



Walsall Council

Walsall Site Allocation Document and Town Centre Area Action Plan

Issues and Options Consultation
22nd April to 3rd June 2013

Comments Received Through Social Media



Comments Received on Site Allocation Document

Comments Received through Social Media on Site Allocation Document.

| Week 1 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
|---------------|-------------|----------------------|---|---|---------------|----------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Question 1 | 25/04/2013 | Objectives | What should the Site Allocation Document Do? Q1. Do you agree with these objectives? What would you have as an objective for new development in the Borough? | It is missing one about being a place of attractions for people o meet. Walsall lacks things to do for families | Wordpress | 25/04/2013 | Thanks for your comment jmills1970 – it's a great suggestion and we'll be posting our final objectives for the Site Allocation Document later today. These cover things like the importance of community facilities and open spaces to the Borough, so please check them out later and let us know what you think | 26/04/2013 |
| | | | | Attracting business is one thing, every other authority in the UK trying to do this, the way for better success is to get growth in Walsall businesses especially manufacturing and food and help them stay in the Borough. | Wordpress | 02/05/2013 | | |
| Question 2 | 26/04/2013 | Objectives | What should the Site Allocation Document Do? Q3. Do you agree with the remaining objectives? Are there other objectives you think we need to achieve up to and beyond the year 2026? | | | | | |
| Week 2 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
| Question 1 | 29/04/2013 | Housing & Employment | What do you think the key issues for new homes in Walsall are? Q5. We think some of the key issues for housing in Walsall are around the need for more homes, including homes for the elderly and affordable homes. What are your thoughts on these and are there other key issues we should consider? | The homes should reflect on who they are being built for. Many modern developments have poor sound insulation, are easily damaged and costly to repair. Room sizes are also shrinking, the UK has the poorest sized new homes in Europe. The cost of running them should also be low, the latest developments in the town have at least been good from that aspect. There is no point in having an affordable rent or mortgage if the property is expensive to run. Integration into public transport is also highly important and so often the missing link. Developing more town centre living as a way of regeneration. | Wordpress | 02/05/2013 | Hi Jon, thanks for this comment, we will consider this as we progress to the next stage of preparing the plans. We will be posting questions about transport and living in the town centre during the week beginning 13th May so please check back and respond to those questions too. | 02/05/2013 |

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|------------|------------|----------------------|---|---|-----------|------------|--|------------|
| | | | | Hi, If I have understood the S.A.D proposal correctly-there will be new houses built in Little Hardwick road, next to Bourne Vale, streetly.Any concerns about increased traffic,pressure on schools,health services etc? | Facebook | 09/05/2013 | Hi Michael, thanks for your enquiry. I think the site you refer to is what we have shown as 'Choices Site CH32'. This can be seen on our 'Schedule of Ward Maps' and is just within Aldridge and Central South Ward, which borders Streetly Ward. This site has been proposed (in a 'Call for Sites') to the Council as a potential development site by the landowner and further information about this is included in the Council's response to the Call for Sites (see Ref CFS48). Links to both the Schedule of Ward Maps and Call for Sites Response can be found on our website. This is the Issues and Options stage of our Site Allocation Document, which means no decision has been taken yet on whether or not to use this site for development. The issues you raise are all valid and are referred to in the Call for Sites document, along with other considerations such as the site's Green Belt location. | 10/05/2013 |
| Question 2 | 01/05/2013 | Housing & Employment | Q8. Walsall has a lot of older industrial land, should we re-develop this for new homes or use it for other things? | Yes, but small, affordable homes, to avoid a repeat of the redevelopment of the Crabtree site in Chuckery. | Wordpress | 02/05/2013 | Hi Wad46, Colin G, Greg, Guest and Willenhallgirl79. Thanks for some great comments. We recognise the need for more affordable homes for the residents of Walsall and understand that contamination issues have to be resolved before new homes can be built on old industrial land and both these points are explained further in our consultation summary document. You have made some strong points and we would welcome further detailed comments from you if you would like to view and respond to the questions we have asked in | 02/05/2013 |

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| <p>I dont see any problem with it as long as the buiders/developers make sure the land is clean and no more contamination is present, i know a lot of houses built on dodgy land, rosehill in willenhall is sitting on numerous mine shafts for one.</p> <p>Building houses is not a bad idea at all, what is a bad idea is selling off the land to private builders to build houses for the private sector, wouldn't it be great if walsall over saw the building of new homes for council tenants and the homeless.</p> <p>We always hear that walsall housing group have insufficient funds to build new homes, i find this difficult to believe, if WHG sell off one of its properties why can't it use the money gained to build a new house? i also think that the money gotten from land sold to developers should be used to build homes, i'm not contradicting my initial comment of selling off land, i was just thinking about selling land that only big enough for 2-4 new builds, anything larger than that should be used by the council</p> | Wordpress | 02/05/2013 | <p>to view and respond to the questions we have asked in the consultation summary using our response form.</p> <p>We will be asking questions about where else we can build new homes and factories tomorrow so remember to check back and give us your views!</p> |
| <p>if its to be used for housing ...how safe is it ? what kind of industry /chemicals ?</p> | Wordpress | 02/05/2013 | |
| <p>No. Industrial land has a strong likelihood of contamination. It would be cheaper and safer to the public to build on other areas.</p> | Wordpress | 02/05/2013 | |
| <p>1. will people be able to afford them ?</p> <p>2. extra traffic may cause problem when its the school hours putting child & adults at risk</p> <p>3. how long would it cost to clean the land all the oil and wastes that's soaked in to the ground over the years</p> <p>have these things been considered?</p> <p>personally I have nothing against land being re-used to build affordable home's</p> | Wordpress | 02/05/2013 | |

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| <p>Definitely , use for housing , protect the green spaces we have for future generations</p> | <p>Facebook</p> | <p>02/05/2013</p> | <p>Thanks for your comment! We have another question coming tomorrow about where else we should build new homes so make sure you check our blog at www.walsallplanning2026.co.uk</p> | <p>02/05/2013</p> |
| <p>Building another factory on the Boak would be foolish for example whereas the town needs to keep sites that are accessible by public transport for industrial use. I know of one company that relocated to West Bromwich from Walsall due to no suitable site being available and planning constrains on their current factory in Walsall. Contamination isn't magiced away, it has to be deposed off, often in land fill and clean soil put in. Why bother if it is under the footings of an apartment block? I see more gardens under dog mess and beer cans than producing for the dinner table. Walsall has long had some great green spaces, far more than Brumageham and other parts of the Black Country. To see them all under tiny social housing matchboxes would be a shocking waste. Redeveloping parts of the social housing in North Walsall and Bloxwich would allow for an increased housing density whilst allowing for green spaces and the increase in allotments for people that do want to grown their own veg.</p> | <p>Wordpress</p> | <p>02/05/2013</p> | <p>Hi Jon, thanks very much for your comments! We will be asking questions around green spaces next week so please do check back and respond to those too. You might also want to view and respond to the full list of questions in our consultation summary by using our response form.</p> | <p>02/05/2013</p> |
| <p>Old industrial land, is the best choice for new housing, I would prefer to see affordable housing and dare i say it social housing. That being said wouldn't it be better to promote industry (preferably green industry) on industrial land I think it would be better for the economy in the long run.</p> <p>Why not try and make better use of the empty properties still available, actively encourage them to be filled, or for properties that have been empty for a long time ie 2 years; have the council take them over and the owner gains a proportion of the rent (after administration costs).</p> | <p>Wordpress</p> | <p>03/05/2013</p> | <p>Thanks KDB1978 for giving us your views. A recent study indicated that Walsall might have some limited potential for renewable energy in the form of wind and biomass. You may wish to find out more about what we've said about infrastructure and respond to the questions in Chapter 11 of the report here using the response form here. We will also be asking questions on this blog about infrastructure during the week commencing 27th May.</p> | <p>03/05/2013</p> |

