Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan

Submission Plan

Showing
Pre-Submission Modifications agreed Post-Publication
and
Further Proposed Modifications following the Pre-Submission Consultation

April 2017

Version for Council Meeting

10th April 2017

Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan

Pre-Submission Modifications and Further Proposed Modifications

Following consultation between March and May 2016 the Council proposed a number of modifications. These sought to address issues raised during the consultation as well as to update factual information. The consultation on the pre-submission proposed modifications took place between 7th November and 19th December 2016.

As a result of the Pre-Submission Modifications consultation and to ensure the plans are as robust as possible for submission further minor modifications have been proposed.

This ³PDFKDQJHV´ YHUVLRQ RI WKH SODQ KDV EHHQ SURG the pre-submission modifications and the further proposed modifications on the plan.

The pre-submission proposed modifications were divided into the following categories:

- Modifications to policies that chang H WKH PHDQLQJ RI WKH SROL PRGLILFDWLRQV´ 3UHIHUHQFH QXPEHUV start with MMAAP-),
- Modifications to the policy justification or other text that do not change the meaning of the policy µRWKHU PRGLILFDWLRQV´ 5HIHUHQFH QXPEHUV start with OMAAP-),
- Minor changes to correct or update factual information that do not affect the meaning of the policies, and changes to the numbering of sections, tables and maps.
- Changes to the Polices Map or other maps in the document (these can be HLWKHU ³PDLQ PRGLILFDWLRQV´ ³RWKHU PRGLILFDWL

These modifications are shown in this document as follows:

- Deleted text is shown as a double strike-through: ~~abcdefgh~~
- Added text is shown in blue text. Note that existing hyperlinks are in green.
- Modification numbers are shown in a box. Most of the modifications were DJUHHG E\ WKH &RXQFLO 21st July 2016, and are contained in Appendix B to the Cabinet report. A full list of all the modifications can be found here: www.walsall.gov.uk/walsall_town_centre_area_action_plan

- Main modifications have been highlighted yellow.

The further proposed modifications have been added to the plan in purple text, with removed text being in ~~purple strikethrough~~, and using the numbering system FPMAAPXX in order to differentiate them from the modifications proposed for the Pre-Submission Modifications Consultation.

What is the purpose of the Town Centre Area Action Plan?

No Modifications at this stage. However, it should be noted that this chapter will need to be modified at the adoption stage to reflect that work on the preparation of the plan will have been completed.

The Area Action Plan (AAP) is a long term plan that allocates sites within the town centre for the development of new shops, leisure opportunities and offices, as well as setting out policies and proposals for other aspects of the town centre, including transportation and the environment. It gives a clear vision for the town centre that we can all work towards together. The AAP will form part of the Local Plan for Walsall within the framework provided by the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS).

This Publication Plan is the final version of the Document that we intend (subject to approval by the Council) to submit for examination by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. It incorporates changes PDGH VLQFH WKH 3UHIHUUHG version and is intended to address the representations made in response to the consultation that took place in Autumn 2015.

Alongside this Draft Plan we have produced a Town Centre Policies Map. You can view these documents and all the evidence on our website.

What is the Area Action Plan process?

The flow diagram below sets out the AAP process. This Publication Draft Plan is the third stage in the production of the AAP. The consultation period runs between 7th March to the 3rd May.

Where can I find more information?

Visit our website at www.walsall.gov.uk/planning_2026

Email planningpolicy@walsall.gov.uk

Phone (01922) 658020

Textphone 01922 654000

Visit the First Stop Shop in the Civic Centre and ask for the Planning Policy Team

If you would like this information in another format please contact us.

List of Abbreviations

AAP	Area Action Plan
BCCS	Black Country Core Strategy
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
EI	Environmental Infrastructure
HA	Housing Association
LEP	Local Economic Partnership
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PSA	Primary Shopping Area
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAD	Site Allocations Document
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
Whg	Walsall Housing Group

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1. Introduction

No Modifications at this stage. However, it should be noted that this chapter will need to be modified at the adoption stage to reflect that work on the preparation of the plan will have been completed.

1.1 Purpose of the Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)

The AAP is a long term plan that allocates sites within the town centre for the development of new shops, leisure opportunities and offices, as well as setting out policies and proposals for other aspects of the town centre, including transportation and the environment. It gives a clear vision for the town centre that we can all work towards together. The AAP sets the planning framework for the town centre, and once adopted it will be the basis on which planning and investment decisions within the area are made. **Chapter 2** sets out the boundary for Walsall Town Centre AAP.

Once it has been adopted by the Council, the AAP will have legal status. It will form part of the Development Plan and will be used as the basis for determining planning applications. It will also help to promote sites for development and identify Council priorities.

1.2 The Publication Draft Plan

The Publication Plan should be the final draft of the document, to show the version that we hope to adopt. A number of the policies relate to allocations or designations on the Publication Draft AAP Policies Map and this should be considered alongside this Draft Plan.

The AAP is being produced in parallel with **Walsall Site Allocation Document (SAD)** which allocates sites for development for housing, employment and other uses across the Borough, and an **Infrastructure Plan and a Charging Schedule**, to support the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regime to levy charges on certain types of development. Your thoughts are also being sought on these documents and they can be accessed on our website:
http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/planning_policy.htm

1.3 How can comments be made about the plan?

Your views are important. Please read through this document and the supporting information.

As this is the Publication Stage, to make your comments more effective it would be useful to provide a response focussing RQ WKH µVRXQGQHVV¶ RI WKH SO cover the following ±

Is the plan:

- **Positively prepared** ± the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;

- **Justified** ± the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;

- **Effective** ± the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and

- **Consistent with national policy** ± the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

In order to make sure we have recorded your views correctly, you must submit them in writing. Please also tell us the reasons why you are making your representation and provide evidence to support your view, and suggest appropriate changes to the wording of the policies and/ or to the allocation of any particular site(s). Providing suggestions for changes to the plan will make your comments more effective.

You can do this by filling in the questionnaire, either in paper form or online, or by submitting a letter or email. If you are submitting a letter or email, please make it clear which site(s) or policy(ies) you are referring to. You should submit any representations during the consultation period between 7th March and 3rd May 2016. Comments received after the latter date may not be taken into account.

1.4 The Planning Context

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of the Borough which is drawn up by the Council in consultation with the community.
,Q ODZ WKLV LV GHVFULEHG DV WKH ³GHYHORSPHQW SOD

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[1] VHWV RXW WKH *RYHUQ
position on the role of the planning system in both plan-making and decision-taking. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, in economic, social and environmental terms. The Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of plans.

The NPPF sets out core land-use planning principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision making. These include driving and supporting sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs, securing high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, supporting the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk, contributing to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution, reusing land that has been previously developed, managing patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, taking account of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and delivering sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

On a more local level the Black Country authorities (Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley) prepared a Joint Core Strategy, which was adopted by Walsall Council in February 2011. As a strategic plan for the whole of the Black Country, the **Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)**[2] seeks to direct investment in retail, leisure and offices across the area. It emphasises that strategic centres such as Walsall should be the focus of large-scale investment in retail, offices and leisure.

:DOVDOO¶V ORFDO **Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP)**[3]**.** Most RI WKH 8'3 SROLFLHV DUH µVDYHG¶ SROLFLHV KRZHYHU changes to planning legislation in 2004 or have been superseded by policies within WKH %&&6 6RPH RI WKH ¶VDYHG¶ SROLFLHV ZLWKLQ W AAP as they still provide a good policy basis to assess proposals against and the AAP avoids repeating existing policy where possible. It is intended that the UDP

[1] The NPPF can be viewed at http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/
[2] The BCCS can be viewed at: http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/planning_policy/local_development_framework/ldf_core_strategy.htm
[3] The UDP can be viewed at: http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/planning_policy/unitary_development_plan.htm

µVDYHG¶ SROLFLHV ZLOO UHPDLQ LQ SODFH XQWLO D QH
developed for Walsall.

However, once adopted, this AAP will supersede some of the UDP policies, especially those within the Inset plan that covers Walsall Town Centre. The AAP will also supersede the information within Appendix 2 of the BCCS (SC3) which sets out an indicative spatial plan for Walsall Town Centre. The Preferred Options AAP documents set out the relationship between each AAP policy and the current planning framework.

1.5 The need for an AAP

The preparation of such a detailed and robust plan reflects the importance of Walsall town centre. The health of the town centre has an impact on the economy of the whole Borough. Walsall town centre is the most accessible location to serve the catchment area and to benefit the maximum number of people, particularly in increased employment and training opportunities. It is therefore the most sustainable location for development in the Borough. However, the town centre economy has significantly under-performed against the national and regional average over the past 10 years.

While there has been a considerable level of regeneration activity in the town centre in recent years, this has tended to focus on a small number of large scale projects. Whilst the delivery of these projects is important to the overall regeneration of the town centre, there is a need for a regeneration strategy for the centre as a whole. Advanced proposals for some important parts of the town centre are lacking, and the town centre now needs a long term spatial plan to set out its function in terms of retail, leisure and culture, education, office-based employment and housing, set in a high quality environment.

1.6 The AAP Process

In 2013 we consulted on the Issues and Options. This set out what we thought were the issues that the AAP would need to address, and possible solutions, including a range of different sites that the Council and other parties including landowners and developers thought might be suitable for development.

This was then followed by the Preferred Options stage which was consulted on between September and November 2015. The consultation responses to this stage of the plan have been taken into account when producing this Publication Draft Plan.

The consultation responses and how the Council have addressed these can be found on our website[4].

This is the third stage of the plan production and gives you the opportunity to comment on the soundness of the plan. The flow diagram (Figure 1.1) sets out the three key stages in which stakeholders and communities can have their say on the AAP and SAD.

Figure 1.1 Flow diagram setting out the three key stages on consultation

If you have made a representation previously at the Preferred Options stage and you feel that the Publication Draft AAP has not met this representation please let us know in writing that you wish to maintain your representation. If you think the points made in a previous representation have now been satisfied then please let us know in writing that you withdraw your representation. You will still be kept informed of the process.

After the consultation period we will take account of all of the representations we receive. If we need to make any changes as a result of the representations, or to make any updates because of changing circumstances, we will propose modifications to the Plan. These modifications might be in the form of a schedule of Proposed Modifications, or they will take the form of a revised version of the Plan. They will be the subject of further consultation.

4 http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/planning_policy/planning_2026/consultation_representations.htm

When we think that the consultations have been completed, we will submit the Plan to a full meeting of the Council. A Council resolution will be required for the AAP and supporting documents (including details of the representations received) to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The Planning Inspectorate will then arrange for the Plan to be scrutinised through an Examination in Public. Everyone who has expressed an interest in the plan and has made a representation about it will be notified RI WKH $$3¶V VXEPLVVLRQ Secretary of State, and, following this, of arrangements for the Examination.

The inspector ¶Vrole at the examination will be to assess whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements and whether it is µVRXQG¶ (see section 1.3 for soundness tests).

1.7 Structure of the AAP

This chapter introduces the AAP by setting out the planning context. It also explains why an AAP is important along with the key points in the AAP process and anticipated timescales.

Chapter 2 sets out the boundary for the AAP, presents the vision for Walsall town centre, and provides the objectives that the AAP aims to deliver.

