

Appendix G:

Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)

AAP Objectives: Updated Objectives Testing and Commentary (January 2016)

Revisions to AAP Objectives 9 and 10 in July 2015 are shown in Blue Text

Revisions to AAP Objective 8 in January 2016 are shown in Purple Text

Revised AAP Objectives (January 2016) Testing Matrix - Outcomes														
Walsall Town Centre AAP Objectives	Walsall SAD & AAP – Revised SA Objectives (July 2015)													
	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14
AAP OBJECTIVE 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 creates job opportunities for the residents of the borough.	?	?	0	+	?	++	++	0	?	?	0	0	++	?
AAP OBJECTIVE 2: Enhance and maximise Walsall's competitiveness for investment, both in its role as a sub-regional centre and in respect of competing with out-of-centre developments.	?	?	+	+	?	++	++	0	?	+	+	+	++	?
AAP OBJECTIVE 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.	?	?	0	+	?	++	++	0	?	?	0	0	++	?
AAP OBJECTIVE 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.	?	?	0	+	?	++	+	0	?	?	0	0	++	?
AAP OBJECTIVE 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 (e.g. weddings and banqueting facilities), complemented by leisure uses such as restaurants, cafes and bars in order to provide an attractive centre for visitors both day and night.	?	?	0	0	+	++	+	0	?	?	0	0	++	?

	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14
AAP OBJECTIVE 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.	0	0	0	+	0	++	+	+	0	?	0	0	+	0
AAP OBJECTIVE 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.	-	?	-	+	?	0	+	+	?	?	0	0	++	?
AAP OBJECTIVE 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.	0	+	+	+	++	?	0	+	++	0	+	0	?	+
AAP OBJECTIVE 9: Promote the sustainability of the centre by delivering environmental infrastructure and improvements that will deliver a range of benefits, including better links with the Canal network and Walsall Arboretum.	0	++	++	+	++	?	+	+	++	0	0	+	?	+
AAP OBJECTIVE 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.	0	+	?	+	+	?	+	+	++	0	0	0	?	?

Key to the Objectives Testing Matrix Outcomes	
Likely strong compatibility	++
Likely compatibility	+
Relationship likely to be neutral	0
Likely incompatibility	-
Likely strong incompatibility	--
Compatibility uncertain	?