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| | | | | Brownhills has empty land where houses used to be, why dont you build on that first. | Wordpress | 07/05/2013 | Hi Mrs Smith, thanks for your comment. You can see the sites and land that we have identified in Brownhills on pages 24-26 of the schedule of ward maps but please do tell us if you think we have missed any and if you think we have identified the right uses for land and sites in Brownhills using the consultation documents and response form here. You can also come and talk to us on the First Stop Shop bus in Brownhills on Wednesday 8th May 2013, 1.30pm to 4pm at Tesco Car Park, Silver Street, Brownhills and at any of the other events we have planned as shown on the home page of this blog. | 07/05/2013 |
| | | | | There should be a mixture of residential and open spaces | facebook | 08/05/2013 | Thanks for your comment Yunus, you can see what we think our options are on pages 10-16 of the site allocation document issues and options consultation summary and tell us what option you prefer by using the response forms - all available at http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/planning_policy/local_development_framework/site_allocation_document.htm | 09/05/2013 |
| Question 3 | 03/05/2013 | Housing & Employment | Q9. Where should we build new homes and factories? a) in the Greenbelt b) on previously developed land C) on failing out of centre retail parks d) underused open space | Definitely no estates on the green belt, single dwellings possibly. There is the large and completely failed Broadwalk Park. There are many of these all over the UK. I have surveyed about a hundred in the last few years. Most are former industrial sites. The Broodwalk Park would work well as either residential or industrial. There is enough derelict and failed retail to build on without looking towards the green space. One thing that the town should not do is more retail. The proposed Lower Hall Lane scheme should not go ahead unless it includes living space. We really don't need shops we need life back in the centre. | Wordpress | 03/05/2013 | Thanks Jon, we will certainly be looking at using other land before the greenbelt where possible and we have set out a number of options to do just that so we would welcome your responses on the options we have set out in Chapter 3 (Housing) and Chapter 4 (Land for Industry) using our response form. | 03/05/2013 |

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| | | | | not on GREEN spaces try using old pub sites and revamp existing derelict sites - not sure about the rest of the borough but w'hall plenty likes of little London, spring lane. | Twitter | 04/05/2013 | Thanks for your comment Burtie, we will consider this as we progress the plans | 07/05/2013 |
| Week 3 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
| Question 1 | 07/05/2013 | Centres, Open Space, Community Facilities & Leisure | Do you know of any existing housing areas that should be better served by local shops? | some of the new estates but it's a great way of using former public houses. | Wordpress | 09/05/2013 | Thanks Jonpakes, if you do know of any specific sites or areas that should be considered for shops to meet the local needs of an area that is poorly served, you can submit a formal response to the consultation using our response form. There will also be a question around the role of community facilities such as pubs and it would be interesting to know if anyone has any views on the loss of pubs in their local areas | 09/05/2013 |
| Question 2 | 08/05/2013 | Centres, Open Space, Community Facilities & Leisure | Do you live near or visit an area of open space in the borough? Are there any especially important sites that you think should be protected? Or, do you know of any underused or poor quality sites that might be more suitable for another land-use? | More activities such as nature walks on nature reserves and proper consultation between users and Park Rangers. Aldridge Airport site should be used more and more litter bins provided on all open space sites and nature reserves. Community police could be used to stop fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour etc on green spaces to ensure their protection. | Wordpress | 08/05/2013 | Thanks to both carlessone and jonparkes for your comments. We're pleased to see local people taking an interest and caring about their local green spaces. Aldridge Airport is recognised as a very important site for the whole borough of Walsall and is identified as a site for open space protection in our Issues and Options document - see Site OS1011 on our schedule of ward maps in Aldridge Central and South Ward. Carlessone - for your other comments about activities and the management of nature reserves, please contact our Countryside Services team at countrysideservices@walsall.gov.uk | 09/05/2013 |
| | | | | Walsall has some excellent parks and open spaces. But the Illuminations should return (to the Arboretum) and be done correctly (i.e. no silly suggestions of log-flumes in winter) as a positive advert for the town. Walsall is the place where the "Black Country goes green" so we don't want to see public green spaces disappearing under concrete even if for the best of intentions. | Wordpress | 08/05/2013 | Jonparkes - the Arboretum is also one of the most important open space sites in the borough (no surprise there!) and is identified for open space protection as Site OS8048 and OS7031 (Arboretum Extension). Your point about protecting green spaces from disappearing under concrete is very valid and Chapter 12 of our Site Allocations Document includes a table of choices sites where some former or existing open spaces could be considered for development. Remember to let us know what you think about any of these sites by using our response form. | 09/05/2013 |

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| Question 3 | 10/05/2013 | Centres, Open Space, Community Facilities & Leisure | Do you think we should try to protect any existing community and leisure facilities from other types of development? Do you know of a need for any new community facilities, especially where new housing is proposed or already being built? | | | | | |
| Week 4 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
| Question 1 | 13/05/2013 | Transport & Waste Resources | Do you think we should try and put any new rail stations in Walsall? If so, where? | I used to use the direct train to Wolverhampton when it was open. Great service, faster than the bus, but it was underused. | Twitter | 14/05/2013 | Thanks for your comment Jason, we will take this into account as we progress to the next stage of consultation in 2014. | 14/05/2013 |
| | | | | a train direct to Wolverhampton would be a god send. The link between the two is very poor. | Twitter | 14/05/2013 | Thanks for your comment Stuart, we will take this into account as we progress to the next stage of consultation in 2014. | 14/05/2013 |
| | | | | Near Walsall College and Butts estate | Wordpress | 13/05/2013 | Thanks for your comment wba31. Is there a particular reason you think new stations should be located near Walsall College and Butts estate? For example, are existing stations too far from these areas? | 13/05/2013 |
| | | | | you should leave it where it is you might need to refurb the old one | Wordpress | 13/05/2013 | Thanks for your comment Guest. What we would really like to know is whether you think there is a need for additional new stations in other areas of Walsall for better connectivity and access by train? | 13/05/2013 |
| | | | | Aldridge | Wordpress | 13/05/2013 | Thanks for your comments Jon and Guest, we will take these into account as we progress to the next stage of consultation in 2014. | 14/05/2013 |
| | | | | There were stations in Rushall and Pelsall that should be brought back. Better than getting stuck on the silly new traffic light infested ring road. | Wordpress | 13/05/2013 | Thanks for your comments Jon and Guest, we will take these into account as we progress to the next stage of consultation in 2014. | 14/05/2013 |
| | | | | No but there should be a metro system linking up parts of Walsall for example using the track bed from Walsall to Brownhills even if single lane with transport only going in one direction at at time that could connect with the proposed midland metro system at around the Portland street area which would help cut traffic along the Lichfield Road between Brownhills and Walsall and help reduce traffic at the Arboretum junction incorporating stations at Brownhills, Pelsall and Rushall (Station Rd/Harden Rd) for example | Wordpress | 30/05/2013 | Great idea Timfy, thanks for your comment - we will consider this as we progress the plans. | 30/05/2013 |

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| Question 2 | 14/05/2013 | Transport & Waste Resources | Do you think we should try and put new park and ride facilities in Walsall? If so where? | At Junction 10 there is a closed transport cafe and there seems to be spare/underused land around it. | Wordpress | 14/05/2013 | Thanks for your comment Saddler, we will look into this and consider it as we progress to the next stage of consultation in 2014. | 14/05/2013 |
| | | | | yes, unlimited free parking at any/all of the sites below J10/A454; J9/A461; A34 near Walsall/Sandwell border; A461 near Calderfields Golf Club A34 Green Lane and run free shuttle buses in and out of town | Wordpress | 15/05/2013 | Thanks for all your comments on this Martin, jonparkes123, Guest and timfy, we will consider them as we progress the plans. | 30/05/2013 |
| | | | | Bit of a worry at near Calderfields golf club as it's a greenbelt and residential area. Rest makes sense. | Wordpress | 17/05/2013 | Thanks for all your comments on this Martin, jonparkes123, Guest and timfy, we will consider them as we progress the plans. | 30/05/2013 |
| | | | | Yes . Land near to Junction M10 by closed transport cafe on Wolverhampton Road land is private some of the land is used for dealing with scrap metals other land may be available of Bloxwich lane industrial Estate or land in front of the Village Hotel. Make car parking free this would attract more people in to Walsall town consider Bescot railway Station area.May be consider the extension at the Arboretum Broadway. Consider Junction m9 Tame-way railway Station. Land along Darlaston Road Pleck brownfield sites around former James Bridge copper works site. | Wordpress | 14/05/2013 | Thanks for all your comments on this Martin, jonparkes123, Guest and timfy, we will consider them as we progress the plans. | 30/05/2013 |
| | | | | A park and ride system using the old railway track bed from Walsall to Brownhills even if single lane with transport only going in one direction at at time would be a good idea or a more ambitious plan to introduce a metro system that would connect with the proposed midland metro system at around the Portland street area which would help cut traffic along the Lichfield Road between Brownhills and Walsall and help reduce traffic at the Arboretum junction. | Wordpress | 30/05/2013 | Thanks for all your comments on this Martin, jonparkes123, Guest and timfy, we will consider them as we progress the plans. | 30/05/2013 |