The rest of the document is divided into the key elements that make up the centre, as summarised below. Each chapter has a number of policies which will deliver the vision and objectives of the AAP. For each policy there is a justification section. The Draft Plan also provides a list of the key evidence used to inform the plan along with an overview of how the policy will be delivered. Further details of how the plan will be delivered can be found in the Site Allocation Document and Town Centre AAP Delivery Document which can be viewed on our evidence page. Finally, for each policy there is an indication of how the policy will be monitored. Where possible, current indicators have been used from the BCCS or the UDP.

Chapter 3 is about Walsall as a Place for Shopping. It provides policies for the Primary Shopping Area, new retail investment including retail floorspace targets and a policy for the new Walsall Market.

Chapter 4 focuses on Walsall as a Place for Business. It provides policies for new office floorspace and for investment in the current office stock along with proposing a social enterprise zone. The chapter also covers the current industrial land within the centre, looking to protect any active businesses while providing opportunities for redevelopment if the industry relocates.

Chapter 5 focuses on Walsall town centre as a Place for Leisure. This chapter has a policy for new leisure development along with a policy to protect and enhance current sport and cultural facilities. It also includes a policy promoting further hotel, conference and banqueting facilities investment in the centre. Finally the chapter includes a policy on the canal to ensure it is protected whilst offering a high quality leisure destination in Walsall.

Chapter 6 looks at Walsall as a Place for Living. This chapter includes policies on housing, education and health, community facilities, the character of the town and the quality of the public realm, and the environmental infrastructure of the town centre.

Chapter 7 looks at transportation, access to and movement within the town centre. This is a key chapter because good access to the town is vital to the successful delivery of town centre regeneration. This chapter includes policies on pedestrian linkages, cycling, public transport, the road network, and town centre parking.

Chapter 8 focuses on Walsall as a Place for Investment. This chapter provides policies for the key areas within the town centre which are opportunities for major redevelopment, as well as secondary development opportunity sites within the town centre. This chapter also includes a policy around overcoming constraints in the centre.

Finally **Chapter 9** provides a summary of how people can get involved and have their say on the plan.

1.8 Key evidence consulted

A wide range of background documents have been prepared for or taken into account in the production of the documents. All of this evidence is available to view at www.walsall.gov.uk/planning_2026

The implications of each policy or proposal in the AAP need to be assessed against broad environmental, social and economic objectives in order to ensure that the AAP is as sustainable as possible. Therefore a **Sustainability Appraisal** (SA) process is running in parallel with the preparation of the AAP, and this plan should be read alongside the SA Report and accompanying technical documents. The SA is a method of identifying potentially significant environmental, social and economic effects of the emerging proposals in the plan, including alternative options under consideration, so that harmful effects can be identified early on, and addressed where feasible.

The SA has included an evaluation of the sustainability of the AAP Objectives (section 2.2), an appraisal of the Options for the AAP, and an appraisal of the Draft AAP policies and proposals. The SA has included equality and health impact assessments, as the SA Framework has been designed to identify potential equality and health impacts.

An HRA screening exercise was conducted as part of the preparation of the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS). The screening has formed the starting point for the assessment of all other subsequent Local Plan documents in Walsall. The HRA work for the BCCS could not rule out the possibility of likely significant effects in respect of Cannock Chase SAC, and the Humber Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar[5] as a result of implementing the strategy. OMAAP3

The basis for the future assessment of Local Plan documents is provided in paragraph 6.4 of the BCCS, which states:

> [3] 7 K H G H Y H O R S P H Q W R I Housing Growth and associated population growth may lead to indirect adverse impacts on Cannock Chase SAC. This is likely to be caused by increased visitor activities on Cannock Chase and is the subject of ongoing research. Depending on the outcome of this research, development plans and proposals may be required to demonstrate appropriate and proportionate measures sufficient to avoid or mitigate

[5] The Humber Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar was also considered as part of the BCCS HRA. However, since then no further technical work or correspondence has identified a need to develop a package of measures to mitigate any effects resulting from projects and / or plans in Walsall. The BCCS HRA screening also could not rule out the possibility of likely significant effects in respect of the Severn Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar, but this applies to areas of the Black Country other than Walsall as there is no apparent impact pathway linking it with Walsall

significant identified adverse impacts. Guidance may be given through V X E V H T X H Q W O R F D O G H Y H O R S P H Q W S O D Q G R F X P H Q W V

OMAAP3

~~Some of the evidence presented at the BCCS examination suggested a potential Q H H G W R F R Q V L G H U Z K H W K H U Q H Z K R X V L Q J G H~ Y H O R S P ~~ ~~L Q I O X H Q F H ¶ V X U U R X Q G L Q J W K H S H U L P H W H U R I &~ D Q Q R F N ~~ ~~effect~~. The interpretation of the available evidence in respect of potential impacts to Cannock Chase SAC, as a result of increased recreational pressure associated with new housing development resulting in a net increase of housing, has resulted in the identification of a 15km Zone of Influence (ZOI) emerging from the SAC boundary. This ~~µ] R Q H R I L~~ ~~ZOI extent~~ is to overlap with the Walsall Town Centre AAP boundary. The council has set out its position in respect of the identified ZOI in its HRA screening assessment which accompanies the SAD and AAP. However, specifically in respect of the AAP, the ~~overlapped~~ affected area is small and the plan proposes only office and educational uses within it. These uses are not within scope of the current strategic mitigation approach for the SAC, and if residential development were to have been proposed in this area through the AAP the council believes the effects of new residents could be screened out on the basis of the distance from the SAC and the visitor profile that can be deduced using the available visitor survey data. In addition, the strategic mitigation approach opted for, in respect of the SAC, requires developer contributions only from residential development within 8km of the SAC (the Zone of Payment - ZOP) that results in a net increase of housing, the AAP is not affected by the ZOP. Consequently, the AAP does not propose the form of development capable of resulting in adverse effects to the SAC, it is also a significant distance from the SAC. On this basis likely significant effects as a result of implementing the AAP have been screened out.~~fall within scope of the basis for assessment identified following the HRA screening of the BCCS~~

2. Walsall Town Centre

2.1 The vision

The vision for Walsall Town Centre is as follows:

By 2026 Walsall Town Centre will have been regenerated as a sub-regional focus for the local economy and the community. It will provide its catchment area with an attractive choice of comparison shopping and leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities, as well as supporting a thriving office market. Walsall will also support modern town centre living. The centre will bring all of these activities together in a vibrant, safe, attractive and accessible environment that combines local heritage with modern design.

2.2 Area Action Plan Objectives

To ensure that the vision is achieved, the following spatial objectives have been identified.

1. Establish and allocate a series of high quality, ambitious and deliverable proposals for Walsall Town Centre that will enable Walsall to maximise its economic potential creating a thriving and prosperous centre that generates job opportunities for the residents of the Borough.

2. Enhance and maximise Walsall's competitiveness and its role as a sub-regional centre and in competing with out-of-centre developments.

3. Increase the choice, quality and diversity of the town centre retail offer in order to meet the needs of all sectors of the population. To secure a mix of occupiers in the town centre through the provision of units of sufficient size and quality in suitable locations to meet the requirements of modern retailers.

4. Diversify and strengthen the economic base, promote new ways of working and deliver a strong office market that provides high standard office accommodation in suitable locations to meet the needs of existing businesses and to attract new businesses to the area, accompanied by training and conference facilities.

5. Strengthen the current cultural offer through increasing the mix of uses within the town centre such as a cinema, performance venues and community facilities, complemented by leisure uses such as restaurants, cafes and bars in order to provide an attractive centre for visitors both day and night.

6. Support businesses to increase employment opportunities, skills and aspirations through high quality jobs in a variety of sectors, supported by good links with education and training providers in the town centre.

7. Improve accessibility to and within the centre for all sectors of the community, through the provision of integrated transport and enhanced cycling and pedestrian links.

8. Conserve heritage assets and seek opportunities for their enhancement whilst delivering high quality sustainable design that is well integrated, secure and encourages greater activity in the town centre with innovative and high quality design and architecture at the core.

9. Promote the sustainability of the centre by delivering multi-functional green infrastructure and improvements that will deliver a range of benefits to both people and wildlife.

10. Transform the experience and perception of Walsall town centre for those who shop, work, visit, invest and live in Walsall through measures such as improved public realm, civic spaces, quality of place, new homes, pedestrian access and security alongside the active promotion of the centre and organisation of community events.

2.2.1 Policy Justification

The BCCS provides the basis for the AAP vision and the AAP needs to be consistent with ~~in~~ the BCCS. The AAP objectives therefore build on this vision to provide clear aims for the policies and proposals in the plan to aspire to.

These objectives align with the NPPF and the BCCS, building on these policy documents to provide a Walsall town centre specific dimension. The objectives have also been reviewed to ensure they align with the objectives of the sustainability statement.

For each chapter the plan indicates which of the objectives the policies within the chapter will look to achieve. However, whilst the objectives each deal with a separate issue they must be considered together when assessing if a proposal in the centre will support the vision of the plan.

2.3 Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan Boundary

The AAP defines the Town Centre Boundary, which is the area to which the policies in the plan will apply, whilst recognising links to the surrounding area.

Policy AAP1: Walsall Town Centre Boundary

a) The AAP Boundary is set out in the Town Centre AAP Policies Map. The boundary of the centre has been drawn so as to include the main areas where there is potential for development which can extend and complement the role of the centre. The town centre area provides the main focus for investment in retail, leisure, office, cultural, and service activities.

b) It is important that all development within the centre is carefully integrated into the existing historic and urban fabric, both visually and functionally, so that they function properly as part of the centre as a whole. All developments will be expected to show flexibility in their format and layout in order to ensure a positive relationship with the centre as a whole. Developments in the centre will also be expected to take a comprehensive approach to the use of land and buildings. To ensure the integration of developments in or on the edge of the centre proposals will need to be in accordance with UDP Saved Policy S3: Integration of Developments into Centres.

2.3.1 Policy Justification

The town centre boundary not only sets out the area which the AAP covers but also the area in which town centre uses should be focussed ±it therefore needs to reflect as accurately as possible the areas in which such uses would be appropriate. The AAP boundary has therefore been altered from the boundary as allocated in the UDP Proposal Inset Map, to reflect changes in the centre since 2005. The changes have been made to remove areas that no longer relate well to the centre and to include sites which could have potential for development or that already strongly relate to the centre ¶ function.

Whilst in principle the boundary acts as a guide to where centre uses are and are not acceptable, L W ¶ V L P S R U W D Q W W K D W G H Y H O R S P H Q W V W R Z D U G well integrated with the rest of the centre. This is crucial in supporting the vitality and viability of the Primary Shopping Area and key regeneration V F K H P H V , W ¶ V D C important that all development is accessible by public transport so the integration of all schemes with the town centre as a whole is an important consideration.

The integration of development within the centre as a whole is crucial to creating a well connected vibrant centre. All proposals will be expected to consider how they relate to the centre and to positively contribute to the objectives of the AAP. It is not accepted that the format requirements of specific proposals should mean that development cannot relate well to the centre overall including proposals for drive-through facilities, convenience or bulky goods retailing and community facilities. Where proposals are considered to fail to integrate well a statement of justification will be required which should demonstrate accordance with this policy and UDP Saved Policy S3, stating how the proposal is integrated and comprehensive in the approach to the use of land or buildings. Development proposals which would prejudice a comprehensive approach to the use of land or buildings or result in a poorly integrated scheme will be resisted.