Revised SAD and AAP SA Objectives (July 2015) - Revisions in Red Text

SA1	Air Quality - Minimise emissions of potentially harmful air pollutants from new development in Walsall and exposure of "sensitive receptors" to poor air quality in the parts of Walsall Borough where monitoring shows that the national air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) are not being met and/ or that there are high levels of other potentially harmful air pollutants
SA2	Biodiversity and Geodiversity - Conserve, protect, enhance and restore Walsall's biodiversity and geodiversity by ensuring that new development contributes towards the establishment of coherent and resilient ecological networks, makes provision for enhancement of biodiversity and geological conservation wherever possible, and does not harm the integrity of European Sites or cause further loss, harm or deterioration of designated sites, other important wildlife habitats, and geological features, or compromise existing ecological networks
SA3	Climate Change - Reduce Walsall's contribution towards climate change and adapt to the unavoidable effects of climate change on the Borough, by promoting developments that avoid, reduce or minimise emissions of harmful greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO ₂), and by identifying opportunities to mitigate the anticipated effects on key infrastructure and other important assets
SA4	Communities and Population - Support the development of strong, sustainable and inclusive communities in Walsall by developing well designed housing that meets current and future housing needs in locations that support the transition to a low carbon future and are resilient to the unavoidable effects of climate change, have a good standard of amenity and are accessible to existing and planned employment areas and social infrastructure; enable the development of appropriately located new social infrastructure where there is a need, and ensure that other new developments will have a positive effect on the quality of life for local communities, and will not be harmful to their amenity, health and well-being
SA5	Cultural Heritage - Conserve, protect and enhance Walsall's cultural heritage by encouraging better management of conservation areas and historic parks and gardens, by identifying appropriate, viable and beneficial uses for vacant historic buildings, and by ensuring that new development does not compromise the quality or character of heritage assets and their settings or destroy features or archaeology of national or local importance
SA6	Economy and Centres - Promote sustainable, low carbon economic growth and retain businesses and jobs in Walsall by identifying and safeguarding sufficient land for employment and training of the right quality in appropriate and accessible locations to meet the needs of local businesses and potential investors, without compromising the amenity of local communities or the operation of other businesses, by helping to address barriers to sustainable economic growth and investment where possible, such as providing new infrastructure where it is needed to support existing and future businesses, and by identifying opportunities for retail, office and leisure development in centres to meet anticipated requirements
SA7	Equality and Diversity - Reduce inequalities which result from social-economic disadvantage by ensuring that the diverse needs of communities in Walsall are met by planned housing and other developments, and ensure that groups or individuals with protected characteristics, as defined in the Equalities Act 2010, do not suffer direct or indirect discrimination as a result of policies that are included or omitted, including ensuring that developments intended for use specifically by protected or disadvantaged groups, or by them in conjunction with others, are in accessible locations, which are not exposed to significant environmental problems and are likely to be resilient to climate change effects
SA8	Health and Wellbeing - Improve the health and well-being of Walsall residents and address health inequalities by ensuring that new development supports healthy lifestyles and wellbeing and does not present unacceptable risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of local communities and people who visit Walsall for work, shopping or leisure, by developing new health and social care facilities where there is a need, and by ensuring that health and social care facilities are accessible to those they are meant to serve and are likely to be resilient to climate change effects
SA9	Landscape and Townscape - Conserve, protect and enhance the landscape and townscape by developing an environmental infrastructure network for Walsall that protects valued areas and provides opportunities to improve areas of lesser quality, and by ensuring that new development is well designed, of a type and scale appropriate to its surroundings, and respects the character of buildings, spaces and other features where they contribute positively to the environment
SA10	Material Resources - Use Walsall's material resources prudently and efficiently by safeguarding mineral resources and mineral and waste infrastructure, by addressing identified mineral supply requirements, by supporting proposals that would reduce waste and manage unavoidable waste in accordance with the "waste hierarchy," and by enabling the provision of the infrastructure needed for treatment, transfer and disposal of waste and manufacture and distribution of mineral products in appropriate locations, where operations will not endanger human health, or cause unacceptable harm to the environment, or the amenity and wellbeing of local communities
SA11	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy - Reduce Walsall's reliance on non-renewable, carbon based energy sources, by minimising energy consumption, by increasing the capacity available to generate energy and fuel from renewable and low carbon sources including waste that cannot be re-used or recycled, by identifying opportunities for co-location of new energy generating infrastructure near to complementary land uses where there is scope to use residual heat, and by delivering more affordable, secure and reliable supplies of energy to local communities and businesses, in ways that will not generate harmful pollutants or have other adverse effects on the environment, and will be resilient to climate change effects
SA12	Soil and Ground Conditions - Maintain and improve the quality of Walsall's soils and land, by avoiding development of greenfield land, including the "best and most versatile" agricultural land, where previously-developed land or lesser quality greenfield land is available, by encouraging development likely to use soils, land and buildings efficiently, re-use or recycle construction, demolition and excavation wastes, and bring previously developed and derelict land back into beneficial use, and by ensuring that new development deals with existing contamination and geotechnical problems and does not exacerbate existing problems or cause such problems on land not already affected
SA13	Transport and Accessibility - Deliver the transport infrastructure required to improve connectivity, reduce congestion and support economic growth in Walsall and adjoining parts of the West Midlands urban area, reduce the vulnerability of transport infrastructure to climate change effects, reduce the impacts of transport on the environment and on the health, amenity and well-being of local communities, and ensure that new employment and social infrastructure is accessible to local people by a choice of transport modes, and encourages them to make smarter and healthier transport choices
SA14	Water Environment - Conserve and protect Walsall's water resources, maintain water quality and reduce the risk of flooding, by minimising water consumption, by avoiding development in areas where water resources are present or areas at risk of flooding, by ensuring that new development will not have adverse impacts on hydrology or water treatment and supply infrastructure, including increasing vulnerability of such infrastructure to climate change effects, and that any waste water likely to be generated by new development can be managed in ways that minimise the risk of flooding and pollution of surface and groundwater

