

Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan

Publication Draft Plan



Planning 2026: Have Your Say

Publication Consultation

Consultation Period: 7th March – 3rd May 2016



Walsall Council



Walsall
Town Centre
A place for everyone

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

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

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

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

What is the Area Action Plan process?

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



Where can I find more information?

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

Email planningpolicy@walsall.gov.uk

Phone (01922) 658020

Textphone 01922 654000

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

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

List of Abbreviations

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

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Walsall Town Centre	10
AAP Vision	10
AAP Objectives	10
Policy AAP1: Walsall Town Centre Boundary	12
3. A Place for Shopping	14
Policy AAPS1: Primary Shopping Area	14
Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development	17
Policy AAPS3: The New Walsall Market	24
4. A Place for Business	26
Policy AAPB1: Office Development	26
Policy AAPB2: Social Enterprise Zone	31
Policy AAPB3: Town Centre Employment Land	33
5. A Place for Leisure	36
Policy AAPLE1: New Leisure Development	36
Policy AAPLE2: Sport and Cultural Facilities	40
Policy AAPLE3: Hotel, Conference and Banqueting Provision	42
Policy AAPLE4: Walsall Canal	44
6. A Place for Living	47
Policy AAPLV1: Residential Developments	47
Policy AAPLV2: Education	51
Policy AAPLV3: Health Care Facilities	55

Policy APPLV4: Community Facilities	57
Policy AAPLV5: Protecting and Enhancing Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness	59
Policy AAPLV6: Securing Good Design	64
Policy AAPLV7: Enhancing Public Realm	68
Policy AAPLV8: Environmental Infrastructure	71
7. Transport, Movement and Accessibility	75
Policy AAPT1: Pedestrian Movement, Access and Linkages	75
Policy AAPT2: Cycling	79
Policy AAPT3: Public Transport	82
Policy AAPT4: Road Improvements	86
Policy AAPT5: Car Parking	89
8. A Place for Investment	96
Policy AAPINV1: Regeneration Strategy	96
Policy AAPINV2: St Matthew's Quarter	100
Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport	105
Policy AAPINV4: Walsall Waterfront	117
Policy AAPINV5: Park Street Shopping Core	124
Policy AAPINV6: Secondary Development Sites	129
Policy AAPINV7: Addressing Potential Site Constraints	139
9. Get Involved	148

1. Introduction

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

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

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

1.2 The Publication Draft Plan

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

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

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

1.3 How can comments be made about the plan?

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

As this is the Publication Stage, to make your comments more effective it would be useful to provide a response focussing on the 'soundness' of the plan. This can cover the following –

Is the plan:

- **Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

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

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

1.4 The Planning Context

The AAP will form part of the “Local Plan”. This is the plan for the future development of the Borough which is drawn up by the Council in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the “development plan”.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ sets out the Government’s position on the role of the planning system in both plan-making and decision-taking. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, in economic, social and environmental terms. The Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of plans.

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

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

Walsall’s local plan also includes **Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP)**³. Most of the UDP policies are ‘saved’ policies; however, some were removed as a result of changes to planning legislation in 2004 or have been superseded by policies within the BCCS. Some of the ‘saved’ policies within the UDP are referenced within this AAP as they still provide a good policy basis to assess proposals against and the AAP avoids repeating existing policy where possible. It is intended that the UDP

¹ The NPPF can be viewed at <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

² The BCCS can be viewed at: http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/planning_policy/local_development_framework/df_core_strategy.htm

³ The UDP can be viewed at: http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/planning_policy/unitary_development_plan.htm

'saved' policies will remain in place until a new Development Management Plan is developed for Walsall.

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

1.5 The need for an AAP

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

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

1.6 The AAP Process

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

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

The consultation responses and how the Council have addressed these can be found on our website⁴.

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



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

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

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

4

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

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

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

1.7 Structure of the AAP

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

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

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

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





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

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



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

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

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



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

1.8 Key evidence consulted

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

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

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

An HRA screening exercise was conducted as part of the preparation of the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS). The screening has formed the starting point for the assessment of all other subsequent Local Plan documents in Walsall. The HRA work for the BCCS could not rule out the possibility of likely significant effects in respect of Cannock Chase SAC, Humber Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar⁵.

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

“6.4 The development of housing with its associated population growth may lead to indirect adverse impacts on Cannock Chase SAC. This is likely to be caused by increased visitor activities on Cannock Chase and is the subject of ongoing research. Depending on the outcome of this research, development plans and proposals may be required to demonstrate appropriate and proportionate measures sufficient to avoid or mitigate significant identified adverse impacts. Guidance may be given through subsequent local development plan documents.”

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

Some of the evidence presented at the BCCS examination suggested a potential need to consider whether new housing development within a 12 mile 'zone of influence' surrounding the perimeter of Cannock Chase SAC might have a significant effect. This 'zone of influence' would extend to overlap with the Walsall Town Centre AAP boundary. The overlapped area is small and the plan proposes only office and educational uses within it. Consequently the AAP does not fall within scope of the basis for assessment identified following the HRA screening of the BCCS.

2. Walsall Town Centre

2.1 The vision

The vision for Walsall Town Centre is as follows:

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

2.2 Area Action Plan Objectives

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

- 1. Establish and allocate a series of high quality, ambitious and deliverable proposals for Walsall Town Centre that will enable Walsall to maximise its economic potential creating a thriving and prosperous centre that generates job opportunities for the residents of the Borough.**
- 2. Enhance and maximise Walsall's competitiveness for investment, both in its role as a sub-regional centre and in competing with out-of-centre developments.**
- 3. Increase the choice, quality and diversity of the town centre retail offer in order to meet the needs of all sectors of the population. To secure a mix of occupiers in the town centre through the provision of units of sufficient size and quality in suitable locations to meet the requirements of modern retailers.**
- 4. Diversify and strengthen the economic base, promote new ways of working and deliver a strong office market that provides high standard office accommodation in suitable locations to meet the needs of existing businesses and to attract new businesses to the area, accompanied by training and conference facilities.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.2.1 Policy Justification

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

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

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

2.3 Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan Boundary

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

Policy AAP1: Walsall Town Centre Boundary

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

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

2.3.1 Policy Justification

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

Whilst in principle the boundary acts as a guide to where centre uses are and are not acceptable, it's important that developments towards the edge of the boundary are well integrated with the rest of the centre. This is crucial in supporting the vitality and viability of the Primary Shopping Area and key regeneration schemes. It's also important that all development is accessible by public transport so the integration of all schemes with the town centre as a whole is an important consideration.

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

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

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

2.3.2 Evidence

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

2.3.3 Delivery

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

2.3.4 Monitoring

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

3. A Place for Shopping



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

3.1 Primary Shopping Area

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

Policy AAPS1: Primary Shopping Area

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

- a) Concentrating new retail floorspace and investment within or immediately adjacent to the Primary Shopping Area boundary;**
- b) Expecting all development within the Primary Shopping Area to provide an active and well designed frontage to positively contribute to the streetscene. Any significant proposal for non-retail use will have to demonstrate that the retail function is not prejudiced (as in accordance with UDP Policy S4);**
- c) Only permitting retail development away from the Primary Shopping Area where it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable development sites or**

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

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

3.1.1 Policy Justification

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

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

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

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

3.1.2 Evidence

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

3.1.3 Delivery

The PSA is the heart of the centre and as such the Council will prioritise investment that will support its vitality and viability. The main tool the Council has to deliver a strong PSA is through the use of planning policy to attract investment into the PSA and to deter developments that will have negative impacts on the centre's health through drawing away investment and spending. The Council will also support the PSA in the following ways:

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

3.1.4 Monitoring

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

3.2 Attracting New Retail Development

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

Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development

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

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

ii) Prioritising the development of sites identified on the AAP Policies Map for retail investment:-

- St Matthew's Quarter (TC01, TC02 and TC03) (See also Policy AAPINV2)**
- Park Place (TC05) (See also Policy AAPINV5)**
- Saddler's Shopping Centre (TC04) (See also Policy AAPINV5); and**

iii) Ensuring new retail development provides large, flexible units to meet retailer requirements.

b) Convenience retailing and bulky goods will, where possible, be located in the Primary Shopping Area in accordance with the sequential approach (BCCS CEN7 and UDP S7). Where retailing cannot be accommodated within or immediately adjacent to the Primary Shopping Area the Council will expect the following sites to be considered in order:-

- 1. Jerome Retail Park (TC19);**
- 2. Former Shannon's Mill Site (TC26) (see also Policy AAPINV2);**
- 3. Crown Wharf (TC07);**
- 4. Wisemore (TC55) (see also Policy AAPINV3);**
- 5. Challenge Block (TC41) (see also Policy AAPINV3(b)); and**
- 6. Day Street (TC50) (see also Policy AAPINV3(c)).**

c) Any edge-of-centre proposals will be expected to:

i) Link directly to active frontages in the Primary Shopping Area, or if not possible, to improve linkages functionally and visually to the Primary Shopping Area; and

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

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

3.2.1 Policy Justification

The key to ensuring the future health and Strategic Centre status of Walsall town centre is securing new retail development within the PSA in addition to existing commitments. This is needed to help increase the town centre's market share of retail expenditure and therefore its ability to compete with other shopping destinations, including those in edge/out-of-centre locations (as defined by the NPPF).

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

- Comparison goods – clothing, footwear and other fashion goods; furniture; domestic appliances; personal and luxury goods e.g. books, jewellery, cosmetics.
- Convenience goods – includes food and beverages, tobacco, newspapers and magazines, and non-durable household goods.

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

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

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

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

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

Site Reference	Site Name	Allocation	Site Details
TC01	Old Square Phase 2	Retail opportunities for investment/ reconfiguration	Shopping Centre within the PSA suitable for retail investment. Has a current consent for retail which maintains views to St Matthew's Church. Development here will lead to further investment in surrounding buildings, some of which are of a strong character.
TC02	Old Square Phase 3	Retail opportunities for investment/ reconfiguration	Shopping Centre within the PSA suitable for retail investment. The existing building does not make a positive contribution to the nearby heritage assets, but any new development should not be above 3 storeys to avoid dominating the surrounding character.
TC03	Digbeth/ Lower Hall Lane	Retail opportunities for investment/ reconfiguration	Shopping Centre within the PSA suitable for retail investment. Has a current consent for retail, to replace the existing vacant buildings with a more modern

			design, which should improve the character of the area.
TC05	Park Place	Retail opportunities for investment/ reconfiguration	Shopping Centre within the PSA suitable for retail investment.
TC04	Saddler's Shopping Centre	Retail opportunities for investment/ reconfiguration	Shopping Centre within the PSA suitable for retail investment. Improvements could create stronger frontages to Bradford Place and Station Street, in order to enhance the character of the area and the setting of the heritage assets in these areas.

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

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

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

Site Reference	Site Name	Allocation	Site Details
TC19	Jerome Retail Park	Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods	Connected to the PSA visually and has units which would be suitable to accommodate convenience retailing and bulky goods. Should form part of comprehensive redevelopment providing a prominent frontage and surface level car parking. Any new development should be of improved design and contribute more to the character of the surrounding area.

TC26	Former Shannon's Mill	Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods along with mixed use opportunity including housing and live/work	Front of the site is connected to the PSA physically and visually. A well designed scheme could provide an active frontage linking directly to the current PSA retail offer and positively contributing to the streetscene. The site provides opportunities for car parking along with other uses on upper floors and on the remaining site such as residential. Scheme would need to accord with Policy AAPINV2: St Matthew's Quarter
TC07	Crown Wharf	Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods	Close proximity to the PSA and has units of sizes that would be suitable to accommodate convenience retailing and bulky goods if traffic impacts could be overcome. Frontages could be strengthened to improve the site's relationship with the town.
TC55	Wisemore	Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods	Development opportunity site close to the PSA opposite to Tesco. Scheme would need to accord with Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport. Development would improve the character of the area as long as it provides a strong frontage to the ring road and relates well to the rear of the buildings fronting Stafford Street.
TC41	Challenge Block	Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods and a allocation for a multi storey car park and Community Hub as part of a mixed use scheme.	Development opportunity that could accommodate the unit size required. Linkages to the PSA would need to be improved. Scheme would need to accord with Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport. Any development should provide a strong, high quality frontage to the ring road in order to contribute positively to the character of the area. It should take inspiration from the surrounding area and original buildings on the site.

TC50	Day Street car park	Retail opportunity for convenience/ bulky goods	Development opportunity that could accommodate the unit size required. Linkages to the PSA and across Littleton Street would need to be improved. Scheme would need to accord with Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport. The redevelopment of this site with a high quality design would improve the character of the area in a prominent location, however the setting of the Leather Museum would need to be considered so as not to dominate this building.
------	---------------------	---	--

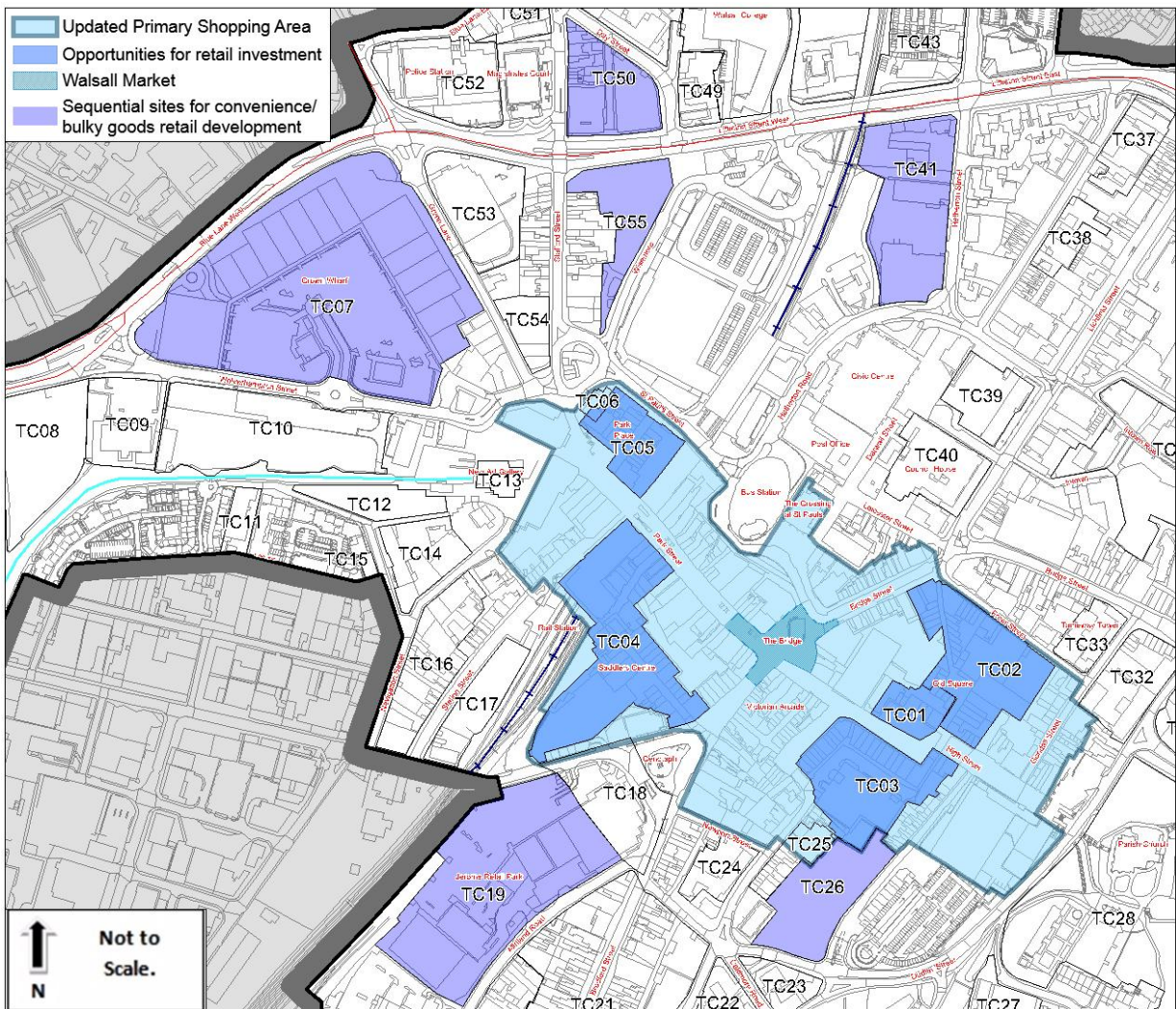


Figure 3.1 A Place for Shopping Allocations

3.2.2 Evidence

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

3.2.3 Delivery

St Matthew’s Quarter is identified in the AAP as a priority location where the Council looks to concentrate change and investment (Policy AAPINV1: Regeneration Strategy). The Council has already demonstrated its commitment to securing new retail floorspace through the direct investment made to the Primark scheme. It is anticipated that this development will act as a catalyst for further investment in retail by the private sector. The Council will support this in two main ways. First, through the strong use of planning policy to encourage investment in the PSA and deter development that will have a negative impact on the health of the centre or planned investment. Second, through Council interventions, including:

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

3.2.4 Monitoring

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

3.3 The New Walsall Market

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

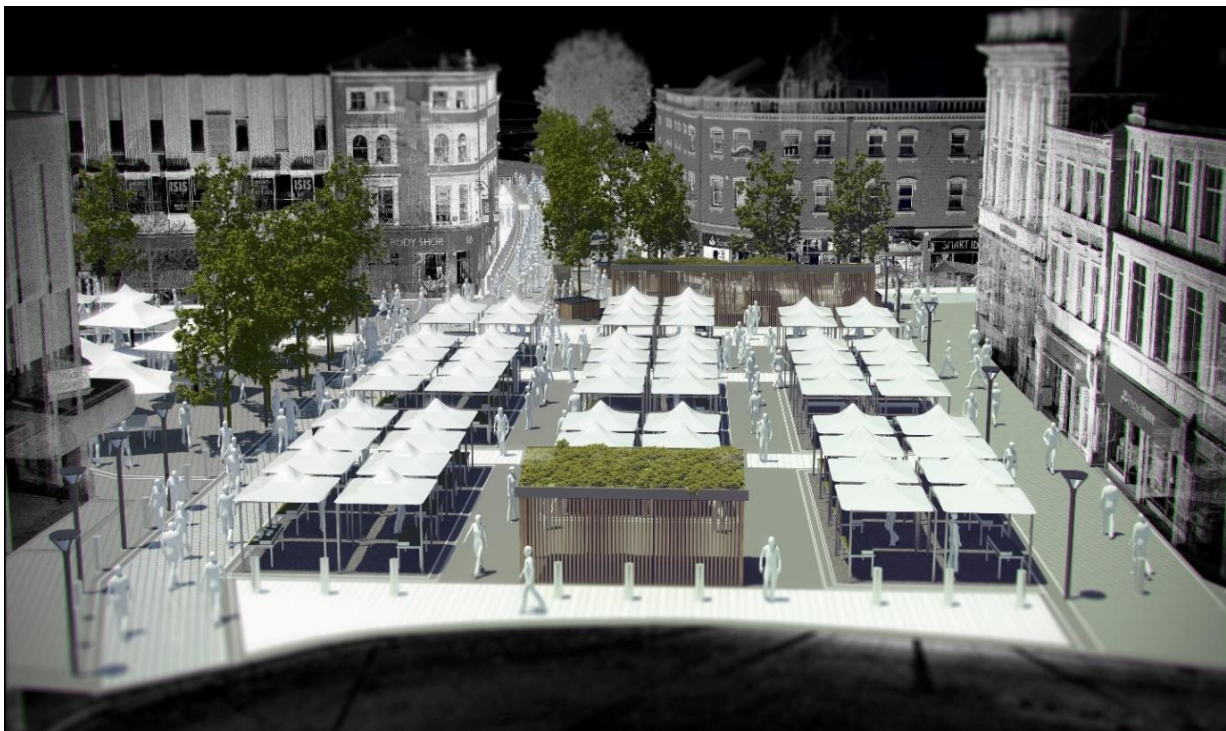


Figure 3.2 Visualisation of the new Walsall Market at The Bridge.