It is recognised that there may be times when proposals for centre uses or for uses that should relate to the town centre are on the outside or very edge of the town centre boundary. When such proposals occur applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the development will contribute positively to the town centre.

It is also important that connections are maintained between the town centre and the rest of the Borough; in particular to the Manor Hospital, Walsall Arboretum and the surrounding residential areas. The AAP will therefore look to strengthen these links and to ensure the town centre remains the most accessible location in the Borough.

2.3.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

2.3.3 Delivery

- Through the appropriate consideration of planning applications and the implementation of all policies within this plan along with the BCCS and UDP Saved Policies to direct investment in town centres uses into the town centre.

2.3.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAP1.1 - Amount of floorspace for town centre uses completed and amount permitted within the town centre boundary, as a proportion of all completions and planning permissions for centre uses.	100% of development to be in accordance with this policy or justified by another local plan policy.

3. A Place for Shopping

Shopping is one of the key functions of a town centre, and a healthy economy requires a diverse range of shops that meet the needs of the community. The policies and proposals in this chapter contribute to the delivery of a strong shopping offer in Walsall and reflect AAP Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6, 8 and 10.

3.1 Primary Shopping Area

The AAP designates the Primary Shopping Area and looks to protect its role as the main shopping destination.

Policy AAPS1: Primary Shopping Area

It is crucial that investment in retail is concentrated within the heart of the town centre and that the area provides an attractive shopping destination. The Primary Shopping Area, as shown on the AAP Policies Map, forms the main focus of activity in the centre and the approach to development in and around the town centre should be to protect and enhance its function as the heart of Walsall Town Centre. This will be achieved by:

a) Concentrating new retail floorspace and investment within or immediately adjacent to the Primary Shopping Area boundary;

b) Expecting all development within the Primary Shopping Area to provide an active and well designed frontage to positively contribute to the streetscene. Any significant proposal for non-retail use will have to demonstrate that the retail function is not prejudiced (as in accordance with UDP Saved Policy S4);

c) Only permitting retail development away from the Primary Shopping Area where it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable development sites or

vacant premises within or immediately adjacent to it (in accordance with UDP Saved Policy S7, BCCS Policy CEN7, and Policy AAPS2). When proposals come forward that can demonstrate there are no suitable alternatives the Council will require the provision of safe, direct and attractive pedestrian links into the Primary Shopping Area; and

d) Encouraging developments for other uses in Walsall Town Centre to improve connections to the Primary Shopping Area where possible. Any development for town centre uses that would generate significant visitor numbers will be expected to accord with Policy AAPT1 in improving linkages throughout the centre and to show that there would be no negative impact on the Primary Shopping Area in terms of investment and footfall.

3.1.1 Policy Justification

The Primary Shopping Area (PSA) includes the main shopping streets within Walsall town centre. This policy is intended to strengthen this area by focussing new retail investment within it and by ensuring that no other developments impact negatively on the health of the PSA. Focussing retail investment within the PSA is essential to delivering the BCCS strategy for regeneration and growth.

It is crucial that the PSA provides an area where existing investment can be consolidated and protected whilst allowing for potential new investment in retail. This PSA boundary is therefore slightly consolidated compared to the PSA as set out in the 2005 UDP Town Centre Inset Map, to remove areas where retail is less likely to come forward, providing a clear focus for new retail development and improvements to the centre.

The NPPF requires local planning authorities to define the extent of the PSA, based on the primary and secondary frontages. Given the level of vacancies and increased role leisure plays in supporting the function of town centres it is not considered appropriate to designate primary and secondary frontages in policy as this would be ineffective and unnecessarily restrict changes of use. It is also not considered helpful to be too onerous about uses other than A1 (A2, A3, A5 etc) being allowed in the PSA as this would be inflexible and potentially deter investment. A mix of uses is needed within the PSA to provide a vibrant centre, especially in the evenings. The approach is instead to allow individual applications to be measured on their own merits in regards to how they impact on the primary function of the PSA as a shopping destination. This will be measured in terms of the risk of diluting the shopping offer and reducing the ability to meet the retail targets set (see Policy AAPS2). Policy AAPLE1 covers leisure uses including A3 and A5 in further detail.

The PSA, as the retail core and focus for future retail investment, is also the key area identified for a high quality public realm, as set out in Policy AAPLV7.

3.1.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

3.1.3 Delivery

The PSA is the heart of the centre and as such the Council will prioritise investment that will support its vitality and viability. The main tool the Council has to deliver a strong PSA is through the use of planning policy to attract investment into the PSA DQG WR GHWHU GHYHORSPHQWV WKDW ZLOO KDYH Q HJD through drawing away investment and spending. The Council will also support the PSA in the following ways:

- Securing funds, where possible, for investment in the PSA to improve the shopping environment;
- Supporting business to invest and relocate within the PSA;
- Where considered necessary and if feasible, the Council will consider further direct involvement (in addition to the Primark scheme) in the development of retail opportunities in the PSA; and
- Where appropriate, for development permitted in an edge-of-centre location requiring developer contributions to improving linkages to the PSA.

3.1.4 Monitoring

Indicators	**Targets**
AAPS1.1 (BCCS indicator LOI CEN3) - Amount of additional retail floorspace within or immediately adjacent the PSA.	6,000sqm gross new comparison goods floorspace and 1,500sqm gross new convenience goods floorspace (in addition to existing commitments) by the end of 2026
AAPS1.2 The extent of vacant floorspace in the PSA at ground floor level.	Percentage to be at or below the figure recorded at time of the plans adoption.

3.2 Attracting New Retail Development

In order to maintain its role as a strategic centre and to reverse the decline of the high street there is a need to retain current retailers and to attract new retail investment in the right locations to support the vitality of the centre.

Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development

a) The Council aims to deliver 6,000sqm gross new comparison goods floorspace and 1,500sqm gross new convenience goods floorspace (in addition to existing commitments) by the end of 2026. This will be achieved by:

i) Focussing new retail development in the Primary Shopping Area as required by Policy AAPS1;

ii) Prioritising the development of sites identified on the AAP Policies Map for retail investment:-
- 6W 0DWWKHZ ¶V (TC01, TC02 and TC03) (See also Policy AAPINV2)
- Park Place (TC05) (See also Policy AAPINV5)
- Saddler § Shopping Centre (TC04) (See also Policy AAPINV5); and

iii) Ensuring new retail development provides large, flexible units to meet retailer requirements.
b) Convenience retailing and bulky goods will, where possible, be located in the Primary Shopping Area in accordance with the sequential approach (BCCS Policy CEN7 and UDP Saved Policy S7). Where retailing cannot be accommodated within or immediately adjacent to the Primary Shopping Area the Council will expect the following sites to be considered in order as part of the sequential assessment:- OMAAP4

1. Jerome Retail Park (TC19);
)RUPHU 6KDQQRQ¶V 0LOO 6LWH 7& VHH DOVR 3RLF
3. Crown Wharf (TC07);
4. Wisemore (TC55) (see also Policy AAPINV3);
5. Challenge Block (TC41) (see also Policy AAPINV3(b)); and
6. Day Street (TC50) (see also Policy AAPINV3(c)).

c) Any edge-of-centre proposals will be expected to:
i) Link directly to active frontages in the Primary Shopping Area, or if not possible, to improve linkages functionally and visually to the Primary Shopping Area; and

ii) Show that there is no significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre and planned investment for its future (as in accordance with BCCS CEN3 and CEN7).

d) Where proposals for retail are permitted away from the Primary Shopping Area planning conditions will be applied where necessary to minimise the impacts of the development on the centre by, for example, controlling the broad range of goods to be sold.

3.2.1 Policy Justification

The key to ensuring the future health and Strategic Centre status of Walsall town centre is securing new retail development within the PSA in addition to existing commitments. This is needed to help increase the town c H Q W U H ¶ V P D U N H W V K retail expenditure and therefore its ability to compete with other shopping destinations, including those in edge/out-of-centre locations (as defined by the NPPF).

The AAP sets out retail capacity forecasts for both comparison and convenience goods, which are defined as follows:

- Comparison goods ± clothing, footwear and other fashion goods; furniture; domestic appliances; personal and luxury goods e.g. books, jewellery, cosmetics.

- Convenience goods ± includes food and beverages, tobacco, newspapers and magazines, and non-durable household goods.

The new target figure for comparison retail is to deliver 6,000sqm gross additional floorspace by 2026. Whilst this figure is lower than the BCCS target of 85,000sqm gross, it maintains and supports the BCCS regeneration strategy by providing a realistic and deliverable figure. These targets are dependent on Walsall increasing its market share and investment being directed into the centre. Planning for town centre growth in line with the new forecasts will provide developers and investors with certainty and confidence. This will also help to counter the threat of proposals for edge/out-of-centre retail development. The existing commitments at Digbeth and St Mat W K H Z ¶ V 4 X D O L W Town Centre absorb much of the forecast growth in expenditure (DTZ have forecasted this as 4,596sqm A1 comparison floorspace) and the new retail capacity forecasts account for this committed development.

The AAP also sets targets for convenience retail to allow for future growth of food retailers in the centre. This target is set at 1,500sqm gross, having taking into account the recently opened Co-op foodstore. DTZ have advised that there is no capacity to support new retail investment beyond the current planning permissions until after 2021, meaning that new development may result in turnover being diverted from existing stores.

Accommodating forecast retail capacity on priority sites within the PSA is crucial to improving the health and performance of the centre. It is therefore important that Walsall town centre provides the right type of units to meet modern retailer requirements in order to prevent retailers choosing out-of-centre or edge-of-centre locations instead. The policy therefore requires, where practical, all new development to provide large scale and flexible units, unless smaller units can be justified by other policies Z L W K L Q : DocaV Plan, 3ff Vexample if the site is in a conservation area. A minimum of 500sqm is suggested as a guide to developers.

The priority sites selected in part aii) of Policy AAPS2 have been identified as they are considered the most appropriate for reconfiguration and amalgamation to create larger units and accommodate retail investment.

Part aii) of Policy AAPS2 sites: Further information on sites

Site Reference	**Site Name**	**Allocation** OMAAP1	**Site Details**
TC01	Old Square Phase 2	~~Retail opportunities for investment/ reconfiguration~~. Opportunities for retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part aii) and Policy AAPINV2: 6 W 0 D W W K H Z ¶ V	Shopping Centre within the PSA suitable for retail investment. Has a current consent for retail which P D L Q W D L Q V Y L H Z V W Church. Development here will lead to further investment in surrounding buildings, some of which are of a strong character.
TC02	Old Square Phase 3	~~Retail opportunities for investment/ reconfiguration.~~ Opportunities for retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part aii) and Policy AAPINV2: 6 W 0 D W W K H Z ¶ V	Shopping Centre within the PSA suitable for retail investment. The existing building does not make a positive contribution to the nearby heritage assets, ~~but any new development should not be above 3 storeys to avoid dominating the surrounding character~~ but any development should be of sensitive design to avoid dominating the surrounding character, with no more than 3 storeys at the Digbeth frontage and 5 storeys at the Freer Street frontage. OMAAP5

TC03	Digbeth/ Lower Hall Lane	~~Retail opportunities for investment/ reconfiguration~~ Opportunities for retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part aii) and Policy AAPINV2: 6 W 0 D W W K H Z ¶ V	Shopping Centre within the PSA suitable for retail investment. Has a current consent for retail, to replace the existing vacant buildings with a more modern design, which should improve the character of the area.
TC05	Park Place	~~Retail opportunities for investment/ reconfiguration~~ Opportunities for retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part aii) and Policy AAPINV5: Park Street Shopping Core	Shopping Centre within the PSA suitable for retail investment.
TC04	6 D G G O H U ¶ V Shopping Centre	~~Retail opportunities for investment/ reconfiguration~~ Opportunities for retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part aii) and Policy AAPINV5: Park Street Shopping Core	Shopping Centre within the PSA suitable for retail investment. Improvements could create stronger frontages to Bradford Place and Station Street, in order to enhance the character of the area and the setting of the heritage assets in these areas.

