress from April 2005 onwards - the LDS will need to be reviewed due to slippage on a number of aspects. It may be that changes or delay at the Black Country or regional levels could affect matters, but at the present time, revisions will be required in respect of:

- The Area Action Plan for Walsall Regeneration Company Area
- SPD on Open Space & Recreation
- SPD on Health Care Provision
- SPD on Education Provision
- SPD on Walsall Waterfront

The Relationship between the LDF and the Council's Vision and Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership Community Plan

3.11   In 2004 Walsall Council adopted its Vision for 2008, which has the following priorities:

1.   Ensure a clean and green borough.
2.   Make it easier for people to get around.
3.   Ensure all people are safe and secure.

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[5] It was understood at that time that SPDs would require the approval of Full Council. It is now clear that is not the case.

4.   Make our schools great.

5.   Make Walsall a healthy and caring place.

6.   Encourage everyone to feel proud of Walsall.

7.   Make it easier to access local services.

8.   Strengthen the local economy.

9.   Listen to what local people want.

10.   Transform Walsall into an excellent local authority.

3.12   Walsall's UDP recognises that the development plan should help to achieve many of these aims (and the aims of further long-term visioning to 2020-2021), whilst the 'Vision' should also help to inform future planning policy.

3.13   The importance of ensuring that planning policies, Council priorities and community aspirations can be co-ordinated together has been recognised in the review of Walsall's Community Strategy (called 'Walsall's Community Plan'), which commenced in November 2004 and has run into 2005. Work on the Community Plan has involved officers concerned with the production of Walsall's UDP and LDF, and it has also included the development of matrix which seeks to align the objectives of Walsall's UDP, the Regional Spatial Strategy, the strategic ambitions underlying the Black Country Study and Walsall Council's Vision, with sustainability objectives to derive both the key issues for the Community Strategy and priorities for the LDF. This work was completed in September 2005 and it is anticipated that the work to align the different policy approaches will be reproduced in next year's AMR.

3.14   This AMR has already referred (in paragraph 2.11) to the use of contextual indicators for both the LDF and the Community Plan. Further consideration will be given to how these (and other) plans can be monitored together using common indicators, including output indicators where appropriate.

4   Core & Local Output Indicators

Introduction

4.1   This Chapter sets out results of the monitoring (for 2004-2005) for the core output indicators set out by the ODPM (shown in bold and with the ODPM reference number) and the local output indicators, based upon the monitoring indicators set out in Walsall's UDP. The aim of this exercise is to seek to find if development plan policies (those of the UDP for the period up to 2005) are being applied and whether they are being effective. However, given the number of indicators and the data required it has not been possible to provide a response on every indicator and reasons have been given where this is the case. The Appendix to this report summarises all of the core output and local output indicators and whether or not they have been monitored this year.

4.2   Because of the number of indicators, this chapter is broken down into sections that reflect the chapters of the UDP. Both the core and the local output indicators are addressed in these sections, in the same order as relevant policies are set out in the UDP.

Environment & Amenity

Green Belt

Local output indicator (UDP, particularly Policy ENV2)
– Protection of the Green Belt – target 100%

4.3   Whilst there were no major developments[6] allowed in the Green Belt from 2001-2004, a major proposal was allowed on appeal by the Secretary of State on 13th September 2004: the redevelopment of St Margaret's Hospital at Great Barr for 445 dwellings on 10ha.. The site was identified (UDP Policy ENV4) as a major developed site within the Green Belt, where development could/can be permitted as long as it meets the necessary criteria. The Secretary of State's decision letter concluded that the site is suitable for housing and redevelopment would remove derelict buildings and benefit the registered Great Barr Park and improve the setting of the listed Great Barr Hall. There would be harm to the Green Belt, but that would be outweighed by very special circumstances in this case. This is an exceptional development on an exceptional site.

Biodiversity

LDF core output indicator (8) - Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including:
> (i) change in priority habitats and species (by type); and
> (ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional or local significance.

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[6] **For Regional Monitoring Purposes this is:** Planning applications for significant new development or changes of use including 5 or more dwellings (residential) or 500 square metres floorspace or more (non-residential) or significant leisure developments within the Green Belt. There is a general issue regarding efforts to monitor completions of all developments other than housing at all scales, because private building inspections do not provide local planning authorities with completion details. Therefore, for the present time at least, where monitoring is concerned with the completion of development for employment, retailing, leisure, etc. the thresholds used for regional monitoring (of the RSS) have been used as the Council has been able to follow the progress of limited numbers of relatively large developments.

4.4 The UDP contains several policies (ENV19-ENV24) that seek to protect species and habitats, promote local nature reserves and protect sites of local importance for nature conservation, control development that might adversely affect protected species, take account of nature conservation in new development and protect wildlife corridors. The plan also contains policies (ENV15-19) promoting forestry initiatives, tree planting generally and the protection of trees and hedgerows. It identifies progress towards targets in biodiversity action plans, protection of nature conservation sites, and tree planning in relation to targets in biodiversity action plans as local monitoring indicators. However, it has been decided not to comment in relation to these potential local output indicators given the overlap with the core output indicator and the need to comment on the issues raised by its publication. The opportunity has been taken to comment in some detail, because the issues raised will be applicable to several other indicators.

4.5 The guidance defines 'change' as something to be considered in terms of 'impact of completed development, management programmes and planning agreements', thus it can involve quantitative and qualitative change.

4.6 *Quantitative changes* in the area of designated nature conservation sites at all levels can be measured but there is little change to be expected on an annual basis. While designated sites, such as new SSSIs and LNRs are added on occasion, sites such as SINCs or SLINCs are only reviewed approximately once every 10 years. This means that annual monitoring will show little or no change over successive years but there will be occasional large changes when reviews take place.

4.7 Comment on the changes to the extent of designated sites in Walsall is described below.

    i)   **Special Areas of Conservation.**
        Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated by English Nature in response to European legislation. The borough currently has one such site: Cannock Extension Canal, which was identified as a candidate for designation on 31` August 2001 and confirmed subsequently. Only 0.65 ha (of the total site area of 5.47 ha.) is within the borough. There have been no changes to the site boundaries between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005 (or at any other time).

    ii)   **Sites of Special Scientific Interest.**
        Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are designated by English Nature. The borough has seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest covering. 69.2 ha, including the Cannock Extension Canal which is also a SAC. Details of these sites, and the other sites designated for their environmental importance can be obtained from the Regeneration Directorate at Walsall Council. Although there have been some relatively minor changes (losses) in previous years, there have been no changes to the site boundaries between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005.

    iii) **Local Nature Reserves**
        Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are declared by local authorities in consultation with English Nature. The borough has nine Local Nature Reserves covering 226.7 ha. Several have been designated relatively recently, the last being in November 2003. However, no new sites have been declared since 31 March 2004 and there have been no changes to the site boundaries between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005. The council only needs to declare sites totalling another 28 ha

in extent to meet the Audit Commission local performance indicator (LIB094) which seeks to secure 1 hectare of Local Nature Reserve land for every thousand people within the borough. At present there are 0.89 hectares per thousand of the population.

iv) **Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation**

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are designated by the local authorities in conjunction with English Nature and the Wildlife Trust. The borough currently has 32 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation which cover some 407 ha.. There have been no changes to the site boundaries between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005. No new sites have been designated since 31 March 2004. A review is underway and will be completed in 2006. If this indicator is carried forward into successive years, there will be significant change in area next year. A review of these sites carried out in 1996 showed that 60.2 ha of land designated as SINCs had been lost to development between 1977 and 1996. In this same period 84.9 ha was removed from the borough due to boundary changes and 7.1 ha added. Since the new UDP was adopted in March 2005, these sites receive stronger protection from development. It is expected that these sites will become more defensible from damaging development.

v) **Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation**

Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs) are identified by the local authority in conjunction with the Wildlife Trust. The borough has approximately 76 Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation which cover some 439 ha.. These sites were first identified in 1990 when approximately 98 sites were placed on the schedule covering some 556 ha. When reviewed in 1996, approximately 88 ha had been lost to development or boundary changes. A new review is underway and will be completed in 2006. Changes to these sites cannot really be monitored because, until the current review is completed, there have never been defensible boundaries or detailed site descriptions. Indeed, until the council's UDP was adopted in March 2005, there were no policies protecting these sites. The current review will establish a precise schedule of sites for future monitoring.

4.8 *Qualitative change to designated sites* is more difficult to measure. English Nature currently monitor the quality of SSSIs for its PSA target, which aims to have 95% of all SSSI in favourable or recovering condition by 2010. However, the monitoring frequency is sporadic, few Walsall sites have been monitored since 31 March 2004 and the monitoring that has been undertaken shows that Walsall's SSSIs are in a mixed condition. Only 50.3% of the sites assessed are favourable or recovering. The national picture in September 2005 is that 68.21% are in a favourable/recovering condition, with 68.99% for the West Midlands Region. The apparent relatively poor performance needs some interpretation. The two council-owned SSSIs are in favourable condition but the condition of the privately-owned ones ranges from unfavourable: declining to favourable. The unfavourable sites can suffer mismanagement due to over-grazing, simple neglect or fertiliser run-off. The council has little control over these activities.

4.9 Monitoring qualitative change to the SINCs and SLINCs is the responsibility of the local authority. However, it is impossible to carry out annually without a considerable increase in capacity: such monitoring, even using indicator species or sample areas, is resource intensive. Survey work carried out in

the summer of 2005 and due to be submitted in January 2006 should give some indication of qualitative change in the sites surveyed over 10-15 years for the nine sites investigated. In the future it should be possible to carry out analysis of survey work undertaken over the years to provide an assessment of each site's current condition.

4.10 It is important to recognise the council does not currently hold baseline data to measure either the quantity or the quality of most habitats and species. As most designated sites are surveyed only once or twice a decade, there is rarely up-to-date information available. At present there is no means to provide reliable borough-wide baseline information on even the easiest-to-survey-and-monitor habitats and species.

4.11 Monitoring the indicators proposed raises three broad sets of issues[7]:

i) It is doubtful that annual monitoring would show very much. Changes in species population and changes in habitat quality can only usefully be measured over long time periods. Even if the data is collected, useful interpretation would be required.

ii) The indicators are not necessarily good indicators of the implementation of planning policy as they are influenced by many other factors. For example, species population trends are affected by climate, changes outside the borough, disease, pollution as well as management or development activities which may be outside the control of the local authority.

iii) Collecting this data would be resource intensive to research and monitor. There is currently little capacity to deal with these indicators. Not all the baseline information currently exists.

4.12 Experience of the issues raised by the monitoring of designated sites, on the basis of work that was being undertaken or envisaged before the production of the AMR has led the Council to consider it will be necessary to:

- Deal with the borough on a sub-regional basis and agree priority habitats and species between other local authorities, English Nature, EcoRecord, Government Office for the West Midlands and the Wildlife Trust.

- Agree monitoring methods across the sub-region which are achievable and which provide useful results.

- Ensure Walsall's current budget for survey work continues to provide baseline data which can be used for monitoring biodiversity.

- Establish baseline schedules of designated sites, particularly SINCs and SLINCs. This will be completed in 2006 when the current review of these sites is complete.

- Increase capacity to monitor biodiversity indicators. This may be within the authority, or through support to sub-regional bodies such as EcoRecord.

- Continue to seek resources for a Black Country (and Birmingham?) biodiversity audit.

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[7] Such issues may be seen as relevant to several of the indicators considered throughout this report.

4.13   It is considered that it will be necessary to identify which data, information and interpretation can be assembled at the sub-regional, regional and national levels to make the most efficient use of resources and to ensure that monitoring can be consistent.

The Historic Environment

Local output indicator (UDP, Policies ENV27, ENV28 and ENV29)
- Protection of buildings of historic or architectural interest – target 100%

4.14   UDP Policy ENV27 seeks to protect buildings that that are Listed because of their historic or architectural interest (and to protect the settings of these buildings) from inappropriate development or alterations. The Council also maintains a 'Local List' of buildings that do not have statutory protection, but are considered to be of historic or architectural interest, and protection of such buildings is sought under UDP Policy ENV28. Policy ENV29 seeks to preserve or enhance Conservation Areas.