Revised AAP Objectives (January 2016) Testing - Commentary

<p>AAP OBJECTIVE 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 creates job opportunities for the residents of the borough.</p>	<p>No definite areas of tension have been identified between AAP Objective 1 and the Revised SA Objectives. Walsall Town Centre is the most accessible location in the borough, having links by rail to other key centres and by bus to most parts of the borough. Delivering large-scale, high quality new developments in the Town Centre would mean that most of Walsall's residents - including those that do not have access to a car - could reach the jobs and services provided in these developments using existing transport networks. AAP Objective 1 is therefore highly compatible with SA Objectives 6, 7 and 13, compatible with SA Objective 4, and is also complementary with AAP Objectives 2 and 3. As this option is not site-specific, there is uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objectives 1, 2, 5, 9 and 14. Large-scale developments could affect heritage assets, conservation areas and water management - but whether or not they would do so would depend on the location of the new developments. With regard to air quality, statutory limit values for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) are being exceeded in some areas on the fringes of the Town Centre, and investment in these areas could create tensions with SA Objective 1. Relationship with SA Objective 3 are likely to be neutral, given that the AAP objective relates to where development is located, rather than how much potentially carbon dioxide (CO₂) generating development will take place, which is dictated by the BCCS. There is also uncertainty about the relationship to SA Objective 10, although large-scale new developments have potential to include provision for in-house sustainable waste management.</p>
<p>AAP OBJECTIVE 2: Enhance and maximise Walsall's competitiveness for investment, both in its role as a sub-regional centre and in respect of competing with out-of-centre developments.</p>	<p>No definite areas of tension have been identified between AAP Objective 2 and the Revised SA Objectives. There is a high degree of compatibility with SA Objective 6, which seeks to identify opportunities for retail, office and leisure development in centres, SA Objective 13, as the Town Centre is generally very well connected to transport networks, and SA Objectives 4 and 7, as increased investment in the Town Centre will have wider benefits for people who depend on the Town Centre for employment, shopping and services. It is also compatible with SA Objectives 3 and 11, as the Town Centre is the main location within the borough likely to have potential for low carbon and renewable energy district heating, power and cooling systems which are more likely to be viable if the centre becomes a focus for investment. In addition, it is compatible with SA Objective 10 and SA Objective 12, as investment could provide opportunities to remediate brownfield sites and address geotechnical problems arising from previous limestone mining activity (which could include prior extraction of coal on the western fringes of the Town Centre) and could also encourage the development of sustainable waste management infrastructure. AAP Objective 2 is also complimentary to most of the other AAP Objectives, as investment is essential to securing the mix of uses the Town Centre needs and improvements to transport and environmental infrastructure. As this option is not site-specific, there is uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objectives 1, 2, 5, 9 and 14, for the same reasons indicated under AAP Objective 1.</p>
<p>AAP OBJECTIVE 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.</p>	<p>No definite areas of tension have been identified between AAP Objective 3 and the Revised SA Objectives. As with AAP Objective 2, there is significant compatibility with SA Objectives 4, 6, 7 and 13, given that the Town Centre is a highly accessible central location, so increasing the range of shops and facilities available will bring a wide range of economic and social benefits. As with AAP Objective 1, there is uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objectives 5, 9 and 14, as large-scale developments could affect heritage assets, conservation areas and water management. As this option is not site-specific, there is uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objectives 1, 2, 5, 9 and 14, and relationship to SA Objective 3 is considered neutral, for the same reasons indicated under AAP Objective 1. There is also uncertainty about the relationship to SA Objective 10, although encouraging more shops/ a wider range of shops is likely to increase the amount of "municipal" waste generated by businesses in the Town Centre.</p>
<p>AAP OBJECTIVE 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.</p>	<p>No definite areas of tension have been identified between AAP Objective 4 and the Revised SA Objectives. There is significant compatibility between this objective and SA Objectives 6 and 13, given that the Town Centre is the most accessible location in the borough, and will support SA objectives towards economic growth and "town centre" development in existing centres. Alternative objectives to locate offices elsewhere, such as on the periphery of the borough, would create significant tensions with the SA objectives. On the whole this objective is also compatible with SA Objectives 4 and 7, as it would provide office jobs that are accessible - in physical terms - to most people in the borough, though whether they could actually take advantage of such jobs would depend on the skills and qualifications needed. As this option is not site-specific, there is uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objectives 1, 2, 5, 9 and 14, and relationship to SA Objective 3 is considered neutral, for the same reasons indicated under AAP Objective 1. There is also uncertainty about the relationship to SA Objective 10, although encouraging office development is likely to increase the amount of "municipal" waste generated by businesses in the Town Centre.</p>