There is a need for strong control over new development in edge/out-of-centre locations in order to ensure the future health of the centre. It is however, recognised that there may be some need for large sites which are unable to be accommodated within the PSA and in order to provide guidance for applicants the AAP gives an indication of the preferable sites for such proposals. The sites selected in part b) of Policy AAPS2 have been chosen in order of how well they relate to the PSA and for their ability to accommodate retail investment.

All applications for retail uses outside of the PSA will have to accord with the sequential assessment and it is not accepted that simply because a retailer sells bulky goods that an out-of-centre location is justifiable. BCCS Policy CEN3 states that any proposed development in an edge-of-centre location exceeding 500sqm gross floorspace will only be considered favourably if the retail assessments contained in the most recent guidance are satisfied. Any proposals for edge-of-

centre retail developments will need to take into account the forecast retail capacity when undertaking an impact assessment.

Part b) of Policy AAPS2 sites: Further information on sites

Site Reference	**Site Name**	**Allocation** OMAAP1	**Site Details**
TC19	Jerome Retail Park	~~Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods~~ Sequential sites for convenience / bulky goods retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part b)	Connected to the PSA visually and has units which would be suitable to accommodate convenience retailing and bulky goods. Should form part of comprehensive redevelopment providing a prominent frontage and surface level car parking. Any new development should be of improved design and contribute more to the character of the surrounding area.
TC26	Former 6 K D Q Q R Q ¶ V	~~Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods along with mixed use opportunity including housing and live/work~~ Sequential sites for convenience / bulky goods retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part b) Opportunities for mixed town centre uses - Policy AAPINV2: St 0 D W W K H Z ¶ V 4 X	Front of the site is connected to the PSA physically and visually. A well designed scheme could provide an active frontage linking directly to the current PSA retail offer and positively contributing to the streetscene. The site provides opportunities for car parking along with other uses on upper floors and on the remaining site such as residential. Scheme would need to accord with Policy AAPINV2: 6 W 0 D W W K H Z ¶ V 4 X D
TC07	Crown Wharf	~~Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods~~ Sequential sites for convenience / bulky goods retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part b)	Close proximity to the PSA and has units of sizes that would be suitable to accommodate convenience retailing and bulky goods if traffic impacts could be overcome. ~~Frontages could be strengthened to improve the V L W H ¶ V U H O D W L R Q V~~ Any additional retail floorspace at Crown Wharf will be expected to V W U H Q J W K H Q W K H V with the centre through improved frontages and better pedestrian linkages. OMAAP6
TC55	Wisemore	~~Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky~~	Development opportunity site close to the PSA opposite to

		~~goods~~ Sequential sites for convenience / bulky goods retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part b) Opportunities for mixed town centre uses - Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport	Tesco. Scheme would need to accord with Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport. Development would improve the character of the area as long as it provides a strong frontage to the ring road and relates well to the rear of the buildings fronting Stafford Street.
TC41	Challenge Block	~~Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods. and a allocation for a multi-storey car park and Community Hub as part of a mixed use scheme.~~ Sequential sites for convenience / bulky goods retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part b) Potential location for super car park - Policy AAPT5: Car Parking part i) Opportunities for office development and mixed town centre uses ±Policy AAPB1: Office Development and Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport.	Development opportunity that could accommodate the unit size required. Linkages to the PSA would need to be improved. Scheme would need to accord with Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport. Any development should provide a strong, high quality frontage to the ring road in order to contribute positively to the character of the area. It should take inspiration from the surrounding area and original buildings on the site.
TC50	Day Street car park	~~Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods along with mixed use opportunity including housing and live/work~~ Sequential sites for convenience / bulky goods retail investment - Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development part b)	Development opportunity that could accommodate the unit size required. Linkages to the PSA and across Littleton Street would need to be improved. Scheme would need to accord with Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport. The redevelopment of this site with a high quality design would improve the character of the area in a prominent location, however the setting of the Leather Museum would need to be considered so as not to dominate

		Potential location for super car park - Policy AAPT5: Car Parking part i) Opportunities for office development - Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport	this building.

OMAAP2

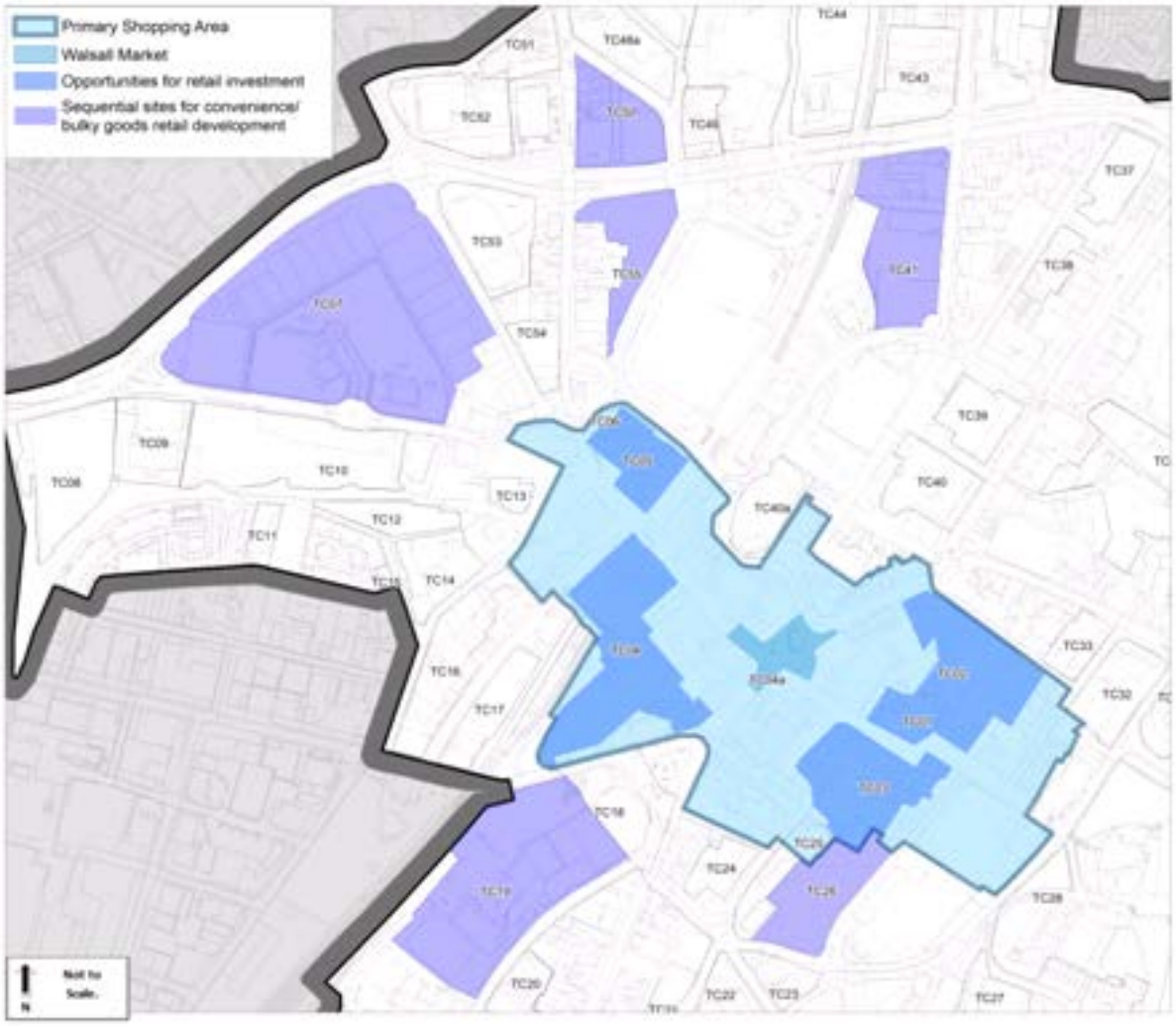

Figure 3.1 A Place for Shopping Allocations

3.2.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.
- Current planning permissions for retail developments.

3.2.3 Delivery

6W 0DWWKHZ¶V 4XDUWHU LV LGHQWLILHG LQ WKH $$3 DV looks to concentrate change and investment (Policy AAPINV1: Regeneration Strategy). The Council has already demonstrated its commitment to securing new retail floorspace through the direct investment made to the Primark scheme. It is anticipated that this development will act as a catalyst for further investment in retail by the private sector. The Council will support this in two main ways. First, through the strong use of planning policy to encourage investment in the PSA and deter

development that will have a negative impact on the health of the centre or planned investment. Second, through Council interventions, including:

- Utilising the ownership at Old Square to continue to work with developer(s) to promote retail development at this end of the town centre, to help anchor the east end of Park Street and create a strong retail circuit; and
- Where considered necessary and if feasible direct involvement in the development of retail opportunities in the PSA in a similar way to the Primark development.

3.2.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPS2.1 (BCCS indicator LOI CEN3) - Amount of additional retail floorspace within or immediately adjacent the PSA.	(new target) 6,000sqm gross new comparison goods floorspace and 1,500sqm gross new convenience goods floorspace (in addition to existing commitments) by the end of 2026.

3.3 The New Walsall Market

Walsall market is an important part of the centre historically and in terms of providing vitality to the shopping area. The AAP looks to ensure the future of Walsall Market and to protect the investment the Council has committed to the market.