4.15   The information for Listed and Locally Listed buildings for 2004-2005 can only cover those buildings that are statutorily protected and Local Listed buildings in Conservation Areas (it has to be recognised that without statutory protection many changes to Locally Listed buildings, including demolition, are not subject to planning controls). As at 31st March 2005 there were:

- 142 entries on the Statutory List, covering approximately 194 buildings or structures.

- A total of 220 entries on the Local List, covering approximately 333 buildings, 99 of which are within Conservation Areas covering approximately 142 buildings.

4.16   The Council keep a 'Buildings at Risk Register,' which is not comprehensive but gives an indication of the numbers of Listed Buildings and Local List buildings that are at risk of damage. The Council seeks to take a proactive approach towards buildings on the register and examples are given below of progress on the protection of buildings considered to be 'at risk'. A more comprehensive assessment would require survey work to be undertaken.

4.17   During 2004-2005 one listed building - 14-15 Upper Lichfield Street, Willenhall (Listed Grade II) – was restored and brought back into residential use, having previously been in a very poor state of repair. This followed grant assistance through the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme for Willenhall.

4.18   The Council has also been working to secure investment in several other buildings, which should result in progress to be reported in next year's AMR. These include:

- 13-14 High Street, Walsall (Listed Grade II)
  These were severely damaged by fire in 2003-2004, with only the front façade and return gable saved, and the Council has been working with the owners to secure investment for residential use, which should retain the surviving historic elements of the structure.

- Great Barr Hall (Listed Grade II*)
  This is Walsall's only entry in the national Buildings at Risk Register. It has been vacant for some years and the Council has been working closely with the owner to seek the restoration of the building, to bring it back into residential use. It is anticipated that it should be possible to report substantial progress next year.

- Albion Flour Mills (Local List within Walsall Locks Conservation Area) Planning permission has been granted for residential use, including re-use of the mill building and contemporary-design new build at rear. It is anticipated development should start in the coming year.

4.19   At 31st March 2005, the borough contained 18 Conservation Areas. Two of these had been the subject of Conservation Area Appraisals, but no Management Plans had been published. However, the provision of such documents is to be monitored under a 'Best Value' Performance Indicator for 2005-2006, which provides an incentive for Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans to be produced, and the Council is seeking to establish a programme to do this.

Renewable Energy

LDF core output indicator (9) – Renewable energy capacity installed by type.

4.20   UDP Policy ENV 39: Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency - encourages proposals for the development of renewable energy sources and for efficient energy use (Policy EN1 of the RSS takes a similar approach).

4.21   Government policy in recent years, and particularly since the European Union Renewables Directive (RD) came into force in 2001, has given increasing emphasis to renewable energy and has encouraged the development of new sources of fuel and power generation. Under the RD the proposed UK 'share' of the EU target is that renewable sources should account for 10% of UK electricity consumption by 2010. The Department of Trade and Industry website provides information on national targets for renewable energy, but does not give sufficient information to assess performance at the local level.

4.22   As part of its target-led approach, Government policy has encouraged renewable energy through a 'Renewables Obligation' on each electricity supplier in Great Britain to supply a specific proportion of electricity from eligible renewables[8]. Ofgem is the body that, among other things, tracks and monitors renewable energy capacity, but a search of the Ofgem website reveals no generators in Walsall that are accredited under the Renewables Obligation.

4.23   Such a result implies there is no renewable energy capacity in Walsall, but the picture may not be a comprehensive one (as it appears to exclude capacity for individual business or domestic use, which could be significant when considered cumulatively). The lack of a source of comprehensive data means that it is not possible to monitor this indicator in the form sought by the Government. At present, the Council's development control system (working on categories obtained previously from the Government) does not specifically identify developments for renewable energy (council officers are not aware of any such applications during 2004-2005). However, not all forms of provision for renewable energy are likely to require planning permission. Without a source (such as a national registration scheme) giving the capacity of provision for renewable energy it is not considered this indicator is capable of being monitored in its present form. Alternatively, the indicator may have to be refined to relate to the information that can be made available, and the Council will consider how planning applications for renewable energy capacity might be identified in future years.

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[8] Government also provides tax advantages and grant aid and promotes research and development into renewable energy.

Environment Agency Advice

Core output indicator (7) - Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality.

4.24   The Environment Agency web site showed that during 2004-2005 it objected on flood-risk grounds to four applications in Walsall Borough. The applications and the outcomes in each case are as follows:

Application Ref	Type of Application	Reason for Objection	Outcome
04/0917/OL/E2	Residential - Major	PPG25 - Request for FRA[9]	Not yet determined (nor at Nov 2005)
04/2269/FL/E4	Residential - Major	Unsatisfactory FRA Submitted	Withdrawn 6th Jan 2005
04/2452/RM/W2	Residential - Major	PPG25 - Request for FRA	Refused (including on flood-risk grounds) 9th Feb 2005, applicants have appealed
04/2458/OL/W1	Educational - Minor	Unsatisfactory FRA Submitted	Withdrawn (24th June 2005)

4.25   The Environment Agency website does not show any objection to planning applications on grounds of water quality during 2004-2005. Thus, no application has been granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence or water quality grounds. UDP Policy ENV40 is concerned with the conservation, protection and use of water resources, as well as with flood risk.

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[9] FRA – Flood Risk Assessment.

Jobs & Prosperity

Employment Development[10]

Core output indicator (1a) - Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type;
Core output indicator (1b) - Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type, in employment or regeneration areas; and
Core output indicator (1c) - Amount of floorspace by employment type, which is on previously developed land.

4.26   Walsall's UDP has the policy aim 'to boost jobs and prosperity in the borough by providing enough land of the right quality to meet the full range of employment needs and by promoting the enhancement of existing employment areas.'   To this end, Proposal JP1 allocates land for employment, whilst other policies (notably Policy JP5, which identifies 'core employment areas') seek to protect and enhance employment land and employment areas for development for employment uses, particularly uses in classes B1(b & c), B2 and B8 (research and development, light industry, industry and warehousing / distribution). B1a offices can also be allowed on employment sites, but generally this will be only if a series of tests can be satisfied, which derive from policies to direct office development towards town centres (see the 'Strengthening Our Centres' section, below, especially core output indicator 4b).

4.27   The monitoring indicators put forward by the ODPM deal with the key issues in a similar way to those proposed in Walsall's UDP, which are:

- Land developed for employment uses - target annual average of 13 hectares

- Share of all development on previously-developed sites – target 95%

- Protection of employment allocations from loss to other uses – target 90%.

   The first two of these local output indicators are addressed by consideration of the ODPM indicators here, whilst the protection of employment land is analysed below.

4.28   The ODPM indicators seek information on development in employment and regeneration areas. In Walsall the UDP defines core employment areas whilst most of the western and central parts of the Borough fall within the Walsall, Wolverhampton and South Staffordshire Regeneration Zone ('Future Foundations') and large parts of Walsall and Darlaston are covered by the Walsall Regeneration Company. These areas have been used in the response to core output indicator 1b. The UDP recognises the importance of the Regeneration Zone and the Regeneration Company for the regeneration strategy of the borough as a whole.

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[10] It should be noted that the information provided in this section, and in the other sections of the document dealing with commercial development, refers to gross *external* floorspace rather than gross *internal* floorspace as suggested by the ODPM's 'Local Development Framework Core Output Indicators' Guidance October 2005. The council, like other planning authorities collects information in terms of gross external floorspace and therefore does not have the necessary information to produce internal floorspace calculations. It is not considered feasible to provide floorspace in terms of gross internal measurements.

4.29 As with other commercial development, it is not possible to monitor completions at all scales, because private building inspection services are not required to provide information on all of the developments they are responsible for and the council does not have the resources to survey every development. Therefore, the information given here is based on returns for the Regional Employment Land Survey, which considers sites of 0.4 ha. or larger. Such a threshold will have to be maintained unless measures and resources are put in place to enable all developments for employment to be considered.

4.30 During 2004 – 2005, the amounts of employment floorspace (and employment sites – to respond to the local output indicator) completed due to the large developments monitored were as follows.

Completion of Employment Development, 2004 - 2005 (sq.m. gross & ha.)

	1a Borough	1b Regeneration Areas	1c Previously-developed Land
B1(a)	900 (0.31 ha)	0	900 (0.31 ha)
B1(b)	0	0	0
B1(c)	2,202 (0.53 ha)	2,202 (0.53 ha)	2,202 (0.53 ha)
B2	0	0	0
B8	0	0	0
B1/B2/B8	7,046 (1.85 ha.)	7,046 (1.85 ha.)	7,046 (1.85 ha.)
Total	10,148 (2.69 ha.)	9,248 (2.38 ha)	10,148 (2.69 ha.)

Source: RELS return 2005 (sites >= 0.4 ha only).
Notes: Floorspace in terms of gross external square metres. B1/B2/B8 permissions generally exclude B1(a) office use.

4.31 These results show a reasonable amount of development for employment, although below the UDP annual average target of 13 ha.. This is because development rates fluctuate between years and in cycles over time – so it is intended that in future trends in employment development should be monitored over time. All of the development was on previously-developed land and most of which was concentrated in employment / regeneration areas. The major exception to this was the single office development, which occurred at Aldridge Park (the former Walsall Airport). This was for a local company that needed premises as a base for its servicing operations, which (because these involved the need to accommodate vehicles for staff that would travel around the region) could not be located within an existing centre. However, it is notable that only a very limited amount of office investment has been secured for the borough in recent years (in 2003 an extension to an existing operation, for Homeserve Insurance was approved, again in an out-of-centre location). The lack of an office market in the Borough has previously been identified by Prism Research ('Local Economic Prospects for Walsall', 2003) and SQW ('Stepping up for Change', 2004) and the need to promote office development, particularly in Walsall town centre is a major part of the strategy for Walsall Regeneration Company and of the strategy emerging from the Black Country Study, which aims to inform a review of the RSS.

4.32 As with other analyses of development, the most useful and informative approach is likely to be on the basis of trends considered over a number of years and in relation to other local authority areas. The council will consider the feasibility of providing such analyses in future, in the light of on-going monitoring work at the regional level.

Employment Land

Core output indicator (1d) - Employment land available by type.

4.33   Employment land is generally allocated in the UDP for B1 (normally excluding B1(a) use), B2 and B8 uses, although planning permissions have been granted on some specific sites for B1(a) (on one site at M6, Junction 10) or B8 uses.   The UDP identified at 2004 that there was no surplus of quality employment land, and, given that the borough is still attracting investment in industry and distribution (see above), this remains the case.   However, in numerical terms the amount of land for employment (95 ha. In total) exceeds the annual average requirement set out in the UDP (13 ha. over 6 years = 78 ha).

Employment Land (Ha) at 1st April 2005

	All (RELS)	(i) allocated	(ii) planning permission	under construction	unallocated / windfall sites
B1(a)	1.48	0.00	1.48	0.00	0.00
B1(b)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B1(c)	5.28	0.00	5.28	0.00	0.00
B2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B8	10.88	0.00	4.45	6.43	0.00
B1/B2/B8	77.37	47.90	24.62	0.00	4.85
Total	95.01	47.90	35.83	6.43	4.85

Source: Regional Employment Land Study and Walsall Council monitoring

4.34   The adequacy of the supply of employment land is to be reviewed further over the coming year through work on the Black Country Study. It is important to recognise that there is substantial capacity to accommodate office development in Walsall town centre.

Core output indicator (1e) - Losses of employment land in
(i) employment/regeneration areas and
(ii) local authority area.
Core output indicator (1f) - Amount of employment land lost to residential development.

4.35   The monitoring carried out for 2004-2005 indicates that during the year no allocated employment sites (in the borough and so not in any employment / regeneration areas) were lost to development for other uses. This means that the local output indicator, to protect at least 90% of new employment allocations has been more than fulfilled.

4.36   On the other hand, some employment land / premises have been redeveloped for other uses, principally for housing. At present the council does not have comprehensive information on all of the changes or on whether they occurred within defined employment / regeneration areas, but it will explore the extent to which such changes maybe monitored in future years.