Policy AAPS3: The New Walsall Market

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

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

3.3.1 Policy Justification

The Council recognises the importance of the market as an attraction for visitors and the role it plays in meeting the needs of the local community. It is also recognised that the market is a historic feature of the centre and plays an important role in its character. As the Characterisation Study states the Bridge is the historic heart of the town and acts as a critical crossroad in the town centre. The Council has committed to investing in the new market at The Bridge, including public realm improvements (as per planning application 14/1871/FL) and this planned investment is reflected in the allocation on the AAP Policies Map. This investment should help to address the weaknesses in the public realm identified in the Characterisation Study. The policy also recognises this investment and looks to ensure the market's attractiveness is maintained and increased in the future. Proposals for edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail developments will be expected to consider the impact on the market as part of impact assessments to ensure there is no detrimental impact on the market's viability.

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

3.3.2 Evidence

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

3.3.3 Delivery

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

3.3.4 Monitoring

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

4. A Place for Business



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

4.1 Delivering New Office Development

Delivering new office space and encouraging businesses into Walsall town centre is crucial for the health of the Borough. New office developments will create jobs, diversify Walsall's economy and result in more people spending money in the town centre.



Figure 4.1 Jhoots Pharmacy headquarters, Littleton Street

Policy AAPB1: Office Developments

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

- a) Focussing new office investment in the Gigaport area as identified by Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport;**
- b) Identifying sites where town centre uses, including office development, is appropriate as shown by mixed use development opportunities on the AAP Policies Map;**
- c) Encouraging the refurbishment of existing office stock especially in the areas identified on the AAP Policies Map:-**
 - TC06 Townend House**
 - TC24 Lower Hall Lane/ Newport Street**
 - TC32 Regina Court**
 - TC33 Tameway Tower**
- d) Encouraging the use of upper floors for offices; and**
- e) Requiring applications for new office developments above 500sqm outside of the Gigaport area to be supported by an impact assessment demonstrating there will be no negative impact on the delivery of the Gigaport.**

4.1.1 Policy Justification

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TC32	Regina Court	Opportunities for investment in office stock (also could form part of a mixed use development)	Office building that would benefit from refurbishment. Office reconfiguration could be undertaken without harming the character of the area, and would actually improve it.
TC33	Tameway Tower	Opportunities for investment in office stock	Office building that would benefit from refurbishment. A proposal for conversion to flats is yet to be implemented. Office reconfiguration could be undertaken without harming the character of the area, and would actually improve it.

4.1.2 Evidence

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

4.1.3 Delivery

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

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

- Creating the right environment through public realm, road improvements and improved linkages (see Policy AAPLV7: Enhancing the Public Realm, all the policies within Chapter 7: Transport, Movement and Accessibility and also Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport);
- Promoting the town centre for inward investment for public and private sector office relocations;

- Delivering the other improvements to the town centre as proposed in the Plan, including increased leisure provision and an improved retail offer to make the centre an attractive place to invest in but also to work in;
- Using the WMBC’s covenant in order to improve scheme viability (i.e. acting as the rental guarantor to encourage development);
- Strategic acquisitions / assembly of development opportunity sites (using the Council’s powers of compulsory purchase where necessary) to enable delivery;
- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery, including site clearance and remediation;
- Taking a direct development role (repeating the role the Council played in successfully delivering the Primark/Co-op scheme)
- Developing strategies to ensure that occupiers and developers have the right infrastructure and where necessary supporting the provision of town centre infrastructure.

4.1.4 Monitoring

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

4.2 Walsall Social Enterprise Zone

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

Policy AAPB2: Social Enterprise Zone

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

a) Designating the area around the Goldmine Centre (TC25) as shown on the AAP Policies Map as a Social Enterprise Zone. Within this area the following uses will be acceptable as part of social enterprise development:-

- Community and cultural uses;**
- Educational uses;**
- Small scale office developments; and**
- Live work units.**

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

4.2.1 Policy Justification

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

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



Figure 4.2 The Goldmine Centre, Lower Hall Lane

4.2.2 Evidence

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

4.2.3 Delivery

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

4.2.4 Monitoring

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

4.3 Protecting Walsall’s Industrial Uses

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

Policy AAPB3: Town Centre Employment Land

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

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

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

Consider for Release Employment Sites:

Site Reference	Site Name
TC11	Kirkpatricks, Charles Street
TC15	FE Towe Ltd, Charles Street
TC16	Station Street
TC20 / 21	Midland Road / Bradford Street area
TC20	Midland Road
TC22	Vicarage Place/ Caldmore Road
TC23	Caldmore Road/ Upper Hall Lane
TC27	New Street
TC30	Ablewell Street east (Bank Street)
TC30	Ablewell Street east (Paddock Lane)

TC30	Ablewell Street east (Acorn Centre)
TC30	Ablewell Street east (Balls Street)
TC34	Intown area
TC34	Intown area (Intown Row/ Lower Rushall Street)
TC35	Upper Rushall Street/ Holtshill Lane
TC38	Lower Forster Street
TC46	East of Portland Street (Corner of Portland Street)
TC46 / 48	East of Portland Street (Garden Street) / 21 Portland Street
TC47	North of Portland Street (John Street)
TC47	North of Portland Street area
TC47	North of Portland Street (Eccles Foundry)

4.3.1 Policy Justification

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

The remaining industrial land in the town centre is allocated as “consider for release” from employment use and appropriate town centre uses are suitable if the current uses relocate. Generally the movement of industry out of the town centre is supported as this will allow for centre uses such as offices. There may, however, be some cases where sites for research and development of products or processes (B1b) and for light industrial uses (B1c) will be acceptable in the town centre as part of mixed use or office developments.

Any change of this land from employment would be subject to BCCS policies EMP 1-5 and DEL2 (bullet points 1 and 2 and the final paragraph) which act to protect employment. Proposals for alternative uses on sites which are considered for release employment land will need to accord with the policies in this plan and policies set out in Walsall’s Local Plan.

4.3.2 Evidence

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

4.3.3 Delivery

The Council aims to protect active industrial uses within the centre, as set out in the policy, but where appropriate will provide support in finding alternative suitable premises or sites to aid in the relocation of industry out of the centre. This will be a particular priority for the Council where the location of industry is preventing the comprehensive approach to redevelopment of sites for centre uses. The identification of appropriate sites is supported by the Site Allocation Document which provides a portfolio of sites for industrial development. The delivery of former industrial sites within the centre for appropriate town centre uses will be supported by the Council in a number of ways as set out throughout the plan.

4.3.4 Monitoring

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



Figure 4.3 Albert Jagger, Green Lane

5. A Place for Leisure



Walsall needs to offer a combined shopping and leisure experience, including restaurants, cafés and bars which attract shoppers and encourage longer stays. The provision of cultural, visitor, entertainment and leisure facilities are a vital component in ensuring the town functions well, particularly in the evening. Attracting visitors to the town is an effective way of boosting Walsall's economy. The policies and proposals in this chapter look to develop Walsall's leisure offer and protect the current facilities, reflecting AAP objectives 1, 2, 5, 7, 8 and 10.

5.1 Making Walsall a Leisure Destination

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



Figure 5.1 The Light cinema and restaurants, Wolverhampton Street

Policy AAPLE1: New Leisure Developments

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

- a) Focussing new leisure developments at Walsall Waterfront as in accordance with Policy AAPINV4: Walsall Waterfront;**
- b) Supporting leisure investment in other areas within the AAP boundary where it can be shown that the proposals are in accordance with other policies in Walsall's Local Plan and will not jeopardise the delivery of Walsall Waterfront;**
- c) Supporting A3, A4 and A5 uses that are compatible with existing A1 uses throughout the town centre including within the Primary Shopping Area as in accordance with Policy AAPS1: Primary Shopping Area;**
- d) Requiring drive-through take-away restaurants to be well linked to the town centre, be accessible to all including pedestrians, connect well to the Primary Shopping Area and mitigate any potential impact on the highway;**
- e) Requiring development proposals to include measures to design out crime and reduce anti-social behaviour to contribute towards the creation of a strong evening and night-time economy which is safe and welcoming; and**
- f) Residential and other developments that prejudice the centre's commercial, leisure and evening economy by conflicting with surrounding leisure uses will not be supported.**

5.1.1 Policy Justification

Leisure uses are performing an increasingly important role in town centres as a result of changes in consumer habits, with people increasingly seeking a varied experience from their trips into town centres. For example, visitors to leisure attractions often contribute significantly through 'spin -off' trade to retail in the centre. For the purpose of this policy leisure uses include D2 Assembly and leisure along with some D1 uses which attract a large amount of visitors such as a museum. There are other uses which fall into no specific planning class order, such as nightclubs and theatres which will also be considered as leisure. A3 Restaurants and A4 Drinking establishments along with A5 hot food take-away and drive-through takeaways are also considered as ancillary leisure uses in this context.

A vibrant evening economy with a mix of bars and restaurants will contribute to enhancing the town's vitality and viability and is also important in supporting a residential offer in the centre, making it an attractive place to live, as well as making it feel safer, particularly at night. The night-time offer in Walsall town centre is currently dominated by drinking venues, and more is needed to encourage workers to remain in the town centre after work, or to encourage families to stay after visiting the town centre for other purposes such as shopping. The AAP looks to address this issue by building on the cinema development which is currently under construction, to promote Walsall Waterfront as a leisure destination providing family orientated restaurants and a leisure offer that differs from the current provision.

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

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

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

5.1.2 Evidence

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

5.1.3 Delivery

A key part of improving Walsall’s leisure offer is well underway with the construction of a new cinema at Walsall Waterfront. This scheme includes family orientated restaurants and will create a high quality location at the canalside, building on the surrounding leisure uses of the Art Gallery and hotel. It is anticipated that following the opening of this new facility further leisure development will be attracted to the area, securing the second phase of the Waterfront cinema scheme.

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

- Using the WMBC’s covenant in order to improve scheme viability (i.e. acting as the rental guarantor to encourage development);
- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery including site clearance and remediation;
- Strategic acquisitions / assembly of development opportunity sites (using the Council’s powers of compulsory purchase where necessary) to enable delivery;
- Developing strategies to ensure that developers have the right infrastructure and where necessary supporting the provision of town centre infrastructure.

5.1.4 Monitoring

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

5.2 Enhancing Walsall's Sports and Cultural Facilities

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

Policy AAPLE2: Sport and Cultural Facilities

The centre is the most accessible location for key sport and cultural facilities serving the Borough as a whole. The centre's role as a key location for facilities will be supported by the following proposals:

- a) Gala Baths (TC39) will be protected and invested in as the key location for sport provision in the centre;**
- b) Walsall Library (TC39) will be protected and where possible invested in as a key cultural facility in the centre;**
- c) Walsall Leather Museum (TC49) will be expanded at its current location to include Walsall Museum and Walsall Local History Centre;**
- d) The Town Hall (TC40) will be promoted as a venue for events and concerts;**
- e) Walsall Art Gallery (TC13) will be protected as a key visitor attraction and cultural destination. The Council will look to enhance the environment in which the building sits and protect views to the building (Policies AAPLV6 and AAPLV7); and**
- f) The public space at The Bridge will be promoted as an area for community events and performances as protected by Policy AAPS3: Walsall Market.**

5.2.1 Policy Justification

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

As part of the commitment to get *more people, more active, more often*, the Council has invested £24m into the building of Bloxwich and Oak Park Active Living Centres. In addition, a further £1m has been committed to improving Walsall Gala Baths. The

explicit intent of the Gala Baths scheme is to extend the life of the facility to secure town centre active leisure provision for at least the next 10 years. The project focuses on reconfiguring and renovating the facility to make it capable of meeting modern standards and customer expectations. Key elements of work include: permanently sectioning the old 33.3m pool into a standard-sized 25m pool and learner pool, redevelopment of the changing rooms into a modern changing village and the refurbishment of the reception area.

The Council is also looking to secure funding for a consolidated Heritage Centre bringing together Walsall Museum, the Leather Museum and the Local History Centre. Significant work has been done to prepare a Stage One application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a single Heritage Centre for the Borough on the site of the Leather Museum. This will be the focus for heritage services and provide an integrated, accessible centre for all Walsall’s history resources and their display. The Council is committed to such facilities remaining in the centre and this policy looks to encourage this approach.

5.2.2 Evidence

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

5.2.3 Delivery

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

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

5.2.4 Monitoring

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

5.3 Hotel, Conference and Banqueting Provision

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

Policy AAPLE3: Hotel, Conference and Banqueting Provision

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

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

5.3.1 Policy Justification

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

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

The areas considered most suitable have been chosen because:

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

5.3.2 Evidence

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

5.3.3 Delivery

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

- Using the WMBC's covenant in order to improve scheme viability (i.e. acting as the rental guarantor to encourage development);
- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery including site assembly, site clearance and remediation;
- Developing strategies to ensure that developers have the right infrastructure and where necessary supporting the provision of town centre infrastructure.

5.3.4 Monitoring

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

5.4 Walsall Canal

The canal is one of Walsall's most defining historical and environmental assets, and so its preservation and enhancement is considered to be crucial. This policy aims to protect the canal but also to promote it as a place for leisure and a destination in Walsall for visitors and residents.



Figure 5.2 Walsall Canal

Policy AAPLE4: Walsall Canal

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

- a) Encouraging the provision of secure moorings, other canalside facilities and environmental improvements that will enhance the attractiveness and recreational potential of the canal network;
- b) Ensuring all development alongside and near the canal positively relates to the opportunity presented by the waterway, to achieve high standards of

design, and to be sensitively integrated with the canal. Where applicable, retain, incorporate and enhance surviving canalside buildings, structures and features of heritage value;

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

d) Requiring development opportunities adjacent to the canal to maintain or improve access to and along the canal network, particularly for walking and cycling, and where possible improve or connect to the Borough's wider Greenway Network; and

e) Where possible, incorporating Green Infrastructure as part of development proposals that will complement the canal network environment by providing a natural setting and improving the ecological value of the network.

5.4.1 Policy Justification

The canal forms an important network for pedestrians and cyclists to navigate into the town centre. It also has high ecological value and provides linkages to areas of the Borough's industrial heritage. As such, it forms a crucial part of the environmental infrastructure network in Walsall. Any development next to the canal should improve the canal corridor through sensitive design and landscaping. Where feasible and practical developments should look to incorporate some form of edge softening and enhance the canal's value as a wildlife corridor.

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

These important environmental assets provide a range of benefits including, for example, providing leisure and recreational facilities, forming part of wildlife corridors, providing space for pedestrian and cycle routes, and offering opportunities for climate change mitigation.

5.4.2 Evidence

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

5.4.3 Delivery

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

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

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

5.4.4 Monitoring

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

6. A Place for Living



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

6.1 Providing New Homes in the Town Centre

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

Policy AAPLV1: Residential Developments

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

i) Allocating the following sites for residential as shown on the AAP Policies Map:-

- TC11 Kirkpatricks, Charles Street
- TC15 FE Towe Ltd, Charles Street;

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

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

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

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

ii) Safe and secure environments;

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

iv) Sufficient protection against air (AAPINV7b) and noise pollution (AAPINV7c) through design and orientation of dwellings along with other appropriate measures.

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

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

e) Schemes (other than the two sites allocated) that propose solely residential uses will be required to demonstrate that the proposal supports and does not prejudice the centre's retail, commercial and leisure function.

6.1.1 Policy Justification

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

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

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

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

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

The BCCS encourages higher density housing in town centre locations with good transport connections as this is the most sustainable approach. There are some sites that may provide an opportunity for types of residential development other than flats, such as town houses or individual homes, especially at sites towards the edge of the centre. This would allow for a wider variety of housing needs to be met in the

centre and help create a diverse centre community. Housing for people with special needs, nursing homes and care homes are also all considered suitable residential uses for the town centre.

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

6.1.2 Evidence

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

6.1.3 Delivery

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

- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery including site assembly, site clearance and remediation;
- Developing strategies to ensure that occupiers and developers have the right infrastructure and where necessary supporting the provision of town centre infrastructure.

6.1.4 Monitoring

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

6.2 Promoting Educational Facilities



Figure 6.1 Walsall College, Littleton Street West

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

Policy AAPLV2: Education

a) The Council will support the further development of Walsall College at the following sites and as shown on the AAP Policies Map:-

- TC46 East of Portland Street
- TC48 21 Portland Street

b) The above sites and any further expansion of the College will be expected to:

i) Support the creation of a high quality education campus;

ii) Be of a high quality design and have a comprehensive approach to the use of land and buildings;

iii) Provide strong and safe links to the centre – especially across the ring road and to the Primary Shopping Area;

iv) Relate positively with the surrounding Gigaport development;

v) Promote sustainable transport methods and links to public transport;

vi) Where appropriate provide community access to facilities; and

vii) Consider Secured by Design principles and create a safe environment.

b) Other higher or further educational facilities and ancillary accommodation will be supported within the centre. Proposals will be expected to:

i) Support the creation of a high quality education campus;

ii) Be of a high quality design and have a comprehensive approach to land and building use;

iii) Provide strong and safe links to the centre – especially across the ring road and to the Primary Shopping Area;

iv) Promote sustainable transport methods and links to public transport;

v) Where appropriate provide community access to facilities;

vi) Be consistent with Policy AAPLV1 if providing living accommodation; and

vii) Consider Secured by Design principles and create a safe environment.

6.2.1 Policy Justification

The College provides Walsall's high proportion of young people with access to vocational courses, and offers education and training for adults. It has undertaken a number of large scale building schemes in the centre over recent years, most recently the Business and Sports Hub.

It is important that the College has space to continue to grow and that other educational facilities that serve a wide catchment area are also accommodated in the centre. Space has been allocated for the growth of the College in the AAP and the Council's aspiration is for the creation of a campus with all the education and

training uses well connected and providing a safe and desirable learning environment.

Other educational facilities will be supported including Further Education provision. The criteria are provided to ensure a high quality learning environment is created and that facilities are safe and accessible. Educational uses are considered a sensitive use in terms of air quality and developers will need to accord with policies AAPINV7b and BCCS ENV8 Air Quality.

Current College facilities and sites allocated for expansion: Further information on sites

Site Reference	Site Name	Allocation	Site Details
TC45	Walsall College	Education	Existing educational use, unlikely to change. The creation of a high quality campus environment is encouraged.
TC44	Walsall College Business and Sports Hub	Education	Educational facilities at the front of the site positively contribute to the streetscene. Further educational facilities to the rear are encouraged in order to create a campus environment.
TC46	East of Portland Street	Office Education	Site anticipated for expansion by Walsall College. The Grade II listed Wisemore House should be brought back into use and its setting improved. The creation of a high quality campus environment is encouraged.
TC48	21 Portland Street	Office Education	Site in use for educational training.

6.2.2 Evidence

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

6.2.3 Delivery

Walsall College has a proven track record in delivering high quality developments, the most recent of which is the Business and Sports Hub which will significantly improve the facilities. The delivery of further improvements to the College is crucial in ensuring it provides a high quality learning environment attracting increased numbers of students to study in the centre. The Council will support the College's future development by:

- Involvement in land assembly as previously demonstrated with the Walsall Campus scheme;
- Detailed pre-application discussions to develop high quality schemes;
- Supporting the College with submissions for funding.

6.2.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLV2.1 - Additional educational floorspace in the town centre.	Increase over the plan period

6.3 The Provision of Health Care Facilities

It is important that the communities in and surrounding Walsall town centre have access to healthcare and that current facilities are protected.