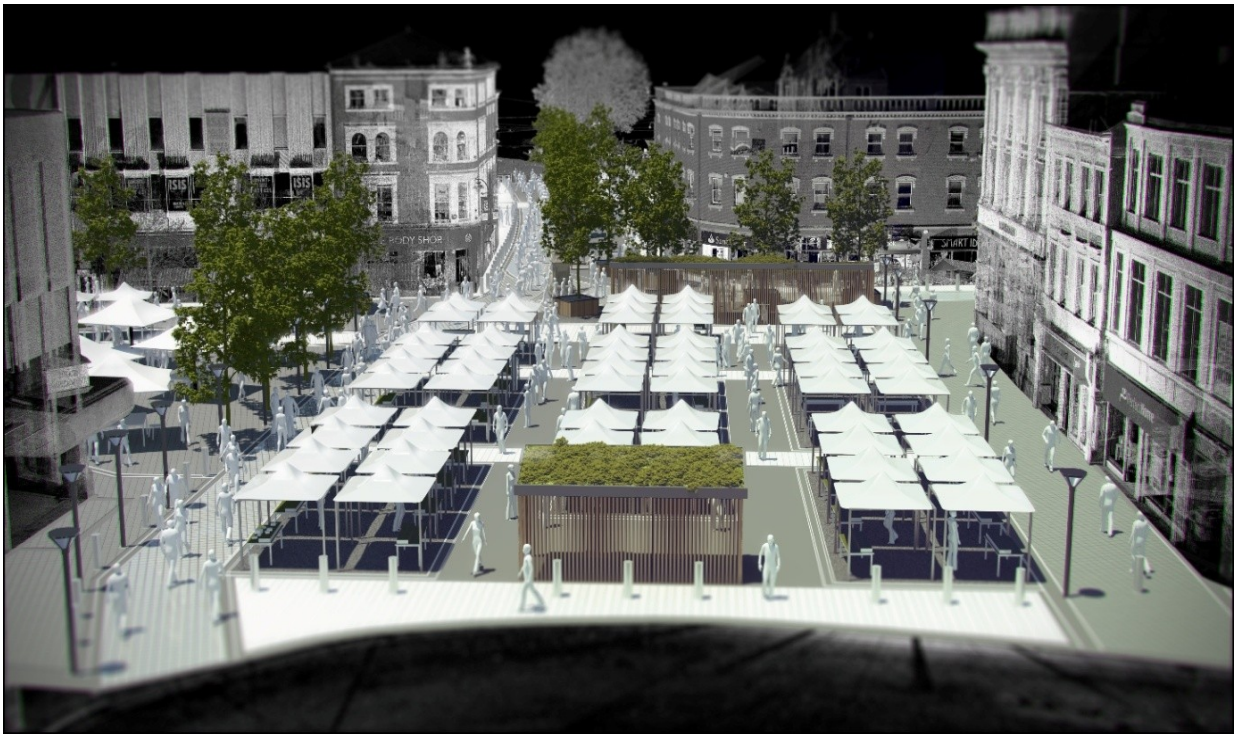

Figure 3.2 Visualisation of the new Walsall Market at The Bridge.

Policy AAPS3: The New Walsall Market OMAAP8

a) The new Walsall market will provide a high quality shopping environment that supports the vitality of the town centre. The market will be protected and where possible enhanced in its allocated location as shown on the AAP Policies Map (TC04a). Any proposals that result in the loss of market trader space or have a negative impact on the market's viability or vitality will be discouraged.

b) The area around The Bridge (TC04a) will be flexible so that it can also be used as a site for community events and performances. Investment in the attractiveness of the market and in specialist markets will be encouraged.

3.3.1 Policy Justification

The Council recognises the importance of the market as an attraction for visitors and the role it plays in meeting the needs of the local community. It is also recognised that the market is a historic feature of the centre and plays an important role in its character. As the Characterisation Study states the Bridge is the historic heart of the town and acts as a critical crossroad in the town centre. The Council has committed to investing in the new market at The Bridge (TC04a) OMAAP8, including public realm improvements (as per planning application 14/1871/FL) and this planned investment is reflected in the allocation on the AAP Policies Map. This investment should help to address the weaknesses in the public realm identified in the Characterisation Study. The policy also recognises this investment and looks to ensure the market¶ attractiveness is maintained and increased in the future. Proposals for edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail developments will be expected to consider the impact on the market as part of impact assessments to ensure there LV QR GHWULPHQWDO LPSDFW RQ WKH PDUNHW¶V YLDELO

An important factor in the attractiveness of the market is the setting in which it is held and the Council will encourage developments in the surrounding area to enhance the setting of the market. The market scheme has been designed so that the stalls can be demounted, allowing the Bridge area to be used as a public space. Given its central location the site is considered the most suitable place for town centre activities and this has been reflected in Policy AAPLE2 where it is promoted as a space for public performances and events.

3.3.2 Evidence

- Information provided in support of planning application for the new market ± planning reference 14/1871/FL
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

3.3.3 Delivery

The new market is a Council scheme and it will be delivered through the implementation of the planning application with Council capital spending.

3.3.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPS3.1 - Annual average market stall occupancy.	Above 70%

4. A Place for Business

We need to provide for more jobs and bring new businesses into the Borough in order to ensure : D O V Dconomy is more resilient to changes in the wider economic environment. A diverse economic base is also key to ensuring income levels are maintained and increased for local residents. The policies and proposals in this chapter look to create an environment in the town centre where businesses can thrive, and reflect AAP objectives 1, 2, 4 and 6.

4.1 Delivering New Office Development

Delivering new office space and encouraging businesses into Walsall town centre is crucial for the health of the Borough. New office developments will create jobs, G L Y H U V L I \ : D O V D O O ¶ V H F R Q R P \ D Q G U H V X O W L Q P R U H S centre.

Figure 4.1 Jhoots Pharmacy headquarters, Littleton Street

Policy AAPB1: Office Developments

The Council aims to deliver 73,000sqm gross of offices by the end of 2026. This will be achieved by:

a) Focussing new office investment in the Gigaport area as identified by Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport;

b) Identifying sites where town centre uses, including office development, is appropriate as shown by mixed use development opportunities on the AAP Policies Map;

c) Encouraging the refurbishment of existing office stock especially in the areas identified on the AAP Policies Map:-
- TC06 Townend House
- TC24 Lower Hall Lane/ Newport Street
- TC32 Regina Court
- TC33 Tameway Tower

d) Encouraging the use of upper floors for offices; and

e) Requiring applications for new office developments above 500sqm outside of the Gigaport area to be supported by an impact assessment demonstrating there will be no negative impact on the delivery of the Gigaport.

4.1.1 Policy Justification

The development of a strong office market is crucial to improving the centre. It will provide more employment, increase footfall and enhance consumer spending power. It can also act as a catalyst for other developments in the leisure and retail sectors. Walsall needs to prioritise the development of office and other commercial space for private sector occupiers in the town centre, in order to attract new investment and jobs and retain skilled employees. Alongside this, it needs to improve the broader town centre offer to create an attractive environment for employment in finance, professional and business services.

The BCCS set an ambitious target of 220,000sqm of additional office space in Walsall between 2006 and 2026 which equates to circa 11,148sqm of additional office space per annum. This is an enormous amount of office space, particularly considering that the existing office stock in Walsall and the recent levels of demand. DTZ have therefore revised the target to provide a figure that is still aspirational but which is more achievable. Office development provision of 3,700sqm per annum

equates to approximately one-third of the BCCS Local Plan figure on an annual basis (73,000sqm by 2026). This target is still very ambitious and will require significant and sustained public sector support. Whilst the main priority for the delivery of offices in the centre is B1a, office uses for research and development of products or processes (B1b) and for light industrial (B1c) uses will also be acceptable in the town centre as part of mixed use or office developments.

The Gigaport is the main location for new office development and the AAP has a specific policy to ensure this is a high quality office development ± see Policy AAPINV3. Other sites may be suitable for offices and these have been represented by the mixed use development opportunities as shown on the AAP Policies Map. A statement evidencing there will be no impact on the delivery of Gigaport will need to be provided for new office developments above 500sqm outside of the Gigaport area. This policy does not apply to refurbishments of current office stock or the conversion of current buildings. The Council will be flexible when applying this policy and will take into account the requirements of individual businesses looking to locate or relocate in Walsall town centre, especially if it helps to sustain local business and create local jobs.

There are office vacancies in the town centre at present and pressure to convert or redevelop offices to residential use. However it is important to take a long-term perspective when considering the level and location of office provision in the town centre. Where possible, the Council will look to protect vacant office blocks from development for other uses and instead promote them for refurbishment. The AAP has identified sites where this would be particularly encouraged as set out in the table below:

Part c) of Policy AAPB1 sites: Further information on sites

Site Reference	Site Name	Allocation OMAAP1	Site Details
TC06	Townend House	Opportunities for investment in office stock - Policy AAPB1: Office Developments part c)	Office tower that would benefit from refurbishment. Reconfiguration is expected to take place within the existing urban form, and therefore will not negatively impact the character of the area.
TC24	Lower Hall Lane/ Newport Street	Opportunities for investment in office stock - Policy AAPB1: Office Developments part c) ~~(also could form part of a mixed use development)~~ Opportunities for mixed town centre uses - Policy AAPINV6: Secondary	Office building that would benefit from refurbishment. Reconfiguration is expected to take place within the existing urban form, and therefore will not negatively impact the character of the area. Any proposal for redevelopment would need to consider the scale of the nearby listed buildings.

		Development Sites	
TC32	Regina Court	Opportunities for investment in office stock - Policy AAPB1: Office Developments part c) ~~(also could form part of a mixed use development)~~ Opportunities for mixed town centre uses - Policy AAPINV6: Secondary Development Sites	Office building that would benefit from refurbishment. Office reconfiguration could be undertaken without harming the character of the area, and would actually improve it.
TC33	Tameway Tower	Opportunities for investment in office stock - Policy AAPB1: Office Developments part c)	Office building that would benefit from refurbishment. A proposal for conversion to flats is yet to be implemented. Office reconfiguration could be undertaken without harming the character of the area, and would actually improve it.

4.1.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

4.1.3 Delivery

Gigaport is identified in the AAP as the priority location for office development and it is considered that through concentrating office development into one location a high quality office location can be created (Policy AAPINV1: Regeneration Strategy and AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport). The Council has already demonstrated its commitment to securing new office development in the Gigaport through the support it provided in delivering the Jhoots Pharmacy development ± this included site acquisition and assembly, demolition, site investigation and ground remediation works, provision of infrastructure/ access works, and supporting the developer to secure in excess of £1m of grant funding. This recent development, along with Walsall College Businesses and Sports Hub and the whg headquarters, are helping to create a corridor of high quality developments which it is anticipated will act as a catalyst for further investment in the office sector within Walsall.

The Council will support the further development of offices in Walsall by:

- Creating the right environment through public realm, road improvements and improved linkages (see Policy AAPLV7: Enhancing the Public Realm, all the policies within Chapter 7: Transport, Movement and Accessibility and also Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport);
- Promoting the town centre for inward investment for public and private sector office relocations;
- Delivering the other improvements to the town centre as proposed in the Plan, including increased leisure provision and an improved retail offer to make the centre an attractive place to invest in but also to work in;
- 8VLQJ WKH :0%&¶V FRYHQDQW LQ RUGHU WR LPSURY as the rental guarantor to encourage development);
- Strategic acquisitions / assembly of development opportunity sites (using the &RXQFLO¶V SRZHUV RI FRPSXOVRU\ SXUFKDVH ZKH delivery;
- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery, including site clearance and remediation;
- Taking a direct development role (repeating the role the Council played in successfully delivering the Primark/Co-op scheme)
- Developing strategies to ensure that occupiers and developers have the right infrastructure and where necessary supporting the provision of town centre infrastructure.

4.1.4 Monitoring

Indicators	**Targets**
AAPB1.1 (BCCS Indicator LOI CEN4) - Amount of additional office floorspace within the centre.	73,000sqm gross of offices by the end of 2026
AAPB1.2 - Amount of office floorspace refurbished as identified in part c of the policy.	100% of office premises identified refurbished by the end of 2026

4.2 Walsall Social Enterprise Zone

Social enterprises play a key role in Walsall through engaging in economic, environmental and social regeneration. They provide a mix of services and facilities, which respond to the needs of the communities.