4.37   The council has, however, been able to monitor the extent to which employment land / premises have been and are being redeveloped for housing, and the results are shown below. It is notable that:

i) The amount of employment land that has changed to housing use (2.4 ha.) is greater than in previous years.

Industrial Land which has changed use to Housing
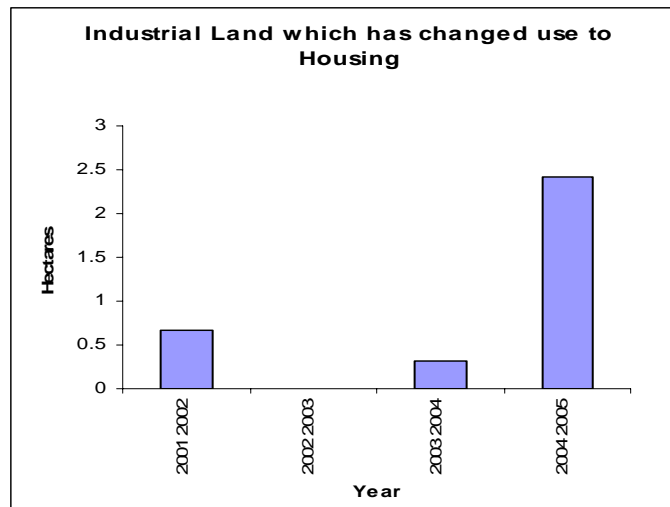
ii) The number of completed housing plots on land previously classified as being for employment use is greater than in recent years.

Completed Housing Plots on Sites Previously Classified as Industrial
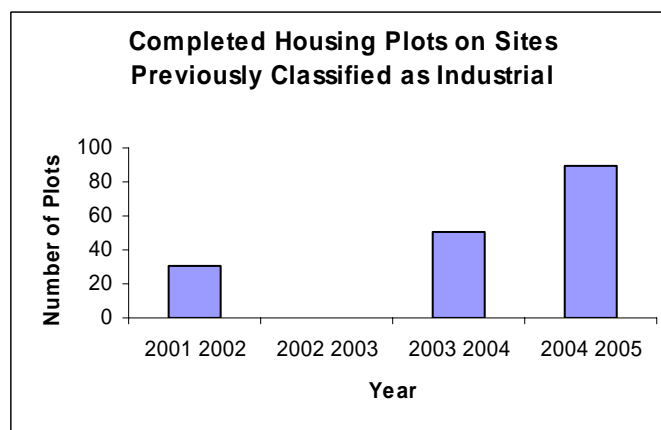
iii) Some of the completions during 2004-2005 follow permissions granted in previous years, and there were actually fewer permissions granted in 2004-2005 than in the previous two years.

Hectares of Industrial Land with New Planning Permission for Housing
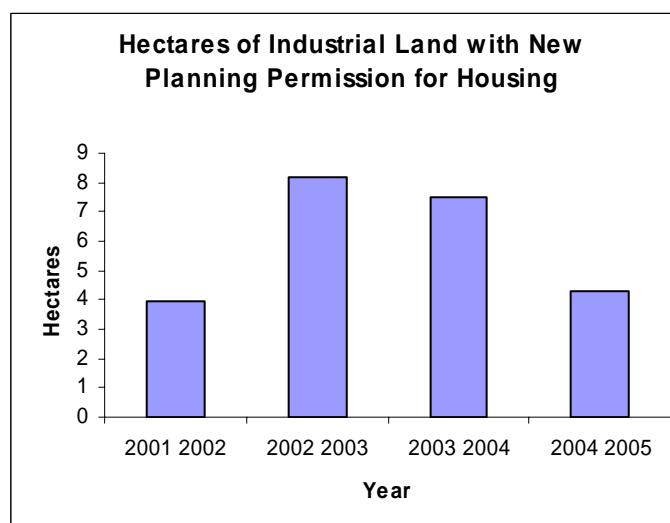
iv)   However, the cumulative effect is that the scale of planning permissions for the future is greater than previously.

Industrial Land with Planning Permission Granted For Housing (By housing plots granted)
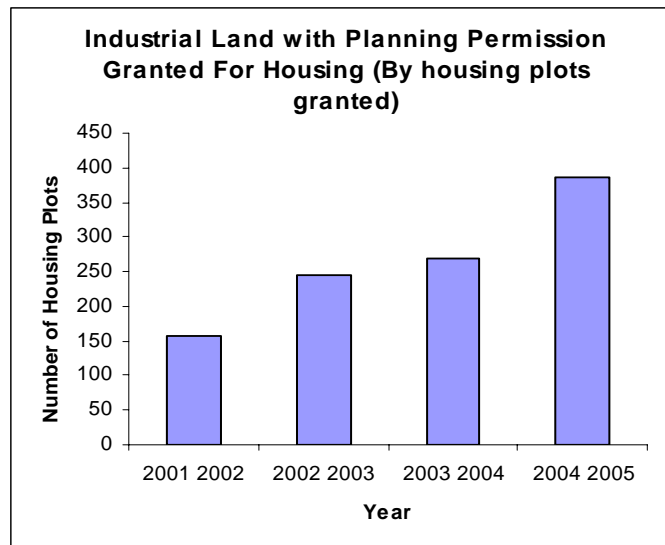
4.38   Whilst housing development is being promoted by Government policy (to meet housing needs) and is part of the aspirations of the Black Country Study (to increase local economic demand), it would appear necessary to strike a balance between such development and the preservation of employment land.   It will be particularly important to try to maintain the supply of employment land if efforts to secure office investment in centres (particularly in Walsall) are not successful.

Strengthening Our Centres

Development in Centres

Core output indicator (4a) - Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development; and
Core output indicator (4b) - Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres.

4.39 Chapter 5 of Walsall's UDP - supported by specific chapters on Walsall town centre and the district centres of Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall - seeks to promote development for 'town centre' uses (retailing, offices and leisure, as well as other uses that attract large numbers of people) in the borough's centres, to promote a strong economy and promote accessibility, social inclusion and sustainable development. One of the monitoring indicators proposed by the UDP is that at least 90% of the development of such uses should take place in established centres, and this is covered by the relevant core output indicator (4b) put forward by the ODPM.

4.40 Again, it is not possible to monitor completions at all scales, so the thresholds from regional monitoring have been used (for retailing the threshold is 1,000 sq.m., for office development the threshold is 500 sq.m. gross, whilst various thresholds are used for leisure development – see below). On this basis, only a limited amount of development was completed during 2004-2005, as follows.

Completion of Retail, Office and Leisure Development, 2004 - 2005 (sq.m. gross)

	1a Borough	1b In Town, District or Local Centres	1c Percentage in Town District or Local Centres
Retailing	0	0	-
Offices B1(a)	900	0	0
Leisure	See below	See below	See below

Source: Regional monitoring returns.
Note: Floorspace in terms of gross **external square metres.**

4.41 No major retail developments were completed anywhere in the borough in 2004-2005. The main issue in this respect concerns the commitment for major retail development in Walsall town centre ('Shannon's Mill, which was intended to provide 23,225 sq.m. gross, based on a factory outlet centre format). Whilst outline planning permission had been granted in 2001 and reserved matters approvals granted subsequently, in late 2004 the press reported that as sufficient pre-lettings had not been secured, the development would not be proceeding as proposed. The developers have subsequently been working with other landowners and with Walsall Regeneration Company to promote an alternative retail development. The need to secure retail\ investment in Walsall town centre, in the face of competition from elsewhere, is a major issue for the future.

4.42 On the other hand, whilst smaller town and district centres have been tending to lose retail investment over recent years (cf the New Economics Foundation: 'Ghost Town Britain', 2003), planning permissions have been granted for retail developments in the district centres of Bloxwich and Brownhills, which should be implemented in the coming year.

4.43   With regard to offices, the 'Jobs and Prosperity' section above has explained how there has only been one major office development in the borough in 2004-2005, at Aldridge Park (the former Walsall Airport) an out-of-centre location. The issue is not perhaps this out-of-centre development, rather the lack of office investment in Walsall town centre. Whilst previous studies have identified the lack of an office market in Walsall town centre, promoting office investment in Walsall town centre is a major part of the strategy for Walsall Regeneration Company and of the emerging Black Country Study, which aims to inform a review of the RSS.

4.44   The requirements for regional monitoring of leisure developments have been reviewed during the past year to set various thresholds for different types of development and it has to be acknowledged that the council has had difficulty in assembling the necessary information to respond to the requirements, although it is clear that very little class D2 leisure development has taken place in 2004-2005. The Council will explore how it can better meet this requirement in the future.

4.45   The terms of the local output indicator for the UDP also include hotel development and one major hotel development was completed in December 2004. This was for a large (160 bedroom) 'Village' hotel on land at Junction 10 of the M6, an out-of-centre location. This followed acceptance of such a development in principle at a public inquiry in 1996, which was subsequently reflected in UDP policy for the site (Policy JP4.1). Generally, however, the UDP seeks to direct hotel development to town centre locations in future.

Local output indicator – amount of vacant floorspace in centres – target to be at or below the national average.

4.46   It has not been possible to monitor this UDP indicator this year. The Council normally undertakes an annual survey of the borough's town and district centres, but was not able to do so because of a lack of resources. Neither has the council been able to obtain information (from 'GOAD' plans) to enable comparison with national vacancy rates. However, as the promotion of investment in centres is part of the strategy for Walsall Community Plan, Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership has agreed to support survey work in future years.
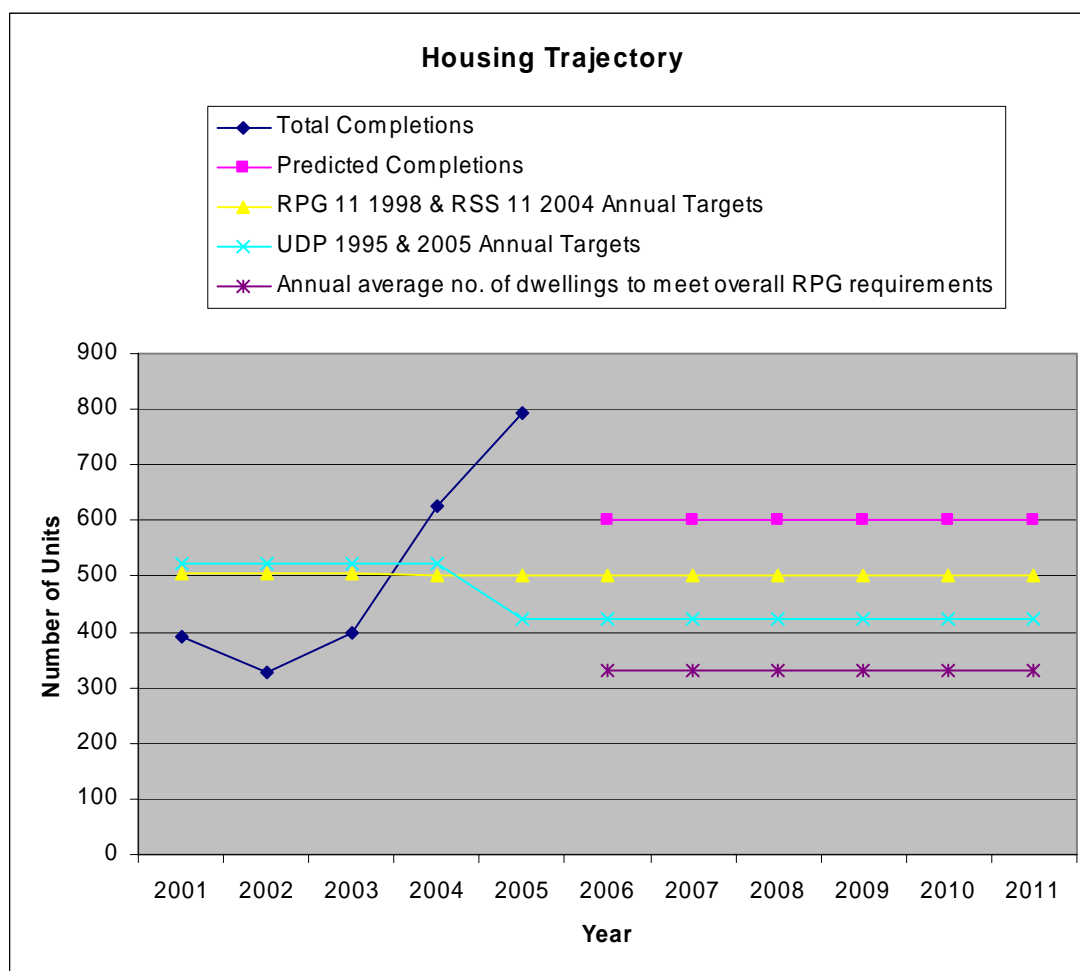
Housing

Housing Development

Core output indicator (2a) - Housing trajectory
(i) net additional dwellings over the previous five year period or since the start of the relevant development plan document period, whichever is the longer;
(ii) net additional dwellings for the current year;
(iii) projected net additional dwellings up to the end of the relevant development plan document period or over a ten year period from its adoption, whichever is the longer;
(iv) the annual net additional dwelling requirement; and
(v) annual average number of net additional dwellings needed to meet overall housing requirements, having regard to previous year's performance.