Policy AAPLV3: Health Care Provision

It is important that the town centre meets the healthcare needs of the surrounding community; this will be promoted by:

- a) Supporting the further development of healthcare facilities within the centre;**
- b) Discouraging the loss of any healthcare facility from the town centre;**
- c) Ensuring the links to Manor Hospital are maintained and where possible enhanced; and**
- d) Supporting proposals for uses linked to the hospital where appropriate.**

6.3.1 Policy Justification

There is a current planning consent to relocate the NHS Walk-in Centre from its current location in Digbeth (TC01) to a new location in the Saddler's Centre on Bridgeman Street (TC04), which is consistent with this policy. Healthcare facilities such as the NHS Walk-in Centre, doctors' surgeries, dentists and other facilities, need to be in accessible locations so that the whole community can access them. There are also a number of households within the town centre who will need access to healthcare facilities on a regular basis. The retention and improvement of healthcare facilities within and on the edge of the centre will therefore be promoted by the Council.

The hospital is a short distance from the centre and there are already strong pedestrian links via the canal. There is also the potential that the close proximity of the hospital could trigger linked healthcare uses within the centre boundary and this policy looks to encourage such schemes. Healthcare uses may be considered a sensitive use in terms of air quality and developers will need to accord with policies AAPINV7b and BCCS ENV8 Air Quality.

6.3.2 Evidence

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

6.3.3 Delivery

The Council will support the funding of proposals for new healthcare provision and expansion to current healthcare facilities through its Public Health function in co-ordination with Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group to secure NHS and other appropriate sources of funding.

6.3.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLV3.1 - Additional healthcare facility floorspace in the town centre.	Increase over the plan period
AAPLV3.2 - Loss of significant healthcare facilities from the town centre.	None

6.4 Community Facilities in the Town Centre

It is important that the town centre meets the needs of Walsall's community. It is also the most accessible location in the Borough so should be at the heart of community activity. There are a number of community facilities already operating in the centre which should be protected but there is also the opportunity to bring groups together, providing a holistic approach to community activities in the centre.

Policy AAPLV4: Community Facilities

a) The Council will protect and enhance community facilities in the centre by ensuring any proposals that involve the loss of community facilities contribute to the overall provision of community facilities in the centre and accord with UDP Policy LC8: Local Community Facilities,

b) The development of a new community hub in the town centre will be promoted to bring together community facilities and services into an accessible building serving the whole community. Sites will be considered appropriate where they meet the following criteria:

i) Good links with public transport;

ii) Provision of, or close proximity to, car parking;

iii) High visibility in a prominent location; and

iv) Highly accessible design.

6.4.1 Policy Justification

Community infrastructure provides an important role in the economic and cultural diversity of the town centre, and is vital to both town centre residents and those from across the Borough. Community facilities include places of worship, community centres and other meeting places. Any proposal that would result in the loss of a facility would have to meet the requirements of saved UDP Policy LC8: Local Community Facilities, which in summary requires proposals to show that the community needs can be met elsewhere, there is no longer a need or that the facility is not viable.

The proposal for a community hub aims to provide a focal point for facilities, to foster greater community activity and bring residents, the local business community,

current community facility providers and smaller organisations together to improve the viability of such facilities in the centre. Whilst there are no firm proposals for this development it is a scheme the Council fully supports and as such needs to be represented in the AAP. If there is demand and/or need for a community hub Challenge Block (TC41) has been identified as the most suitable location as it is well located in terms of both visibility and accessibility (see Policy AAPINV3(b)). Criteria has been developed for considering proposals at other sites to ensure that the hub is accessible given it is likely to be used by visiting members of the public.

6.4.2 Evidence

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

6.4.3 Delivery

The priority for the delivery of community facilities in the centre is to provide a community hub. This is considered to be the most sustainable way to ensure the future of community groups as resources can be shared in an accessible location. The Council will work in partnership with the public sector and community groups to support the delivery of the hub, providing assistance in applications for funding, Council expertise and encouraging the use of Council land to aid with delivery. Other community facilities will also be supported in the centre and the Council will where appropriate aid community groups in finding suitable sites/buildings and with applications for funding.

6.4.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLV4.1 - Additional floorspace in community use in the town centre.	Extended during the plan period
AAPLV4.2 - Loss of significant community facilities from the town centre.	None

6.5 Protecting the Character of Walsall Town Centre

Walsall's historic environment is a set of unique asset that showcases the evolution of the town through its historic growth, industrial legacy and the influence of various styles of architecture which have created the vibrant townscape that we see today.

Developments that embrace the best viable use of heritage assets should be secured or encouraged in order to enable sustainable development, especially in the Conservation Areas, which will lead to socioeconomic benefits such as an improved environment for residents and increased investment in the town centre.

Policy AAPLV5: Protecting and Enhancing Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness

a) New developments should be designed to strengthen local character and identity, with particular reference to the Characterisation Analysis and Sensitivity Plans featured in the town centre Characterisation Study. Developments should also respect any heritage assets (both surviving buildings/ features and buried archaeological deposits) identified in the Characterisation Study, on the Heritage List for England or at the Wolverhampton and Walsall Historic Environment Record.

b) Development proposals affecting sites identified as heritage assets or as areas of high sensitivity to change should demonstrate how they will be conserved and enhanced including, where appropriate:

i) Consideration of the need to protect views and enhance the setting of heritage assets;

ii) Consideration of the sensitivity to change, opportunities and constraints of the area as defined by the Characterisation Study;

iii) Opportunities to promote the enjoyment of and access to the cultural heritage of the area for the benefit of the local community, such as improving access and providing interpretation; and

iv) Ensuring good design standards are addressed, with reference to Policy AAPLV6 and the Characterisation Study.

c) The Council will encourage the sensitive re-use of those buildings of special architectural or historic interest in accordance with BCCS Policy ENV2 and other Policies Walsall's Local Plan.

d) Development that would result in substantial harm to or demolition of a Heritage Asset will not be permitted unless, in addition to any requirements contained in national guidance, either it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following criteria are met:

i) All reasonable alternatives that would avoid harmful adverse impacts have been fully explored and are not feasible or viable;

ii) The proposed development is of high quality and designed to reinforce and enhance local character and distinctiveness;

iii) All options to secure the future of the asset have been fully explored, including grant funding and disposal to a charitable organisation or community group

iv) A mitigation strategy has been prepared to minimise harm and provide for an appropriate level of salvage and/or recording; and

e) Where there is archaeological potential then the development will be required to undertake a desk based archaeological assessment, and where necessary a field based survey, by a qualified professional.

6.5.1 Policy Justification

The historic environment is a finite resource that makes an important contribution to the character and sense of place of Walsall town centre, and has the capability to provide a positive contribution to the economic, social and environmental viability of the town centre. This should be facilitated and encouraged through the creation of a distinctive, visually attractive town centre which integrates new development into the historic environment through the innovative use of design reflecting the heritage of the area, local materials and high quality architectural design.

Applications which enhance the character of the Conservation Areas should be encouraged in order to improve their significance and protect and enhance their contribution towards the local character and distinctiveness of the area.

A detailed Characterisation Study of the town centre has been carried out to evidence the AAP. The aims of the study were to define the local character and distinctive features of the area and recommend the capacity for change and

opportunities afforded by these as ways that sub-character areas and their associated assets can contribute towards the regeneration objectives of the AAP.

The Characterisation Study can be used by everyone involved in planning for the future of the town centre AAP area to ensure that developments take into account the known heritage assets and locally distinctive elements of the area, as well as their sensitivity to change. It includes a gazetteer of the sub-character areas identified through the study providing information on the make up of the area, its significance, its sensitivity to and capacity for change and the potential opportunities afforded by each of the areas.

The sensitivity analysis (figure 6.2) and character analysis plan (figure 6.3) give an idea of the areas of the town centre that have potential to be catalysts for regeneration. Information from the Characterisation Study has been provided against the sites within Chapter 8: A Place for Investment to provide a summary for developers.

The Characterisation Study provides information that should be used in conjunction with other sources of heritage data, including the Walsall Historic Environment Record, to inform site appraisals and development proposals. Design and Access Statements should clearly set out, explain and justify design solutions and demonstrate how these will achieve locally responsive outcomes that will contribute towards strengthening the local character and identity of the town centre, in line with BCCS Policy ENV2. This will ensure that new development acknowledges the past and respects rare survivors of earlier times. Where there is no alternative to loss, recording must be carried out by a qualified professional and the Wolverhampton and Walsall Historic Environment Record updated.

Where there is potential for archaeological deposits to be present, in accordance with Local Plan policies, a detailed desk-based assessment will be required, and potentially evaluation, excavation or a watching brief if preservation in situ is not possible.

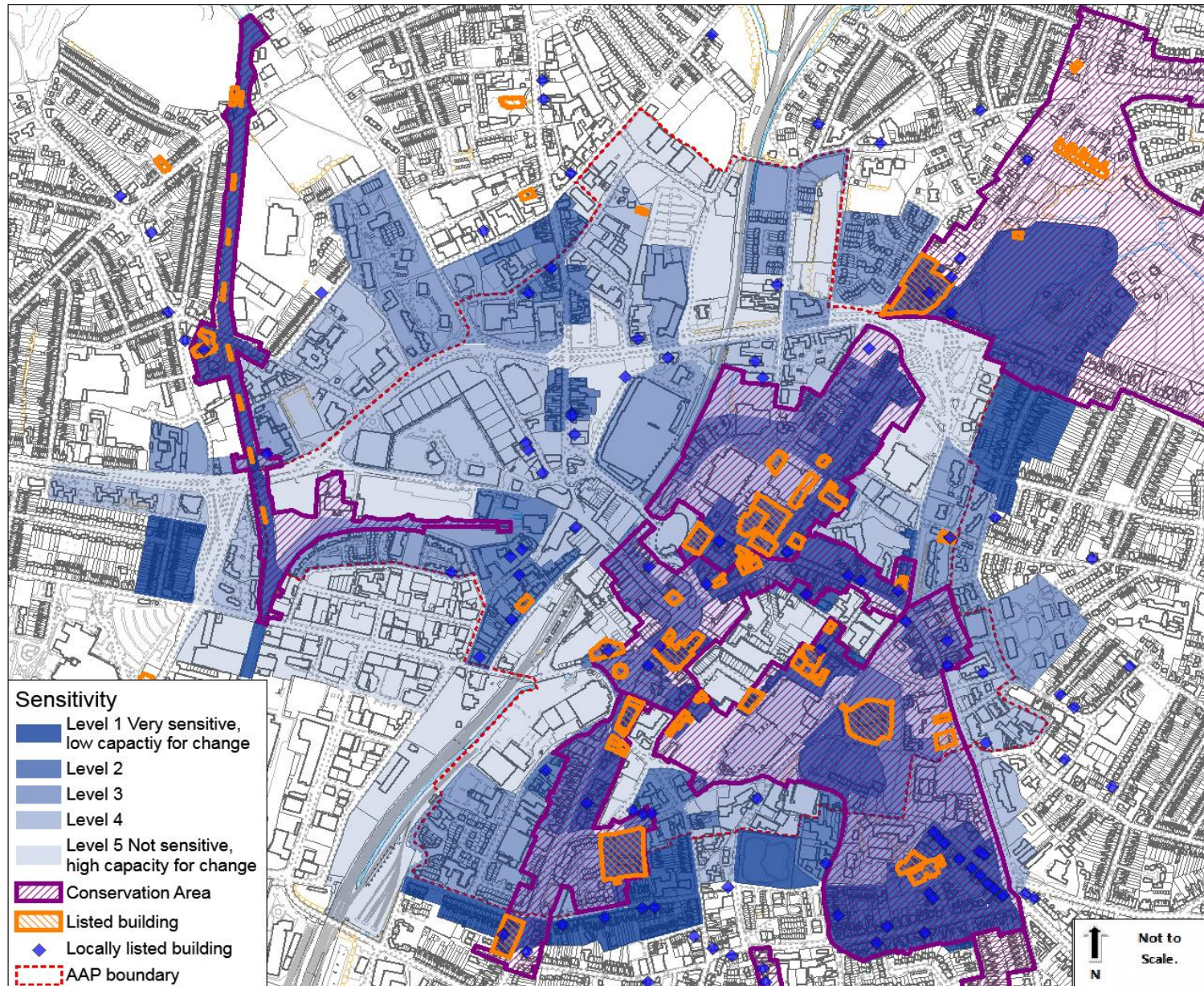


Figure 6.2 Historic sensitivity and heritage assets

6.5.2 Evidence

- Conservation Areas boundaries.
- National Heritage List for England – Historic England.
- Heritage at Risk Register – Historic England.
- Wolverhampton and Walsall Historic Environment Record.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

6.5.3 Delivery

The Town Centre Characterisation Study has been developed as a direct tool to aid the delivery of schemes that will enhance the character of the centre and the Council will work with developers and investors to ensure that the character of Walsall is reflected in schemes. The Council will also look to secure funding through partnership working with Historic England and the Heritage Lottery Fund to improve historic and listed buildings, such as the Bridge Street Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme which provided grants to repair, restore and reuse its historic buildings between 2007-2011. £800,000 of public sector funding was spent on 9 retail and residential properties to create 7 new jobs, 3 new businesses and 1,000sqm of refurbished floorspace.

6.5.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLV5.1 (BCCS LOI ENV2) - the proportion of planning permissions granted in accordance with Conservation / Historic Environment Section or Advisor recommendations.	100%
AAPLV5.2 - Number of buildings or conservation areas on the 'at risk' register.	Reduction over the plan period
AAPLV5.3 - Protection and retention of listed and locally listed buildings within then town centre.	100%

6.6 Securing Good Design in Walsall Town Centre

New buildings in the town centre should improve and enrich the quality and image of the Borough through high quality design which is sensitive to Walsall's historic character.

Policy AAPLV6: Securing Good Design

a) New development must create a positive environment with an identity that relates to the specific character of Walsall and its historic context. New buildings should:

i) be of appropriate scale and massing to the streetscene;

ii) provide active, distinctive frontages, avoiding blank elevations;

iii) consider safety and security, referencing 'Secured by Design' principles; and

iv) consider the need to protect views of landmark buildings as identified in the AAP Policies Map, and enhance the setting of sites.

b) Except where it can be proven that a development will not proceed, any proposal of more than 4 storeys in height will have to demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on views of any landmark buildings (as identified in the AAP Policies Map) or the character of any Conservation Area, and that the highest possible quality of design has been achieved.

c) Developments at locations identified in the AAP Policies Map as a 'Gateway site for high quality design' will need to demonstrate that the scale, massing, and building layout is of sufficient quality for a prominent site, and that the highest possible quality of design has been achieved.

6.6.1 Policy Justification

As shown in the AAP Policies Map and discussed in section 6.5.1, much of Walsall town centre is covered by Conservation Areas, which are subject to national and local policies to protect their character and distinctiveness. New developments should be designed to complement the historic elements of the town with high quality, visually attractive buildings and spaces.

A Shopfront Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted by the Council in April 2015. This sets out design principles for shopfront proposals and should be adhered to where appropriate.

The Characterisation Study highlighted key buildings which serve as local landmarks, and the setting and views of such buildings should be protected in order to retain their landmark nature. Landmark buildings and heritage assets add character to the townscape and provide points of reference for those who live, work and visit the town centre. Therefore it is important that views towards these landmark buildings are preserved, and new views and improved settings are created, where possible.

It is considered that most buildings within the town centre are less than 4 storeys in height, and therefore new buildings of a similar height are unlikely to significantly affect the Walsall townscape. New developments above 4 storeys in height will reach above the majority of buildings in the centre and therefore the visual impact of any proposed development above this height should be carefully considered, particularly any impact on landmark buildings. Very tall buildings are likely to be visible from a wide area, and so achieving a high quality of design will be particularly important for preserving the character of the town centre.

The Characterisation Study also identified certain prominent sites which should be the focus for new landmark buildings. On these sites high design standards will be required in order to improve the image and identity of the town centre. Policies AAPINV2-6 set out policies for specific areas of the town centre, including any design and scale considerations.

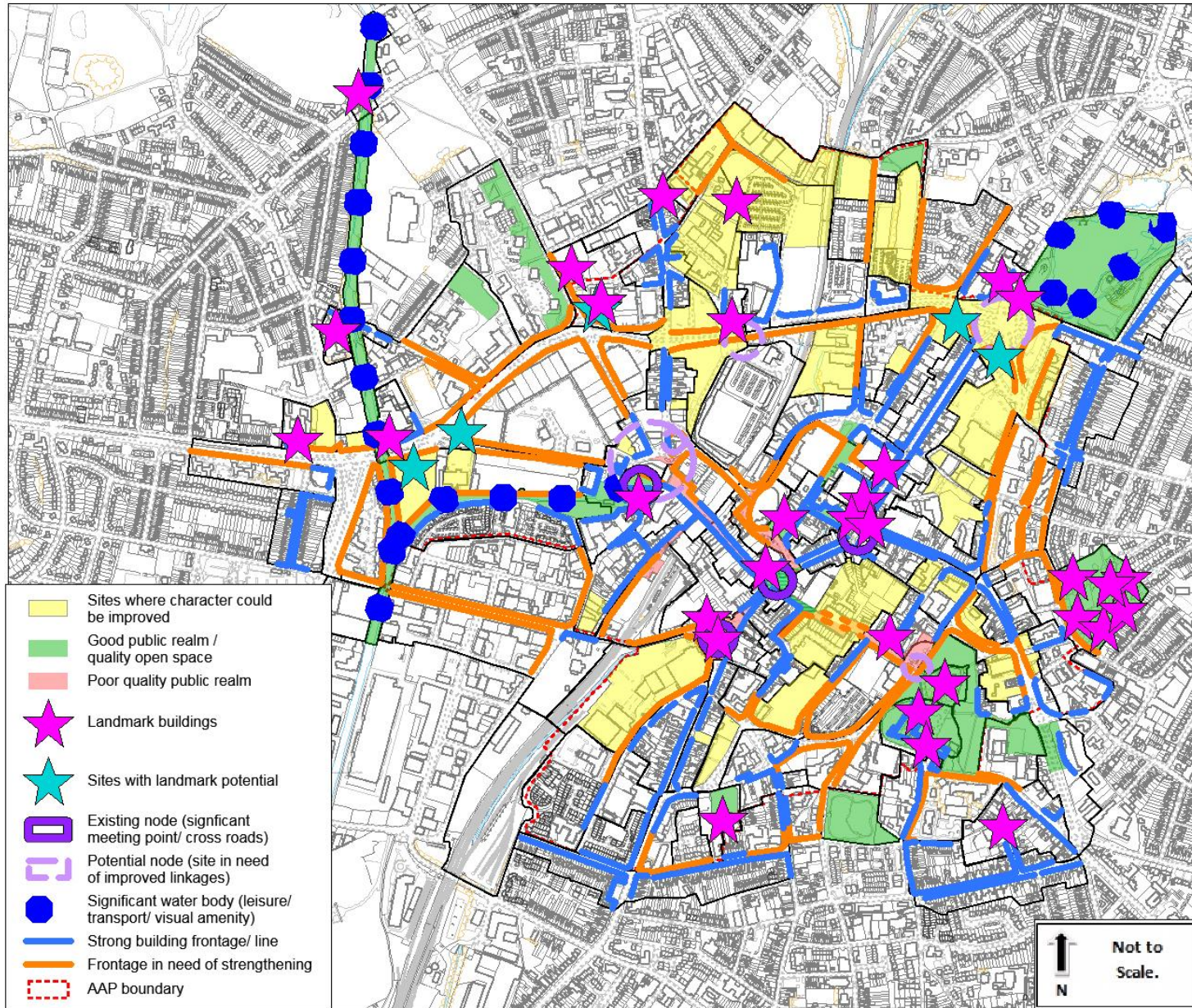


Figure 6.3 Analysis of the character of the town centre.