Policy AAPB2: Social Enterprise Zone

The Council will support and promote the expansion of social enterprises in the town centre by:

a) Designating the area around the Goldmine Centre (TC25) as shown on the AAP Policies Map as a Social Enterprise Zone. Within this area the following uses will be acceptable as part of social enterprise development:-
- Community and cultural uses;
- Educational uses;
- Small scale office developments; and
- Live work units.

Residential uses may be supported where buildings within the Social Enterprise Zone are historically listed if it can be demonstrated this is the best approach to maintaining the character of the buildings and that any proposal will not jeopardise the delivery of a Social Enterprise Zone. MMAAP1

b) Supporting in principle proposals for social enterprises in other areas and buildings around the centre which are suitable for such uses and where they accord with other relevant policies in Walsall ¶ Local Plan.

4.2.1 Policy Justification

The zone is based around the existing Vine Trust, which provides a range of social enterprise initiatives. The designation of a social enterprise zone is in recognition of the work already being undertaken in the area and to enable the future growth of such uses. The Goldmine Centre is the hub for Walsall Studio School and focuses on business social enterprise and a broad range of Creative and Digital disciplines. There are proposals to expand the work of social enterprises in this area to include live-work spaces and the designation has been drawn to reflect this ambition. This aligns with AAP SURSRVDOV IRU WKH IRUPHU (TC26) as set out in ¶ 0LOO Policy AAPINV2: St Matthew¶s Quarter.

This policy is designed to support social enterprises but, in recognition that there are other areas within the centre where such uses are suitable, the Council will be flexible when considering proposals for alternative uses in this area where they are acceptable. The appropriate re-use of heritage assets for community and cultural uses would be particularly welcomed.

Figure 4.2 The Goldmine Centre, Lower Hall Lane

4.2.2 Evidence

- Black Country LEP Social Enterprise Prospectus.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

4.2.3 Delivery

The social enterprise zone has been identified to build on the work of the Vine Trust which already has a proven track record delivering enterprise initiatives in Walsall. The Vine Trust has to date secured £4.4 million of investment from the public and private sector. The purpose of this policy is to allow for the space for social enterprises to grow and to continue delivering in Walsall.

4.2.4 Monitoring

Indicators	**Targets**
AAPB2.1 - Number of social enterprises active in Walsall town centre.	Increase over the plan period
AAPB2.2 - Amount of floorspace occupied by social enterprises in the town centre.	Increase over the plan period

4.3 3URWHFWLQJ :DOVDOO¶V ,QGXVWULDO 8VHV

Walsall is an industrial town and there are a number of industrial uses within the town centre boundary. The AAP will protect active industry whilst still allowing for the growth of centre uses within the town centre boundary.

Policy AAPB3: Town Centre Employment Land

The Council will protect active industry within the town centre boundary through:

a) Allocating Albert Jagger (TC53) site as High Quality industry for safeguarding. The provisions of BCCS policy EMP2 and UDP Saved Policy JP8 will apply. Proposals for non high quality industrial uses will be discouraged if they compromise the overall quality. If the current use relocates proposals for town centre uses will be considered acceptable.

b) Allocating and safeguarding local quality industry as ³consider for release´ to other uses under the provisions of BCCS policy DEL2, and subject to the need to ensure that the stock does not fall below the minimum requirement set out in BCCS Policy EMP3. Town centre uses will be acceptable in principle VXEMHFW WR WKH RWKHU SROLFLHV **provided that any remaining industry can be relocated satisfactorily, there are no physical constraints that would make the site unsuitable, and other relevant policy requirements are satisfied. A1 retailing will only be supported where proposals can demonstrate there are no more centrally located suitable development sites or vacant premises (Policy AAPS1: Primary Shopping Area). Housing will be supported where proposals accord with Policy AAPLV1: Residential Developments.**

Consider for Release Employment Sites:

Site Reference	Site Name	Allocation (if requirements of BCCS DEL2 are met) MMAAP2
TC11	Kirkpatricks, Charles Street	Opportunities for residential development and Waterfront Area (AAPLV1 and AAPINV4)
TC15	FE Towe Ltd, Charles Street	TC15 - Opportunities for residential development and Waterfront Area (AAPLV1 and AAPINV4)
TC16	Station Street	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses

		and (AAPINV6)
TC20 / 21	Midland Road / Bradford Street area	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC20	Midland Road	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC22	Vicarage Place/ Caldmore Road	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC23	Caldmore Road/ Upper Hall Lane	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC27	New Street	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC30	Ablewell Street east (Bank Street)	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC30	Ablewell Street east (Paddock Lane)	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC30	Ablewell Street east (Acorn Centre)	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC30	Ablewell Street east (Balls Street)	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC34	Intown area	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC34	Intown area (Intown Row/ Lower Rushall Street)	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC35	Upper Rushall Street/ Holtshill Lane	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC38	Lower Forster Street	Secondary Development Sites as opportunities for mixed town centre uses and (AAPINV6)
TC46	East of Portland Street (Corner of Portland Street)	Opportunities for office development and education investment. Gigaport area AAPB1, AAPLV2 and AAPINV3)
TC46 / 48	East of Portland Street (Garden Street) / 21 Portland Street	Opportunities for office development and education investment. Gigaport area (AAPB1, AAPLV2 and AAPINV3).
TC47	North of Portland Street (John	Opportunities for office development (AAPB1)

	Street)	
TC47	North of Portland Street area	Opportunities for office development (AAPB1)
TC47	North of Portland Street (Eccles Foundry)	Opportunities for office development (AAPB1)

4.3.1 Policy Justification

Although much of the employment land in the town centre is of poor quality, Albert Jagger in Green Lane is of high quality as it meets several of the criteria set out in BCCS paragraph 4.7 and 4.8. This site is therefore expected to remain in the centre and will be protected as a key employment use.

The U H P D L Q L Q J L Q G X V W U L D O O D Q G L Q W K H W R Z Q F H Q W U H from employment use and appropriate town centre uses are suitable if the current uses relocate. Generally the movement of industry out of the town centre is supported as this will allow for centre uses such as offices. There may, however, be some cases where sites for research and development of products or processes (B1b) and for light industrial uses (B1c) will be acceptable in the town centre as part of mixed use or office developments.

Any change of this land from employment would be subject to BCCS policies EMP 1-5 and DEL2 (bullet points 1 and 2 and the final paragraph) which act to protect employment. Proposals for alternative uses on sites which are considered for release employment land will need to accord with the policies in this plan and S R O L F L H V V H W R X W L Q R X U P D L Q : D O V D O O ¶ V

4.3.2 Evidence

- Walsall Employment Land Review (March 2016) Walsall Council.
- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

4.3.3 Delivery

The Council aims to protect active industrial uses within the centre, as set out in the policy, but where appropriate will provide support in finding alternative suitable premises or sites to aid in the relocation of industry out of the centre. This will be a particular priority for the Council where the location of industry is preventing the comprehensive approach to redevelopment of sites for centre uses. The

identification of appropriate sites is supported by the Site Allocation Document which provides a portfolio of sites for industrial development. The delivery of former industrial sites within the centre for appropriate town centre uses will be supported by the Council in a number of ways as set out throughout the plan.

4.3.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPB3.1 - Planning permissions granted for the development of consider for release employment sites in accordance with this policy.	100% in accordance.

Figure 4.3 Albert Jagger, Green Lane

5. A Place for Leisure

Walsall needs to offer a combined shopping and leisure experience, including restaurants, cafés and bars which attract shoppers and encourage longer stays. The provision of cultural, visitor, entertainment and leisure facilities are a vital component in ensuring the town functions well, particularly in the evening. Attracting visitors to WKH WRZQ LV DQ HIIHFWLYH ZD\ RI ETRPRWLQJ The policies and proposals in this chapter look to develop Walsall ¶V leisure offer and protect the current facilities, reflecting AAP objectives 1, 2, 5, 7, 8 and 10.

5.1 Making Walsall a Leisure Destination

Delivering new leisure facilities in Walsall town centre is crucial for its attractiveness and viability as people are increasingly seeking a varied experience from town centres.

Figure 5.1 The Light cinema and restaurants, Wolverhampton Street

OMAAP11

Figure 5.1 The Light cinema and restaurants, Wolverhampton Street

Policy AAPLE1: New Leisure Developments

Support will be given to proposals which strengthen, expand and diversify the leisure, visitor, cultural and evening economy functions of the town centre. This will be achieved by:

a) Focussing new leisure developments at Walsall Waterfront as in accordance with Policy AAPINV4: Walsall Waterfront;

b) Supporting leisure investment in other areas within the AAP boundary where it can be shown that the proposals are in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan and will not jeopardise the delivery of Walsall Waterfront;

c) Supporting A3, A4 and A5 uses that are compatible with existing A1 uses throughout the town centre including within the Primary Shopping Area as in accordance with Policy AAPS1: Primary Shopping Area;

d) Requiring drive-through take-away restaurants to be well linked to the town centre, be accessible to all including pedestrians, connect well to the Primary Shopping Area and mitigate any potential impact on the highway;

e) Requiring development proposals to include measures to design out crime and reduce anti-social behaviour to contribute towards the creation of a strong evening and night-time economy which is safe and welcoming; and

f) Residential and other developments that prejudice the centre ¶ commercial, leisure and evening economy by conflicting with surrounding leisure uses will not be supported.

MMAAP3

g) All proposals for leisure uses in the centre will be expected to accord with UDP Saved Policy S3: Integration of Developments into Centres especially where schemes are proposed towards the edge of the town centre boundary

5.1.1 Policy Justification

Leisure uses are performing an increasingly important role in town centres as a result of changes in consumer habits, with people increasingly seeking a varied experience from their trips into town centres. For example, visitors to leisure D W W U D F W L R Q V R I W H Q F R Q W U L E [L W ¶ H W U L D G L W L R Q D O W R W D O W U L S V For the purpose of this policy leisure uses include D2 Assembly and leisure along with some D1 uses which attract a large amount of visitors such as a museum. There are other uses which fall into no specific planning class order, such as nightclubs and theatres which will also be considered as leisure. A3 Restaurants and A4 Drinking establishments along with A5 hot food take-away and drive-through takeaways are also considered as ancillary leisure uses in this context.

OMAAP12

A vibrant evening economy with a mix of bars and restaurants will contribute to H Q K D Q F L Q J W K H W R Z Q ¶ V Y L W D O L W \ D Q G Y L D E L O L W \ D Q residential offer in the centre, making it an attractive place to live, as well as making it feel safer, particularly at night. The night-time offer in Walsall town centre is currently dominated by drinking venues, and more is needed to encourage workers to remain in the town centre after work, or to encourage families to stay after visiting the town centre for other purposes such as shopping. The AAP looks to address this issue by building on the cinema development, ~~which is currently under construction~~ which was completed in March 2016, to promote Walsall Waterfront as a leisure

destination providing family orientated restaurants and a leisure offer that differs from the current provision.

There may however be some leisure developments that cannot be accommodated at Walsall Waterfront. Specific locations for further large scale leisure developments have not been allocated through the AAP as there is no current evidence of further demand ~~beyond securing a cinema in the centre~~. It is hoped that in the future the centre will secure further leisure investment and the AAP takes a flexible approach to uses on a number of sites to allow for this eventuality. In such locations the Council will support these proposals as long as there is no concern that this will result in leisure investment being diverted away from Walsall Waterfront. The AAP Policies Map identifies a number of secondary development opportunities as set out in Chapter 8: A Place for Investment and many of these will be suitable for leisure developments.