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| Question 3 | | Transport & Waste Resources | Should we set new targets for recycling in Walsall and to reduce the amount we send to landfill? | | | | | |
| Week 5 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
| Question 1 | | Environment and Minerals | How can we form 'Environmental Networks' across the borough? | The area of land at Moxley which was used as educational land by the now demolished Moxley Infants School. The land shares its boundary with Moxley Road/Church Street/Festival Avenue and the public footpath between Moxley Road and Church Street. It is my belief that this land should be protected as green open space land for the following reasons. It has never been developed and historically has always been used as open space land by various members of the community of all ages. It continues to be used as community green space land by many members of the local community for sport and recreation and dog walking, It is also one of the areas of land that was under previous Council documents classified as part of the Moxley Wildlife Corridor, it is surrounded by a number of trees which provide nesting places for birds of a number of species. | Wordpress | 21/05/2013 | Thanks for your comment 'Guest'. The land I think you refer to is an area of open space off Festival Avenue that is classed as CH62 in the Site Allocation Document. This is a site that we consider could be allocated for open space protection or new housing development through the plan and we welcome your views on what this land should be used for. You can see all of the sites being consulted on in our Schedule of Ward Maps (in Darlaston South ward), and submit a response to us on this site using our response form. | 21/05/2013 |
| | | | | I say we bring back the canal boat an alternative to cheaper travel then buses and trains it would be a good business and generate money for the council | Facebook | 21/05/2013 | Thanks for your comment Pal. Don't forget to check out our blog at www.walsallplanning2026.co.uk where you can find a link to the full Site Allocation Document and response form | 21/05/2013 |
| | | | | This is worth considering people of Walsall - how might we contribute to making a difference for future generations? | Facebook | 21/05/2013 | | |
| | | | | Very important...in new GS strategy and could be massively beneficial to Walsall especially if part of the Country Park | Facebook | 21/05/2013 | | |
| | | | | Is that Riddian's Bridge? | Facebook | 21/05/2013 | | |
| | | | | Sounds like a plan to involve social cycle groups... be great to map out some trails/routes/points of interest.... | Facebook | 05/06/2013 | | |

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| Question 2 | | Environment and Minerals | How should we protect sites for mineral extraction to support economic growth? | This looks like a coded reference to open cast mining at the old James Bridge site, the site that is less than 1km from over 1000 school children and a residential estate of Alumwell. NO, absolutely not. Mineral extraction does not belong in an urban environment in the 21st century; the future demand for coal doesn't look to be great: as you no doubt know, Drax is converting to use less coal more biomass, and this is likely to be the shape of things to come. Coal mining, if allowed, will only ruin lives and health in the short term and make no difference to energy production long term. | Wordpress | 12/06/2013 | Thank you for your comments. This is an open question, aimed at gathering public opinions on how we should protect sites that might be identified in the SAD for mineral extraction. Potential mineral extraction areas and sites are identified in Chapter 9 of the main SAD Issues & Options report, and they do not include the James Bridge site – there is no “hidden agenda” regarding this site but like other sites containing mineral resources development is subject to the mineral safeguarding policy in the Black Country Core Strategy (MIN1). | 12/06/2013 |
| Week 6 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
| Question 1 | 28/05/2013 | Infrastructure & Delivery & Viability | Do you think there are any sites in Walsall that should be used for renewable energy generation such as wind and biomass? If so, where and why? | Solar panels could be used on the roof of the Bus station that could help power the bus station and any money saved could go towards keeping the toilets in the bus station free for public use as could the roof of the Gala Baths or current leisure centres that could help reduce energy costs within the buildings saving Council and Public money. | Wordpress | 28/05/2013 | Great idea timfy, we will make sure this suggestions is recorded and considered as we progress the plans. | 04/06/2013 |
| Question 2 | 29/05/2013 | Infrastructure & Delivery & Viability | Is there an area of open space or community facility you would like to manage as a community group? If so where and why? | | | | | |
| Question 3 | 31/05/2013 | Infrastructure & Delivery & Viability | It is important that we show how sites can be delivered. Have we identified all issues and sources of delivery on our website at http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/regeneration/regeneration_places/delivery.htm? | | | | | |

Comments Received on Town Centre Area Action Plan

Comments Received through Social Media on Area Action Plan.

| Week 1 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
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| Question 1 | 25/04/2013 | Vision/Objectives | What is your vision for the Town Centre? Q2. Here is a summary of the vision in the Area Action Plan, tell us what you think the vision should be or take a photo of things you would like to see in Walsall Town Centre by 2026. | By 2026, Walsall should be a place where people want to meet, eat, and be happy! | Wordpress | 25/04/2013 | Thanks jmills1970, we agree that the town centre should be a place for people to meet – you might want to take a look at the objectives in the consultation summary and tell us if you think this is covered. | 26/04/2013 |
| | | | | <i>as well as supporting a thriving office market.</i> This part has been thwarted by the building of the WHG offices and the moving of the Health/NHS workers from the various offices in Lichfield St. Causing Walsall to have a mass excess of office space that it will be paying for for years. Not a good move. Walsall isn't really an office town and I see empty office space every day anyway when I am out surveying. Walsall needs to embrace light industry once more. We are good at it and it pays. Increasing town centre dwelling is also important. No more huge supermarkets, who ever green lit the Tesco plan clearly doesn't understand how shops work. I wonder if it was the same person that thought the giant Morrisons was great idea in Willenhall. | Wordpress | 02.05.13 | Hi Jon, thanks for your comment, we will take this into account as we progress with the plans. We will be looking at Business in the town centre next week and will have some specific questions around offices and industry, so don't forget to come back then and join the discussions. In the meantime please take a look at the Area Action Plan on our webpage which also looks at these issues, and let us know what you think. | 02.05.13 |
| | | | | Demolish The Saddler's Centre for something more modern. More green spaces for a friendlier environment. | Twitter | 25/04/2013 | Hi Jay, thanks for your comment we will take this into account as we progress the plans. | 26/04/2013 |
| | | | | I like Walsall centre — a shop front enhancement programme like London Borough programmes would be good. | Twitter | 29/04/2013 | Thanks for your comment we will take this into account as we progress to the next stage. | 29/04/2013 |
| | | | | What's YOUR vision for the town centre? Isn't that what I'm paying you for? | wordpress | 15/05/2013 | Hi Martin, we have provided our vision for the town centre at the top of the page, but we think it is important to make sure that this accords with the views of residents and users of the town centre. | 17.05.13 |
| | | | | I think it's best at looking at the opinion of basically anyone other than a town planner when looking at planning. Britain has had it's town centres ruined by a mixture of failed social engineering and US style out of town retail. The main things town centres need to be be is occupied with life. Generations of my family were actually born in the town centre. There are appartments coming back, mostly of a low quality and access is very poor because of the ring road and pedestrianisation. | wordpress | 17/05/2013 | Hi Jon, thanks for your comment. We have also asked a question about how to make the town centre an attractive and vibrant place to live and visit, so you may want to give us your thoughts on this. | 17.05.13 |