6.6.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Walsall Council Draft Public Realm study (March 2016) Walsall Council.
- Walsall Shop Front SPD (April 2015) Walsall Council.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

6.6.3 Delivery

The Town Centre Characterisation Study has been developed as a direct tool to aid in the delivery of high quality design in the centre and the Council will work with developers through pre-applications to ensure the design of schemes is given full consideration. The 2015 Shop Front SPD will also provide guidance to developers to aid the delivery of high quality schemes for retail.

6.6.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLV6.1 (BCCS LOI ENV2) - the proportion of planning permissions granted in accordance with Conservation / Historic Environment Section or Advisor recommendations.	100%
AAPLV6.2 - Number of buildings or conservation areas on the 'at risk' register.	Reduction over the plan period
AAPLV6.3 - The proportion of major planning permissions adequately addressing the Town Centre Characterisation Study.	100%

6.7 Enhancing the Public Realm

Public realm comprises the streets and spaces which are available for use by everyone, to walk, meet, rest and interact. The town centre's public realm influences how people perceive and experience the town centre, and improvements to the environment are required in order to attract both visitors and investment.

Policy AAPLV7: Enhancing the Public Realm

a) The Council will seek to implement a programme of improvements to key streets and spaces, as per the priority areas identified in the AAP Policies Map. Public realm improvements can include, but will not be limited to:

i) creating routes that are direct, convenient, safe, and accessible to all;

ii) enhancements to improve accessibility to public transport and increase the attractiveness of walking and cycling:

iii) using good quality hard landscaping materials which complement the setting and are easy to maintain; and

iv) where appropriate, providing high quality street furniture and soft landscaping, whilst minimising street clutter.

b) The Council will seek to maintain new and existing areas of high quality public realm, in order to protect this investment and maintain a good quality environment.

c) Proposals for new development within the town centre will be expected to contribute towards the improvement and maintenance of the public realm in that vicinity.

d) Proposals for new development will be expected to respect the historic character of the public realm in the centre and any public realm works need to show consideration for the historic character of Walsall Town Centre.

e) Proposals for public realm enhancements will be expected to consider incorporating green infrastructure into the design. This will help to improve connectivity for wildlife through the conurbation, mitigate against the impact of climate change and improve the amenity value (see also Policy AAPLV8).

6.7.1 Policy Justification

An attractive public realm enhances people's quality of life and the perception of a place. It is an integral part of the urban fabric and should make a positive contribution to reinforcing the local distinctiveness of the built environment of Walsall. Public space should be accessible to all members of the community. The public realm in Walsall town centre suffers from a lack of consistency and a wide variation in quality. While recent developments such as Waterfront South and Tesco have led to some improvements in certain areas, on the whole the public realm across the town centre would benefit from comprehensive public realm improvements, which have regard to upcoming developments in the town centre.

The public realm has a significant impact on the perception of the town centre and there are recognised economic benefits in providing a high quality environment. Furthermore, in recent discussions with agents, developers, and consultants, public realm improvements have been identified as critical investments which should not be overlooked. Improvements can also have benefits for the natural environment and help decrease flood risk through the incorporation of green infrastructure. This could take the form of street trees, SuDs, green walls and roofs (see also policy ENV8).

A network of pedestrian and cycle routes which are direct, convenient, well lit and of a safe and secure design will be promoted and where appropriate, enhancements should be made to the public realm to improve accessibility to public transport and increase the attractiveness of walking and cycling (see also the policies within Chapter 7). This may include opportunities to improve surface materials, landscaping, lighting and pedestrian signage to enhance accessibility to public transport. Improvements to pedestrian legibility are also required and are considered as part of Policy AAPT1.

Recent developments in certain parts of Walsall town centre have altered footfall patterns and have highlighted key priority areas for public realm improvements. These are shown on the AAP Policies Map and include the majority of streets and spaces within and adjacent to the PSA. Other areas within the town will be subject to environmental improvements either as new developments come forward or on a case by case basis, as budgets allow, once the priority areas have been delivered. Major schemes, including those within the Gigaport, will be expected to create a high quality public environment within and around their buildings and spaces, as set out in Policy AAPINV3.

The Bridge area will be subject to public realm improvements as part of the implementation of the planning consent for the permanent relocation of Walsall Market, and this area, along with the Civic Quarter, and any areas subject to environmental improvements in the future, will be the focus for a continuous maintenance regime in order to maintain a good quality environment.

6.7.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Walsall Council Draft Public Realm study (March 2016) Walsall Council.
- Information provided in support of planning application for the new market – reference 14/1871/FL.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

6.7.3 Delivery

In recognition of the crucial role the quality of environment plays in the success of the centre not only in terms of people’s experience but also in attracting investors, the Council is committed to funding the delivery of its public realm improvements programme. The programme of delivery of public realm schemes will relate to the priority areas identified, starting with the area around the Bridge which the Council has committed to through the planning consent for the market, followed by further improvements to Park Street. This will build on successful schemes such as the Wayfinding project and the Council will look to fund improvements when capital funding is available. Funds will also be sought from the private sector through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other mechanisms such as grant programmes.

6.7.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLV7.1 - Number of schemes delivered that include public realm improvements.	Increase over the plan period

6.8 Delivering Environmental Infrastructure

The amount, location and quality of environmental infrastructure is key to securing the sustainable regeneration of Walsall town centre. This includes protecting and enhancing the current environmental network within the centre, creating and improving links to environmental sites outside of the centre, and ensuring new development contributes to the environmental infrastructure of Walsall.

Policy AAPLV8: Environmental Infrastructure

Existing environmental networks, environmental infrastructure, including identified ecological networks, will be protected and enhanced.

Existing Assets:

a) The two Urban Open Space sites as shown by the AAP Policies Map (TC12 and TC28) will be protected and enhanced. Proposals that would result in the loss of open space will only be permitted if they are in accordance with paragraph 74 of the NPPF.

b) The canal network will be protected and enhanced as set out in Policy AAPLE4.

c) Existing trees within the town centre will be protected and maintained where feasible and additional trees and planting will be encouraged.

d) The Council will look to improve links to Walsall Arboretum for all the community as it offers a high quality open space within close distance of the centre for leisure, sport and recreation as well as being a key part of the environmental network (see Policy AAPT1).

New Developments:

e) New developments of 1,000sqm floorspace or more will be required to provide Green Roofs to reduce the impact of the heat island effect unless it can be demonstrated that is not viable or feasible to do so.

f) All development proposals and public realm improvements should consider the use of green walls, green roofs, street trees and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) (see also Policy AAPLV7 and Policy AAPINV7) in new development, particularly where there are known surface water flooding issues or where wildlife habitat connectivity could be enhanced.

g) The Council will support where feasible and deliverable local renewable energy schemes and low carbon energy projects.

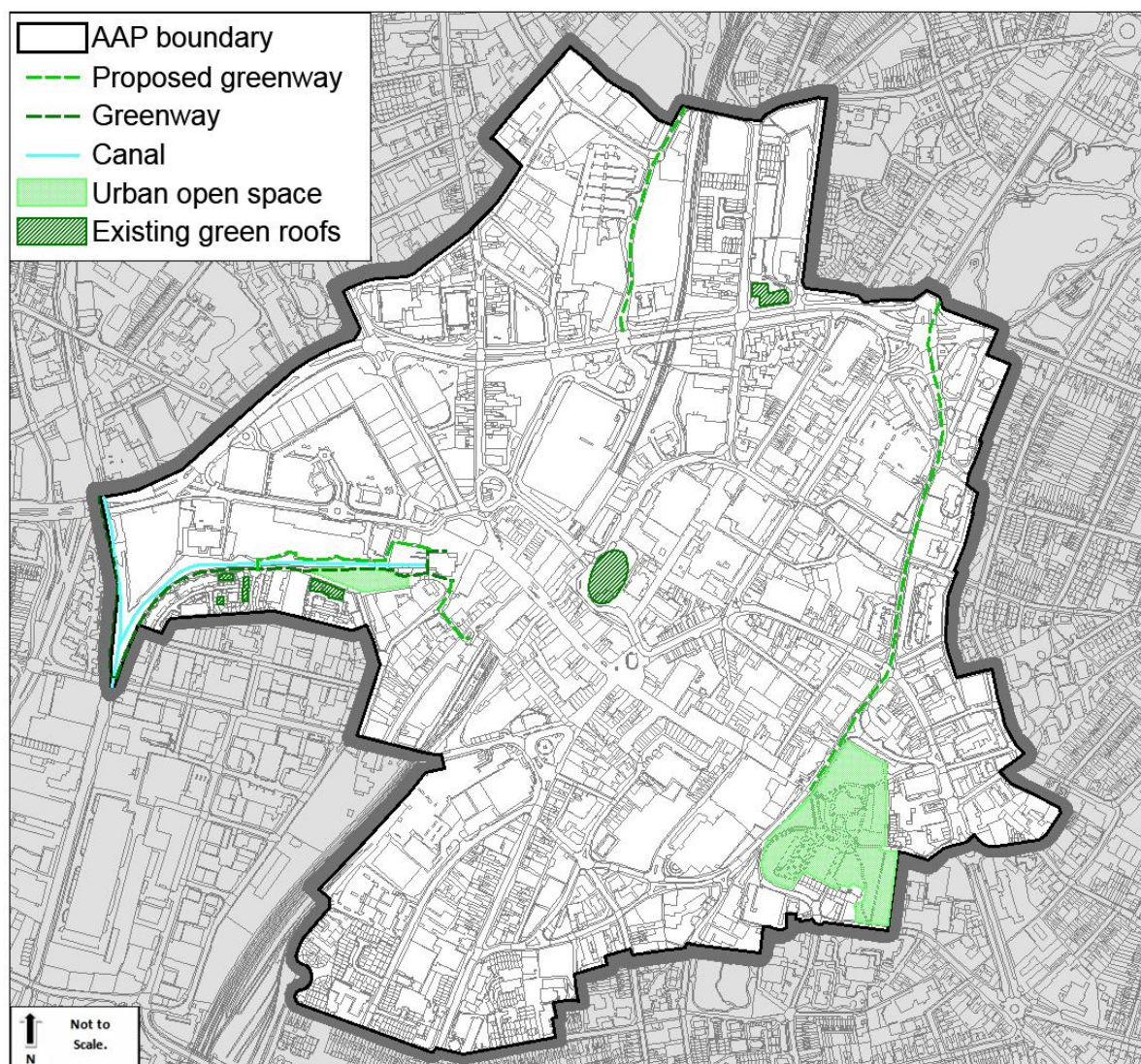


Figure 6.4 Existing Environmental Infrastructure

6.8.1 Policy Justification

A high quality environment improves the experience of using the town centre for all users, increases property values, attracts inward investment and can dramatically enhance the perception of Walsall for both regular users and people visiting the town centre for the first time. The environmental infrastructure network in Walsall should focus on protecting and, wherever possible, improving features of the town centre such as the Town Arm of the Walsall Canal, areas of Open Space or connectivity to the Arboretum. These important environmental assets collectively provide multi-functional benefits including, for example, providing leisure and recreational facilities, forming wildlife corridors, providing space for pedestrian and cycle routes, or offering opportunities for climate change mitigation and adaptation. An important priority for improving the environment of the town centre should be to improve the linkages between environmental features in and around the town centre.

Policy CSP3 of the BCCS requires development proposals to demonstrate how the network of Environmental Infrastructure (EI) will be protected, enhanced and expanded at every opportunity. This is supported by other strategic environmental policies on, for example, nature conservation (BCCS ENV1). Environmental infrastructure covers open space, sport and recreation facilities, areas of biodiversity and geodiversity importance, wildlife corridors, the canal network, watercourses, energy efficient buildings, renewable energy generation, pedestrian and cycle routes, areas and buildings of high design quality, and the special character and historic aspects of locally distinctive elements of the Black Country.

The BCCS also provides the strategic approach to Climate Change adaptation and mitigation issues in the Black Country through these environmental policies. The main issues the AAP needs to address are flood risk, urban heat island effect, strengthening ecological networks, providing and supporting renewable energy (including the potential for district heating), energy efficient buildings and improving sustainable transport. Improving green infrastructure can increase wildlife resilience, reduce flooding, reduce the urban heat island effect and increase the amount of carbon absorbed by trees.

Open space is capable of providing several multifunctional green infrastructure benefits simultaneously. These include protecting and improving ecosystems and biodiversity, improving mental and physical wellbeing through facilitating exercise, outdoor activity and community interaction; and supporting sustainable land and water management. The Council does not envisage any changes to the two sites identified as Urban Open Space and the policy looks to protect them in their entirety.

Walsall Arboretum is the Borough's flagship park and is a key location for leisure activities. Although not technically within the current town centre boundary, it is just a short walk away from the centre, and developments here will be of such significant value to the town centre that it cannot be overlooked in the AAP. The proposed Greenway in the town centre as shown on the AAP Policies Map and set out in Policy AAPT1 looks to promote better connections between the Arboretum and St Matthew's Church Open Space (TC28) as these provide the main areas of amenity open space for the surrounding community.

BCCS Policy ENV7 already looks to promote the development of renewable energy sources where the proposal accords with other policies in Walsall's Local Plan and has no significant adverse impact. The Council will be supportive of schemes proposed in the centre where they are deliverable and where they accord with the policies and proposals set out in the AAP. The plan does not allocate for any such proposals as there has been no evidence to suggest a feasible scheme can be delivered.

6.8.2 Evidence

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

6.8.3 Delivery

Some of the green infrastructure requirements set out in the above policy are required to mitigate against the impact of development and as such the inclusion of green infrastructure into schemes and/or developer contributions may be required. The impact of such requirements on the viability and therefore deliverability of schemes will be considered on a site by site basis and the Council will work with developers to understand any impacts. The Council will also look to secure green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of public realm schemes funded by the Council especially in regards to green planting.

6.8.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPLV8.1 - The proportion of major planning permissions including appropriate green infrastructure.	100%

7. Transport, Movement and Accessibility

The town centre is the most accessible location in the Borough, where the arterial transport routes meet and public transport hubs are located. Improving transport in Walsall town centre provides an opportunity to increase access to employment, education and training along with retail and leisure activities, increasing its position as the most sustainable location in the Borough, and meeting AAP Objectives 1, 7 and 10.

7.1 Improving Pedestrian Movements and Linkages throughout the Town

The movement of pedestrians into and around the town centre is critical to its economic success. There is a need to improve the quality of some of these routes and to continue maintaining existing pedestrian areas across the town centre.

Policy AAPT1: Pedestrian Movement, Access and Linkages

a) All new development will be expected to be well integrated in the centre, providing strong pedestrian linkages to and throughout the town centre. Key locations where improvements to linkages are needed have been identified on the AAP Policies Map and new development will be expected to:

i) Support the provision of new linkages particularly to key regeneration initiatives, the Primary Shopping Area and public transport facilities;

ii) Improve linkages across the ring road to ensure the safe movement of people throughout the centre and to reduce the perception of physical barriers to access;

iii) Give consideration to the ease of movement for those with limited mobility; and

iv) Where appropriate provide enhanced signage, journey information, lighting and security;

v) Improve linkages to public transport and encourage sustainable travel.

b) The Council will look to maximise the potential for safe, attractive links between open space and environmental assets through the following existing and proposed Greenways as shown on the AAP Policies Map and in accordance with UDP Policy LC5: Greenways by:

i) Protecting and maintaining the Greenway along the canal between Manor Hospital and Walsall Arboretum;

ii) Extending this current Greenway to the other side of the canal;

iii) Extending this current Greenway to Walsall Railway station;

iv) Promoting a Greenway through Walsall College to Rue Meadow Open Space; and

v) Promoting a Greenway that connects St Matthew's Urban Open Space with Walsall Arboretum (AAPLV8).

7.1.1 Policy Justification

Safe, efficient and convenient pedestrian movement into and within the centre is fundamental to supporting economic development, and attracting investment, employers and employees. A network of pedestrian and cycle routes which are direct, convenient, well lit and of a safe and secure design will be promoted and where appropriate, enhancements should be made to the public realm to improve accessibility to public transport and increase the attractiveness of walking and cycling (see also Policy AAPLV7: Enhancing the Public Realm).

Ease of movement around the centre and quality public realm also plays a role in giving the town centre a strong sense of place, and linkages between uses will encourage visitors to spend more time in the town. This is particularly important in terms of linkages between and to the PSA to support the retail offer and develop a desirable shopping experience in the centre. The areas where the Council wishes to see improvements to linkages are shown on the AAP Policies Map and set out below:

- pedestrian access across the ring road, so that sites to the north of Littleton Street are well connected to parts of the town south of the ring road
- routes from the ring road/ Gigaport area to the Primary Shopping Area
- pedestrian links between Crown Wharf and the Primary Shopping Area

- pedestrian links between the new cinema scheme and the Primary Shopping Area
- pedestrian links between the Arboretum and the core of the town centre
- pedestrian access at the junction between Bridge Street, Lichfield Street and Leicester Street
- pedestrian links between St Matthew's Church and the core of the town centre.

The movement of people within the town centre is largely influenced by the location of the three transport hubs. Accessibility between these areas needs to be improved so pedestrian journeys are quicker, safer and easier as well as more attractive to users. An important component of this would be further way-finding improvements to ensure that, in particular, new visitors to the town arriving by public transport can easily navigate and find key destinations such as the Arboretum, Art Gallery, Leather Museum, Park Street, and Crown Wharf.

The AAP Policies Map sets out one maintained Greenway and two proposed Greenways. The main purpose of the Greenway network is to provide safe, attractive, continuous routes linking built up areas to open spaces and the Countryside (saved UDP Policy LC5: Greenways). The maintained Canal Greenway connects the centre to the hospital and makes the most of the canal as a leisure destination. It is proposed to extend this Greenway to connect the route to Walsall Railway station, via Marsh Street and Little Station Street, and to extend it to the northern side of the canal via the proposed bridge. The proposed Greenway from the UDP that ran across the College site has been amended to reflect the building and road layout whilst still providing a route from Littleton Street to Rue Meadow open space which lies just outside the town centre boundary. A new proposed Greenway has been included on the AAP Policies Map to provide an opportunity to improve links between the Arboretum and St Matthew's Church open space (TC28), along Upper and Lower Rushall Street. The approach also reflects the aims of Policy AAPLV8 which looks to make the most of environmental infrastructure in the town centre and Policy AAPLE4 which promotes the canal as a leisure destination. Greenways also provide opportunities for improved cycle access into and around the centre as set out in Policy AAPT2.

The Council is determined to improve provision and access for those with limited mobility and applicants for schemes are expected to work with disability groups to ensure their proposals are accessible to all.

7.1.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Strategic Transport Plan: “Movement for Growth” (December 2015).
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

7.1.3 Delivery

The delivery of improved pedestrian movement, access and linkages throughout the centre will be achieved in two main ways. The first is through the appropriate consideration of planning applications to ensure that developments are in accessible locations and that full consideration is given to how schemes link to other key centre uses and the Primary Shopping Area (PSA). If the Council considers that improvements to linkages are needed developer contributions may be sought to deliver these schemes.

The second is through Council funded schemes such as the Wayfinding project. This project combined developer contributions for recent developments to appoint consultants to look at the way the town is used by pedestrians, produce a Wayfinding Strategy of improvements, and implement 2 artworks designed to improve the ways pedestrians navigate the town centre. The Council will prioritise improvements in areas that will have the greatest impact on the town as a whole such as between public transport interchanges or improvements to links with the PSA. The Council will also look to implement improvements to the centre’s accessibility as part of overall public realm schemes.

7.1.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPT1.1 - The proportion of new greenways implemented.	100% by 2026
AAPT1.2 - The implementation of public realm improvements in the town centre.	See policy AAPLV7

7.2 Promoting Cycling

The development of sustainable modes of transport and encouraging people out of their cars is important to the sustainability of Walsall. Cycling is a key mode of transport for local journeys and for commuters, meaning it should be an integral part of transport in the centre.