Drive-through takeaways are supported in the town centre as a main town centre use that can bring life into the centre, especially in the evenings. As they are often a car-focussed facility there is a need to ensure proposals relate well to the town centre as a whole, linking well to the PSA. It is also crucial that they provide desirable and safe access for pedestrians and cycle users. The design of such schemes is important to ensure that they contribute to the F H Q W U H ¶ V Y L W D O L viability rather than as a standalone development which may draw investment away from other uses within the centre.

Creating a town centre that is attractive and safe is key to improving the leisure offer. It is therefore crucial that any new leisure facilities are designed in a way which helps to make the centre safe and feel secure to visitors. In addition to measures which design out crime such as good surveillance, solutions may include expanded CCTV coverage, expanding street lighting and improved linkages to public transport.

5.1.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Waterfront Cinema planning application ±planning reference 13/0440/FL.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

5.1.3 Delivery

OMAAP13

$ N H \ S D U W R I L P S U R Y L Q J ~~is DvOlVuDdOrOeQ¶V WitOthLeVXtUHIR I I H U of a~~ was delivered with the completion of the new cinema at Walsall Waterfront. This scheme includes family orientated restaurants and ~~will create~~ has created a high quality location at the canalside, building on the surrounding leisure uses of the Art

Gallery and hotel. It is anticipated that following the opening of this new facility in March 2016 further leisure development will be attracted to the area, securing the second phase of the Waterfront cinema scheme.

The Council will support the delivery of this scheme by resisting any developments which would compromise the scheme¶ delivery by spreading the leisure offer too thinly throughout the centre. This is because it is considered that creating a leisure hub through focussing leisure provision in one area there is the greatest chance of creating a leisure destination and therefore sustaining such uses. Once the cinema scheme is delivered in full the Council will look to support further leisure-led schemes where necessary in the following ways:

- 8VLQJ WKH :0%&¶V order to improve scheme viability (i.e. acting as the rental guarantor to encourage development);
- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery including site clearance and remediation;
- Strategic acquisitions / assembly of development opportunity sites (using the &RXQFLO¶V SRZHUV RI FRPSXOVRU\ SXUFKDVH ZKH delivery;
- Developing strategies to ensure that developers have the right infrastructure and where necessary supporting the provision of town centre infrastructure.

5.1.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLE1.1 - BCCS Indictor LOI CEN3 - Amount of additional leisure floorspace within the centre.	Increase over the plan period

5.2 Enhancing : D O V D Sports and Cultural Facilities

The town centre offers an accessible location to provide a wide variety of facilities for the community and to draw visitors from a wider area. It is important that these facilities are, where possible, enhanced and protected.

Policy AAPLE2: Sport and Cultural Facilities

The centre is the most accessible location for key sport and cultural facilities VHUYLQJ WKH %RURXJK DV D ZKROH 7KH FHQWUH¶V U facilities will be supported by the following proposals:

a) Gala Baths (TC39) will be protected and invested in as the key location for sport provision in the centre;

b) Walsall Library (TC39) will be protected and where possible invested in as a key cultural facility in the centre;

c) Walsall Leather Museum (TC49) will be expanded at its current location to include Walsall Museum and Walsall Local History Centre;

d) The Town Hall (TC40) will be promoted as a venue for events and concerts;

e) Walsall Art Gallery (TC13) will be protected as a key visitor attraction and cultural destination. The Council will look to enhance the environment in which the building sits and protect views to the building (Policies AAPLV6 and AAPLV7); and

OMAAP14

f) The public space at The Bridge (TC04a) will be promoted as an area for community events and performances as protected by Policy AAPS3: Walsall Market.

5.2.1 Policy Justification

: D O V D O O ¶ V sport and cultural facility offer consists chiefly of the New Art Gallery, Gala Baths, Walsall Museum, the Leather Museum, and the Local History Centre. This needs to be protected and where possible enhanced. The historic environment is also recognised as a cultural facility which offers potential for leisure activities.

As part of the commitment to get more people, more active, more often, the Council has invested £24m into the building of Bloxwich and Oak Park Active Living Centres. In addition, a further £1m has been committed to improving Walsall Gala Baths. The explicit intent of the Gala Baths scheme is to extend the life of the facility to secure town centre active leisure provision for at least the next 10 years. The project focuses on reconfiguring and renovating the facility to make it capable of meeting modern standards and customer expectations. Key elements of work include: permanently sectioning the old 33.3m pool into a standard-sized 25m pool and learner pool, redevelopment of the changing rooms into a modern changing village and the refurbishment of the reception area.

The Council is also looking to secure funding for a consolidated Heritage Centre bringing together Walsall Museum, the Leather Museum and the Local History Centre. Significant work has been done to prepare a Stage One application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a single Heritage Centre for the Borough on the site of the Leather Museum. This will be the focus for heritage services and provide DQ LQWHJUDWHG DFFHVVLEOH FHQWUH IRU DOO :DOVDO
The Council is committed to such facilities remaining in the centre and this policy looks to encourage this approach.

5.2.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

5.2.3 Delivery

All of the buildings included in the above policy are Council-owned and as such any improvements/investments are likely to be led by the Council. As such the delivery of schemes will be subject to budget restrictions and the delivery of large scale projects is likely to be limited. The Council is committed to investing in improving the Gala Baths in recognition that having a leisure centre within the town centre is crucial to serving the community. The Council is also committed to providing a new Walsall Market which will provide a location for community activities in the centre of town.

There may also be circumstances where external funding is available to secure improvements to such cultural and leisure facilities and the Council will look to utilise such funding streams where possible. An example of this is the Leather Museum scheme where the Council is submitting a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

5.2.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLE2.1 (BCCS Indicator LOI EMP6) - loss of significant sport and cultural facilities in the town centre.	None

5.3 Hotel, Conference and Banqueting Provision

Hotel provision is a key part of the leisure offer within a town centre and it is considered that the centre would benefit from a wider offer in hotel provision. Other uses such as conference and banqueting facilities are also important for bringing visitors and investment into the centre.

Policy AAPLE3: Hotel, Conference and Banqueting Provision

a) The Council will support proposals for a hotel, conference and banqueting development within the town centre boundary. Areas that are considered most suitable for hotel provision are:-

- Sites near the Walsall Waterfront leisure development (Policy AAPINV4: Walsall Waterfront)
- Sites near or within the Gigaport area (AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport)
- Sites near Walsall Railway Station
- Sites near Walsall ring road (Littleton Street)

5.3.1 Policy Justification

Although there is significant hotel provision outside of the town centre, in particular towards M6 Junctions 10 and 7, there is a clear lack of hotel space within the town centre, and the limited current provision is of varying quality. Hotel provision helps the regeneration of Walsall by supporting the visitor economy and existing and future leisure assets. There is a 100-bed Premier Inn hotel with bar/restaurant facilities which opened in December 2012. However, whilst welcome, this development represents the only national hotel chain found in the town centre, and it is considered that another major chain, preferably of 4 star quality with leisure and conferencing facilities, is required for the town centre to move forward as a serious business and tourism centre. It is anticipated that future developments of office and leisure uses in the centre will trigger further demand for hotel provision.

There are already some small scale banqueting and conference facilities within the town centre but there is a lack of any large scale facilities. It is anticipated that there will be future demand for conference facilities as the office market expands in the centre. Banqueting facilities have seen an increase in demand over recent years and it is possible that there will be further future requirements for such uses.

The areas considered most suitable have been chosen because:

- Sites near the Walsall Waterfront leisure development will build on the leisure facilities being developed and the canal provides the opportunity for a high quality scheme. Proposals for predominantly banqueting facilities will be appropriate as part of the Waterfront development to support the leisure offer of the town centre.
- Sites near or within the Gigaport area would serve the office developments and the College. Indeed the Gigaport outline permission includes allowance for a hotel. Proposals for predominantly conference facilities will be directed towards Gigaport in connection with the office development proposed.
- Sites near Walsall Railway Station would allow for easy access via train and help create a gateway to the centre. This area is also in close proximity to the Waterfront, building on the leisure offer in this location.
- Sites near the ring road (Littleton Street) outside of the Gigaport area could also be appropriate as they provide good access not only to the road but also to other uses.

5.3.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

5.3.3 Delivery

The delivery of further hotel developments in the centre is likely to be triggered by the delivery of other schemes such as the cinema as these will create the further demand needed. The Council will support the development of hotels in the centre through:

- 8VLQJ WKH :0%&¶V FRYHQDQW LQ RUGHU WR LPSURY as the rental guarantor to encourage development);
- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery including site assembly, site clearance and remediation;
- Developing strategies to ensure that developers have the right infrastructure and where necessary supporting the provision of town centre infrastructure.

5.3.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLE3.1 - Number of hotel banqueting and/or conference facilities developments in the town centre.	2 additional developments by the end of 2026

5.4 Walsall Canal

The canal is one of Walsall's most significant and historic features and is a unique asset to the town so its preservation and enhancement is considered to be crucial. This policy aims to protect the canal but also to promote it as a place for leisure and a destination in Walsall for visitors and residents.

Figure 5.2 Walsall Canal

OMAAP15

Figure 5.2 Walsall Canal

Policy AAPLE4: Walsall Canal

The canal will provide a focus for future development through its potential to attract investment as a high quality desirable environment. This will be achieved by:

a) Encouraging the provision of secure moorings, other canalside facilities and environmental improvements that will enhance the attractiveness and recreational potential of the canal network;

b) Ensuring all development alongside and near the canal positively relates to the opportunity presented by the waterway, to achieve high standards of design, and to be sensitively integrated with the canal. Where applicable, retain, incorporate and enhance surviving canalside buildings, structures and features of heritage value;

c) Expecting development to protect or enhance the water quality, visual amenity, ecological, and built environmental value of the canal as in accordance with BCCS Policy ENV4;

d) Requiring development opportunities adjacent to the canal to maintain or improve access to and along the canal network, particularly for walking and cycling, and where possible improve or connect to the B R U R X J K ¶ V Z L G H U Greenway Network; and

MMAAP4

e) Where possible, incorporating Green Infrastructure as part of development proposals, including through sensitive design and landscaping, that will complement the canal network environment and the environmental infrastructure network (AAPLV8) by providing a natural setting and improving the ecological value of the network.

5.4.1 Policy Justification

The canal forms an important network for pedestrians and cyclists to navigate into the town centre. It also has high ecological value and provides linkages to areas of W K H % R U R X J K ¶ V L Q G X V W U L D O K L V W R U \ , t forms a local part of the environmental infrastructure network in Walsall. Any development next to the canal should improve the canal corridor through sensitive design and landscaping. Where feasible and practical developments should look to incorporate some form of edge V R I W H Q L Q J D Q G H Q K D Q F H W K H F D Q D O ¶ V Landscaping D V D proposed along the canal corridor will need to be accompanied by appropriate management and maintenance plans to ensure the natural environment of the waterway is not adversely affected and that there is no impact to safe navigation of the waterway FPMAAP01

The area also provides an opportunity for recreation and leisure as the setting to the New Art Gallery and other Waterfront developments. The Council and its partners will explore the potential to increase moorings on the canal to establish if further secure moorings and facilities for both visiting and residential boats can be provided. The canal also provides links between the town centre and surrounding areas, especially via the historic Walsall Locks Conservation Area and through the use of the allocated Greenway (see also Policy AAPT1: Pedestrian Movement, Access and Linkages).