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|------------|------------|-------------------|---|--|-----------|------------|--|------------|
| | | | | <p>Making the town attractive and vibrant basically revolves around getting more people in and having a better demographic of shopper. I see more people I know in Lichfield or Sutton and they are Walsall people. Walsall town centre is a skate boarder's dream but a retail nightmare. The hot food selection is also very poor. The exodus of office workers is also not helping either. To turn it around it needs better access, ie get rid of the pedestrian zones, and cheaper parking. It isn't rocket science but it is against received planning wisdom and the direction of change. As the direction of change isn't working it surely is time to think again</p> | wordpress | 24.05.13 | | |
| Question 2 | 26/04/2013 | Vision/Objectives | <p>What should the Town Centre Area Action Plan do?</p> <p>Q4. We've picked out some of the objectives for the Area Action Plan and set these out below. What do you think, have we got it right? Which one(s) are the most important to you? Have we forgotten anything?</p> | <p>There will be a much higher percentage of older people by 2026, all of whom will always need to go to the toilet when they come into the town centre. If you fill the town with decent public toilets, you will fill the town with people. It's pretty desperate today, but things will be impossible by 2026. You will no doubt be affected yourselves when you get to a certain age, and it's not just in the cold weather either. Plan ahead please, you must have thousands who stay at home because of lack of toilets.</p> | Wordpress | 26/04/2013 | <p>Thanks for your comment, we will consider this when progressing the Town Centre Area Action Plan. Remember to check this blog on a weekly basis as we will be asking other questions that you may wish to answer. This week the questions will be around homes, jobs and shopping in the town centre.</p> | 29/04/2013 |
| | | | <p>"3. Increase the choice, quality and diversity of the town centre retail offer.</p> <p>4. Diversify and strengthen the economic base and deliver a strong office market.</p> <p>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 complimented by restaurants, cafes and bars.</p> <p>6. Support businesses to increase employment opportunities, skills and aspirations,</p> <p>7. Improve accessibility to and within the centre through the provision of integrated transport and enhanced cycling and pedestrian links.</p> <p>8. Protect areas and buildings of historical importance while delivering high quality sustainable design.</p> <p>10. Transform the experience and perception of Walsall town centre for those who shop, work, visit, invest and live in Walsall."</p> <p>Remember to check this blog each</p> | <p>you have forgotten points 1 and 2, you start at point 3. You also miss 9. The council can only do most of these things indirectly. There is no point in suggesting things to landlords and investors unless there is a market for it. Walsall as a town struggles to support any high class dining yet Lichfield has a much better selection. The only way to pull the town out of the dirt and cheap sausage rolls is to get a people with more spending power back into the town. Point 3. nothing you can do about this. Retail is the barest for of capitalism there is. Buy something and sell it dearer. If the people aren't buying then there is no point to the shop and we have lots of empty shops. 4. Already botched, already chronic over supply in the West Midlands anyway 5. New Cinema is potentially good news (if has parking). The town needs an art centre to match the gallery but from where to funds to build run and maintain? A commercial theatre would fail miserably. The live music in pubs is good but not much you can rely do about that. 6. Are you going to give us all a rates holiday and remove the parking meters? 7. We now have the bus stops spreading out from Bradford Place, along Bradford Street and now up towards the Vine. The main bus station looks nice but is a "dangerous disaster". Form without function or art is uselessness and that is what the current public transport system is. I have now stopped cycling through the town since the dire new ring road made it too dangerous. 8. Too late most of it has gone. Though you can stop hiding the Hippo. A good deal of the older buildings that are left really aren't that great. Post war town planners did far more damage than the German bombs. 10 How? The night market is good but there are so many other problems. Restart the Illuminations maybe?</p> | wordpress | 02.0.13 | <p>Hi Jon, many thanks for your response, these are some really comprehensive points which we will take on board in the preparation of the Area Action Plan. We picked out some of the objectives here, but the full list can be found in our Consultation Summary. You've made some strong points on a variety of topics, and as we will be looking at different themes each week on this blog don't forget to keep coming back to let us know what you think, or look at the full Issues and Options report and give us a more detailed response on our webpage using the response form.</p> | 02.05.13 |

| Week 2 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
|--------|------|-------|----------|---|-----------|---------------|---|------------------|
| | | | | Poundland needs to be knocked down, open the town up to the wharf. We need a record shop and a good mens clothes shop. | wordpress | 29.04.13 | Hi Neil, thanks for your comment. We agree those shops would be great for Walsall, and improving the linkages with Crown Wharf is something we can look at through the Area Action Plan. | 29.04.13 |
| | | | | I think if Tesco had put their entrance opposite the Park place centre rather than where it is, it would have brought more people through the shopping centre and opened up the top of Park street and hopefully have created interest in businesses opening up in the empty shops in the Park place centre. | wordpress | 29.04.13 | Hi Steve, thanks for letting us know what you think. Linkages between different parts and how people move around the town centre is really important to how the town centre functions. Don't forget you can have a look at our Area Action Plan Consultation Summary, which asks more questions about these issues. | 29.04.13 |
| | | | | Poundland needs to be returned back to a theatre or a cinema | wordpress | 29.04.13 | thanks for your comments. Yes a theatre or cinema in the town centre would be great wouldn't it – did you know that two planning applications for cinemas have recently been submitted? Exciting times for Walsall! | 29.04.13 |
| | | | | In need of more shops, and a good clean up. | wordpress | 29.04.13 | Are there any shops in particular you would like to see in Walsall? | 29.04.13 |
| | | | | I very rarely shop in Walsall as I support the local businesses in the Bloxwich area. I think people should shop local to keep our town centre shops open. To many shopping centres are suffering from low footfall and as a result have empty shops or many charity shops. | wordpress | 29.04.13 | We agree it's really important to support local shops and businesses in Walsall town centre and the district centres, and the Area Action Plan aims to support new and existing businesses in the town centre to reduce the number of vacant units. Are there any shops in particular you would like to see in Walsall? | 29.04.13 |
| | | | | I shop in town but lately it's very depressing with so many empty shops. I've also noticed a drastic decline in shoppers over the last few years & it can be quite creepy on your own if you're female in the run up to closing hours. I think the town needs some things to make it more appealing to a wider range of shoppers. We desperately need some good food chains, quality restaurants & things to draw more of a crowd at night instead of just people wanting to drink. A theatre would be lovely, a cinema, some activities for young people like laser tag, crazy golf, skating, a big soft play area.. basically a scaled down version of the Bullring or Merry Hill centre. We desperately need to draw all ages, ethnicities & classes to the town. Make it how it used to be :) | wordpress | 30.04.13 | Hi BlondeLou, thanks a lot for your response, these are some really good ideas about how to improve the town centre. It sounds like you have some really interesting opinions, if you'd like to look at our thoughts and respond to questions on these and other important issues for the town centre, take a look at our Area Action Plan Consultation Summary and let us know what you think. | 30.04.13 |

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| Question 1 | 29.04.13 | Shopping | What do you think about the shops in Walsall town centre? Q6. Do you shop in Walsall Town Centre, if not why not? What do you think is needed in the Town Centre to improve the shopping experience? | <p>The parking costs imposed by the council stop me shopping in Walsall as I can go to other town centres and park for free. I can park for free at Tesco if I fight for a place but Walsall council are trying to put an end to that too.</p> | wordpress | 30.04.13 | Hi Libitina and Guest, thanks for your comments about parking in the town centre. We will be asking some specific questions around access and transportation during our Transport theme week which will be week commencing 20th May, so don't forget to come back then and join the discussions. | 30.04.13 |
| | | | | <p>The parking Eye thing needs scrapping. Im sick of debt collection agencies threatening me because i overstayed my parking by 5 minutes. Its a joke and I now take my money to spend at Merry Hill where parking is FREE</p> | wordpress | 30.04.13 | We also have a whole chapter on Transportation in the Area Action Plan with some specific questions about parking, so why not take a look at our webpage and leave a response, as these are very valid points and we value your thoughts. | |
| | | | | <p>This is an impossible question to answer. The problems in Walsall shopping are fairly obvious. The building of a giant Tesco was a massive blunder of epic proportions. Together with the giant Asda all the money is being hoovered up and spirited out of the town. The independents are being killed because: it costs a fortune to park in the town, there are so few independents there is a lack of critical mass, the people that shop in the town have a low disposable income, people see going to a supermarket as doing the shopping. Over the years many have tried to run restaurants and entertainment venues in the town., including many of my friends and family. It doesn't really work as the people aren't here to spend in the places. Getting those people back into the town is the main issue. Most people that do well tend to leave.</p> | wordpress | 02.05.13 | Hi Jon, thanks for letting us know what you think, these are some interesting and valuable comments which we will take into account in preparing our plans for the town centre. We will be looking at Living and Leisure in the town centre during week commencing 13th May which will include specific questions on housing, leisure, and the evening economy, so please make sure you come back and let us know what you think. There are also specific chapters on this in the Area Action Plan if you would like to respond in more detail. | 02.05.13 |