4.47   Walsall's UDP Proposal H2 and Policy H3 seek to ensure land is available for housing development, both through the allocation of sites and through provision for 'windfalls' (sites that had not previously been foreseen coming forward for housing development). The overall provision for housing land was made in the context of RPG11 (April 1998), and the UDP proposed a local output indicator to measure progress against the RPG11 housing requirement, progress which is now more thoroughly addressed through consideration of the 'housing trajectory, sought by the ODPM. In this context the proposed local output indicator to asses the role of windfalls has not been monitored this year.

4.48   RPG11 (1998) required provision to be made for 10,100 additional dwellings during the period 1991-2011, an average of 505 units per year. During the period 1991-2002, 6,296 dwellings were completed in the borough, leaving a requirement of 3,804 units to 2011, so the UDP housing target was 422 dwellings per year. Subsequently, the revised RPG11 of 2004 (now the RSS) set Walsall's target at 500 units per year up to 2011 (but aims to increase it to 825 dwellings a year from 2011 onwards). However, since 2002 there have been 1,819 further completions in the Borough (an average of 606 dwellings each year over the last 3 years), leaving a total requirement of just 1,985 dwellings (an average of 331 units per year) to 2011. Recent completions, projected completions for the future (on the basis of the figure of 600 dwellings per year put forward for the council's last 'best value' submission) and the targets derived from the previous RPG11, the RSS, the council's previous UDP (1995) and the recently-adopted UDP (2005) are set out below.

Year	Total Completions	Predicted Completions	RPG 11 1998 & RSS 11 2004 Annual Targets	UDP 1995 & 2005 Annual Targets
2000-2001	393		505	523
2001-2002	327		505	523
2002-2003	399		505	523
2003-2004	627		500	523
2004-2005	793		500	422
2005-2006		600	500	422
2006-2007		600	500	422
2007-2008		600	500	422
2008-2009		600	500	422
2009-2010		600	500	422
2010-2011		600	500	422

4.49 Clearly, the levels of completions of new dwellings in Walsall over the last two years have exceeded the targets set out in both regional and local planning policy and appear to be on an upward curve. However, it remains to be seen whether this growth in completions is sustainable and whether the increased RSS target for 2011 onwards will be met. Less employment land appears to be the subject of permissions for housing development than in previous years (which have fed through to the high level of completions in 2004-2005, see paragraph 4.37, above), and if more employment land is to be taken for housing development in future there will be issues about the adequacy of the supply of employment land. In these circumstances it is not considered that it would be possible to provide a housing trajectory beyond 2011 with any accuracy. The Borough's housing trajectory to 2011 is provided below. The supply of housing land will be a major issue for the Black Country Study and also for a wider review of the RSS and it will also be a priority for work on a development plan document for Walsall's LDF when the necessary regional / sub-regional work is complete.


Housing Trajectory

Legend:
- Total Completions
- Predicted Completions
- RPG 11 1998 & RSS 11 2004 Annual Targets
- UDP 1995 & 2005 Annual Targets
- Annual average no. of dwellings to meet overall RPG requirements

Use of Previously Developed Land

Core output indicator (2b) – Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land.

4.50   In considering the identified housing land supply and the provision for 'windfall' sites in the context of Government guidance in PPG3 (which set a national target for 60% of new dwellings to be on previously-developed land), the UDP set a local output indicator target of 95% for the period 2002-2011. Subsequently, the RSS set a regional target for housing completions on previously-developed sites of 76%, with a specific target of 79% for Walsall 2001-2011. The actual proportions of completed dwellings on previously-developed sites have been as follows.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total Completions	393	327	399	627	793
Total Completions on Previously-Developed Sites	294	206	353	524	727
Total Net Conversions and Changes of Use to Housing	0	4	28	5	19
Percentage New and Converted dwellings on Brownfield Sites	74.8	64.2	95.5	84.4	94.1

Percentage New and Converted Dwellings on Previously-Developed Sites
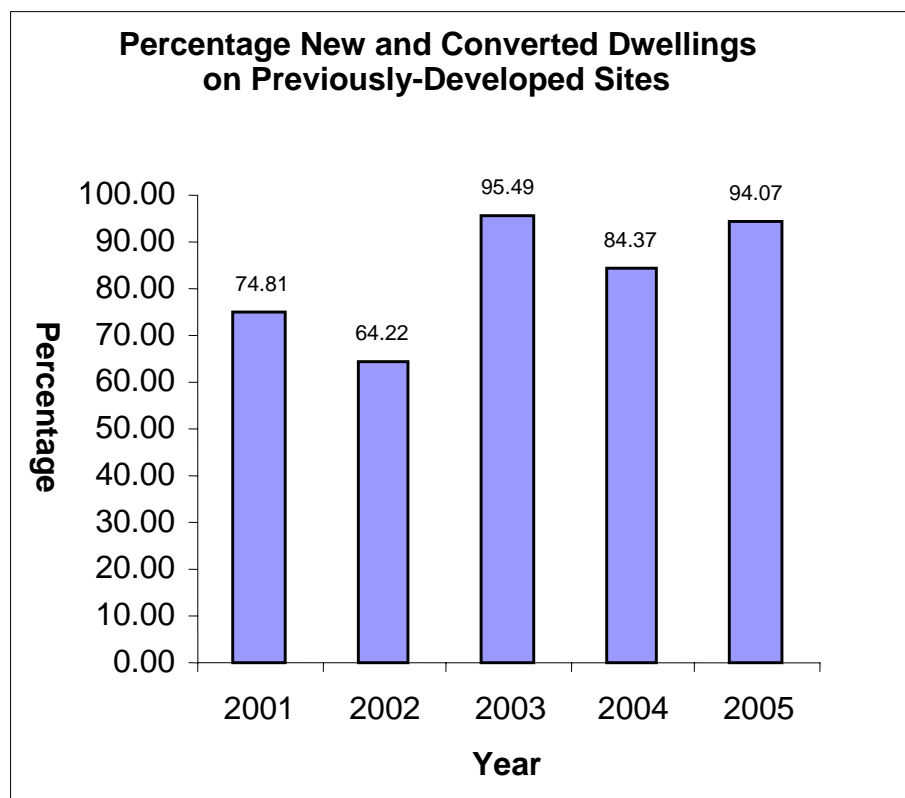
4.51   The results show that the Council is exceeding the national and regional targets for housing completions on previously-developed land. In recent years such completions have come close to the 95% target set in the UDP, with an overall average for 2002-2005 of 87%. It is anticipated this proportion should rise, given the impacts of both UDP and national policies, which emphasise the re-use of previously developed land, whilst the Black Country Study and the consequent RSS review are likely to seek increased housing development while at the same time protecting the Green Belt.
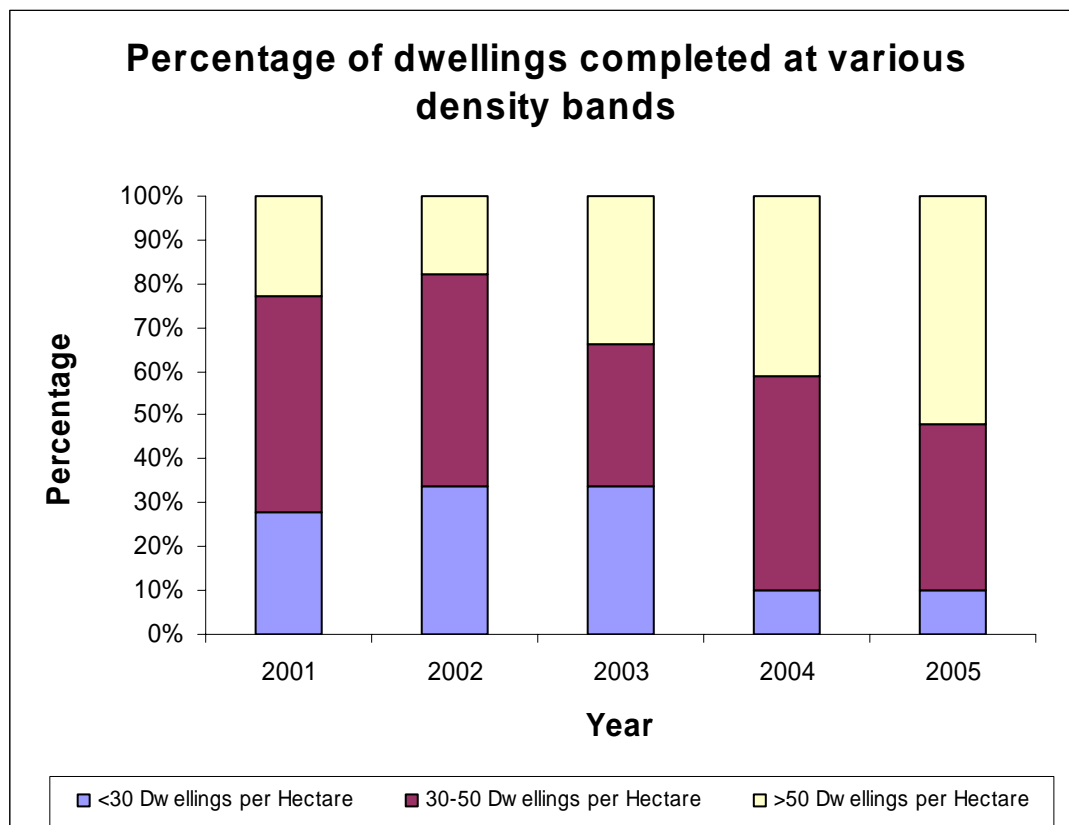
Housing Densities

Core output indicator (2c) - Percentage of new dwellings completed at:
(i) less than 30 dwellings per hectare;
(ii) between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare; and
(iii) above 50 dwellings per hectare.

4.52   Government policy in PPG3 has sought to increase the density of housing development, to make more efficient use of land.   In response to this Walsall's UDP set out a local output indicator, with a target to achieve an overall average density of new development of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. This is covered generally by the core output indicator introduced by the ODPM, the results for which are as follows.

Percentage of Dwellings Completed at Various Density Bands

	2001 Number	%	2002 Number	%	2003 Number	%	2004 Number	%	2005 Number	%
<30 Dwellings per Hectare	108	28	110	34	136	34	62	10	82	10
30-50 Dwellings per Hectare	192	49	157	48	128	32	308	49	300	38
>50 Dwellings per Hectare	92	23	60	18	135	34	257	41	411	52
Total	**392**	**100**	**327**	**100**	**399**	**100**	**627**	**100**	**793**	**100**

4.53   The results show that the densities of new housing developments have been increasing in recent years. In 2005 over 50% of completions were at a density of 50 dwellings per hectare and above, whilst 38% were at densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare.

Affordable Housing

Core output indicator (2d) - Affordable housing completions.

4.54   RPG 11 (1998) estimated that the West Midlands region would need around 130,000 additional social-sector homes between 1991 and 2011. This helped to provide the basis for the figure of 3,600 affordable dwellings in Walsall over the period to 2011, leaving a residual figure of 184 dwellings per year, which has been proposed as an indicative target (local output indicator) for the purposes of the UDP. Subsequently, the RSS (2004) has not set a target for the provision of affordable housing, although it states that the figure of 6,000-6,500 affordable dwellings across the region each year would be used as a basis for monitoring.