<p>AAP OBJECTIVE 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 (e.g. weddings and banqueting facilities), complemented by leisure uses such as restaurants, cafes and bars in order to provide an attractive centre for visitors both day and night.</p>	<p>No definite areas of tension have been identified between AAP Objective 5 and the Revised SA Objectives. There is significant compatibility between this objective and SA Objectives 6 and 13, and also general compatibility with SA Objective 7, given that the Town Centre is the most accessible location in the borough, and will support SA objectives towards economic growth and "town centre" development in existing centres. It is also likely to complement SA Objective 5, as some of these uses (e.g. restaurants and bars) could be accommodated in historic buildings and could help facilitate their repair and beneficial re-use. Introducing significantly more night-time entertainment into the Town Centre could impact on the amenity of existing communities living in and around the Town Centre and the occupiers of any new homes built. However, this would depend on where the facilities were located, and it is also likely that localised effects could be controlled effectively through the regulatory systems in place. The potential harmful effects are also offset by the benefits of locating such facilities in the Town Centre where they can be accessed by most people in the borough, hence the relationship between AAP Objective 5 and SA Objective 4 is considered "neutral" overall. As this option is not site-specific, there is uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objectives 1, 2, 9 and 14, and relationship to SA Objective 3 is considered neutral, for the same reasons indicated under AAP Objective 1. There is also uncertainty about the relationship to SA Objective 10, although encouraging more leisure uses is likely to increase the amount of food waste generated by businesses in the Town Centre.</p>
<p>AAP OBJECTIVE 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.</p>	<p>As AAP Objective 6 relates to education, training and job creation, the land use implications are limited, and the relationship to most of the Revised SA Objectives is neutral. However, there is significant compatibility with Revised SA Objective 7, as aspirations towards sustainable economic growth and retaining jobs in the borough can only be realised if there is a skilled and highly motivated local workforce in place. There is also compatibility with Revised SA Objectives 4, 7, 8 and 13, as any training opportunities provided in the Town Centre would be accessible to large numbers of people in the borough, including people who do not have access to a car, and improving access to training is also likely to help lift people out of poverty and into employment, improving the well-being of those people.</p>
<p>AAP OBJECTIVE 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.</p>	<p>There is potential tension between AAP Objective 7 and Revised SA Objectives 1 and 3, if the objective has the effect of increasing the number of trips by road into and within the Town Centre. The exceedances of statutory limit values for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) identified on the fringes of the Town Centre through air quality monitoring are largely caused by road transport, including buses which are the main form of public transport used in the borough. Road transport is also a significant cause of the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions that contribute towards climate change. Such effects could be mitigated if the new infrastructure provided - including buses - is low-emission. As the objective specifically includes an aspiration to enhance cycling and pedestrian links as well as other transport links, the objective is highly compatible with SA Objective 13, as well as being compatible with SA Objectives 4, 7 and 8. However, for communities living in or near to the Town Centre, these benefits could be offset by localised effects of increased noise and emissions from buses. As this option is not site-specific, there is uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objectives 2, 5, 9 and 14, for the same reasons indicated under AAP Objective 1. There is also uncertainty about the relationship to SA Objective 10, although major improvements to transport infrastructure are likely to require significant amounts of raw materials for engineering.</p>