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| | | | <p>Local shops need to be promoted. With local shops run by local people capital gets circulated within Walsall, rather than going to shareholders or a small amount of people living elsewhere in the country. These local profits will then be recirculated within Walsall energising the economy. To allow that to happen several things need to happen: 1) Rent reductions and/or caps. 2) Restrictions/cap on National/Multinational companies/corporations. 3) Actively promote local people to start businesses by giving loans at low interest (especially shops/services that have been identified that Walsall needs.) 4) Promotion using similar methods regarding the wider economy within Walsall, It seems to me that Walsall is in the middle of becoming a commuter town. 5) Make Walsall town centre a pleasant place to be! It's not and it is even worse if you go outside of Park Street. It would be nice if you could make the area in between the Art Gallery and Poundland a green space i.e. grass. 6) Increase accessibility, promote public transport, Try and get the metro to be extended to Walsall, perhaps from Wolverhampton, using the railway line...It then could carry onto Brownhills via Rushall and Pelsall. It could even be possible to go as far as Lichfield. The public transport infrastructure is terrible unless if you are catching a bus to Birmingham or Wolverhampton and parking isn't much better.</p> | wordpress | 03.05.13 | <p>Hi KDB1978, thanks for your comments. These are some really interesting points and we will certainly be taking them into account as we progress with the Area Action Plan. Why not take a look at our Consultation Summary and let us know what you think on this and other issues using our response form.</p> | 03.05.13 |
| | | | <p>Walsall Market should be put back where it always was historically located on the hill leading up towards ASDA St Matthews and off from the Old Square Shopping Centre. Where it is currently located along past the works book shop and Santander Bank the Market Stalls are located far too close to the shops and if they were to remain there should be more centralised between the shops along that way as when Stalls expand out to add more items to sell and people try to walk past it becomes congested and also increase the possibility for pick pockets stealing from the public passing through. Please consider putting things back as they used to be and also fitting permanent solid Market Stall Roofs on each Stall which would be more practical for stall holders, saving them taking their own covers and making them look smarter. Andrew Howard-Williams (Walsall Resident)</p> | wordpress | 02.05.13 | <p>Hi Andrew and wad46, thanks a lot for your comments. The Council has commissioned an independent analysis of the options for the future location of the market, and this includes looking at improvements to the public realm, the quality of the stalls, the range and quality of produce, and the way in which the market is managed. Remember you can also take a look at our Area Action Plan Consultation Summary which asks more questions about the market, and you can respond using our response form.</p> | 02.05.13 |
| | | | <p>I like it where is is now. I just would like the stallholders to be pleasant !</p> | wordpress | 02.05.13 | | |
| | | | <p>I agree. The market needs putting back where it use to be. We had a thriving market then. Lots of stalls. Really varied. All we have now is veg in bowls. material, cosmetics and phone stalls. Its pitiful now. Certainly not a market to be proud of anymore. I'm walsall born and bred. And I've seen the town change. But doing this to the market has reall spoilt walsall for a lot of people</p> | wordpress | 02.05.13 | <p>Hi Marie and Jon, thank you for your comments, you both make some strong points and we will certainly be taking these into account in the next stage of the town centre Area Action Plan. Walsall's market has a long history and</p> | |

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| Question 2 | 01.05.13 | Shopping | Where do you think Walsall Market should be located? Q7. We need a permanent location for the Market and the evidence suggests that it should be located on The Bridge and in Bradford Street. Where do you think the market should be located? What other changes are needed to secure its future? | <p>Completely agree it should go back to where it used to be. I went to one meeting where one official was suggesting Gallery Square, it would blow away and end up in Willenhall if we did. The market was there for hundreds of years. The old square and Digbeth are dying, both because of the parking and access issues together with the popularity of the vile Uber Tesco and the Crown Wharf retail park. Putting the market back would be part of the regeneration of that part of town, Walsall's historic High Street (none of this daft Quarter nonsense).</p> | wordpress | 02.05.13 | like you, we want to make sure it continues to thrive. If you would like to comment in more detail about this or any other issues affecting the town centre, why not look at the Area Action Plan or Consultation Summary and let us know what you think using the response form. | 02.05.13 |
| | | | | <p>SUMMARY OF 10 COMMENTS: put the market back at the top of the hill in its original location. Improve quality and attractiveness of stalls. Move stalls away from shops as too close. Put it back on High Street but rebuild the High Street first, currently very run down. Negative impact of Tesco. Locate it on Park St so the shops can benefit.</p> | Facebook (Planning 2026 Have your say) | 01- 02.05.13 | Hi everyone, thanks for some interesting comments, please keep them coming. Alison - the Council commissioned an independent analysis of the potential locations for the future home of the market, and this work concluded that the market should be located on The Bridge and Bradford Street, although further feasibility work is still being undertaken. Don't forget to have your say on this and other issues at www.walsall.gov.uk/planning_2026 | 02.05.13 |
| | | | | <p>SUMMARY OF 25 COMMENTS: Most people saying move the market back up the hill to where it used to be. Although concern about money being wasted on moving the market so many times. Also need to focus on getting more people to use it and improving quality of market. Look after the heritage of the town rather than new construction. Cycle route currently goes through the market which is impractical. Other concerns in the town including CCTV and rubbish.</p> | Facebook (Our Walsall) | 01- 02.05.13 | Hi everyone, thanks for all your comments, there's some really interesting points on here and we will certainly be taking these into account in the next stage of preparing the town centre Area Action Plan. This is your opportunity to have your say on everything to do with the town centre and we want to hear as many of your views as possible, please take a look at our website where you can read our Issues and Options report and let us know what you think using the response form at www.walsall.gov.uk/planning_2026 | 02.05.13 |
| | | | | <p>Where it used to be ... put St. Matthews Church back on the map. Church, market, real ale pub and Street Theatre.. Lets make Walsall a thriving community where it's history can be on show..</p> | wordpress | 03.05.13 | Hi Guest, thanks for letting us know your thoughts, we will take this into account when progressing with the Area Action Plan. | 03.05.13 |
| | | | | <p>I seem to remember there was an old bloke who used to work on the markets (small-ish, glasses) who had some really good ideas about siting the market. He knew all the stallholders and seemed to know lots of customers too. What happened to him? Why don't you track him down and ask him, I bet he'd make more sense and be cheaper than 'independent consultants'</p> | wordpress | 24.05.13 | | |

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| Question 3 | 03.05.13 | Shopping | How can we improve links within the town centre? Q10. Do you consider Crown Wharf to be separate from the town centre? How can we improve links between Park Street and others parts of the centre such as Crown Wharf? | Of course it's separate .People drive in to Crown Wharf,shop and drive out again. The provision of more parking next to Premier Inn will help Crown Wharf and its immediate neighbours but do nothing for the pedestrian area. Some people I know will walk to M&S but that's about it. The profile of the town centre means that car borne out of town shoppers steer well clear. | wordpress | 03.05.13 | Hi Saddler, thanks for your comments, this is something we will be looking at as we take the plans forward to the next stage. What do you think we could do to encourage people to walk to Park Street and use the rest of the town centre? | 03.05.13 |
| | | | | The town is blighted by the large pedestian area that has poor footfall and access. As an experiment it hasn't worked and it needs removing. Get people back in on foot, on bikes and yes in cars. People that have money to spend have cars and go shopping in their cars. The drive past shops and see things that they then park up and go and buy. If you never see somewhere how can you know it's there? | wordpress | 17.05.13 | Hi Jon, thanks for your comment about Park Street, we will take this on board as we progress with the Area Action Plan. Given your point about access you may be interested to know that next week (commencing 20th May) we will be asking questions about transportation, access and movement in the town centre, so please come back and let us know what you think on these issues. | 17.05.13 |
| | | | | introduce a kind of intertown metro or tram system that links each end of the town | wordpress | 30.05.13 | | |
| Week 3 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
| | | | | offer a rates holiday and stop building more offices | wordpress | 08.05.12 | Thanks Jonparkes, not sure if you have read the consultation documents yet but you may be interested to know that the Area Action Plan has to find sites for 220,000 square metres of additional office floorspace, as set out in the adopted Black Country Core Strategy - you can view this document here. However, we would welcome any further comments you have on this target and you may wish to do this through a formal submission. | 09.05.13 |

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| Question 1 | 07.05.13 | Business | We know we have some empty offices in the Town Centre so how can we create demand for offices and a strong business environment? | <p>I presume you mean this bit?</p> <p>Building that amount of retail and office space will completely ruin most of the blackcountry towns and be epically pointless. Not that Walsall town centre wasn't ruined years ago by the pedestrianisations and daft ring road.</p> <p>The rest is badly written council English but it isn't too bad. You can't build offices and shops like a field of dreams.</p> <p>Policy By 2026, the Strategic Centres of Brierley Hill, Walsall, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton will have a much stronger role at a regional and sub-regional level, providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional 345,000 square metres gross comparison retail floorspace and additional 880,000 square metres gross office floorspace; • Major new leisure and cultural facilities; • 7,500 new homes' of mixed type and tenure – the majority built at high densities as part of mixed use developments; • Excellent public transport links, making the centres highly accessible to increased catchment areas, including new residential communities in the Regeneration Corridors; | wordpress | 14.05.12 | Thanks Jon, We take on board your concerns around the targets however the Core Strategy is adopted so we now have to look at ways to at least show we can work towards achieving these targets. This is the purpose of the Area Action Plan and we welcome your views on how we can accommodate these targets in a balanced way so not to create negative impacts on the centre. | 14.05.12 |
| | | | | <p>I can't see how these targets came about. Setting a figure for an area of new office space without seeing how the demand for office space can come about seems strange.</p> <p>The world is a very rapidly changing place and setting targets for 13 years into an uncertain future seems odd.</p> <p>Retail is in flux and office space is in huge surplus.</p> <p>Many mistakes have been made in planning and Walsall, the town I love, bears more scars than most. Not to make a stand when more mistakes are mooted would be remiss.</p> | wordpress | 15.05.13 | | |