4.55   Affordable housing is principally provided in two main ways:

(i)   through direct provision by Housing Associations and other social landlords; and/or

(ii)   by private housing developers, as a result of planning requirements placed on private sector housing developments.

4.56   Taking account of completions to 2002 (a total of 1.658 from all sources), the remaining requirement for the UDP period to 2011 was 1,656, an average of 176 a year, which is close to the UDP target of 184. In Walsall the numbers of new dwellings that have been completed by Housing Associations has been as follows.

	Housing Association Completions	%	Private Completions	%	Total Completions	
2000- 2001	81	21	312	79	393	100
2001 - 2002	52	16	275	84	327	100
2002 - 2003	65	16	334	84	399	100
2003 - 2004	37	6	590	94	627	100
2003 - 2005	14	2	779	98	793	100
2000 - 2005	249	10	2,290	90	2,539	100

Source: Annual Regional Planning and Housing monitoring returns

4.57   This shows that the amounts of affordable housing provided by Housing Associations have been falling. In such a context, increased emphasis is placed upon the ability to secure affordable housing through requirements placed on planning permissions for private sector developments.[11] However, until the UDP review was sufficiently advanced, the council did not have a strong policy basis to pursue private sector contributions. Objections to the relevant policy (Policy H4) in the UDP review delayed the ability to seek to implement the policy until after it had been supported through the public inquiry into the Plan and the Council had responded to the Inspector's report. Since that time, the council has secured legal agreements for the provision of affordable housing as part of three major housing developments, but none of these had been constructed by March 2005.

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[11] The Government's Best Value Performance Indicator ref HL2 – seeks to increase the number of affordable homes which are provided by local authority planning powers.

4.58   Once it was clear that Policy H4 would be supported by the UDP Inspector, the council began work on a Supplementary Planning Document to guide the implementation of the policy to secure affordable housing. This SPD was adopted subsequently in July 2005.

Vacancy Rates

Local output indicator – UDP Policy H1 seeks the renewal of existing residential areas and is supported by a monitoring indicator that seeks to reduce vacancies to 3% by 20011 in line with RPG11. This indicator has been lifted from the UDP indicators and aims to reduce vacancy rates to a level of 3% by 2001.

4.59   Council Tax figures submitted in the council's 'Local Authority Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix' showed that, at 1st April 2005 there were 4,732 vacant dwellings (of all kinds, tenures and periods of vacancy) from a total stock of 107,560. This gives a vacancy rate of 4.4%. This rate will have to be monitored over coming years to see if the trend is on target for 2011.

Transport

Use of Public Transport, Road Traffic and Cycling

Local output indicators:

- Use of buses - increase in line with West Midlands Local Transport Plan (WMLTP) target.

- Use of rail - increase in line with WMLTP target.

- Road traffic - keep growth in line with WMLTP target.

- Cycle use - increase in line with WMLTP target.

4.60   Policies in Chapter 7 of Walsall's UDP seek to help everyone to get around, including through encouragement for bus and rail transport and for cycling, as well as seeking to manage traffic growth and improve the highway network for all users. At the time Walsall's UDP was being prepared it was anticipated that the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (WMLTP) would contain specific targets for the use of different modes of transport in individual local authority areas, but this is not yet the case.

4.61   Walsall is currently working with the other six WM Metropolitan Authorities and Centro in finalising their next 5 year LTP for 2006/07 – 2010/11, which needs to be submitted to Department of Transport (DfT) by the end of March 2006.   This document outlines the main transport implementation and monitoring proposals for the whole Met Area over the next 5 years.

4.62   The LTP document includes a large number of transport indicators and targets that will be monitored throughout the 5 year period to determine how effective the Plan has been in delivering real transport improvements for residents and visitors of the Metropolitan Area. The range of topics for these indicators include:

- Health and Safety, in terms of reductions in the number of road accident casualties, improved safety on public transport, improved footway and carriageway conditions and improved air quality;

- Accessibility and Economic issues, in terms of improved access to key services and facilities, greater access to key centres and better access for HGV's to industrial estates;

- Congestion, by reducing vehicle trips and mileage and reducing delay on the highway network; and

- Modal shift, away from single occupancy car use through increased public transport patronage levels, positive responses to user satisfaction surveys, increased cycle trips, improved bus punctuality and increased implementation of Travel Plans.

4.63   All of these indicators are currently being monitored for the whole of the WM Metropolitan Area and are in most cases not disaggregated down to individual district level.   However, this may change through the process and more accurate information against these types of indicators may become available at the district level. The AMR will be reviewed in future years to reflect the information that does become available.

4.64   In terms of delivering transport improvements in Walsall, the council is working through programmes of major and minor transport improvements funded through the LTP Capital Settlements to help deliver the Vision and

Objectives of the LTP and the RSS. This includes local schemes developed at Walsall, together with partnership working with the other Metropolitan authorities and neighbouring shire authorities to deliver broader transport benefits across the Region.

4.65   The Black Country Study, due to report in summer 2006, will identify further transport needs for Walsall to help deliver its vision of a vibrant and thriving Black Country. This will feed into the Phase 1 review of the RSS and the continued development of the WMLTP.

4.66   An alternative local output indicator, based on information available at the present time, could be:

Local output indicator – Levels of Road Traffic in Walsall Town Centre.

4.67   Consultants Mott MacDonald carry out 'cordon surveys', of the traffic entering major centres, on behalf of the Metropolitan authorities. The most recent cordon survey of traffic in Walsall town centre took place over a period of one week commencing Monday March 17 2003. The survey provided detailed data on the variations of traffic levels throughout the day, for inbound and outbound directions at individual sites and for the cordon as a whole. The information generated by the cordon survey has and will continue to be used to update policy aiming to manage traffic flow and reduce congestion in Walsall town centre and the Borough as a whole. The next cordon survey is due to be undertaken in 2005.

4.68   Analysis against surveys in pervious years shows that in 2003, road traffic in Walsall town centre had reduced and was lower than at any other time over the five year period//levels at previous surveys taken up to five years earlier (see below).

Net Loss/Gain in Vehicles Crossing the Cordon by hour
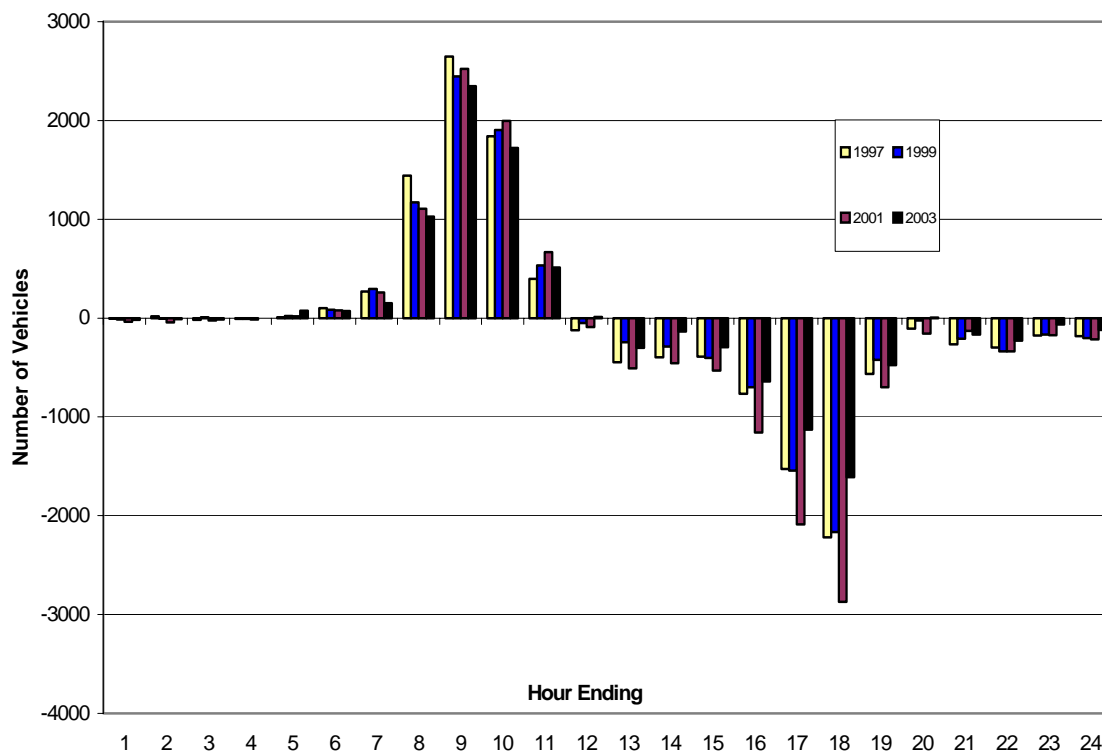
Source: Walsall Cordon Report 2003, Mott MacDonald jdt.

Total Vehicles by Time Period on an Average Weekday

	07.30 - 09.30	10.00 - 12.00	16.00 - 18.00	07.00 – 1900 (12 hour)	00.00 –24.00 (24 hour)
1997					
Inbound	13,865	9,090	9,863	59,938	72,918
% of 24 hr	19.0%	12.5%	13.5%	82.2%	100%
Outbound	9,090	8,815	13,610	60,054	73,706
% of 24 hr	12.3%	12.0%	18.5%	81.5%	100%
NET	4,775	275	-3,747	-116	-788
1999					
Inbound	13,627	9,227	9,940	60,363	73,819
% of 24hr	18.5%	12.5%	13.5%	81.8%	100%
Outbound	9,244	8,744	13,649	60,124	74,137
% of 24hr	12.5%	11.8%	18.4%	81.1%	100%
NET	4,383	483	-3,709	116	-318
2001					
Inbound	13,704	9,400	9,424	59,212	72,190
% of 24hr	19.0	13.0	13.1	82.0	100
Outbound	9,410	8,823	14,383	61,319	75,068
% of 24hr	12.5	11.8	19.2	81.7	100
NET	4,294	577	-4,959	-2,107	-2,878
2003					
Inbound	12,044	8,354	9,265	54,438	67,271
% of 24hr	17.9	12.4	13.8	80.9	100
Outbound	7,935	7,831	12,003	53,404	66,556
% of 24hr	11.9	11.8	18.0	80.2	100
NET	4,109	523	-2,738	1,034	715

Source: Walsall Cordon Report 2003, Mott MacDonald jdt.

4.69 Analysis of the 2003 cordon survey reveals that around 12,000 vehicles travel into Walsall Town Centre during the morning peak period (07:30 – 09:30), but the amount of traffic has decreased significantly from almost 14,000 in 1997. Such decreases may be as a result either of more people using public transport, or on the other hand it could indicate that Walsall may be losing employment and activity.

Parking Standards

Core output indicator (3a) - Amount of completed non-residential development within UCOs A, B and D complying with car-parking standards set out in the local development framework.

Local output indicator - Car parking provision for new housing development – in line with the standards in Policy T13.

4.70 The UDP car parking standards are in line with those set out in PPG13 Annex A. However, UDP Policy T13AI states that developers must demonstrate that there is adequate parking in all cases so that the development can meet its own needs, and that there will be no adverse effects on highway safety and the environment. This means that the Council may judge that in some cases the car parking provision should be set above, or indeed below, the maximum

standards as set out in the UDP and PPG13 for these uses. This is in line with PPG13 paragraphs 51, 54 and 56. In terms of parking provision, all developments therefore comply in practice with the local planning framework.

4.71   There would be complex data collection issues in relation to monitoring compliance with individual standards for development classes A, B and D. Firstly, parking is a detailed matter, and large developments, which have significant transport and parking implications, are more likely to provide outline applications, with the parking matters being dealt with separately and later. Sometimes the information on the developer's intentions with regard to parking provision is apparent on outline applications. However, this could not be seen as definitive, as there could be further outline and detailed applications that vary the parking provision as circumstances change. This is a particular feature of large, complex town centre and edge of centre developments that take time to come to fruition.   And, of course, the permission given may not be acted on. Hence, to assess the compliance with this indicator effectively, the council would need to check the parking provision only when it is sure that the development in question is on the point of being constructed.   Given that monitoring compliance with individual standards is a narrow interpretation of this indicator, the effort needed to provide this information would be time-consuming and out of proportion to any benefits gained.