Policy AAPT2: Cycling

Places need to be well connected with attractive, convenient, direct and safe routes available to make cycling a reasonable and realistic option.

a) This will be achieved by protecting the current cycle routes and utilising the Greenways as shown on the AAP Policies Map and set out in Policy AAPT1.

b) Improvements will also be made between Walsall Railway Station and Bradford Place Bus Interchange as shown on the AAP Policies Map to improve access for cycle users and pedestrians.

c) Current cycle parking will be protected and major schemes within the centre are expected to provide for secure additional parking or improve current facilities.

7.2.1 Policy Justification

The Council will look to support any proposals that improve the accessibility and desirability of cycling, especially to public transport and places of work in order to encourage sustainable patterns of travel. Walsall town centre benefits from being served by National Cycle Route 5, which runs from Oxford to Derby via Bridge Street, Walsall. The National Cycle Route is shown on the AAP Policies Map and the Council will look to protect and promote this route.

The Council will also seek to improve the route as it passes through the town centre, and link it with other Greenways and cycle-friendly routes. It is proposed that the current Greenway that runs along the canal is extended to connect to Walsall Railway Station (see Policy AAPT1) and the northern side of the canal. It is also proposed that the route between Walsall Railway Station and Bradford Place Bus Interchange is improved allowing for better cycle and pedestrian access. This is crucial for cycle users as routes through the Saddler's Centre or through Park Street are not necessarily appropriate for cycling. The improvements will apply to Station Street and Bridgeman Street, as shown on the AAP Policies Map and Figure 7.1.

There are currently 30 separate cycle parking locations around the town centre, situated at key trip generators, such as the railway station, library and supermarkets. These spaces are well used and the Council would promote the provision of further facilities. Cycle parking should be integrated into the street scene and not add to street clutter. Cycle parking facilities should meet Secured by Design standards and ideally cycles should be stored away from public view in a lockable room or container. However it is recognised that most cycle storage facilities will be external so it is important that they are located in locations with natural surveillance.

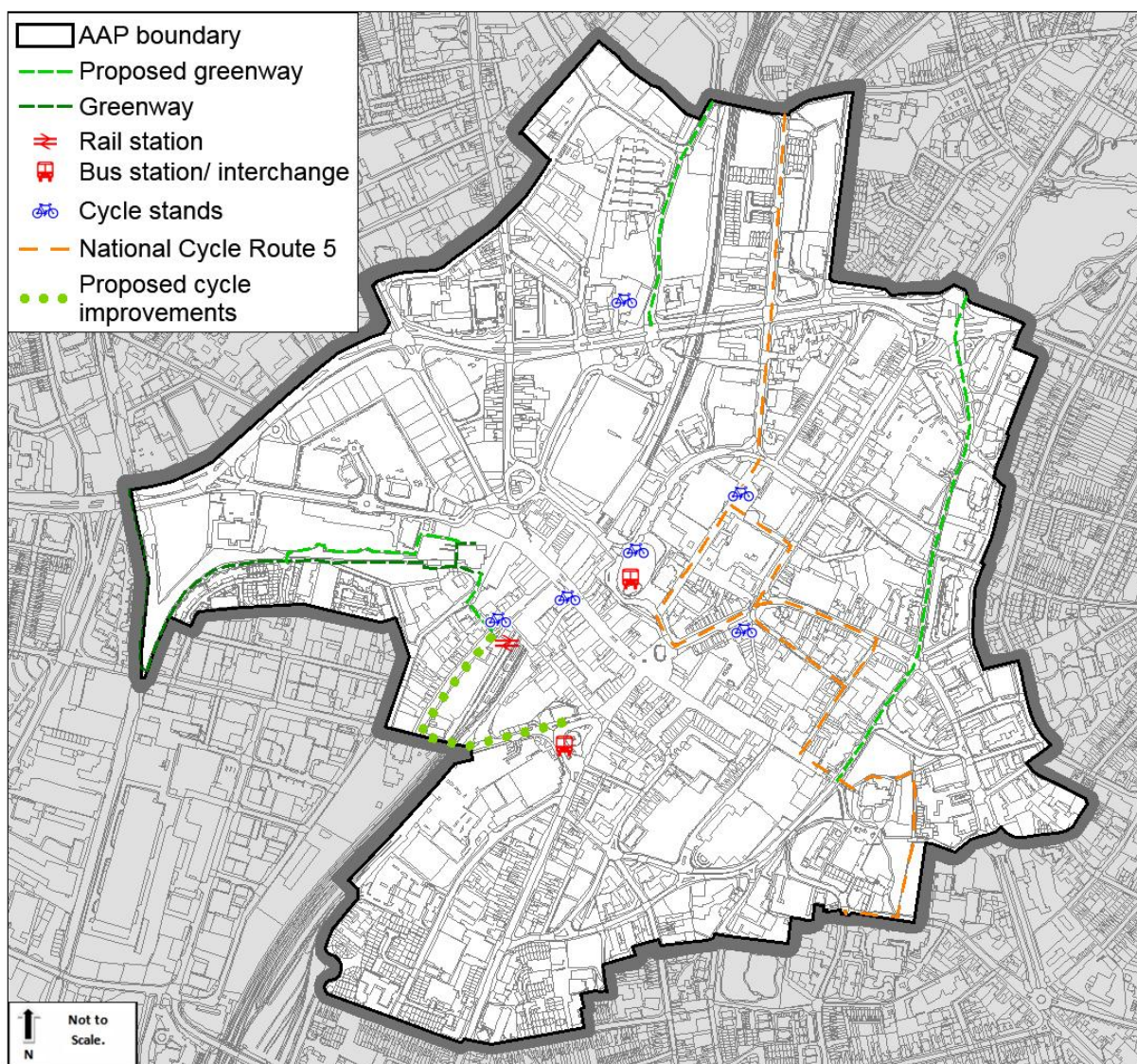


Figure 7.1 Cycling and public transport facilities

7.2.2 Evidence

- Strategic Transport Plan: “Movement for Growth” (December 2015).
- The National Cycle Route.

7.2.3 Delivery

The Council will, where possible, secure funding to improve current cycle routes or to create new ones. This will be achieved through partnership working with Centro and other relevant bodies to unlock funding. Major new developments will be expected to provide facilities to support cycle use in the centre including cycle parking.

7.2.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPT2.1 (BCCS indicator LOI TRAN4) - Increase in cycle use of monitored routes.	1% increase in cycling by 2026
AAPT2.2 (BCCS indicator LOI TRAN4b) - Implementation of proposed Local Cycle Network identified in the Cycle Network Diagram.	Increase % length implemented

7.3 Improving Public Transport

Public transport is crucial for many residents; particularly given Walsall's population with its higher than average proportion of residents aged under 16 and over 65, who are most likely to rely on public transport. Public transport must strive to offer an attractive alternative to the car.



Figure 7.2 Bus serving Walsall town centre

Policy AAPT3: Public Transport

The following improvements to public transport will be sought:

- a) Walsall Town Centre Bus Interchange – Bradford Place as allocated on the AAP Policies Map (TC18) will be increased in capacity with improved public realm and accessibility.
- b) Walsall Bus Station – St Paul's will be improved in terms of customer experience and safety.

c) The capacity for bus usage on the highway will be protected and future bus priority measures will be supported including SPRINT, a rapid transit link between Walsall town centre and Birmingham city centre which will significantly reduce journey times and create a better link between Walsall and Birmingham.

d) Walsall Railway Station as allocated on the AAP Policies Map (TC17) will be expanded to accommodate future investments in rapid transit connecting the Black Country Strategic Centres to each other. Improvements will be made to the access and visibility on Station Street.

e) Other improvements to public transport will be encouraged and new developments will, where appropriate, be expected to support the delivery of public transport improvement schemes.

7.3.1 Policy Justification

Public transport is very important in allowing residents to access jobs and education, as well as travel for leisure purposes.

Improvements to Bradford Place Bus Interchange to create a new Town Centre Interchange will create a larger and more modern facility to allow for future increases in bus services and patronage. This would result in the loss of some of Jerome Retail Park in order to allow for the increased capacity. The Council will actively work with landowners to discuss the impact of this and to explore the relocation of affected businesses. It is considered that the benefit of increased bus capacity and a more user friendly bus interchange will greatly improve the accessibility of the town centre, therefore having a positive impact on the viability and attractiveness of the town centre. Further work will be undertaken around this proposal in consultation with neighbouring businesses. The new interchange should be fully connected with the wider public transport network and any future rapid transit routes.

St Paul's bus station is constrained by the adjacent land limiting the possibilities for expansion. The Council, in partnership with transport providers and Centro, will look to improve the passenger experience of the station especially in regards to capacity and safety.

The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan: Movement for Growth has identified a number of rapid transit corridors. The Walsall to Birmingham link was identified for SPRINT, a form of rapid transit. A new rapid transit link between Walsall town centre and Birmingham City Centre is being designed which will encourage the use of

public transport through reduced journey times and increased capacity between these two important centres. Improvements by highway authorities to the network will be performed to meet the agreed performance specification for the links and junctions involved. These will take into account emerging thinking for delivery of enhanced public transport priority on key corridors to support road based rapid transit proposals for SPRINT. As well as capital scheme improvements, it is vital that this network is managed efficiently through the collaborative operations of all highway authorities responsible for its provision. This will need to ensure that the highway authorities' statutory duty is met of "ensuring the safe, efficient and resilient operation of the overall highway network for all users."

In addition the electrification of the Chase (Walsall to Rugeley Trent Valley) rail line will bring potential for services to destinations further afield to be introduced. Along with improvements to rail services, Walsall train station would also require its capacity to be increased to facilitate new services, as well as to accommodate a potential rapid transit service between Walsall and Wolverhampton. Direct travel between Walsall town centre and Wolverhampton city centre is limited by public transport to bus travel. This journey of 35 minutes could be reduced to 15 minutes by introducing a rapid transit service between the two strategic centres.

As developments within the town centre are delivered the need to maintain and expand an efficient public transport network is imperative.

The Council will consult with the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Midlands on public transport routes, to ensure that crime and fear of crime is minimised.

7.3.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Strategic Transport Plan: "Movement for Growth" (December 2015).
- Walsall Cabinet Report and Draft Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document (February 2016).
- Walsall Council Infrastructure and Delivery Plan (March 2016).

7.3.3 Delivery

The Council will work with public transport providers such as Centro and Network Rail to develop schemes for improvements to transport infrastructure in the centre. This will include:

- Support with bids for funding from Central Government (Local Sustainable Transport Fund), Black Country LEP, Local Growth Fund,
- The safeguarding of land for transport improvements
- Support with land assembly if necessary
- Facilitating discussions on schemes with landowners and interested partners.

Where appropriate developer contributions such as CIL will be used to fund public transport improvements.

7.3.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPT3.1 - Protection of sites identified for public transport improvements.	No loss of protected sites.
AAPT3.2 - Implantation of public transport schemes.	Improvements to all three transport hubs as identified in the policy to be started by the end of 2026.

7.4 Road Network

Improvements to the roads in and around the centre are essential to ease congestion which could deter visitors and investors from the centre. This is also crucial to improve the environmental quality of the town and provide better access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

Policy AAPT4: Road Improvements

- a) Improvements or modifications to the road system around the town centre are proposed in the locations identified on the AAP Policies Map.**
- b) Other highway works may also be necessary to serve future development/ investment opportunities.**
- c) Where appropriate developer contributions will be sought to mitigate the negative impacts of proposals on the highway network.**

7.4.1 Policy Justification

Walsall has 845km of main roads that connect people to jobs, services and other activities, with excellent links from the national strategic highway network. M6 junctions 7, 9 and 10 all lie within or just outside the Borough, providing access for long distance travel and bringing visitors and goods to the Borough. Within the town centre boundary, the local roads can at times experience congestion due to large traffic flows, the impact of new developments and occasional diverted traffic from the M6 motorway.

The AAP Policies Map includes a number of proposed improvements to highway junctions. The key priority is the ring road which suffers from congestion. Without improvements to increase capacity, there are likely to be further issues with both traffic and air pollution levels. Furthermore businesses looking to locate in Walsall town centre may consider congestion to be a potential issue. These improvements may require changes to pedestrian movement across the ring road as the way junctions operate is altered to increase capacity on the road network. There may be some areas along the ring road, for example the junction of Hatherton Street and Littleton Street, where land is needed to make improvements to the ring road and the Council will work with landowners and developers to minimise the impact of this on developments. Initial traffic modelling has been undertaken to understand the impact of future developments on the ring road in the short, medium and long term. The initial outcomes of the traffic modelling begin to support the view that

improvements to key junctions along the ring road will be needed as new developments are delivered. The other junctions identified are less of a priority than the ring road junctions but the Council will look to improve these as resources become available. It should also be borne in mind that traffic flows and congested junctions outside of the town centre boundary, for example the Mellish Road island and the Wolverhampton Road/ Pleck Road junction, will impact on traffic entering and leaving the town centre. Improvements to these junctions should also be sought, although these are not covered by this AAP.

Where there is the need for new road improvements to serve new development, the impact on the historic environment should be fully tested to ensure that the new infrastructure required does not have a harmful impact on the historic environment.

Any highway works, including temporary road closures while development is carried out and new road construction, will need to be planned to maintain emergency service access and minimise opportunities for plant machinery theft. Any major schemes that impact on road networks will be undertaken in consultation with the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Midlands.

Air pollution remains a major issue in the Borough with road traffic being the main contributor to adverse air quality, a significant issue in the town centre. Poor air quality affects the health and well-being of local people living along key corridors which carry high volumes of traffic. The review and assessment of air quality is a statutory function that all local authorities must undertake. The purpose of this is to demonstrate to central government that action is being taken to improve poor air quality and meet UK and EU standards. In a national context, outside of London, the West Midlands conurbation has the worst nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) problems in the UK. The Strategic Transport Plan: "Movement for Growth" aims to reduce transport emissions in the West Midlands and surrounding areas. The seven West Midlands metropolitan authorities are currently developing a Low Emissions Towns and Cities Programme. In line with this Walsall proposes to adopt a Black Country-wide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on air quality which aims to further address the issue of air quality (see also policy AAPINV7).

The transition to low emission vehicles is an important factor for moving towards a low carbon economy. Walsall Council has joined the Midlands' Plugged in Places consortium and work is continuing to seek out opportunities regarding the introduction of electric vehicle infrastructure within the town centre.

Over the past few years, the strategic routes leading to Walsall town centre have all undergone significant upgrades to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion and partly address air quality. However there are still significant challenges relating to the management of traffic and how users access the town centre. Walsall Council works with Centro Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) and public transport operators to

encourage town centre users to arrive on sustainable transport. However we also recognise that this is not always possible and that a balance needs to be found between encouraging public transport use, and making the town accessible for private car users and HGVs.

7.4.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Road network modelling data.
- Strategic Transport Plan: “Movement for Growth” (December 2015).
- Walsall Cabinet Report and Draft Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document (February 2016).
- Walsall Council Infrastructure and Delivery Plan (March 2016).

7.4.3 Delivery

Where possible, the Council will look to secure funding from Central Government (Local Sustainable Transport Fund), Black Country LEP, Local Growth Fund to support highway improvements in the centre. If necessary the Council will consider funding some of the improvements through capital funding. The Council will also look to safeguard land to deliver improvements where there is no alternative solution. Developer contributions may be sought to combat the negative impact of schemes on the town centre road network and also through CIL to fund wider/larger town centre infrastructure improvements. Once adopted the Air Quality SPD will be used as a mechanism to reduce the impact of air quality in the town centre.

7.4.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPT4.1 - The amount of highway improvements implemented.	Increase over the plan period
AAPT4.2 - Adoption of an Air Quality SPD.	2017

7.5 Improving Town Centre Car Parking

Car parking has a significant role to play in how people experience the town centre. The location, type and quality of car parking can impact on decisions like where in the centre people visit and how long they stay. It is also one of the key considerations for investors and businesses when making decisions about a site's suitability. It is therefore important to provide effective car parking to support the viability and vitality of the town centre.

Policy AAPT5: Car Parking

a) The Council will ensure the provision of an appropriate quantity, quality and type of convenient car parking, as set out in the Town Centre Car Parking Strategy, including high density short stay parking within the centre. This will be achieved by:

i) The delivery of at least one new multi-storey car park as identified on the AAP Policies Map at Challenge Block (TC41) or if this site is not deliverable Day Street (TC50). If and when a further multi-storey car park is required it will be located at Intown (TC34);

ii) Except where there is a demonstrated need for short stay dedicated provision, car parking within or on the edge of the AAP area will be available to serve the needs of the centre as a whole;

iii) Where new office developments come forward in the Gigaport area dedicated car parking can be provided as in accordance with the standards set in Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport. Consideration will be given to applying the same standards to other developments when justified;

iv) All new parking provision will be in accordance with the standards set out in relevant Local Plan documents and technical guidance, including provision of disabled, motorcycle and cycle parking and recharging facilities for low emission vehicles where feasible;

v) All parking will be subject to a charging and management regime agreed by the Council and in line with the Car Parking Strategy;

vi) All new parking will be of high quality, well-signed and secure, linking well with the rest of the town centre, in particular key destinations;

vii) New developments that include car parking should be well integrated with the centre and not have an adverse visual impact on the surrounding area. Building layout should take priority over any car parking so that it does not dominate and where possible, should be overlooked to promote security; and

viii) The effective use of planning conditions will be applied to ensure compliance with the Town Centre Car Parking Strategy and AAP policies.

b) The Council will support the release of existing car parks for redevelopment, for uses identified on the AAP Policies Map, as appropriate and provided a suitable provision can be maintained. Once new multi-storey provision has been provided (see point (i) above) all Council car parks identified can be released for redevelopment.

7.5.1 Policy Justification

A balance is needed between providing sufficient amounts of car parking with a sustainable pricing regime that supports development, whilst promoting the use of sustainable travel to the centre. Significant changes are needed to short stay public parking arrangements in the Town Centre AAP area. These changes are necessitated by the need to respond to widely expressed concerns about the adequacy of car parking provision in the town centre and to meet the needs of future development in the town centre as set out in this AAP.

Evidence shows that shortcomings in car parking provision is one of the factors which undermines the competitiveness of Walsall town centre. The solutions lie, however, not just in improving parking, but also improving the appeal and ease of using alternatives to the private car, including public transport, cycling and walking.

In total, the AAP proposes in the order of 726 additional short-stay public spaces. The additional and replacement short-stay parking provision will be in at least one new multi storey car park in the locations identified on the AAP Policies Map. Any new car parks should include electric vehicle recharging infrastructure to help meet air quality requirements. A number of locations have been identified as appropriate for a new multi-storey car park to serve the centre. It is considered that one multi-storey car park is needed in the short term, with a potential second being needed in the latter parts of the plan period. The locations are in preference order and set out in the table below:

Part a) of Policy AAPT5 sites: Further information on sites

Site Reference	Site Name	Allocation	Site Details
TC41	Challenge Block	Mixed use, including convenience retail/ bulky goods Multi storey car park	This is the preferred location given its proximity to services and facilities within the town centre and within the ring road. Pedestrian linkages to these services and facilities are already fairly well established and pedestrian flows will not impact adversely on the operation of the ring road. This solution may require improvements to the junction of Hatherton Street and Littleton Street. New development would need to provide a strong frontage to the ring road.
TC50	Day Street car park	Office Convenience retail/ bulky goods Multi storey car park	If the Challenge block cannot be delivered for the multi-storey car park this site is considered the next preferable location due to its position in an area of considerable investment and location on the strategic highway network. Pedestrian linkages across the ring road and to within the core of the town centre will have to be enhanced. The redevelopment of this site with a high quality design would improve the character of the area in a prominent location, however the setting of the Leather Museum would need to be considered so as not to dominate this building.
TC34	Intown area	Mixed use, Multi storey car park	If either site TC41 or TC50 is delivered for a multi-storey car park and demand for parking provision still exceeds supply then this site close to the Civic Quarter and within the ring road is considered an appropriate site for further car parking investment. The scale of building should be informed by the falling topography and due to its largely 'back land' location, should not exceed the height of frontage buildings.