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| | | | <p>“the Area Action Plan has to find sites for 220,000 square metres of additional office floorspace,” is an interesting concept.</p> <p>Are you big fans of the “build it and they will come” school of thought, because that seems to be the only rationale behind much of Walsall’s planning.</p> <p>We currently have one of the highest rates of empty shops in the midlands (depending on which reports you read) yet I saw recently that planning permission had been granted for yet more retail space at the top of the market, and the council has failed magnificently to facilitate the Primark and CoOp we hear so much about but see so little of.</p> <p>I think you need to start literally from the bottom and look at primary schools and how they link to senior schools; how do senior schools then educate/train/prepare students for further education or work?</p> <p>Walsall’s education has been a shambles for as long as I can remember, and I can remember when T.P. Riley was a good school.</p> <p>If I were a big employer I wouldn’t come here because I think I’d struggle to get an educated workforce, and I certainly wouldn’t locate a science/electronics business here because all the senior schools are sports colleges.</p> <p>You need to create a vibrant arts scene to stimulate social media use and you need to build low-cost, easy-in incubator units with rates holidays or low rates.</p> | wordpress | 15.05.13 | <p>Thanks Martin, we will take on -board your comments about the targets. As for the Primark development the Council has committed funds to it’s delivery so is fully behind the development. We are aware that education and skills are a real issue within the Borough and that this relates to business demands – there are teams who work towards improving skills in Walsall. Thanks for your comments about the incubator units – do you have any ideas about locations?</p> | 16.05.12 |
| | | | <p>I agree with Martin, if you want to create wealth you need to have a better class of education. Science teaching in the UK as a whole is poor but in Walsall is particulatly bad. I was helping my godson do his homework and though he is a bright and eager boy the teaching he received was substandard and he goes to one of Walsall’s “better” state schools.</p> <p>Incubating design, engineering , arts and a professional sector is the way forward rather than building HUGE and begging for a transplant, more often than not from another struggling town that we will loose again in three yeas from when the grants run out.</p> | wordpress | 17.05.13 | <p>Hi Jon and Timfy, thanks for your comments, some interesting points there particularly the links between offices and transportation. If you would like to leave any more detailed comments please take a look at our Consultation Summary and respond using our Response form before consultation ends on 3rd June.</p> | 30.05.13 |
| | | | <p>Better transport for professionals working within Walsall town centre if there was a park and ride style business bus where people working within the town centre could get into town without using there cars but have a quicker journey without lots of stops which could include mobile wifi and table areas where they could actually work in comfort before they get to work but that would only work if there is modern state of the art offices for the businesses to work in</p> | wordpress | 30.05.13 | | |

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| Question 2 | 08.05.13 | Business | Should offices be grouped together in one main location such as the Gigaport or spread out across the town centre? | Spread out across the town centre | wordpress | 08.05.13 | Thanks for your answer, be great if you could let us know why you think they should be spread out across the centre. Do you know of any particular sites that would make good locations for offices? Also do you have any ideas on the previous question about how we can create demand for offices in Walsall. | 08.05.13 |
| | | | | Does it matter? Offices need access to utilities, public transport, parking, and shops. Fulfil those needs, and that's all is needed. | wordpress | 09.05.13 | Thanks to Stymaster and Greg for your comments around developing the office market – we will take these on board when developing the Area Action Plan. Jonparkes - you make some interesting points about the balance of offices and industry. Tomorrow I am posting a question about the future of employment land in the town centre which you may want to comment on. Also in a couple of | 09.05.13 |
| | | | | If you wish to create demand, maybe offer incentives to businesses located outside the borough: lower rent offers free or reduced tariff parking to business owners and staff flexible terms rebates for employing people from the borough who were previously unemployed. To be frank, this is economics 101 and should already be as standard. Rather a little rent for an otherwise unoccupied property than none at all. | wordpress | 09.05.13 | | |
| | | | | The businesses need to be spread out. Put them all in one area and you have a massive increase in demand for parking in a concentrated area. Another (worst case) scenario would be fire. Concentrate all businesses in one building and one arsonist or carelessness means potentially massive damage to a large number of businesses. If you wish to create demand, maybe offer incentives to businesses located outside the borough: lower rent offers free or reduced tariff parking to business owners and staff flexible terms rebates for employing people from the borough who were previously unemployed. To be frank, this is economics 101 and should already be as standard. Rather a little rent for an otherwise unoccupied property than none at all. | wordpress | 09.05.13 | | |

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| | | | <p>The Question basks in the false premise that more office space would be a good idea. I see office scheme devoid of tenants on virtually every day. To see what happens pop up to the Waterfront in Dudley and look at the occupancy rate. I have been to similar schemes of high quality modern office in many other parts of the country and seen the same thing. With the rise of the home worker and companies being stretched large office requirements may be a thing of the past than of the future. Low skilled office jobs are also easily lost to other places on cost etc and Walsall does not have a developed professional services sector to fill new space without leaving vacancies as the new WHG offices above illustrate. The town needs industrial jobs as can be seen by the new i54 development, there is still scope for high quality manufacturing in the UK which Walsall could get involved in mostly due to the towns transport links. M6, M5, M54 and A38 all being very easily reached and being the only real reason I am still here. We just need to sort out the Ring Road, who ever said the system that has been put in works is clearly on something.</p> | wordpress | 09.05.13 | <p>weeks we will be looking at transport and how the centre links to the surrounding area so make sure you let us know your thoughts on this topic.</p> | |
| | | | <p>Arggh! Nooooooooooooo. This is wrong wrong wrong. Office building is completely pointless. Industrial seems to be doing better than Office Space and probably has more future.</p> <p>Certainly more housing in the centre but we need quality industrial too. We are an industrial town and forget that at our peril.</p> <p>Walsall has enough office space and the region has more than enough. Look in any property paper if you need convincing.</p> | wordpress | 14.05.13 | <p>Hi Jon, thanks for your passionate arguments against the idea of moving industry outside of the town centre. You are quite right in the fact we need to protect industry. I would highlight that this process would never be an the expense of the businesses in the town centre and would involve working with them to find more suitable locations within the Borough. Some of the industrial premises in the town centre are not really suitable for modern industry because of poor access and the fact they are constrained by other uses – this means that the industry can not develop further. We are therefore looking at options around finding more appropriate locations within the borough for industry, whilst freeing up the land for town centre uses.</p> <p>If you do have evidence of the need to keep industry in the town centre rather than moving in out to create space for other uses, then please submit this formally as part of a consultation response.</p> | 14.05.12 |

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| Question 3 | 10/05/2013 | Business | <p>There are a number of industrial businesses in the town centre, should these businesses be relocated and the sites used for other uses such as offices? If so how can we ensure the businesses are not negatively affected?</p> | <p>The other main problem of moving the industry out of the town centre is access to public transport.</p> <p>Moving out of the town makes this more and more difficult. Some workers find it had enough to get in as it is.</p> <p>I work full time in three different capacities and I am trying to get together with some other minds to go through these proposals but there are only so many hours in a day.</p> | wordpress | 15.05.13 | <p>Thanks Jon, we look forward to your comments. You may also be interested in attending our 'Have your Say' event tomorrow – 6pm at the Council, where you can ask us any questions and give some feedback.</p> | 15.05.13 |
| | | | | <p>Of course you need to move 'industry' away from the town centre, and away from residential areas too, but you need to keep 'business' in the town centre. You need to distinguish between 'white collar' and 'blue collar' industry; one sits quite comfortably within a town centre but the other clearly doesn't and I'm sure all you highly-paid officers can work out which fits where. It puzzles me why WHG was allowed to build a shiny new office block when, clearly, there already plenty of office space available in the town. All that's done is create empty space in Tameway Tower and elsewhere and added to the derelict and unkempt look. You might want to start with looking at the scrap yards: possibly start with the one just over the road from the hospital, then the one near all the houses in Bloxwich Rd, and then move the one less than half a mile from the schools near J10 and the one less than half a mile from the 'prestigious' Smiths Flour Mill. I'm sure I've missed a few, but how such an industry is allowed to operate in such surroundings beggars belief. I certainly wouldn't want to be treated for anything serious mere yards from thousands of tons of contaminated scrap metal. I'm not saying get rid of them because they are clearly valuable and successful businesses, but they don't belong on the sites they currently occupy with the neighbours they currently have. Perhaps you could move them all to the old James Bridge site, then you wouldn't have to use up all my money cleaning it up? Of course, this assumes that you can actually attract clients into the town centre. I understand they've had a lot of success in Newcastle in attracting new industries in media and electronics to the city centre, so some all-expenses paid jollies up there might be in order.</p> | wordpress | 15.05.13 | <p>Thanks for your thoughts on this issue Martin. You may be interested in looking at the industrial chapter of Walsall Site Allocation Document as it covers industrial sites that could be considered for release for other uses such as housing (if any remaining businesses can be successfully relocated within the Borough). Some of the sites you mention above are included as 'consider for release', however, others are not, so you may wish to take a look and give us your views. Here is the link to the document:</p> | 16.05.14 |