4.72   The same general issues apply in relation to car parking for new housing development, which is a UDP monitoring indicator. It should also be noted here that the standards for new housing development are essentially starting points, rather than being maximum or minimum ones. Nevertheless, as part of the UDP Review process, the council has recently completed two one-off exercises to monitor car parking in new housing planning approvals (subject to the caveats set out above relating to outline applications and so on). In both cases it was found that, taken as a whole, the council was allowing an average of 1.4 car parking spaces per house across the Borough, with 0.84 spaces in Walsall town centre. This is well in line with the provisions of PPG3. If this indicator is to be monitored in future, exercises based on sample surveys would seem to be the practical way forward.

Accessibility

Core output indicator (3b) - Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP; a hospital; a primary school; a secondary school; areas of employment; and a major retail centre(s).

4.73   It has not been possible to provide the information sought by the ODPM in this AMR. To do so would require the location of residential developments to be mapped[12] in relation to the facilities referred to and for this mapping to be compared with public transport provision.   The council does have the technology to map residential developments and it has recently acquired the ability to use 'Accession' software to map public transport access. However, there has not yet been sufficient time to train staff to combine the different mapping elements.   To give an illustration of what should be possible, the following two figures show 15 and 30 minute public transport access (isochrones) from:

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[12] Walsall's UDP sets out accessibility standards in Policies T10 – T12, but exempts small residential developments within existing residential areas, i9ncluding infill plots, redevelopment, conversions and extensions.

- Walsall Manor Hospital[13], at evening visiting time (indicating that there may be some difficulty in accessing a single large facility in an out-of-centre location); and

- employment sites, during the morning peak (indicating that almost all of the built-up parts of the borough are within 30 minutes travel time of several employment sites).

4.74   It is intended that residential developments should be mapped in relation to all of the facilities referred to.

Public Transport Times to Hospital

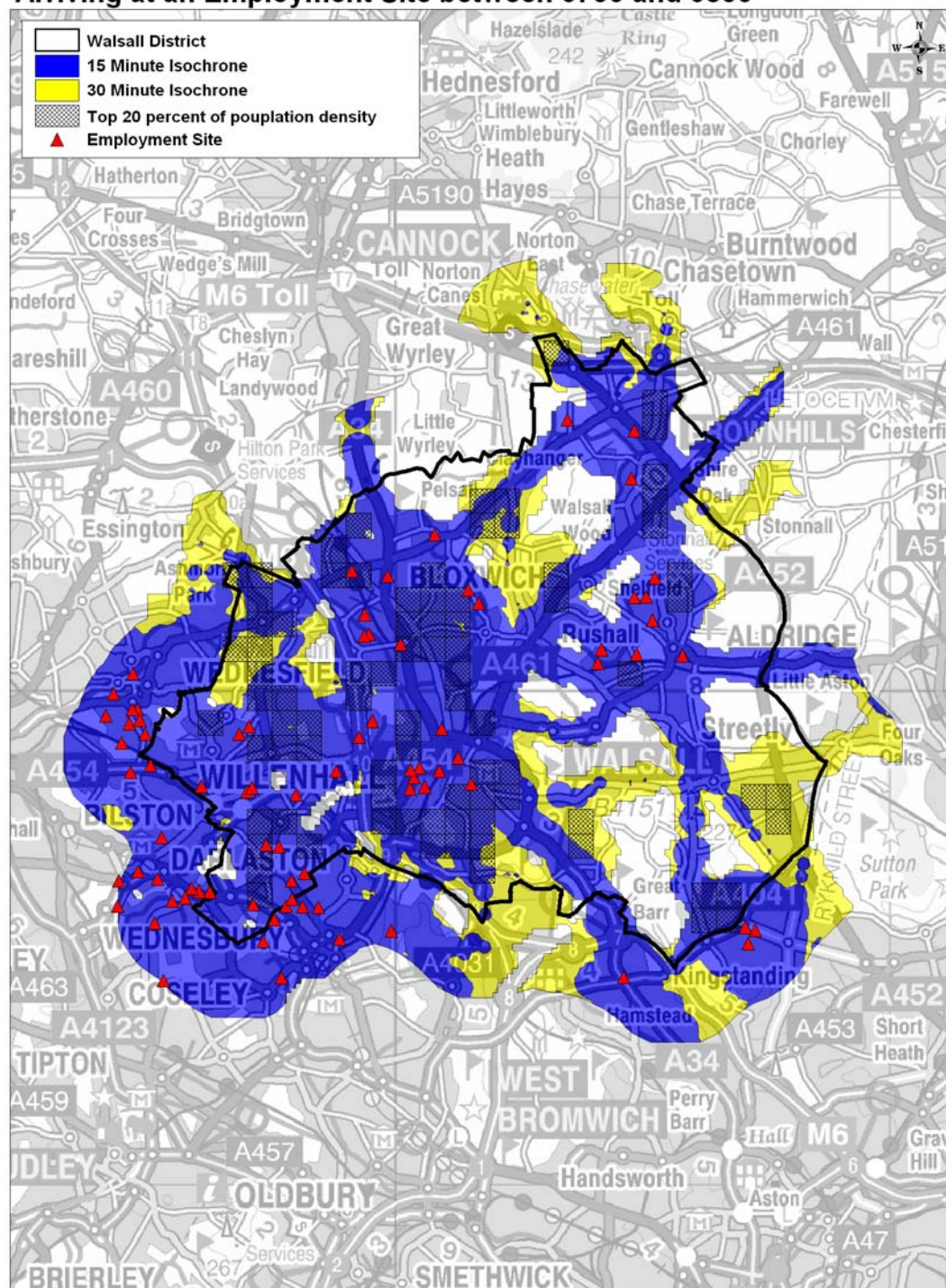Arriving At Manor Hospital between 1900 and 2000 (Weekday)
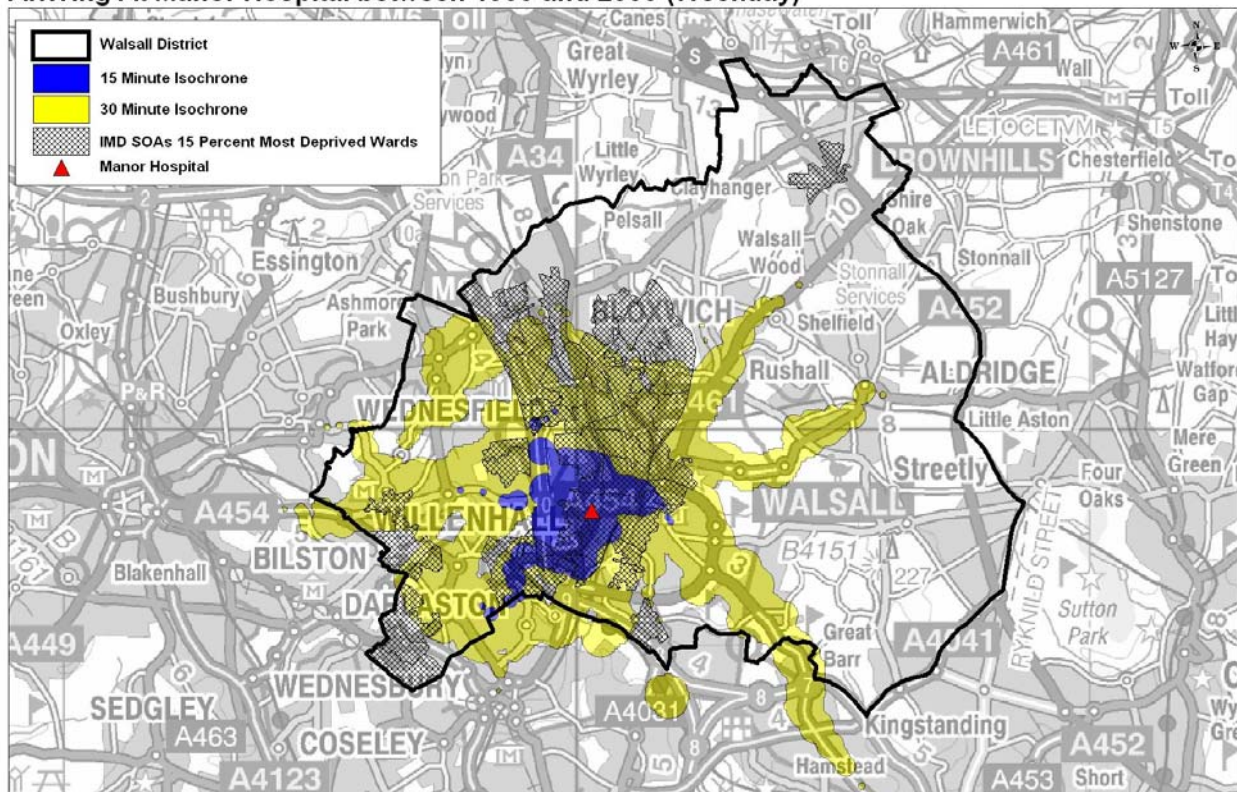
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[13] The Borough does contain another hospital at Goscote in Bloxwich, but this provides only a limited range of services (specialising in recuperation, rather than treatment) and its future came under review by Walsall Teaching Primary Care Trust in 2005. Some parts of the borough may have reasonable public transport aces to hospitals in surrounding areas, notably New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton and Sandwell General Hospital in West Bromwich.

Public Transport Times to Employment Sites

Arriving at an Employment Site between 0730 and 0830

Legend:
- Walsall District
- 15 Minute Isochrone
- 30 Minute Isochrone
- Top 20 percent of pouplation density
- ▲ Employment Site

Mott
MacDonald

Leisure and Community

Open Space Provision and Management

Core output indicator (4c) – Amount of eligible open space managed to Green Flag Award standard.

4.75   At present no open spaces in the borough are managed to Green Flag standards, although a pilot project for Walsall Arboretum is being considered for the coming year and if successful this may be rolled out to other eligible open spaces in the borough. On the other hand, whilst planning can help provide resources (from obligations placed on nearby development[14]) and promote physical enhancements to support improved management, much of the quality and functioning of open space will be due to other factors and the extent to which this measure would help inform planning policy may be questionable, compared with other indicators.

Local output indicators:

- Protection of urban open spaces from inappropriate development – target 100%.

- Provision of new urban open spaces (target at least 24 hectares over the rest of the plan period)

4.76   UDP Policy LC1 seeks to retain and enhance urban open spaces and Policy LC2 proposes and additional 26.44 hectares of open space. No designated areas of open space were lost during 2004-2005, and no planning permissions were granted during the year that would lead to the loss of such spaces. Work on providing additional open space at Goscote Road and Brewers Drive in Pelsall started but was not completed during 2004-2005.

Playing Fields / Sports Pitches

Local output indicator - protection of playing fields / sports pitches – target 100%.

4.77   UDP Policy LC6 aims to prevent loss of sports pitches to inappropriate development and no developments have occurred, or planning permissions been granted that would lead to the loss of any sports pitch.

Greenways

Local output indicator – length of greenways constructed – target at least another 10 miles (16 km) up to 2011.

4.78   UDP proposal LC5 states that the Greenway network will continue to be created, enhanced and safeguarded.   The total length of Greenway completed up to the end of March 2005 reached 48 km, considerably in excess of the UDP target.

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[14] As outlined in Chapter 3, the Council is seeking to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document to support UDP policy to do this.

Minerals

Production of Aggregates

4.79   Walsall Borough contains coal reserves as well as several active mineral workings for fire clay, brick clay (etruria marl) and sand, as follows.

Mineral Extraction / Production in Walsall

Product	*Site*	*Company/operator*
Fire Clay	Birch Coppice (of Pelsall Rd Brownhills)	Pot Clays – who operate out of the Swan Works at Birch Coppice
Brick Clay	Highfields South Quarry (off Lichfield Road Shelfield)	Cory Environmental
Brick Clay	Sandown Quarry (off Stubbers Green Road)	previously Salverson Brick
Brick Clay	Ibstock Atlas Works (off Stubbers Green Road)	Ibstock Atlas
Brick Clay	Onyx (off Stubbers Green Road)	Onyx
Sand*	Branton Hill Lane Quarry (Branton Hill Lane Aldridge)	Bliss Sand and Gravel
Sand*	Sand Quarry at Birch Lane (Birch Lane Aldridge)	previously Weston Aggregates may now be ARC Western Aggregates

* Only these are classed as aggregates.