These important environmental assets provide a range of benefits including, for example, providing leisure and recreational facilities, forming part of wildlife

corridors, providing space for pedestrian and cycle routes, and offering opportunities for climate change mitigation.

5.4.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council
- Black Country Environmental Infrastructure Guidance (2011)

5.4.3 Delivery MODAAP16

Much of the canalside land in Walsall town centre has already been subject to redevelopment, such as the waterfront housing schemes and the hotel development and recently completed cinema development. ~~There is also a scheme nearing completion for a canalside leisure development anchored by a new cinema~~. The environment around the canal has therefore been significantly improved over the past few years and any further development will be expected to build on this success. The Council will support this through:

- Detailed pre-application with developers to ensure that the canal is an integral part of the development and that any impact on the canal is considered from the outset;
- Partnership working with the Canal & River Trust (CRT) on specific canal schemes and planning applications;
- Developer contributions as in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) and/or other relevant legislation or policy;
- Council-led schemes to improve and maintain linkages, such as the Wayfinding project, in which consultants looked at the way the town was used by pedestrians, produced a Wayfinding Strategy of improvements, and implemented 2 artworks designed to improve the ways pedestrians navigate the town centre.

A key issue however, is not just delivering new schemes that have a positive impact on the canal environment but also maintaining the environment. The Council will therefore look to ensure continued improvements and maintenance to the canal in partnership with the Canal & River Trust (CRT).

5.4.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLE4.1 - the proportion of planning permissions granted in accordance with Canal & River Trust planning related advice	100%

6. A Place for Living

Encouraging people to use the town centre is vital to its success and so it is necessary to provide high-quality facilities that meet the needs of the catchment population in an attractive environment. A high quality environment also improves the experience for all users and can dramatically enhance the perception of Walsall for both regular users and people visiting the town centre for the first time. The policies and proposals in this chapter look to provide homes, education and health facilities in centre. It also looks at the character and quality of buildings and public space in the town, and community and environmental infrastructure, meeting AAP Objectives 1, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

6.1 Providing New Homes in the Town Centre

Delivering new homes in Walsall town centre can complement the vitality and viability of the centre by helping to ensure it is a lively, welcoming and safe place.

Policy AAPLV1: Residential Developments

a) The town centre will be an inviting, safe and pleasant place to live. New homes in the town centre will be supported by:

i) Allocating the following sites for residential as shown on the AAP Policies Map:-
- TC11 Kirkpatricks, Charles Street
- TC15 FE Towe Ltd, Charles Street;

ii) Encouraging residential uses on other sites as part of mixed used developments, especially on upper floors of schemes; and

iii) Encouraging the conversion of existing buildings, especially upper floors throughout the centre where it does not jeopardise the commercial function of the centre and where proposals accord with Policy AAPB1 which looks to protect office uses in the centre,

b) Residential developments in the town centre will be high quality and desirable, this will be achieved by ensuring all residential developments provide:

i) High quality living environments where people choose to live;

ii) Safe and secure environments;

iii) Access to amenity space. The Council will be flexible in applying the numerical guidance set out in Appendix D of the Designing Walsall SPD to proposals in the town centre, provided developers have demonstrated consideration for the amenity of existing and future residents in the design process; and

iv) Sufficient protection against air (AAPINV7b~~a~~c) and noise pollution (AAPINV7~~c~~d) through design and orientation of dwellings along with other appropriate measures.

c) In most locations developments will be expected to be of high density (60 + dwellings per hectare) but there may be some locations where lower densities such as town houses will be appropriate, taking into account the existing townscape and to allow for a wider variety of housing needs to be met in the centre.

d) In all areas of the centre, residential uses will support and not prejudice the centre¶s retail, commercial and leisure functions ±in particular the evening economy.

e) Schemes (other than the two sites allocated) that propose solely residential uses will be required to demonstrate that the proposal supports and does not S U H M X G L F H W K H F H Q W U H ¶ V **leisure function.** F R P P H U F L D O D Q G

6.1.1 Policy Justification

The BCCS does not set a target for the amount of new housing to be delivered in the town centre, but it recognised the existing commitments for 450 new homes. These homes have now been completed and include the Waterfront South development that has created a new neighbourhood of high quality residential units. However, creating sustainable residential communities through encouraging an increased resident population in the centre, particularly through the use of upper floors, is important to bringing life into the centre. Residential uses in the town centre also increase the vitality and help improve surveillance and activity. It is therefore

considered that the allocation and promotion of further residential development in the centre is appropriate and will support the strategy for regeneration. The AAP looks to maximise the potential for commercial development in the centre and as a result sites have only been allocated for housing alone when no other uses are considered to be appropriate for allocation.

Part a) of Policy AAPLV1 sites: Further information on sites

Site Reference	**Site Name**	**Allocation** OMAAP1	**Site Details**
TC11	Kirkpatricks, Charles Street	~~Consider for release employment land. Allocated for housing.~~ Consider for release employment land - Policy AAPB3: Town Centre Employment Land Opportunities for residential development - Policy AAPLV1: Residential Developments	This is the only remaining industrial use in an area that has been redeveloped for houses, flats and supported living accommodation. Any new scheme would be expected to continue the strong frontage to the canal (which is a Conservation Area).
TC15	FE Towe Ltd. Charles Street	~~Consider for release employment land. Allocated for housing.~~ Consider for release employment land - Policy AAPB3: Town Centre Employment Land part b) Opportunities for residential development - Policy AAPLV1: Residential Developments	This is the only remaining industrial use in an area that has been redeveloped for houses, flats and supported living accommodation. Potential for conversion of the existing building should be explored as it adds to the character of the area. Proposals for a new build would need to be sensitive in scale and design to the adjacent locally listed building.

Outside of these specific sites residential uses are supported in principle where they do not jeopardise the function of the town centre as a place of work, leisure and shopping. Developers will be expected to take a comprehensive approach to development and residential uses should be considered as part of mixed schemes to make the best use of land and to bring life into the centre. In order to maximise the potential of town centre sites, schemes proposing solely residential uses will need to

demonstrate that a mixed use scheme, incorporating other town centre uses, has been considered and that a residential scheme is the best option for delivering the site.

The BCCS encourages higher density housing in town centre locations with good transport connections as this is the most sustainable approach. There are some sites that may provide an opportunity for types of residential development other than flats, such as town houses or individual homes, especially at sites towards the edge of the centre. This would allow for a wider variety of housing needs to be met in the centre and help create a diverse centre community. Housing for people with special needs, nursing homes and care homes are also all considered suitable residential uses for the town centre.

The higher levels of activity associated with town centres can have an impact on the living conditions of residents in or near the centre. Therefore a careful balance needs to be made between residential environments and other centre uses, especially night-time activities, to ensure that residents have a high quality amenity, safety, and reasonable access to services and facilities. Some town centre housing can be of poor quality, especially where it involves the conversion of existing buildings or provides little or no amenity space for residents to enjoy. The policy therefore sets out some requirements to ensure a high quality living environment in the centre. Residential uses are considered as a sensitive use in terms of air quality and developers will need to accord with AAPINV7b~~s~~c and BCCS ENV8 Air Quality.

6.1.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Housing Land Supply Update (2014~~4~~6) Walsall Council. OMAAP17
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council

6.1.3 Delivery

The majority of new housing will be delivered by the private sector. However, there may be some sites which will be developed by Housing Associations (HAs). The Council has a successful partnership with Walsall Housing Group (whg), other locally based HAs and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA Where necessary the Council will look to support housing delivery in the town centre through:

- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery including site assembly, site clearance and remediation;

- Developing strategies to ensure that occupiers and developers have the right infrastructure and where necessary supporting the provision of town centre infrastructure.

6.1.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLV1.1 (BCCS indicator LOI HOU1) ±Net additional housing completions in the centre.	Monitored through the housing targets for the BCCS

6.2 Promoting Educational Facilities

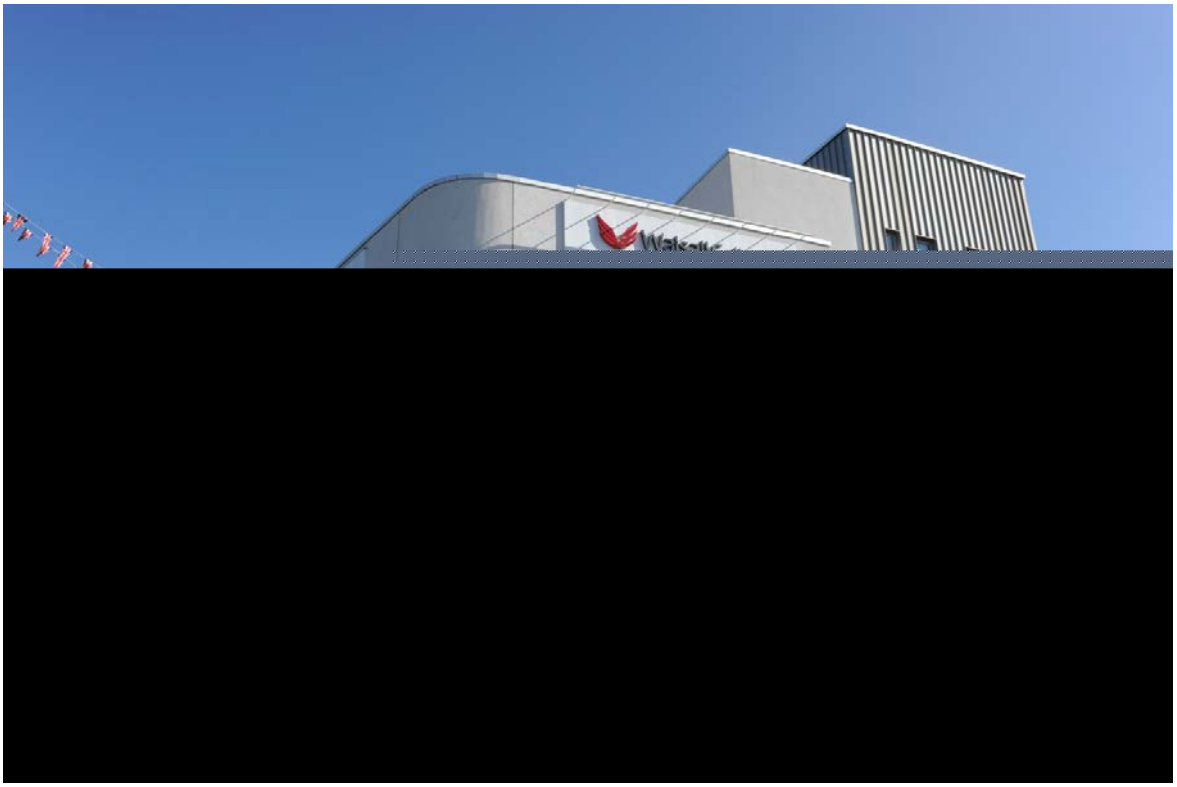

Figure 6.1 Walsall College, Littleton Street West

The centre should be the main focus of key educational facilities that serve the Borough and surrounding area. The Council recognises the importance of the College as a centre for Higher and Further Education and adult education and will facilitate its expansion, where appropriate.