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| | | | | <p>Relocating industry isn't something to be considered lightly and even light engineering is tricky to move causing serious cash flow issues and loss of production to the companies involved. Unless you have specialist skills and knowledge which I doubt is processed by local government.</p> <p>Attracting professional services to the town centre when we don't currently have much of a professional services sector or skills would just mean acres of empty office space going cheaply like the rest of the country.</p> <p>Walsalls office space is a bit crummy but if there was a demand for better office space someone would build it and I know of no one wanting to build a large office scheme at present. I have been working hard on a scheme in South London, one in Sheffield and one in Birmingham to upgrade old fashioned office space in order for it to be considered lettable. Walsall has at least two office blocks that I know of that could easily be modernised into more lettable space.</p> <p>I know the scrapyards quite well. The owner has been trying to sell it for redevelopment but no one is really interested.</p> | wordpress | 17.05.13 | | |
| Week 4 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
| Question 1 | 13/05/2013 | Leisure & Living | Gala Baths has been serving Walsall Town Centre since 1961 and is in need of some investment to improve the facilities. No decision over the future of the baths has been made and the Area Action Plan consultation is the perfect opportunity to let us know what you think. What sport and leisure facilities do you think should be provided in the town centre? What factors impact on your decisions to use leisure facilities? Gala Baths requires some refurbishment to meet the needs of its users but what should happen to Gala Baths if a refurbishment is not possible? | Keeping the baths is great and closing it is not an option. Public swimming baths are great for health and wellbeing, we have a town gold medal winning champion a great positive image for the town and something that is a rare and wonderful thing. | wordpress | 14.05.16 | Hi Jon, Thanks for your comments in support of Gala Baths, your point about the baths being part of a positive image for the town is an important one. We welcome as much discussion around their future as possible. | |
| | | | | invest money into the social aspects. There is literally nothing to do in Walsall. Get the community involved in developments | Twitter | 14/05/2013 | Hi Stuart, thanks for your comment, we will consider this as we progress the plans to the next stage of consultation in 2014 | |

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| Question 2 | 14/05/2013 | Leisure & Living | <p>We want a centre that is vibrant in the evenings and an attractive place to live. What is missing from the eating and drinking offer in the town centre? Is there a need for more homes in the town centre? How can we ensure the town centre is vibrant as well as an attractive place to live?</p> | <p>You really need to sort out the violence and disorder.</p> <p>Only recently a friend was attacked (unprovoked) and suffered serious leg injuries.</p> <p>While this sort of thing keeps happening you'll need to take a far more imaginative approach than spending £10k of my money on acoustic panels for the Town Hall ceiling "to make the town centre more attractive".</p> <p>Have any of the council's senior officers walked past R1 Bar, The Imperial or Yate's (do they know where they are?) and seen the clientele hanging around outside, smoking and shouting at pigeons?</p> <p>While a portion of the citizenry has this penchant for drunken violence no sane developer will build flats, sorry, apartments or anything else.</p> <p>You need to ask why Five Rivers, for example, chose to locate in the obscure site they did.</p> <p>It might help if you did something about the fires which break out at regular intervals, too (What happened to Modus Vivendi?)</p> | wordpress | 15/05/2013 | <p>Thanks for your comments Martin. One of the aims of the Area Action Plan is to encourage changes that will make the centre a safe and welcoming place to be. We do have a dedicated Town Centre officer who is doing great work to introduce new things to the town centre such as the Night Market but the more ideas people can give us on how to improve the centre the better. As for the specific comments about R1, this relates more to licensing who can be contacted at licensing@walsall.gov.uk</p> <p>One idea we have included in the AAP is that night time venues are zoned in areas within the town centre as this may make it easier to police – do you have any views of whether this would help?</p> | 15/05/2013 |
| | | | | <p>My comment to the Walsall Chronicle in September 2012 – where nothing has changed as the passage from the Bus Station remains an eyesore & with broken slabs presumably a health & safety risk = Dear Editor</p> <p>Walsall continues to attract criticism of its appeal to shoppers, and planners and developers have clearly played a part.</p> <p>Considering your previous reports on this subject may I observe = Greeting visitors at Walsall Bus Station is a filthy corridor to the high street strewn with litter and graffiti: whereas 000's of pounds was spent unnecessarily on Butlers Passage that is not the main outlet from the terminus. It appears that the main arcade may now be spruced up, but this does not excuse the many years of damage to this towns reputation while this focal area has been neglected: some visitors having just turned round and left at this point.</p> <p>Planners have progressively developed shopping facilities out of town and on the edge of town: while destroying the original character of the town centre and its market that served to provide an attractive and popular venue over many years through to the 90's.</p> <p>A town 'vibrates' from its centre: have we not learned this lesson.</p> | wordpress | 20.05.13 | <p>Hi Ken and Jon, many thanks for letting us know your thoughts on this issue, we will take on board your points as we progress with the next stage of the Area Action Plan. As you both point out, making the town centre an attractive and vibrant place to live is closely linked with other issues in the town including the environment, and the quality and location of the shops and market, so the Plan aims to look at all these issues individually and collectively.</p> <p>We're in the last week of consultation</p> | 28.05.13 |

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| | | | | The money spent on Butlers Passage was a quite remarkable waste of money. I hear of attacks all the time and have had someone try and steal the gates off our fence in daylight two mins walk from the back of BHS. The market has been very poorly served, more attention being given to ASDA and TESCO. Walsall was a market town. One of the best market towns in the country. Now you can't get to the market or park near it and the traders consequently aren't of the same high caliber. No replacement for characters of old like Sid Wright, once the town mayor, with his ceramics. Remember that money spent in local shops stays in the town and money spent as ASDA and Tesco goes to their shareholders who may not even be in the country let alone the town. | wordpress | 24.05.13 | now but there's still time to look at the documents and give us a detailed response using the form on our website. | |
| Question 3 | 17.05.13 | Leisure & Living | We think the Art Gallery is one of the most iconic buildings in the centre, but what buildings do you think are important to Walsall and how can we ensure that these are protected? What guidance would you give to a developer to help them design a new building in the town centre that is in keeping with Walsall's historic character whilst being inspiring? (Also add to FB that people can post pics of their fav building) | The Art gallery is a special building because it is better to be inside than outside. As a space to display art it is excellent as an example of 20th century cladding systems on a frame it is wholly unremarkable and even infantile. However from memory this is what the architect had in mind. Unfortunately there are precious few town centre buildings that are actually interesting left. Many redevelopment schemes have left the town centre a pedestrian island with a few bright spots, mostly seen by raising your eyes above the shop windows, like the old music shop on Bridge Street. I have had a good friend from a national heritage charity walk the centre with me a few times and it is very much a case of 1960s and 1970 damage and ill conceived pedestrianisation. Future development needs to open up the centre again and get it working. From a new development point of view the main thing is that it should be that future buildings should be idiosyncratic and actually engender an emotional response. This is what was Selfridge's building at the Bullring was aimed as, and was a building I helped a good deal in the making of. We don't need another Crown Wharf or Old Square, bland bland bland. | wordpress | 17.05.13 | Hi Jon, thanks a lot for your interesting comments. These issues are covered in more detail, with questions and options posed, in chapter 7 of the Area Action Plan so you may be interested to take a look here and let us know what you think via our response form. | 17.05.13 |
| | | | | I agree with JonParkes123, many beautiful buildings with their heritage obliterated by modern facades and corporate cloning. It takes away the town's individuality. | Wordpress | 20.05.13 | | |
| Week 5 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |
| Question 1 | 20.05.13 | Transport | How can we improve pedestrian links in the town centre? If you could pedestrainise any street in the centre which ones would you choose and why? | Too much pedestrianisation in the town already. The picture you use illustrates this perfectly. Darwall St was very busy before being pedestrianised. Now it is a desert. For the love of God no more pedestrianisation think about going the other way. Get people into the town rather than keeping them out. | wordpress | 24.05.13 | Thanks for letting us know your thoughts Jon, we'll take these on board as we progress with the next stage of the Area Action Plan. | 29.05.13 |