<p>AAP OBJECTIVE 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.</p>	<p>No definite areas of tension have been identified between the Revised AAP Objective 8 and the Revised SA Objectives. It is particularly compatible with SA Objectives 5 and 9, and also compatible with SA Objectives 2, 4 and 8, because protecting the Town Centre's historic environment and delivering well-designed new developments in the Town Centre would also help improve the amenity and well-being of people who live there as well as those who work and visit the centre, and also provides opportunities to enhance biodiversity (e.g. improvements along the canals). The aspiration to deliver sustainable design is also compatible with SA Objectives 10, 11 and 14, as such developments would be energy and water efficient, include provision for sustainable waste management and for surface water management to reduce flood risk, and where feasible, would be generating at least some of their energy on-site from renewable and low carbon sources. There is some uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objective 13, as the aspiration to improve sustainable transport infrastructure could be harmful to the historic environment and townscape, depending on where the improvements take place and how impacts are managed. There is also uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objective 6, as aspirations to conserve and improve the built environment could increase the cost of development, which might in some cases make schemes unviable. On the other hand, an alternative objective which allowed badly-designed and unsustainable development is likely to create tensions with other SA objectives, and would also make the Town Centre less attractive for investors in the long-term.</p>
<p>AAP OBJECTIVE 9: Promote the sustainability of the centre by delivering environmental infrastructure and improvements that will deliver a range of benefits, including better links with the Canal network and Walsall Arboretum.</p>	<p>No definite areas of tension have been identified between the Revised AAP Objective 9 and the Revised SA Objectives, and indeed the relationship to most of the SA objectives is positive. It is particularly compatible with SA Objectives 2, 3, 5 and 9, as delivery of an integrated, multi-functional environmental infrastructure network will help conserve and enhance sites of importance for biodiversity, geodiversity, cultural heritage, townscape and open spaces and make it easier to manage them. It is also compatible with SA Objectives 4, 7 and 8, because such a network would help to improve access to open spaces, the natural environment and cultural heritage for people living in and around the Town Centre, and will help to improve their amenity and well-being and provide opportunities for active recreation. It would also provide opportunities to improve brownfield sites in line with SA Objective 12. There is some uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objective 13, as improvements to transport infrastructure could affect environmental assets, but on the other hand, an integrated environmental infrastructure network would also include "greenways" which would improve accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians. There is also uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objective 6, for the same reasons indicated under AAP Objective 8.</p>

<p>AAP OBJECTIVE 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.</p>	<p>This objective is complementary with AAP Objectives 8 and 9 but is most compatible with SA Objective 9, as it is concerned with improving the quality of the built environment and townscape. It is also compatible with SA Objective 5 as conservation of the historic environment would also help improve the quality of the townscape. Like AAP Objective 8, there is compatibility with SA Objectives 2, 4 and 8, because the improvements aspired to would also enhance the amenity and well-being of people who live in, work in, and visit the Town Centre, and could also include opportunities to enhance biodiversity (e.g. improvements along the canals). There is some uncertainty about compatibility with SA Objective 13 for the same reasons indicated under AAP Objective 9, and about compatibility with SA Objective 6, for the same reasons indicated under AAP Objective 8. Relationship to SA Objectives 3 and 14 are also uncertain, as the creation of more pedestrianised areas could increase the amount of surface water run-off and could impact on flood risk.</p>
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