4.80   Walsall's UDP policies (in Chapter 9 of the plan) seek to safeguard areas of mineral extraction whilst ensuring minimal environmental impact and the reclamation and restoration of minerals working sites. The plan also sets specific criteria for the working of open cast or deep coal mines. However, at this time the ODPM is only seeking the monitoring of the production / supply of aggregates.

LDF core output indicator (5a) - Production of primary land won aggregates.

4.81   Whilst there are two sites in the borough where aggregates (sand and gravel) are produced, there appears to be no up-to-date source of data as to the amount of production at the local authority level. The West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party (RAWP), which provides statistical information on primary (and also secondary / recycled) aggregates, produced its most recent report in 2003 and this provided information primarily at a sub-regional level.

4.82   On the other hand, there are important issues because of the scale of the need / demand for aggregates and the natural limits that result from minerals only being able to be won where they are found.

  i)   'National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England 2001-2016', published in 2003 estimated 359 million tonnes (mt) of aggregates minerals would need to be provided for the West Midlands Region during the period 2001-2016. Of this total 255mt would need to be sourced from within the region itself (the rest would have to come from outside the region or from secondary / recycled material). On this basis the RSS (2004) included an apportionment by RAWP, which calculated that the former West Midlands County area would have to provide 0.506mt of sand and gravel each year from 2001-2016. It is understood that Walsall and Solihull are the only producers of sand and gravel in the Metropolitan County area. It appears likely that much of the production required will have to come from Walsall, but there is not the data to show whether this is being achieved.

  ii)   National guidance states that minerals planning authorities should maintain a seven-year supply of aggregates. However, the West Midlands RAWP report from 2003 indicated that the West Midlands County area had a sand and gravel landbank of just 5.97 years' supply. This means production and supply will need to monitored closely in future years.

4.83   Data will need to be put in place if this indicator is to be monitored in a manner that will usefully inform future policy-making in Walsall and for other minerals planning authorities. As this data would have to come from the minerals operators, it would appear that the data would heave to be secured by the Government. Similar issues affect other kinds of minerals operations and for this reason Walsall's UDP has not sought to propose any local output indicators for minerals.

LDF core output indicator (5b) - Production of secondary/recycled aggregates.

4.84   The potential issues regarding the possible future supply of primary aggregates support increased use of secondary / recycled aggregates, which is encouraged by both national and regional policy to ensure the best use of resources and protect the environment. However, there is, again, a lack of data to enable the production of such materials to be monitored at the local authority level.   The most recent West Midlands RAWP report does not provide sufficiently disaggregated figures and, similarly the 'Survey of Arisings and Use of Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste as Aggregate in England 2003' by Capita Symons Ltd (with WRc plc) on behalf of the ODPM does not cover the period 2004-2005 and only provides statistics at a national level. Locally, it is notable that there has been an increase in the use of mobile plant to crush and recycle construction waste on demolition sites, but – although this appears to be encouraging – it is likely to make monitoring more difficult.

4.85   As with primary aggregate production, it will be necessary to ensure that data can be obtained if this indicator is to be monitored in future.

Waste

Waste Management

4.86   Planning policy for waste management has been going through a period of continuing change as it has been given increasing importance with the realisation of the need to minimise the waste that is produced and of treating it safely and without harm to the environment.

4.87   The waste management policies in Chapter 10 of Walsall's UDP seek to work towards targets for waste minimisation, the reuse of materials, recycling and composting set at the national, regional and local levels, and propose that measures should be taken to ensure the environmental impacts of waste management facilities are minimal.   These policies were prepared in the context of:

   •   PPG10 on Planning and Waste Management, and the Government's 'Waste Strategy 2000', which seeks to curb growth in waste production and sets targets for the recycling of municipal waste and the reduction of waste going to landfill[15];

   •   RPG11 (April 1998), which explained the principle of the 'waste hierarchy' (giving preference to waste reduction, re-use and recovery before safe disposal) and the 'proximity principle', under which waste should be handled close to the point where it is generated; and

   •   Walsall Council's own Integrated Waste Management Strategy, which was published in draft in December 1999, with the aim of providing "a high quality waste management service to all sections of the community which is both effective and progressively more sustainable in environmental terms."

4.88   More recently, PPG10 has been reviewed (with a replacement, PPS10, published in July 2005).   The RSS (2004) has set targets for waste management in the region and advised that development plans should include proposals to enable them to be met. At the local level Walsall Council has produced a new draft Waste Management Strategy in 2004. Looking to the future, planning policy for waste management are currently being reviewed at the regional level, as part of the second phase review of the RSS and at the sub-regional level, in tandem with the Black Country Study.

4.89   In such a changing context, the Council has recognised that waste management should be the subject of one of the first Development Plan Documents to be prepared under the Local Development Framework system (see Chapter 3).   Also the present UDP recognises that progress with initiatives for more sustainable waste management will need to be monitored in terms of emerging targets from national guidance, regional strategies, the council's waste strategy and Best Value Performance Indicators. Some of these can provide local output indicators where the issues are not already covered by the core output indicators proposed now by the ODPM.

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[15] National policy reflects EU policy, which has also sought a more sustainable approach to dealing with waste, notably through the Landfill Directive (Council Directive 1999/31/EC on the Landfill of Waste) agreed in 1999 and which sets ambitious targets for the reduction of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) that is disposed of to landfill. Other EU Directives impacting waste management include the Directive on Packaging and Packaging Waste, the Waste Incineration Directive, End of Life Vehicles Directive, EU Animal By-products Regulation.

**Core output indicator (6a)** - Capacity of new waste management facilities by type.

4.90 The guidance states that 'new' facilities are those which have planning permission and are operable. However, at present it is not possible to identify when facilities become operable: consideration will be given to the extent to which the licensing regime might assist with this. Therefore, information is provided on planning permissions for waste facilities in 2004-2005, when six proposals for scrap yard / metal recycling or waste transfer facilities were determined, as follows.

Appn ref:	Address	Description of facility/use and comments	Wastes to be managed	Annual throughput capacity (in tonnes to the nearest 1,000)	Decision 2004-2005
04/2525	European Metal Recycling, Bentley Road South, WS10 8LW	Scrap Yard Increase in types of recycling on an existing site	Breaking Vehicles, Recycling ferrous and non frerrous, fridges and metal	>50,000	Refused
04/2632	Ashmore Lake Way, Willenhall, WV12 4LF	Scrap Yard Minor application for indoor vehicle dismantling	Breaking Vehicles	-	Refused
04/2492	Heath Road, Walsall	Transfer Station Change of Use to Materials recycling Facility	Inert Industrial Waste	<50,000 50 loads a day (200 t ea.)	Refused
04/1326	Maybrook Road, Brownhills, Walsall	Transfer Station Change of Use to Non Hazardous Transfer Station	Non Hazardous Waste	10,000	Granted
04/2104	Sharesacre Street	Transfer Station Change of Use from Scrapyard and Vehicle Breaking to waste transfer Station and Recycling.	Building and demolition waste, soil and rubble from small contracts	25,000	Granted
04/0197	Cemetery Road	Transfer Station Resiting of existing waste transfer station	Inert and Degradable Waste	230	Granted

4.91 While three applications were refused, another three were approved, with a total annual throughput capacity of over 35,000 tones.

4.92 In addition, an application to extend the time for the submission of reserved matters for infilling at Moxley Tip was approved in April 2004, but this did not affect the proposed landfill capacity.

4.93 Of course, simply looking at new facilities coming forward in any given year does not show whether or not waste management provision in the borough

will be adequate. An assessment of existing waste management capacity in each waste collection and disposal authority area is being undertaken, on behalf of the Regional Technical Advisory Body for Waste (RTAB) as part of the work to inform the future review of the RSS. This work ('Future Capacity Requirements', by Shropshire County Council, 2004) will need to be considered carefully in the setting of targets for the provision of facilities for the future.

4.94   In assessing the capacity for waste management it is also important to take a sub-regional view as waste will often be dealt with at sites or facilities outside of an individual local authority area. This will especially be the case with large sites / facilities, such as incinerators or major landfill sites. For example, at present there is a landfill site at the Poplars in Cannock Chase district, which has several years' capacity for waste disposal. On the other hand, planning permission was granted in 1995 for landfill at the Vigo and Utopia quarries at Walsall Wood and there are other active or disused minerals sites in the borough where investigations will be needed to explore whether these might prove suitable for landfill operations involving household or other types of waste. problems). Such sites may be seen either as opportunities, or as potential sources of problems, for the future.

Core output indicator (6b) - amount of municipal waste arising, and managed by management type, and the percentage each management type represents of the waste managed.

Local output indicator – progress towards targets set out in national guidance, regional guidance [now the RSS], Walsall's Waste Management Strategy and Best Value Performance Indicators.

4.95   According to information from the council's waste management service, in 2004-2005 Walsall borough gave rise to a total of 130,368.87 tonnes of municipal (primarily house hold) waste. This was managed as follows.
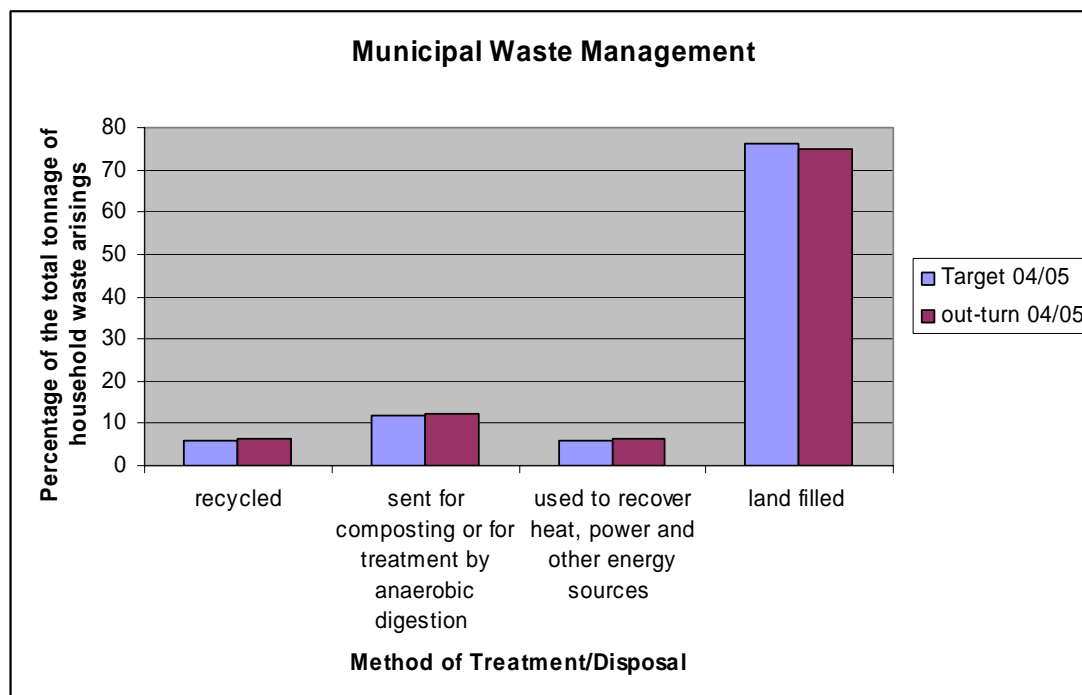
Source: Walsall Council Waste Management, Street Pride Directorate.

- 8,213.24 tonnes (6.3%) of household waste arisings were recycled (BVPI 82a target was 6.0%)

- 16,165.74 tonnes (12.4%) of household waste arisings were sent for composting or for treatment by anaerobic digestion (BVPI 82b target was 12.0%)

- 8,082.87 tonnes (6.2%) of household waste arisings were used to recover heat, power and other energy sources (BVPI 82c target was 6%)

- 97,907.02 tonnes (75.1%) of household waste arisings were land-filled (BVPI 82d target was 76%)

4.96 Thus, the Council has met all of the targets established as BVPI indicators - to encourage recycling, composting and energy and to limit landfill – for 2004-2005. However, to promote continued progress the Government is setting more challenging BVPI targets for 2005-2006.