It is recognised that some developments will require their own car parking and the AAP makes provision for this at the Gigaport as set out in Policy AAPINV3. The Council will be flexible when considering other sites where this approach to designated parking would be suitable when justified by the applicant. The Council does however, aim to move away from each development having its own parking and is therefore proposing to meet some of the needs of new developments through the delivery of the multi-storey car park(s). It is envisaged that 60% of the spaces provided of the upper floors of the multi-storey car park delivered at either Challenge Block or Day Street will be long stay to serve office developments, with a designated area on the top floors with 40% serving the needs of short stay visitors. Intown is envisaged to have 40% of its spaces dedicated to long stay and 60% to short stay.

To ensure that no adverse effects on the strategy for the town centre arise from developments also providing short stay public spaces, the Council proposes to require all short stay car parks within the AAP area, or intended to serve the AAP area, to be priced and managed in line with Council policy.

All car parking will be expected to provide a safe and secure environment to ensure both crime and the fear of crime are reduced. This will include meeting the current standards and advice given by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) such as the 'Park Mark' award/accreditation.

The Council has reviewed its current car parking provision and concluded that the location and quality of a number of the Council-owned car parks are poor. Where appropriate these car parks can therefore be developed for other uses as indicated on the AAP Policies Map. The suitable sites are set out in the table below.

Part b) of Policy AAPT5 sites:

Site Reference	Site Name	Allocation	Justification	Site Details
TC21	Bradford Street area (Mountrath Street)	Mixed use	If one or more of the multi-storey car parks is delivered then a number of Council owned car parks, many poorly located and under-utilised, become surplus to requirements. It is therefore possible to allocate these for other uses.	The new building would need to be of an appropriate scale and design to the adjacent Conservation Area and listed buildings.
TC30	Ablewell Street east (Warewell Street)	Mixed use		Proposals should take into account the Conservation Area and locally listed buildings and be sensitive in their scale and design so as not to dominate these assets.
TC30	Ablewell Street east (Paddock Lane)	Mixed use		
TC30	Ablewell Street east (Tantarra Street)	Mixed use		

TC31	Upper Rushall Street/ Town Hill	Mixed use		Proposals should be of an appropriate scale and design to the adjacent buildings, in particular the locally listed building adjacent the site.
TC34	Intown area (Whittimere Street)	Mixed use, Multi storey car park		The scale of development should be informed by the falling topography and due to its largely 'back land' location, should not exceed the height of frontage buildings.
TC34	Intown area	Mixed use, Multi storey car park		
TC34	Intown area (Intown Row)	Mixed use, Multi storey car park		
TC35	Lower Rushall Street/ Holtshill Lane	Mixed use		Narrow car park and listed building so any scheme would need to be designed to take into account the impact on the both the building and the surrounding area.
TC41	Challenge block (Hatherton Street)	Mixed use, including convenience retail/ bulky goods Multi storey car park		Any new development should provide a strong frontage to the ring road and take inspiration from the surrounding character and original buildings on the site.
TC50	Day Street car park (Bate Street)	Office Convenience retail/ bulky goods Multi storey car park		The proposed design would need to contribute positively to the setting of the Leather Museum, whilst also forming a strong frontage to the ring road.
TC50	Day Street car park	Office Convenience retail/ bulky goods Multi storey car park		
TC54	Stafford Street/ Green Lane	Mixed use		Proposals for this site would need to be of an appropriate scale and design for the character of the area, taking into account the nearby locally listed buildings.

7.5.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Draft Car Parking Strategy (August 2015) Walsall Council.
- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Walsall Cabinet Report and Draft Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document (February 2016).
- Walsall Council Infrastructure and Delivery Plan (March 2016).
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

7.5.3 Delivery

The Council is committed to improving the car parking offer in the town centre. The Council will explore all options to delivering a new multi-storey car park and will work with the private sector in developing a viable scheme. If necessary and feasible the Council will consider directly supporting the development of a new car park and will explore the following solutions:

- Partnership working with private investors and car parking providers,
- Using the WMBC's covenant in order to improve scheme viability (i.e. acting as the rental guarantor to encourage development);
- Strategic acquisitions / assembly of development opportunity sites (using the Council's powers of compulsory purchase where necessary) to enable delivery;
- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery, including site clearance and remediation;
- Taking a direct development role (repeating the role the Council played in successfully delivering the Primark/Co-op scheme)
- Developing strategies to ensure that occupiers and developers have the right infrastructure and where necessary supporting the provision of town centre infrastructure.

The Council will also support where necessary and feasible the redevelopment of the Council car park stock that is not considered to be required, especially where the sites form part of a larger development opportunity or are considered essential to the overall regeneration strategy. Once adopted the Air Quality SPD will be used to implement the delivery of electric vehicle charging points in the town centre.

7.5.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPT5.1 (BCCS Indicator LOI TRAN5a) – number of publically available long stay parking places in the centre.	Decrease the number of long stay parking spaces in centres.
AAPT5.2 - Number of short stay car parking spaces in the town centre.	As in line with the car parking strategy
AAPT5.3 - Number of electric vehicle charging points.	As in line with the adopted SPD

8. A Place for Investment



Much of the regeneration activity in the town centre in recent years has been focussed around three development opportunities – St. Matthew’s Quarter, Gigaport and Waterfront – and along with Park Street, it is these areas which should remain the focus for change and investment within the town centre. There are also some secondary sites which provide development opportunities to help support the regeneration of Walsall. There are however some constraints in the town centre that need to be addressed. This chapter sets out the vision and specific policies for these key areas along with providing guidance on dealing with constraints in the centre, reflecting AAP objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10.

8.1 Walsall Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

Providing an overarching regeneration strategy to meet the objectives in the plan is an important element of the overall approach to the regeneration of Walsall town centre. The policy outlined below seeks to guide investment in a way which makes these objectives deliverable.

Policy AAPINV1: Regeneration Strategy

a) The objectives in Chapter 2 will be met through applying the Council’s regeneration strategy for Walsall town centre which seeks to concentrate change and investment in the following areas:-

- **St Matthew’s Quarter – shopping destination (Policy AAPINV2)**
- **Walsall Gigaport – office corridor (Policy AAPINV3)**
- **Walsall Waterfront – leisure destination (Policy AAPINV4)**

Further to these three priority areas, Park Street (Policy AAPINV5) will play an important role as the retail core (Primary Shopping Area) in the town centre, as a key location for attracting retail investment and the reconfiguration of units (Chapter 3) and as an area for improvements in the public realm (Chapter 6).

Other areas of the town centre represent secondary development opportunities where a mix of appropriate town centre uses will be encouraged in accordance with other policies in the plan (Policy AAPINV6).

The concentration of investment and resources in the geographical areas above is supported by improvements in the transport infrastructure (Chapter 7), and the environment of the town centre (Chapter 6).

b) Any proposals for development which are inconsistent with this regeneration strategy are unlikely to be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that there would be significant economic, social or environmental benefits to the town centre as a whole. There may be circumstances where a proposal is supportable at the time it is determined but is not in accordance with the long term regeneration strategy for an area. In this situation and where appropriate the Council will use temporary permissions to allow investment to come forward without jeopardising the AAP strategy.

c) All proposals will be expected to:

- i) Be comprehensive in the approach to the use of land and buildings;**
- ii) Address any adverse impacts on the highway; and**
- iii) Have consideration for the character of the area and be of high quality design.**

d) Schemes that involve the clearance of sites for development will be expected to give full consideration to how the treatment of the site visually and functionally impacts on the centre. The greening of cleared sites, including sites that form later parts of phased schemes, will be actively encouraged and developers and / or owners will be expected to maintain such sites throughout until development is completed. Developers and / or owners will also be expected to give proper consideration to the impact of boundary treatments on the amenity of the centre.

8.1.1 Policy Justification

Much of the regeneration activity in the town centre in recent years has been focussed around three geographical locations – St Matthew’s Quarter, Gigaport and Waterfront – and along with Park Street, it is these areas which remain the focus for change and investment within the town centre. The concentration of investment and uses in particular areas is considered the most effective approach to securing investment and economic growth in the town centre. These areas are now

recognised by developers as key opportunities building upon the £370 million worth of investment secured in Walsall town centre since 2007.

The Council can demonstrate a strong track record of delivering, facilitating or enabling town centre investment through a range of interventions, having a key role in most of the projects which have attracted £370 million of investment in the town centre. There are currently 5 schemes on site or recently completed in the town centre which will deliver an additional £39 million of investment. The Council has played a key role in each of these schemes as direct developer or in other facilitating roles, all of which are geographically located in the Council's priority areas noted in the policy. Where necessary, the Council will continue to play an active role in delivering sites that support the regeneration strategy of the town centre. The AAP is supported by a delivery plan that sets out the range of interventions at the Council's disposal.

The Council will utilise temporary (i.e. 5-year) planning permissions as a mechanism to manage areas and secure interim viable uses whilst more strategic development is being promoted and delivered over the longer term. Such permissions are already being used in the Gigaport area and this approach has recently been upheld at Appeal (decision ref. APP/V4630/W/15/3009493). However, the use of temporary planning permissions will not be allowed to delay or inhibit longer term investment decisions.

A fundamental part of delivering the regeneration strategy for the town centre is ensuring that there is a comprehensive approach to sites and that there are development opportunities for investors. In some cases this may result in sites being cleared for phased development or site assembly. Where sites are cleared and especially in prominent locations the Council will expect developers to consider the visual impact of the cleared sites on the centre. Solutions such as greening the site will be encouraged to reduce the visual impact and to provide more green infrastructure. Developers will also be expected to give consideration to the boundary treatment of sites and the visual impact this has on the centre as a whole.

8.1.2 Evidence

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

8.1.3 Delivery

The Council has identified a number of priority sites and it will be within these areas that the Council concentrates its resources to support delivery. It is considered that this strategy of prioritising sites is the best approach to delivering the regeneration of the centre. The full range of intervention mechanisms will be explored when looking for ways in which to assist in the development of sites which are considered to have the potential to act as a catalyst for further investment in the centre. This will include:

- Creating the right environment through public realm, road improvements and improved linkages (see Policy AAPLV7: Enhancing the Public Realm, all the policies within Chapter 7: Transport, Movement and Accessibility and also Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport);
- Promoting the town centre for inward investment for public and private sector businesses;
- Using the WMBC's covenant in order to improve scheme viability (i.e. acting as the rental guarantor to encourage development);
- Strategic acquisitions / assembly of development opportunity sites (using the Council's powers of compulsory purchase where necessary) to enable delivery;
- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery, including site clearance and remediation;
- Taking a direct development role (repeating the role the Council played in successfully delivering the Primark/Co-op scheme); and
- Developing strategies to ensure that occupiers and developers have the right infrastructure and where necessary supporting the provision of town centre infrastructure.

8.1.4 Monitoring

As this policy brings together the strategy within the AAP it will be monitored through drawing together the findings for all the monitoring indicators in the plan. This will also be reflected in terms of how the plan is delivering against the AAP retail and office floorspace targets.

8.2 St Matthew's Shopping Quarter

Ensuring the shopping heart of Walsall is vibrant and viable is one of the key aims of the AAP. A key function of the town centre is to provide a shopping destination and St Matthew's Quarter along with Park Street (see Policy AAPINV5) provide the main shopping locations in Walsall town centre.

Policy AAPINV2: St Matthew's Quarter

a) St Matthew's Quarter is the main location for retail investment in Walsall town centre, largely falling within the Primary Shopping Area, with the opportunity to provide new larger space retail units to meet the needs of modern retailers. These larger space units will complement the current provision in Park Street and the rest of the Primary Shopping Area.

Any application within this area needs to accord with the following policies:

- Policy AAPS1: Primary Shopping Area**
- Policy AAPS2: New Retail development**

b) New retail development will be required, wherever possible, to provide large, flexible units to meet retailer requirements.

c) All development within the area will be expected to provide an active and well designed frontage which positively contributes to the streetscene. Leisure uses will be supported to bring life to the area, particularly in the evening, where they can be shown not to prejudice the retail function of the Primary Shopping Area. All development will be expected to provide linkages with the rest of the Primary Shopping Area and other parts of the town centre, and in particular St Matthew's Church.

d) All development within the area will be expected to protect, conserve and where possible, enhance heritage assets including the Conservation Areas and listed and locally listed buildings within the area. In particular, the Council will seek to promote the listed Victorian Arcade as a destination for smaller independent retailers.

e) The former Shannon's Mill site (TC26) is allocated as a potential sequential site for convenience or bulky goods retailing along with a mixed used allocation. Any proposal for retailing would need to be strongly integrated with the Primary Shopping Area providing an active pedestrian frontage. Other uses such as car parking for a retail unit could be provided along with residential use and live/work units on upper floors and to the rear of the site.

8.2.1 Policy Justification

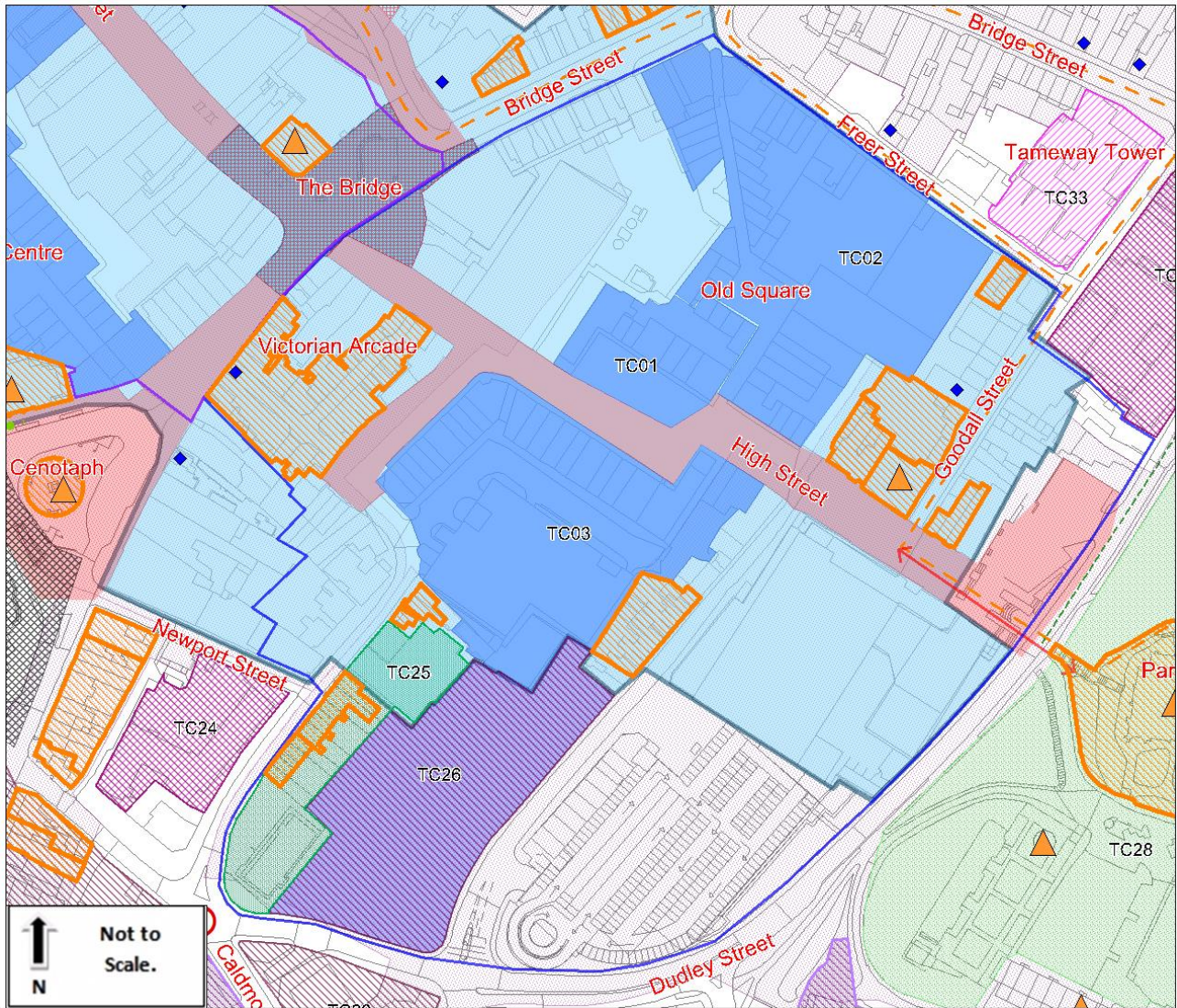
The Council's delivery of new retail premises for Primark and Co-op foodstore should improve footfall in St Matthew's Quarter and has worked as a catalyst to encourage neighbouring landowners to move forward with plans for their redevelopment proposals. The owners of the Old Square shopping centre (TC01) and land in Digbeth/ Lower Hall Lane (TC03) have both progressed their proposals for major retail investment, providing larger format stores to meet modern retailer requirements. It is anticipated that both of these schemes will commence on site in the next 12 months, further enhancing the retail offer in the town centre.

The former Shannon's Mill site (TC26) has been removed from the Primary Shopping Area boundary to reflect its peripheral location and the site's development constraints. Residential development (including live/work) is considered more appropriate and will support the regeneration of St Matthew's Quarter by bringing more life, vibrancy and footfall into the area. The site therefore has a mixed use allocation and would be suitable for a number of town centre uses. The site is also considered to be a sequential site for convenience retailing and bulky goods as allocated in Policy AAPS2 due to its proximity to the PSA. It would be possible for a high quality well designed scheme to connect well to the retail core of the centre and strengthen the retail offer in St Matthew's Quarter, provided that it links visually and functionally with the PSA.

The table below provides further details on the development opportunities within St Matthew's Quarter:

Site Ref.	Site Name	Allocation	Site Details	Capacity	Timescale	Further Information
TC01	Old Square Phase 2	Retail opportunities for investment/reconfiguration (Policy AAPS2: New Retail development)	Within the PSA	1,000 sqm additional retail floorspace (from planning consent)	Medium term (2-5 years)	Upper floor residential to be retained. Planning consent retains important views of St Matthew's Church.
TC02	Old Square Phase 3	Retail opportunities for investment/reconfiguration (Policy AAPS2: New Retail development)	Within the PSA	15,657 sqm (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Should be designed so Debenhams is fronting the high street. Part of site covered by flood zone 2 and consideration should be given to designing in flood resilient finishes to buildings (see Policy AAPINV7a).

						Part of site is high sensitivity (levels 1 and 2) as per Characterisation Study, so any new development should not be above 3 storeys to avoid dominating the streetscene.
TC03	Digbeth/ Lower Hall Lane	Retail opportunities for investment/reconfiguration (Policy AAPS2: New Retail development)	Within the PSA with a current application	8,247 sqm additional retail floorspace (from planning consent)	Short term (0-2 years)	Part of site is within Church Hill Conservation Area. The site has planning consent to replace the existing vacant buildings with a more modern design.
TC26	Former Shannon's Mill site	Convenience retail/ bulky goods (Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development) Mixed use including residential and work/live units.	Front of the site is connected to the PSA physically and visually proving an opportunity for edge of centre retailing.	14,852 sqm over 4 storeys (estimate)	Medium term (2-5 years)	Change in levels. Within Church Hill Conservation Area. Air pollution issues at Upper Hall Lane (see Policy AAPINV7b). Any proposal for retail would need to be integrated with the PSA and provide an active frontage in order to make a positive contribution to the streetscene.



