

11. Securing and Delivering the AAP

11.1 Delivering the AAP

Delivery is a key test of soundness for the AAP. Proposals that are identified within the document must be shown to be deliverable over the AAP plan period. Over this plan period, a number of potential delivery options to fund the planned quantum of development will need to be identified and fully considered. This must include the Council working closely in partnership with all of the major landowners to assist wherever possible in securing delivery and investment. It will also require the Council to consider how it can best use its own limited land ownership to encourage investment, be it disposing of its land at less than best consideration to further the economic, social or environmental well-being of the Borough, or entering into joint ventures, local asset backed vehicles or other delivery mechanisms to secure investment. This is explained further in the delivery and funding section of our published list. This can be accessed from the Council's website at www.walsall.gov.uk/planning/planning_2026.

Land Assembly: The Council must also show a continued willingness to intervene in land assembly to deliver key elements of the AAP. In recent years, the Council has used limited internal and external resources to make strategic acquisitions to assemble key sites within the Gigaport area, and it must continue to make similar acquisitions in the town centre to secure delivery. The Council must also be willing to use its compulsory purchase powers to enable development, as it did in securing the delivery of the town centre transport package in recent years.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): CIL is a mechanism to make a charge on new developments in the Borough brought about by the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010). The funds can be used towards the Borough's identified infrastructure needs and applies to a wider range of new development such as retail and smaller scale housing developments, in contrast to Section 106 Agreements that normally only apply to major developments. Work on CIL is at the very early stages and will need a much more detailed assessment to identify the Borough's

infrastructure needs and viability implications before preparing a draft charging schedule.

Whilst the current government has indicated that local authorities may be able to borrow against future CIL receipts to help towards the up-front costs of key infrastructure (National Infrastructure Plan 2010), this has not yet been implemented and Walsall Council is committed to responding to any government related consultation on this to give full consideration to this potential funding stream.

The Big Three: The opportunities and projects identified within the AAP will be important in guiding funding streams to the key priorities in regards to delivering the vision for the town centre. It is recognised that both public and private sector funding streams are limited in the current economic climate, and therefore the AAP concentrates on the “Big Three” projects (Waterfront, St Matthew’s Quarter and Gigaport) and Park Street because these are the areas where the largest impact can be made on the economic growth of the town centre. These projects are the areas where the Council will make its own limited investment and concentrate resources over the plan period. The Council will consider concentrating its capital programme and directly received central government grants, for example New Homes Bonus, in support of the town centre regeneration

Every effort will also be made in these areas to maximise and attract both further public sector funding, for example through the Homes and Communities Agency or other central government sources, and from the private sector. For the latter, the Council will consider the introduction of Business Improvement Districts if the private sector is supportive, and consider the use of resources collected through the Community Infrastructure Levy for reinvestment in the core of the town centre.

D:Q1 What delivery mechanisms do you think should be explored through the AAP process?

The AAP will in itself act as a tool to attract investment in the town centre by establishing robust spatial planning allocations and therefore certainty for the market.

Alongside this document, the Council is developing a marketing strategy to attract indigenous and inward investment into the town centre and the Borough as a whole. The marketing strategy will seek to celebrate recent investment in the town centre, for example Walsall College and the Walsall South development, and also showcase the “Big Three” as clear investment opportunities in the town centre.

The broad aspirations outlined in the AAP are set within the context of the BCCS and translated to a local level by this document. An important step in the evolution of the AAP will be an independent evaluation of the proposals by the private sector. This will be achieved on a site by site, chapter by chapter basis through the consultation process of this Issues and Options report. However, it is also proposed that a thorough deliverability check will be made on the content of this document by an independent valuation consultancy before a Preferred Options document is circulated for consultation.

11.2 Phasing

It is important to recognise that key projects within the town centre will be delivered at different times. Funding and investment may not be available to deliver major projects in a single phase, from within either the resources of the public sector or the private sector. Setting clear priorities and considering the need for logical phasing will be important to ensuring the AAP objectives are met. In this respect and subject to comments received elsewhere in this Issues and Options paper, the Council is proposing that the “Big Three” projects and Park Street should be the place for the concentration of its resources, and will seek a similar approach from the private sector.

Within each of the Big Three and Park Street projects, there may also be a requirement to concentrate resources within and between the opportunities. For example within St Matthew’s Quarter, proposals are significantly advanced for the first phase redevelopment of the Old Square Shopping Centre, and also under development for both the second stage and for proposals on the southern side of Digbeth. If all of these proposals are delivered, they will make a significant contribution towards the retail floorspace target within the AAP, and will then enable resources to be concentrated in delivering the outstanding retail floorspace within the

rest of the town centre, concentrating at first within Park Street and its shopping centres (Park Place Shopping Centre and the Saddler's Centre). This approach will ensure that the retail heart of the town centre is protected before other potential locations are considered for retail investment.

D:Q2 Are there any parts of the town centre you think should be prioritised for investment/development?

D:Q3 What needs to be delivered in order to kick start the transformation of the town centre?

11.3 Utilities and Infrastructure

Utilities infrastructure is needed to serve existing and proposed developments in the town centre and includes water supplies and waste water, energy supplies, and telecommunications. We do not think there are any requirements for land to deliver utilities but we need to ensure any future needs are considered as part of planning for the town centre. There is also a need to manage any waste that is produced in the town centre and with the concentration of businesses there may be some potential for innovative management of waste.

D:Q4 Are you aware of any potential deficits in utilities infrastructure that could affect the deliverability of any of the sites?

D:Q5 Do you have any suggestions about how waste is managed in the town centre?

And finally...

D:Q6 Are there any further comments you would like to make about the town centre?

D:Q7 Is there anything you think we have missed?

12. Get Involved

We want our residents and other interested parties to inform the development of our plans. Your views (where possible, supported by evidence) are important, and the Council wants to receive them during the 6 week consultation period 22nd April 2013 – 3rd June 2013.

You can view these documents and respond online by visiting www.walsall.gov.uk/planning_2026. Paper copies of the documents are also available to view at your local library.

What happens next?

Following the consultation period, a consultation report will be produced which will outline the comments which were received and how they have been used to inform the next stage of the AAP. This document will be available to view using the 'Planning 2026' tab as above.

The responses received during consultation will be an important source of information which will be used to help shape our more specific proposals through the Preferred Options for the AAP. The Preferred Options Report will be published and this will also be available for your comments. Your views on the Preferred Options will then be used to produce the final Area Action Plan. This will be submitted to the Secretary of State and will be subject to an Examination by an independent Planning Inspector who will test the soundness of the Plan and produce a report setting out what changes, if any, are required.

Throughout the AAP process the Council will continue to collect evidence, react to currently unknown development proposals and evaluate the options. This will help to ensure that the emerging planning policy is up to date, robust and considered deliverable.

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