4.97 In addition comparing performance with other national, regional and local targets show the scale of the challenge for the future.

(i) The National Waste Strategy(2000) for England and Wales sets a series of targets for recycling and composting and recovery for 2005, 2010 and 2015. These are:
National Targets for household waste:
- • Recycle/compost 25% by 2005
- • Recycle/compost 30% by 2010
- • Recycle/compost 33% by 2015
National Targets for municipal waste:
- • Recover value from 40% by 2005
- • Recover value from 45% by 2010
- • Recover value from 67% by 2015

(ii) To ensure that all local authorities contribute to achieving these targets the Government has set "statutory performance standards" for recycling and composting for each local authority for the years 2003/04 and 2005/06. Walsall's statutory performance standards are:
- • To recycle or compost at least 16% of household waste by 2003/04
- • To recycle or compost at least 24**%** of household waste by 2005/06

(iii) Policy WD1 of the RPG sets targets for waste management in the region, (stating that development plans should include proposals which will enable the following regional targets to be met):
- to recover value from at least 40% of municipal waste by 2005; 45% by 2010 and 67% by 2015;
- to recycle or compost at least 25% of household waste by 2005; 30% by 2010; and 33% by 2015; and
- to reduce the proportion of industrial and commercial waste which is disposed of to landfill to at the most 85% of 1998 levels by 2005.

4.98 Whilst the council's planning / regeneration function does not have the lead role in terms of the authority's waste management performance, it will have an important role in safeguarding existing waste management facilities and in making provision for new facilities as necessary and appropriate. The scope of the targets for waste management imply the need for a positive and proactive approach and in the context of the forthcoming review of the RSS the Council is seeking to recruit the necessary expertise to do this.

Conclusions on the Output Indicators

Issues raised by the Results of the Monitoring

4.99   As this is the first AMR under the 'new' development planning system there may be a tendency to see the results of the monitoring as a snap shot, with emphasis on 'one-offs' (such as the approval of housing development on the St Margaret's Hospital site), rather than on issues which are more apparent from longer-term analyses, such as the relatively limited interest in economic development in the borough. However, on the basis of the monitoring results presented here the main planning policy issues would seem to be as follows.

(i)   The limited interest in office investment in the borough and in Walsall town centre. This has been apparent for some time and Walsall Regeneration Company (WRC) and work at the Black Country and regional levels, to inform reviews of the RSS, are seeking to increase investment interest.

(ii)   The need to secure substantial investment in comparison retailing in Walsall town centre. Again, work by WRC and at the Black Country and regional levels, to inform reviews of the RSS, is seeking to address this issue.

(iii)   Whether or not the recent increase in housing development will be sustainable and what the consequences might be for employment land. The borough's housing trajectory will need to be kept under review in the light of work on the Black Country Study and to inform reviews of the RSS.

(iv)   The need to press ahead in implementing planning policy to secure the provision of affordable housing, to make up for time lost due to objections to the UDP review.

(v)   The scale of the issues to be faced if ambitious targets for waste management are to be met. The council is seeking to recruit the expertise to ensure that the planning regeneration function can play a full role in doing this.

4.100   The list is not exhaustive, issues may be identified in respect of all of the issues monitored, whilst it is apparent there are other issues (such as traffic congestion or a relative lack of cultural facilities) that are not the subject of monitoring. Also, none of the issues are new or surmising. Nevertheless, this AMR does draw out the scale of some of the issues and provides evidence to draw attention to them and to help provide the evidence basis for planning policies to respond.

Issues raised by the Monitoring of the Indicators

4.101   The good practice guidance from the ODPM recognised that the first AMR would be something of a pilot exercise and there would be lessons to be learned from the approach to monitoring indicators. What has and has not proved possible to monitor so far is summarised in Appendix 1, which considers the council's UDP monitoring indicators (as local output indicators), as well as the core output indicators recommended by the ODPM.

4.102   Experience with Walsall's AMR indicates, of course in the context of the resources available, suggests that some of the indicators cannot be monitored because the data is not available (at least not at present). The core output indicators on primary and secondary aggregates (5a & b) and

renewable energy (9) are examples of this, as are the UDP indicators concerned with travel by different transport modes (certainly in advance of further work on the WM Local Transport Plan).

4.103 Other indicators, such as those concerned with car parking standards for commercial development (core output indicator 3a) or housing (for the UDP) may be capable in theory of being monitored, but it is likely that the amount of time and effort involved would confine monitoring of such issues to, at best, limited sample surveys. Further indicators, such as those concerned with biodiversity (core output indicator 8 and the indicators for the UDP) appear difficult to monitor yet would show little or no relevant change if undertaken annually. Yet more indicators (for Walsall's UDP, as well as core indicators 1 & 4) would benefit from refinement to reflect the fact it is not presently possible to monitor the completion of commercial development below certain thresholds[16]

4.104 In general terms, it would appear advisable to allow some learning from experience, so that indicators (including those proposed by local authorities) can be improved over coming years. To make them more efficient as well as effective, consideration should be given to the provision of data at national or regional levels where possible or most desirable (such as when data is not held by local authorities, comparative data between different locations would be useful or specialist knowledge is required). It should also be recognised that some indicators, mainly those concerned with the condition or stock of assets (such as sites with environmental designations, historic buildings or areas) will be monitored more practically by means of periodic surveys instead of on an annual basis.

4.105 For its part, Walsall council will seek to identify those indicators that can be monitored through surveys rather than on an annual basis. It will also continue to explore how UDP / LDF monitoring can be integrated with the monitoring of other documents such as Walsall's Community Plan and the WM Local Transport Plan. The council also recognises that it needs to consider how it can respond to try to meet the new monitoring requirements. Leisure development and accessibility (core indicators 3b and 4 & b) are particular examples of where further investment in monitoring is needed.

4.106 Monitoring all of the aspects of a development plan and continuing to do this over time, to be able to establish relevant trends, has to be acknowledged to be a major and long-term commitment. The extent to which a commitment can be fulfilled will depend on the resources available. Where these are limited there will be a need to ensure that efforts to inform planning policies can be balanced against work to apply these policies.

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[16] It should also be recognised that local planning authorities hold all of their information in terms of gross external floorspace.

Appendix

Monitoring of Core and Local Output Indicators

The ODPM (October 2005) has advised on the *core output indicators* it wishes to see monitored in this first AMR, whilst Walsall's UDP proposed a number of issues for monitoring, which have been tested here as local output indicators. This Appendix summarises whether or not these indicators have been successfully monitored in this AMR, with the core and local output indicators listed separately, but in the order they appear in Chapter 4 of the report.

Local Development Framework Core Output Indicators ('Local Development Framework Core Output Indicators Update 1/2005 – ODPM, October 2005)	
BIODIVERSITY	
8 Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including: (i) change in priority habitats and species (by type); and (ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional or local significance.	Monitored primarily in quantitative rather than qualitative terms, because of resource and feasibility issues.
RENEWABLE ENERGY	
9 Renewable energy capacity installed by type.	Not monitored, as data not available
FLOOD PROTECTION AND WATER QUALITY	
7 Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality.	Monitored
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	
1a Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type.	Monitored, w size threshold
1b Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type, in employment or regeneration areas.	Monitored, w size threshold
1c Amount of floorspace by employment type, which is on previously developed land.	Monitored, w size threshold
1d Employment land available by type.	Monitored
1e Losses of employment land in (i) employment/regeneration areas and (ii) local authority area.	(i) Not monitored, except re allocated sites (ii) Monitored
1f Amount of employment land lost to residential development.	Monitored

LOCAL SERVICES (1)	
4a Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development.	Monitored for retail and offices, with size threshold, but not monitored for leisure development
4b Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres.	Monitored for retail and offices, with size threshold, but not monitored for leisure development
HOUSING	
2a Housing trajectory showing: (i) net additional dwellings over the previous five year period or since the start of the relevant development plan document period, whichever is the longer; (ii) net additional dwellings for the current year; (iii) projected net additional dwellings up to the end of the relevant development plan document period or over a ten year period from its adoption, whichever is the longer; (iv) the annual net additional dwelling requirement; and (v) annual average number of net additional dwellings needed to meet overall housing requirements, having regard to previous year's performance	Monitored, but with housing trajectory to 2011 as need for fundamental review of provision in context of RSS review
2b Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land.	Monitored
2c Percentage of new dwellings completed at: (i) less than 30 dwellings per hectare; (ii) between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare; and (iii) above 50 dwellings per hectare	Monitored
2d Affordable housing completions.	Monitored
TRANSPORT	
3a Amount of completed non-residential development within UCO's A, B and D complying with car-parking standards set out in the local development framework.	Not monitored because of feasibility and resource issues
3b Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP; a hospital; a primary school; a secondary school; areas of employment; and a major retail centre(s).	Not monitored because of available resources
LOCAL SERVICES (2)	
4c Amount of eligible open spaces managed to Green Flag Award standard.	Monitored

MINERALS (FOR MINERALS PLANNING AUTHORITY ONLY)	
5a Production of primary land won aggregates.	Not monitored as data not available
5b Production of secondary/recycled aggregates.	Not monitored as data not available
WASTE (FOR WASTE PLANNING AUTHORITY ONLY)	
6a Capacity of new waste management facilities by type.	Monitored
6b Amount of municipal waste arising, and managed by management type, and the percentage each management type represents of the waste managed.	Monitored

WALSALL UDP 2005 Monitoring Indicators	
ENVIRONMENT & AMENITY	
Protection of Green Belt - target 100%	Monitored
Tree planting - related to targets in forest plans/ strategies	Not monitored
Progress towards targets in Biodiversity Action Plan	Not monitored as feasibility issues and overlap with core indicator 8
Protection of nature conservation sites - target 100%	Not monitored as feasibility issues and overlap with core indicator 8
Protection of buildings of historic or architectural interest - target 100% - modified to provision of strategies	Monitored insofar as feasible
JOBS & PROSPERITY	
Land developed for employment uses - target annual average of 13 hectares	Monitored
Share of all development on previously developed sites - target 95%	Monitored
Protection of employment allocations from loss to other uses - target 90%	Covered by core indicator 1e
STRENGTHENING OUR CENTRES	
Proportion of all development for retailing, leisure and other town centre uses which takes place in established centres - target at least 90%	Covered by core indicator 4b
Amount of vacant floorspace in centres - target to be at or below the national average	Not monitored – resource issues

HOUSING	
Reduction of vacancies - to a level of 3% by 2011	Monitored
Progress towards RPG11 dwelling requirement – residual annual average target of 422 dwellings	Covered by core indicator 2a
Proportion of all development on previously developed land - target of 95% for 2002-11	Covered by core indicator 2b
Number of dwellings provided on windfall sites – annual average target of 275 windfall completions	Not monitored
Extent of provision for affordable housing - residual annual average target of 184 dwellings	Covered by core indicator 2d
Types and sizes of housing provided - a mix appropriate to local circumstances	Not monitored
Density of new housing - target annual average density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare	Covered by core indicator 2c
TRANSPORT	
Use of buses - increase in line with West Midlands Local Transport Plan (WMLTP) target	Not monitored as data not available
Use of rail - increase in line with WMLTP target	Not monitored as data not available
Road traffic - keep growth in line with WMLTP target	Not monitored as data not available
Cycle use - increase in line with WMLTP target	Not monitored as data not available
Car parking provision for new housing development – in line with the standards in Policy T13	Not monitored as feasibility and resource issues
LEISURE & COMMUNITY NEEDS	
Protection of urban open spaces - target 100%	Monitored
Provision of new urban open spaces - at least 24 hectares over the rest of the Plan period	Monitored
Protection of playing fields/ sports pitches - target 100%	Monitored
Length of Greenways constructed - target at least 10 miles over the rest of the Plan period	Monitored
WASTE MANAGEMENT	
Progress towards targets set out in national guidance, regional guidance, Walsall's Integrated Waste Management Strategy and Best Value Indicators	Monitored