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| Question 2 | 22.05.13 | Transport | We know many people consider parking to be a problem in the town centre – if we built three new ‘super’ car parks and closed some of the current under-used car parks, where should these new car parks be located? What other improvements are needed to car parking? | <p>Ah the Day Street car park, pretty sure we owned a bit of that till it was CPOed. Building Car parks is pretty useless unless they are free to use. It is getting people to actually SEE what the town has to offer. Building car parks and having a pedestrian town centre is creating a low class shopping centre without a roof. Merry Hell will always be a better offer mostly due to aesthetics and smell. Building the crown wharf and uber tesco has effectively shifted the heart of the town’s shopping away from the centre. The cinema will have a similar effect. You have to think what you are doing with the shops before playing god with the parking. Open the town again, fix the silly ring road and get people back into the centre.</p> | wordpress | 24.05.13 | Hi Jon and Martin, thanks for your comments. These are some interesting points which we will be taking on board as we progress with the Area Action Plan. There’s still time to comment on the Issues and Options report if you haven’t already, using our website. | 28.05.13 |
| | | | | <p>You could try making it much cheaper, or even free.</p> <p>You only have to look at Tesco’s car park and the chaos in Wisemore to see the lengths people will go to for free parking so clearly there is a demand and it would actually get a lot of support from the ‘beleaguered’ traders.</p> <p>Obviously, you can’t go back to the chaos which reigned before the charges were introduced, but, typically, you’ve gone too far the other way and you’re actively discouraging people from using the town centre with the current parking and charging regime. I’m sure there is a correlation between economic activity in Aldridge centre and the number of free parking spaces. Yes, I know Aldridge is altogether more affluent but shops need customers, whether they’re in Aldridge or Darlaston and, people being what they are, folk don’t like to walk too far.</p> <p>In any case, you were able to make parking free for the white elephant night market so you could do the same again, but for longer (or for ever).</p> <p>However, the problem here is that the income from parking and fines is now enshrined in council budgets and it will be virtually impossible to get rid of that income target.</p> | wordpress | 24.05.13 | | |
| | | | | <p>Some good points here... especially the ‘failed’ ring road which practically syphons visitors away from the town centre. Parking charges too... you need to create park free days, Saturday is the priority day for shoppers... so, make free parking evry other weekend maybe..?</p> <p>I have lived in the borough of Walsall since birth, the ring road still confuses me, no matter ‘how’ you try to improve it. The ideal place for car parking would have been to build a multi level car park where Tesco stands. this could have been the most accessible link from the ring road for car users.</p> <p>Car parking is ample really, you just have to create ‘Park Free’ days to encourage people into the town.</p> | wordpress | 06.06.13 | | |

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| Question 3 | 23.05.13 | Transport | <p>There are some options presented in the AAP Issues and Options document around creating a new public transport hub. Where would you like public transport to drop off and pick you up in the town centre? What improvements do you think are needed to public transport in and around the centre?</p> | <p>well i would say keep the bus station where it is it looks a mess mind like a big lump of concrete but why waist money getting dropped off at the bus station is better than all around town i think we should also encourage means and ways of getting people off busses and cars and onto bikes like hire of a segway or bike something that can easley be tracked if case of theft this way people have an option to what way they get to town rental of a segway or push bike or bus train an so on</p> | wordpress | 24.05.13 | <p>Thanks Guest and Jon for letting us know your thoughts on the bus station and transportation in the town centre. You can find more information including some specific options for public transport hubs in our Transport, Movement, and Accessibility chapter of the Area Action Plan. Why not fill in a response form and let us know what you think.</p> | 28.05.13 |
| | | | | <p>The bus station has NOT WORKED. It is a failure in every sense of the word. The ring road has made cycling in the town much more dangerous to the point I have given up, I am not as brave as Councillor Worrall. The current site is ok, it's not far to the railway and taxi points. It's just a dire design, a triumph of form over function and it isn't even a nice form. Fix the bus station, preferably something square (buses are square and square things fit in square boxes more effectively than round ones). The capacity has causes a nightmare the other side of town at the cenotaph turning it into a second bus station. This is daft and worsened by the pedestrianisation preventing movement over the bridge. The bridge was built as traffic going round over by St Matthews caused problems many many years ago.</p> | wordpress | 24.05.13 | | |
| | | | | <p>Personally I think the bus station is the wrong way round and buses should enter from where they depart and depart from where they enter and buses using St Pauls Street and not Hatherton Road using stands A, B and C this would allow easier access to the bus station for buses entering the bus station and stop the current bottle neck at the entrance.</p> <p>With regards to where buses should drop off I think that the preferred area should be bridge street which would bring the retail units on bridge street into a more used area with a more greater footfall and creating a shorter amount of time buses are in the bus station blocking other buses.</p> <p>The former railway track bed from Walsall running through Pelsall and Brownhills would make a perfect single lane road connecting Walsall, Pelsall & Brownhills that could be used as a park and ride system with one single transport going in one direction at any one time allowing there to be space for cyclists and walkers with it only being a single lane. This route could also be part of a more ambitious plan for the council to introduce there own metro system to be used as a park and ride which would eventually link up with the proposed Midland Metro extension into Walsall at around North St and Portland St which could reduce traffic along the Lichfield road between Brownhills and Walsall which would help to reduce traffic around the Arboretum junction.</p> | wordpress | 30.05.13 | <p>Hi Timfy, thanks for your response, you've made some interesting points which will be taken on board as we progress with the Area Action Plan. If you would like to read more about the issues and options for transportation please look at section 8 of our Consultation Summary. You can leave any comments you have or answer the questions using our response form, but please remember that the consultation closes on 3rd June.</p> | 30.05.13 |
| Week 6 | Date | Theme | Question | Summary of Comment Received | Format | Date Received | Summary of Council Response | Date of Response |

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| Question 1 | 28.05.13 | Delivery & Viability & Investment | Do you agree with our approach to focus town centre investment in specific opportunity areas? At the moment the Council has an approach to investment in Walsall town centre which focuses on four specific opportunity areas, with St Matthew's Quarter as the main location for retail, Gigaport for | | | | | |
| Question 2 | 29.05.13 | Delivery & Viability & Investment | We want your views on the key development opportunities in the town centre. What is the future of St Matthew's Quarter? How do we develop The Gigaport? How can we make Waterfront a gateway destination in Walsall? How do we reinvigorate Park Street? Where should a major new leisure facility such as a cinema be located? | Car parking with direct pedestrian access to Park Street if the proposed option of moving the train station to closer to the bus station was taken creating a better transport hub then area of the current station could be used expanding the current parking area using some of the the space of the current station or even having the current multi story car park used by the Saddlers Centre extending over the tracks onto station street allowing direct access to park Street and could allow the Saddlers to expand into area currently used by part the car park creating more shops and offices making a bigger and better Saddlers Centre attracting major retail names into the Town Centre and could somehow allow pedestrian access directly to the Bradford Place transport hub and the current Jerome Retail Park. This extension could also include keeping the existing station but used as a sub station for access to Park Street, Saddlers Centre & Art Gallery with the main station at its new position. | wordpress | 31.05.13 | Hi Timfy, thanks for letting us know your thoughts, we will take these points on board as we progress with the next stage of the Area Action Plan. | 31.05.13 |
| | | | | In answer to Timfy, (all due respect mind...) I think that the land between walsal train station and Corporation street should be developed to incorporate a metro service. This would become more attracted to outsiders travelling from nearby boroughs. The land is begging to be redeveloped to expand Walsall town to breathe new life into a somewhat neglected area. If this land were to be redeveloped, there is an ideal oppourtunity to benefit business's nearby this area. I don't think building a new multiplex cinema would be the answer because... Showcase cinema's tried this and failed (movies are released to quickly and are available to cable and satelite owners who see the cheaper option more than sitting in a multiplex) The multiplex cinema would fail (eventually) to return the necessary funds. Walsall needs a sports complex more than it needs a cinema multiplex. One which would benefit all areas of sport activity's. I would also like to see more interactive street theatre goin on, this inspires, excites and motivates people who would visit more often due to a 'lightened' atmosphere. Also, when people are more comfortable with the surroundings, they are more likely to become a part of the town, take more interest... notice how vibrant and exciting Walsall can become. | wordpress | 06.06.13 | | |

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| Question 3 | 31.05.13 | Delivery & Viability & Investment | Are there any parts of the town centre you think should be prioritised for investment/development? What needs to be delivered in order to kick start the transformation of Walsall Town Centre? | | | | | |
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