<p>Chapter 2 Walsall Town Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ AAP boundary (AAP1) <p>Chapter 3 A Place for Shopping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Primary Shopping Area boundary (AAPS1) □ Opportunities for retail investment (AAPS2) □ Sequential sites for convenience/bulky goods retail development (AAPS2) □ Walsall Market (AAPS3) <p>Chapter 4 A Place for Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Opportunities for office development (AAPB1) □ Opportunities for investment in existing office stock (AAPB1) □ Social Enterprise Zone (AAPB2) □ High quality employment land (AAPB3) □ Consider for release employment land (AAPB3) 	<p>Chapter 5 A Place for Leisure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Opportunities for leisure investment (AAPLE1) □ Sports, community, cultural facilities (AAPLE2) □ Canal (AAPLE4) <p>Chapter 6 A Place for Living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Opportunities for residential development (AAPLV1) □ Education investment (AAPLV2) □ Conservation Area (AAPLV5) □ Listed building (AAPLV5) □ Locally listed building (AAPLV5) □ Landmark buildings (AAPLV6) □ Gateway sites for high quality design (AAPLV6) □ Public realm areas for improvement (AAPLV7) □ Public realm areas to be maintained (AAPLV7) □ Urban open space (AAPLV8) 	<p>Chapter 7 Transport, Movement and Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↔ Opportunities for improved pedestrian linkages (AAPT1) --- Existing greenway (AAPT1) --- Proposed greenway (AAPT1) --- National Cycle Route 5 (AAPT2) --- Proposed cycle improvements (AAPT2) □ Opportunity for public transport investment (AAPT3) ⊕ Railway line (AAPT3) ○ Location for junction improvements (AAPT4) — Strategic highway network ⊕ Potential location for super car park (AAPT5) <p>Chapter 8 A Place for Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ St Matthew's Quarter boundary (AAPINV2) □ Gigaport masterplan boundary (AAPINV3) □ Waterfront area boundary (AAPINV4) □ Park Street area boundary (AAPINV5) □ Opportunities for mixed town centre uses (AAPINV6) □ Mineral Safeguarding Area (AAPINV7)
--	--	---

Figure 8.1 St Matthew's Quarter area

8.2.2 Evidence

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

8.2.3 Delivery

The Council has already shown its commitment to the development of St Matthew's Quarter through its direct involvement in the Primark scheme. It is anticipated that Primark will act as a catalyst for further retail development and the site opposite has permission for a retail scheme which is envisaged to start construction within the next 12 months. The Council will provide further support to the development of St Matthew's Quarter through:

- Utilising the ownership at Old Square shopping centre to continue to work with developer(s) to promote retail development at this end of the town centre, to help anchor the east end of Park Street and create a strong retail circuit;
- Where considered necessary and if feasible, direct involvement in the development of retail opportunities in the PSA in a similar way to the Primark development;
- Working with the landowners and interested parties for the former Shannon's Mill site (TC26) on a scheme to unlock the site's potential; and
- Funding public realm improvements and pedestrian linkages through the centre to ensure pedestrian movement towards this end of town (see Policy AAPLV7: Enhancing the Public Realm and all the policies within Chapter 7: Transport, Movement and Accessibility).

8.2.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPINV2.1 - Amount of additional town centre use floorspace within the St Matthew's Quarter Area.	Increase over the plan period. See also retail floorspace targets Policy AAPS2.

8.3 Walsall Gigaport – Walsall’s Office Destination

Creating an office location in Walsall town centre is crucial to developing an attractive environment that encourages further investment. This policy sets out the overall aim of the Gigaport and sets requirements for developers to ensure the Gigaport is a high quality, well integrated development.

Policy AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport

The Gigaport will be a series of high quality office developments designed to meet the evolving needs of business and enterprise.

a) The sites considered appropriate for office development are allocated on the AAP Policies Map and included below:-

TC36 Ward Street area

TC41 Challenge Block (see section b of this policy below)

TC42 Teddesley Street

TC42a Royal Mail car park, Hatherton Street

TC43 Former Noirit site

TC46 East of Portland Street (see also Policy AAPLV2: Education)

TC48a Day Street/ Garden Street

TC50 Day Street car park (see section c of this policy below)

TC51 Blue Lane East/ Stafford Street

TC52 Green Lane Police Station

TC54 Stafford Street/ Green Lane car park

There are also certain sites that are in the vicinity of the Gigaport area and so could be suitable for office uses, but which are not located within the Gigaport boundary and therefore do not have the benefit of outline planning consent:

TC37 Jabez Cliff

TC47 North of Portland Street

TC55 Wisemore.

Office development will be prioritised at sites fronting Littleton Street West. Within other areas of the Gigaport the following uses will be supported in principle when they facilitate the function of the Gigaport as an office location:

- Business Incubation Units,**
- Hotel with conference facilities (use class C1),**
- Live/work space at the rear of the Gigaport area,**
- Ancillary retail and/or restaurant uses (use class A1/A3).**

b) In addition to the above, Challenge Block (TC41) is allocated for the following uses:

- **Multi-storey car park (Policy AAPT5)**
- **Convenience retail/ bulky goods, if sequentially preferable sites cannot be delivered (Policy AAPS2).**

Proposals for any uses will be expected to demonstrate that the multi-storey car park can also be accommodated at this site, and that the scheme will support and not prejudice its delivery.

The design of buildings should make the best use of the land including multi-storeys and create a strong built-up frontage to Littleton Street. Any car parking proposed as part of the development should be well integrated and accord with Policy AAPT5.

Any development should look to provide an attractive frontage to the Ford Brook river that offers up views and will provide opportunities to improve the structure and habitat of the river. Consideration should also be given to the water quality of any site drainage going into the river.

Delivery of some or all of the allocated uses may require improvements to the junction of Hatherton Street and Littleton Street.

c) In addition to the above, Day Street car park (TC50) is allocated for the following uses:

- **Multi-storey car park, if Challenge Block can't be delivered (Policy AAPT5)**
- **Convenience retail/ bulky goods, if sequentially preferable sites cannot be delivered (Policy AAPS2).**

d) All proposals will be expected to:

i) **Be comprehensive in the approach to the use of land and buildings;**

ii) **Address any adverse impacts on the highway;**

iii) **Improve pedestrian links to the centre across Littleton Street West and in particular to bus and railways stations, the Primary Shopping Area and Walsall Arboretum;**

iv) **Consider sustainable transport improvements such as links to public transport, electric car charging points and cycle provision;**

v) Improve the public realm of the Gigaport area and protect, conserve and where possible, enhance heritage assets, including the Leather Museum (TC49) and Wisemore House (TC46); and

vi) Demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact on existing occupiers and that where necessary businesses will be relocated.

Unless otherwise justified any car parking proposed would be expected to serve the Gigaport area as a whole, with the maximum car parking ratio for office development being: 1 space per 60 square metres.

8.3.1 Policy Justification

The Gigaport is located on the edge of the town centre's retail and commercial core, and evolved as the preferred location for office investment due to the availability of under-utilised land, investment secured in the new college facilities and an environment enhanced by improvements to the town centre transport package. Critically it is within easy walking distance of town centre shops and services, the railway station and bus stations, and those facilities will benefit from having Gigaport developments within such close proximity.

Historically the Gigaport area was defined by a masterplan outline planning consent, first approved in 2008, to provide 127,000 sqm of office floorspace plus other complementary uses. This was designated as a response to the BCCS expectation that all strategic centres plan for the delivery of 220,000 sqm office floorspace by 2026. This BCCS requirement has been reviewed by DTZ who concluded that a more realistic, but still aspirational, target of 73,000 sqm of office floorspace should be allocated within the AAP. Taking this revised figure, the Gigaport policy now seeks to allocate sites for office development, as indicated in the table below. If all of the sites noted in the table below are developed to their full capacity, then this revised figure of 73,000 sqm will be exceeded, and it is therefore recognised that some of the sites will not be delivered for office use within the plan period.

Major schemes such as the Gigaport will be expected to create a high quality environment, including improving pedestrian links to the centre and providing high quality public realm in its streets and spaces (see Policy AAPLV7).

The Challenge Block (site TC41) has been identified for a multi-storey car park and a sequential site for convenience retail/ bulky goods. Given its location close to public offices and public transport the Council considers that the site would be suitable for community facilities if there was demand/ need.

The design, appearance and layout of Challenge Block will be important in ensuring that the area should feel like and function as part of the town centre. Also with the Ford Brook bordering the site to the west any scheme will need to incorporate this into the design and help to improve the natural environment of the river. This might mean the setting back of buildings from the watercourse where useful space could be provided along it and where the viability of the proposal and the best use of the land are not prejudiced. Any development on this site should look to improve the structure and habitat of the brook in line with Water Framework Directive objectives as this is currently a failing water body. Consideration should also be given to improving the water quality of any site drainage going into the river and to reducing any surface runoff as part of flood risk management (see Policy AAPINV7).

Sites that are allocated for mixed uses are suitable for a variety of town centre uses apart from A1 retailing when they are outside of the Primary Shopping Area (Policy AAPS1: Primary Shopping Area). All developments will be expected to consider main town centre uses before solely residential schemes in order to protect the function of the town centre and to help realise the potential of sites in supporting the regeneration strategy. The table on the following page provides further details on the development opportunities within the Gigaport area:

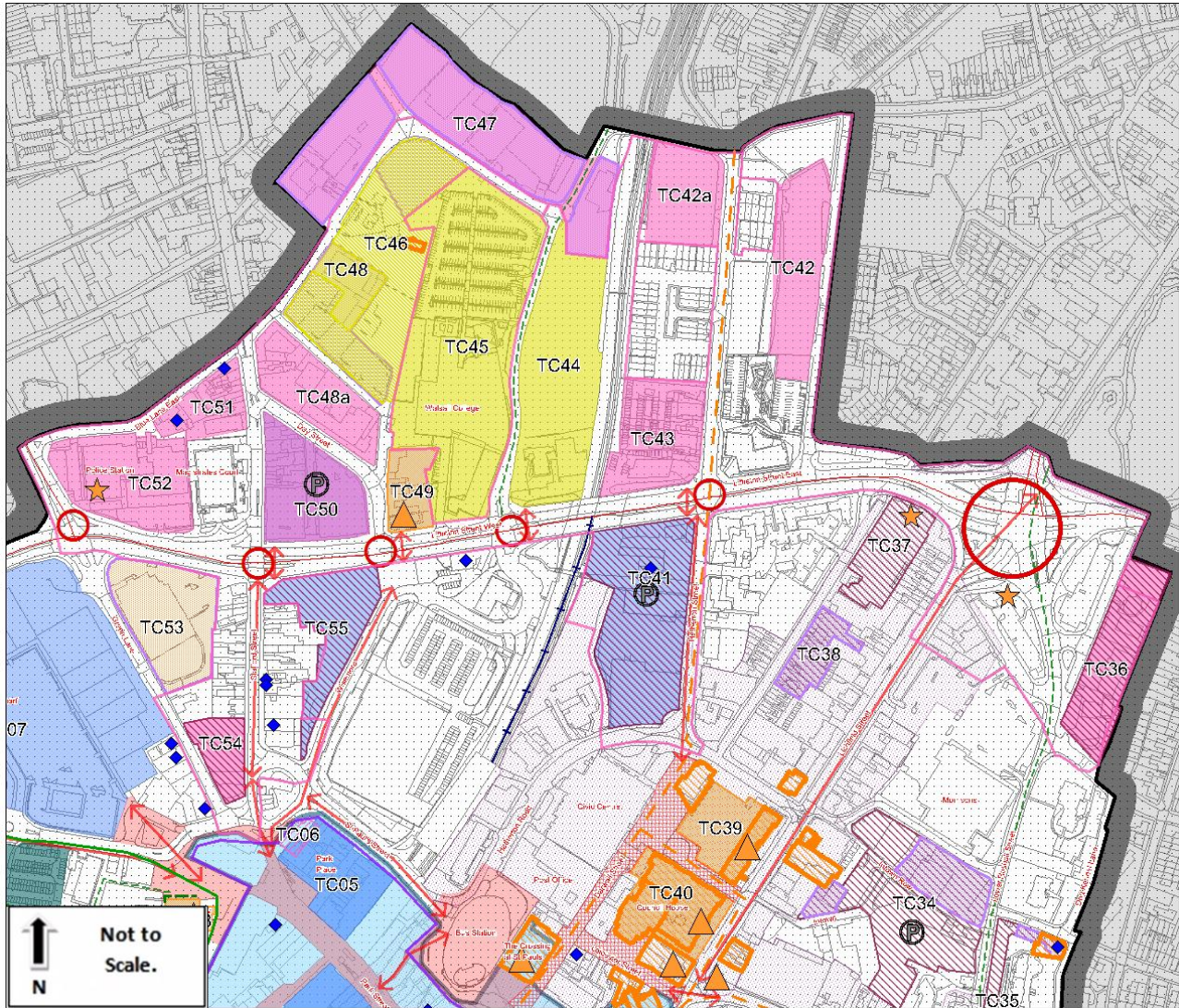
Site Ref	Site Name	Allocation	Site Details	Capacity	Timescale	Further Information
TC36	Ward Street area	Mixed use	Under-utilised site	9,223 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of site in flood zone 2 and adjacent culverted watercourse, and consideration should be given to designing in flood resilient finishes to buildings (see Policy AAPINV7a). Frontage could be strengthened (as per Characterisation study). The site is underutilised and provides potential to provide a positive contribution to the vitality of the town. Air pollution issues at Lower Rushall Street (see Policy AAPINV7b). Potential noise issues at Broadway North (see Policy AAPINV7c)
TC37	Jabez Cliff	Mixed use	Vacant site	7,378 sqm over 4 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Within Lichfield Street Conservation Area, so any development would need to bear in mind the scale of the surrounding buildings. Consider design and massing due to prominent location – part of site is high sensitivity (level 2) and has landmark potential, as per town centre Characterisation study. Access issues. Air quality issues along Littleton Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC41	Challenge Block	Multi storey car park Convenience retail/ bulky goods Mixed use	Under-utilised site	23,812 sqm over 4 storeys (estimate)	Medium term (2-5 years)	Part of site covered by flood zones 2 and 3 and the Ford Brook runs adjacent to the site. Consideration should be given to designing in flood resilient finishes to buildings (see Policy AAPINV7a). Part of site is high sensitivity (level 2) and frontage could be strengthened, as per Characterisation study. Any proposals for the site may take inspiration from the surrounding character and the original buildings on the site, up to 3 storeys in height. Any new development should provide a strong frontage to the ring road. Part of site in Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Air quality issues along Littleton Street (see Policy AAPINV7b). Any development on this site should look to improve the structure and habitat of the brook. Consideration should be given to improving the water quality of any site drainage going into the river (also see text in policy justification).

TC42	Teddesley Street	Office or mixed use	Under-utilised site	10,186 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Frontage could be strengthened, as per Characterisation study. The area is currently used for car parking and provides little contribution to the historic character of the town, therefore development is not considered to have any negative impact on the surrounding area. Part of site in coal development high risk area (see Policy AAPINV7d).
TC42a	Royal Mail car park in Hatherton Street	Office or mixed use	Under-utilised site	7,226 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Site is covered by flood zone 2 and adjacent to a culverted and open watercourse, and consideration should be given to designing in flood resilient finishes to buildings (see Policy AAPINV7a). The area is currently used for car parking and provides little contribution to the historic character of the town, therefore development is not considered to have any negative impact on the surrounding area. Part of site in limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Part of site in coal development high risk area (see Policy AAPINV7d).
TC43	Former Noirit site	Office	Partially delivered site with outline consent for further office uses	4,566 sqm office floorspace (from planning application)	Short term (0-2 years)	Part of site covered by flood zones 2 and 3. Consideration should be given to designing in flood resilient finishes to buildings (see Policy AAPINV7a). Site within Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Part of site in coal development high risk area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Air quality issues along Littleton Street (see Policy AAPINV7b). The frontage of the site has now been built out and makes a positive contribution to the streetscene by providing a strong frontage to the road network. The allocation is for further office on the remainder of the site, as per the existing outline planning consent. Delivering further office uses in this location will attract investment into the town, providing jobs and adding to the vitality of the town centre.

TC46	East of Portland Street area	Education Office if no longer required by Walsall College	Included within Gigaport masterplan area, identified by Walsall College as preferred location for future expansion	27,347 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Wisemore House is Grade II listed, but is somewhat lost within the environment and therefore doesn't make as strong a contribution as it could to the character of the town. The allocation could help to improve the setting of the listed building, and bring uses, investment and footfall the area which should help to secure its future. Use by the College for expansion should create a high quality campus environment. Part of site covered by flood zone 2 and consideration should be given to designing in flood resilient finishes to buildings (see Policy AAPINV7a). Part of site in Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Part of site in coal development high risk area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Air quality issues Garden Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC47	North of Portland Street	Office	Consider for release employment land within Gigaport masterplan area	19,809 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of site is within flood zone 2 and consideration should be given to designing in flood resilient finishes to buildings (see Policy AAPINV7a). Site within Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d). The current buildings do not contribute positively to the character of the area, therefore redevelopment for office uses would increase investment and jobs to this area, improving the vitality of the town centre.
TC48a	Day Street/ Garden Street	Office	Included within Gigaport masterplan area	8,270 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of site is high sensitivity (level 2) as per Characterisation Study. The site is allocated because it is considered there may be more appropriate uses for the site, and this would ideally improve the design of the buildings on the site. Part of site in coal development high risk area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Air quality issues along Stafford Street and Garden Street (see Policy AAPINV7b). Part of site in Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d).

TC50	Day Street car park	Office and multi storey car park, Sequential site for convenience retail/ bulky goods	Included within Gigaport masterplan area	9,942 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	The occupied commercial units along Stafford Street could form part of a scheme if they are positively integrated. If the units are redeveloped the proposals will need to show how the businesses have been relocated within the town centre. Alternatively if a scheme comes forwards that excludes the units, consideration will need to be given to the boundary treatment. Part of site is high sensitivity (level 2) and frontage could be strengthened, as per Characterisation Study. The proposed design would need to contribute positively to the setting of the Leather Museum, whilst also forming a strong frontage to the ring road. Air quality issues along Littleton Street and Day Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC51	Blue Lane East/ Stafford Street	Office		4,560 over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	High sensitivity (level 2) as per Characterisation Study, with 2 locally listed buildings on the site. There is potential to explore the opportunity for the reuse of the buildings, although given their condition this option may be limited. Part of site in Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Air quality issues along Stafford Street and Blue Lane (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC52	Green Lane Police Station	Office	Included within Gigaport masterplan area	19,567 sqm over 5 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Peripheral location but prominent on ring road. Frontage could be strengthened (as per Characterisation Study). Any new development on the site would need to be a high quality landmark building. Air quality issues along Littleton Street and Green Lane (see Policy AAPINV7b). The site could include the Walsall Magistrates Court if this was to relocate.

TC54	Stafford Street/ Green Lane car park	Mixed use	Included within Gigaport masterplan area	3,546 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of site in Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d). The re-establishment of development on this site will fill in gaps within the townscape and will therefore improve the character of the area and the setting of the locally listed buildings. Proposals for this site would need to be of an appropriate scale and design for the character of the area, taking into account the nearby locally listed buildings.
TC55	Wisemore	Bulky goods/ convenience retail, Mixed town centre uses	Adjacent to Gigaport masterplan area	8,380 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Medium term (2-5 years)	Frontage could be strengthened (as per Characterisation Study). This is a vacant site in a prominent location, so development is not considered to have a negative impact on any heritage assets, as long as a positive relationship can be found with the rear of the buildings on Stafford Street. Site within Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Air quality issues along Littleton Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).



- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Chapter 2 Walsall Town Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ AAP boundary (AAP1) <p>Chapter 3 A Place for Shopping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Primary Shopping Area boundary (AAPS1) □ Opportunities for retail investment (AAPS2) □ Sequential sites for convenience/bulky goods retail development (AAPS2) □ Walsall Market (AAPS3) <p>Chapter 4 A Place for Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Opportunities for office development (AAPB1) □ Opportunities for investment in existing office stock (AAPB1) □ Social Enterprise Zone (AAPB2) □ High quality employment land (AAPB3) □ Consider for release employment land (AAPB3) | <p>Chapter 5 A Place for Leisure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Opportunities for leisure investment (AAPLE1) □ Sports, community, cultural facilities (AAPLE2) □ Canal (AAPLE4) <p>Chapter 6 A Place for Living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Opportunities for residential development (AAPLV1) □ Education investment (AAPLV2) □ Conservation Area (AAPLV5) □ Listed building (AAPLV5) ◆ Locally listed building (AAPLV5) ▲ Landmark buildings (AAPLV6) ★ Gateway sites for high quality design (AAPLV6) □ Public realm areas for improvement (AAPLV7) □ Public realm areas to be maintained (AAPLV7) □ Urban open space (AAPLV8) | <p>Chapter 7 Transport, Movement and Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↔ Opportunities for improved pedestrian linkages (AAPT1) — Existing greenway (AAPT1) — Proposed greenway (AAPT1) — National Cycle Route 5 (AAPT2) ●●● Proposed cycle improvements (AAPT2) □ Opportunity for public transport investment (AAPT3) — Railway line (AAPT3) ⊕ Location for junction improvements (AAPT4) — Strategic highway network Ⓟ Potential location for super car park (AAPT5) <p>Chapter 8 A Place for Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ St Matthew's Quarter boundary (AAPINV2) □ Gigaport masterplan boundary (AAPINV3) □ Waterfront area boundary (AAPINV4) □ Park Street area boundary (AAPINV5) □ Opportunities for mixed town centre uses (AAPINV6) □ Mineral Safeguarding Area (AAPINV7) |
|--|--|---|

Figure 8.2 Gigaport Area

8.3.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Gigaport outline planning permission - planning reference 07/2659/OL/W7.
- The EU Water Framework Directive.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council

8.3.3 Delivery

Gigaport is a well established priority for the Council and a number of sites have already been delivered or are under construction within the area including the Jhoots Pharmacy office. The outline Gigaport permission provides the planning framework to give applicants the confidence that office uses will be supported and the Council will help in the delivery of an office corridor by:

- Creating the right environment through public realm, road improvements and improved linkages (see Policy AAPLV7: Enhancing the Public Realm and all the policies within Chapter 7: Transport, Movement and Accessibility);
- Prioritising the sites fronting Littleton Street West in order to develop a corridor of high quality developments that will attract further investment and create a gateway to Walsall;
- Promoting the town centre for inward investment for public and private sector offices;
- Delivering the other improvements to the town centre as proposed in the AAP, including increased leisure provision and an improved retail offer to make the centre an attractive place to invest in but also to work in;
- Working to deliver a multi-storey car park that will provide parking for office workers and visitors along with being flexible to allow some level of individual parking for office developments (see Policy AAPT5: Car Parking);
- Working to overcome issues around congestion on the ring road and to make improvements to the road network (see Policy AAPT4: Road Improvements);
- Using the WMBC's covenant in order to improve scheme viability (i.e. acting as the rental guarantor to encourage development);
- Strategic acquisitions / assembly of development opportunity sites (using the Council's powers of compulsory purchase where necessary) to enable delivery;
- Securing funding (under the SEP for the Black Country) to intervene proactively to de-risk sites to support delivery, including site clearance and remediation;
- Taking a direct development role (repeating the role the Council played in successfully delivering the Primark/Co-op scheme); and

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

8.3.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPINV3.1 - Amount of additional town centre use floorspace within the Waterfront Area.	The amount of new office floorspace will also be monitored against the floorspace targets as set out in Policy AAPB1: Office Developments.

8.4 Walsall Waterfront – Walsall’s Leisure Destination

Creating a leisure destination in Walsall is crucial for the future vitality and viability of the centre.

Policy AAPINV4: Walsall Waterfront

Walsall Waterfront will become a gateway destination in Walsall for leisure, work and living, providing opportunities to build on the historic canal frontage and creating a unique waterside development.

a) Waterfront North (TC10) will deliver a successful and vibrant cinema-anchored leisure hub with family orientated restaurants. This site is considered to be the main location in the town centre for substantial leisure development to serve the Borough and surrounding areas. The Council will prioritise the delivery of leisure uses as set out in the planning permission (07/2659/OL/W7) and will not allow other schemes to jeopardise the scheme.

b) Appropriate uses for Waterfront Lex site (TC08) include hotel and conference facilities, commercial office use, healthcare related uses and further leisure uses to complement the planned investment currently under construction. Residential use would be acceptable if an appropriate level of residential amenity and suitable access arrangements could be achieved.

c) Appropriate uses for secondary sites (Holiday Hypermarket (TC09), William House and Stafford Works (TC14)) include hotel and conference facilities, cultural uses and further leisure uses that complement the planned investment. Residential will also be appropriate where an acceptable residential environment can be provided without constraining any leisure uses.

d) Waterfront South provides the opportunity to create a canalside community which supports the vitality of the centre and provides a high quality living environment. Residential uses will be suitable at the Kirkpatrick's site (TC11), William House and Stafford Works (TC14), and FE Towe Ltd, Charles Street (TC15) if the criteria in Policy AAPLV1(f) can be met.

Retail use, except small-scale complementary activities, will not be permitted on any of the Waterfront sites.

All development must be of high design quality complementing the New Art Gallery, the canal (Policy AAPLE4) and the Conservation Area.

The development of the area should relate positively, in visual and functional terms, to surrounding areas and particularly to the rest of the centre. Strong and secure pedestrian linkages will be required both to and within the development to encourage the maximum public access. In particular public access must be provided along the canal and at least one footbridge provided across the canal arm.

Development opportunities adjacent to the canal will be expected to contribute towards the improvement and maintenance of the canal infrastructure and towpaths. All development within the area will be expected to protect, conserve and where possible, enhance heritage assets including the Canal Locks Conservation Area.

8.4.1 Policy Justification

Waterfront North has been the location where the Council has sought to attract leisure development in the town centre, as per the Walsall Waterfront SPD, and the delivery of the 100-bedroom Premier Inn hotel and associated restaurant is the first investment of this nature. The next challenge therefore is to deliver major leisure and entertainment uses on the remainder of the site. Waterfront North needs to build on its location and its links to the town centre and Park Street with high quality public realm and improved east to west movements.

Landowners are currently working on a proposal to deliver a footbridge across the canal to increase pedestrian access along both sides of the canal and to new facilities such as the cinema.

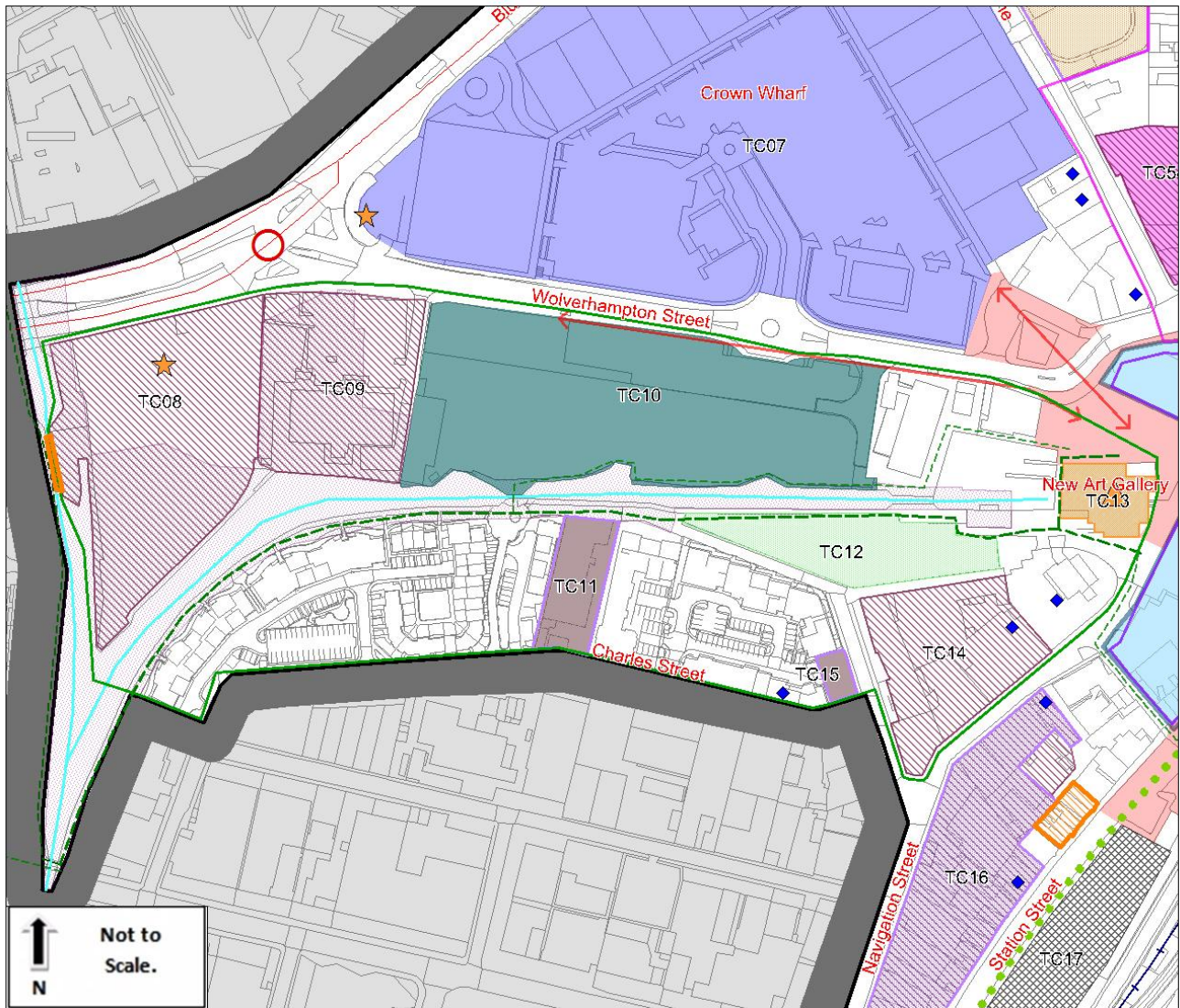
The Waterfront Lex site (TC08) has been the subject of an intrusive site investigation which has narrowed down the remediation costs associated with the site, and it was acquired by the Council in January 2015. Its dual canal frontage and gateway location makes this site a prime development opportunity. Better connections with Waterfront North could be achieved by the inclusion of the Holiday Hypermarket (TC09) into a more comprehensive development opportunity.

The table on the following page provides further details on the development opportunities within Walsall Waterfront:

Site Ref	Site Name	Allocation	Site Details	Capacity	Timescale	Further Information
TC10	Waterfront North	Leisure	Planning consent (13/0440/FL) granted June 2013 for multi-screen cinema and associated leisure uses. Material amendments granted July 2014 (14/0779/FL)	7,005 sqm leisure scheme (from planning consent)	Short term (0-2 years)	Adjacent to Canal Locks Conservation Area. Frontage could be strengthened (as per Characterisation Study). Phase 1 of the cinema scheme is nearing completion, which will improve the streetscene of this previously vacant site, and will bring footfall and vitality to the area adjacent the canal. Part of site in coal development high risk area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Site within Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d).
TC08	Waterfront Lex	Mixed use – including office	Vacant site in prominent location fronting both the ring road and canal.	4,824 sqm over 5 storeys (estimate from potential end user)	Medium term (2-5 years)	Access issues from Wolverhampton Road. Contamination and remediation issues (see Policy AAPINV7d). Southern part of the site falls within Walsall Locks Conservation Area. Frontage could be strengthened and the site is a potential location for landmark building (as per Characterisation Study). The site is currently cleared so a high quality development will make a positive contribution to the area, and should include enhancement of the canal as an historic asset. Part of site in Limestone mine consideration zone (see Policy AAPINV7d). Air quality issues along Wolverhampton Street (see Policy AAPINV7b). Potential noise issues at Wolverhampton Road (see Policy AAPINV7c).

TC09	Holiday Hypermarket	Mixed use	Would improve links between Waterfront North and the Lex site, allowing a more comprehensive development.	8,454 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of the site falls within Walsall Locks Conservation Area. The site houses a 19 th century building to the west which positively contributes to the character of the area and should be retained; however this could tolerate development on both sides of a significant scale to reinstate the urban character of the canal. Limestone mine consideration zone (see Policy AAPINV7d). Air quality issues along Wolverhampton Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC14	William House and Stafford Works	Mixed use	Vacant buildings in a prominent location fronting the canal.	8,538 sqm over 4 storeys (estimate)	Medium term (2-5 years)	High sensitivity (level 2) as per Characterisation Study. The buildings on the site are currently vacant and therefore make a negative contribution to the surrounding area, particularly to the canal. Development of appropriate design and scale, taking into account the locally listed building, would make a positive contribution to the area, particularly the canal Conservation Area. Part of site in Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d).
TC11	Kirkpatricks site	Housing	Consider for release employment land, within predominantly residential area	Approx. 40 residential units over 4 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Site within Limestone consideration area (see Policy AAPINV7d). Part of site in coal development high risk area (see Policy AAPINV7d). This is the last remaining site along the canal for the Waterfront South area, and currently does not relate positively to the surrounding buildings. Development here would complete the development along the canal and provide a more active frontage. Any scheme would be expected to continue the existing strong frontage to the canal.

TC15	FE Towe Ltd, Charles Street	Residential	Consider for release employment site, within predominantly residential area	Approx. 20 residential units over 3 storeys.	Long term (5-10 years)	The site is currently in use for industry, but as this may relocate out of the centre in the future there is potential that the building will become underused without a positive allocation, and residential is considered to be in keeping with the surrounding uses and character. The building makes a positive contribution to the character of the area and is in keeping with nearby buildings, therefore the potential for conversion should be explored.
------	-----------------------------------	-------------	--	---	------------------------------	---



<p>Chapter 2 Walsall Town Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ AAP boundary (AAP1) <p>Chapter 3 A Place for Shopping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Primary Shopping Area boundary (AAPS1) □ Opportunities for retail investment (AAPS2) □ Sequential sites for convenience/bulky goods retail development (AAPS2) □ Walsall Market (AAPS3) <p>Chapter 4 A Place for Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Opportunities for office development (AAPB1) □ Opportunities for investment in existing office stock (AAPB1) □ Social Enterprise Zone (AAPB2) □ High quality employment land (AAPB3) □ Consider for release employment land (AAPB3) 	<p>Chapter 5 A Place for Leisure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Opportunities for leisure investment (AAPLE1) □ Sports, community, cultural facilities (AAPLE2) □ Canal (AAPLE4) <p>Chapter 6 A Place for Living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Opportunities for residential development (AAPLV1) □ Education investment (AAPLV2) □ Conservation Area (AAPLV5) □ Listed building (AAPLV5) □ Locally listed building (AAPLV5) □ Landmark buildings (AAPLV6) □ Gateway sites for high quality design (AAPLV6) □ Public realm areas for improvement (AAPLV7) □ Public realm areas to be maintained (AAPLV7) □ Urban open space (AAPLV8) 	<p>Chapter 7 Transport, Movement and Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↔ Opportunities for improved pedestrian linkages (AAPT1) --- Existing greenway (AAPT1) --- Proposed greenway (AAPT1) --- National Cycle Route 5 (AAPT2) ... Proposed cycle improvements (AAPT2) □ Opportunity for public transport investment (AAPT3) — Railway line (AAPT3) ○ Location for junction improvements (AAPT4) — Strategic highway network Ⓟ Potential location for super car park (AAPT5) <p>Chapter 8 A Place for Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ St Matthew's Quarter boundary (AAPINV2) □ Gigaport masterplan boundary (AAPINV3) □ Waterfront area boundary (AAPINV4) □ Park Street area boundary (AAPINV5) □ Opportunities for mixed town centre uses (AAPINV6) □ Mineral Safeguarding Area (AAPINV7)
--	--	---

Figure 8.3 Waterfront Area

8.4.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Waterfront Cinema Planning Permission – planning reference 13/0440/FL and 14/0779/FL.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

8.4.3 Delivery

Much of Walsall Waterfront, such as the hotel and residential development, has been completed or are under construction, as in the case of the cinema development. The Council will look to protect the cinema scheme by resisting any proposals that may compromise its delivery and directing further leisure developments to the Waterfront area to create a leisure hub. Furthermore, the Council will also look to support the delivery of the remaining waterfront sites. This includes:

- Pre-applications discussions with owners and interested parties on Waterfront Lex and William House / Stafford Works;
- Implementing the required remediation works at Waterfront Lex, following successful application for LGF funding
- Support with finding suitable alternative sites / premises for industry within the waterfront boundary (see Policy AAPB3: Town Centre Employment Land);
- Working with the Canal & River Trust to maintain the quality of the canalside environment and where appropriate utilising developer contributions to improve and maintain the waterfront environment to ensure it remains a high quality leisure development (see Policy AAPLE4: Walsall Canal);
- Protecting and enhancing the links between Waterfront and the rest of the town, especially in regards to maintaining the canal towpath through Council investment, partnership working with Centro and where appropriate developer contributions (see Policy AAPLE4: Walsall Canal and Policy AAPT1: Pedestrian Movement, Access and Linkages); and
- In the longer term looking to realise the potential of the Holiday Hypermarket site so that the full potential of the canal location is fulfilled.

8.4.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPINV4.1 - Amount of additional town centre use floorspace within the Waterfront Area.	Increase over the plan period

8.5 Park Street

Park Street is the core of the town centre where the prime rental levels are achieved and the majority of the big high street names are congregated. Its position moving forward should remain as the retail core where retailers and complementary service providers are encouraged to locate. However if this position is to be maintained in the long term, Walsall's attractiveness to retail investment needs to be improved.

Policy AAPINV5: Park Street Shopping Core

a) Park Street shopping core, which includes the Saddler's shopping centre and Park Place shopping centre and other surrounding streets, will be protected and enhanced as the primary retail location. This will be achieved by directing retail investment into vacant units and through working with landlords to reconfigure units to meet modern retail requirements, where appropriate (Policy AAPS2).

b) Developments in Park Street will be expected to positively contribute to the streetscene and create active frontages, complementing the existing built environment. All development within the area will be expected to protect, conserve and where possible, enhance heritage assets. (Policies AAPS1 and AAPLV6).

c) Park Street will also be the area where the Council seeks to maximise investment in public realm improvements, connected to the delivery of the new market (Policy AAPS3) and the implementation of the Council's public realm strategy (Policy AAPLV7). The Council will seek to ensure that new developments improve the linkages between the Park Street shopping core and Crown Wharf, Waterfront and public transport interchanges (Policy AAPT1).

d) There are currently significant areas of under-utilised space at upper floors in the Park Street shopping core and the Council will encourage landowners to bring this space back into economic use for appropriate town centre uses, including residential if amenity is not compromised (Policy AAPLV1).

8.5.1 Policy justification

Park Street shopping core is the heart of Walsall town centre, it is therefore crucial that all policies and proposals in the plan look to protect and enhance this part of the centre. Whilst the Park Street area offers fewer opportunities for large scale change due to the smaller retail units and diverse land ownership, there will be opportunities

to maximise its potential. The Council will actively look to reduce vacancies and promote the use of upper floors to bring further life into the centre.

There are some opportunities for reconfiguration as set out in Policy AAPS2 within the Saddler's Centre and Park Place shopping centres. These shopping centres play a crucial role in supporting Park Street through the provision of larger indoor units offering routes through to other parts of the centre and public transport hubs. Leisure uses such as A3 and A5 will be permitted in this area to bring life into the centre, subject to Policy AAPS1. It is recognised that improvements are needed to Park Street's public realm to create a high quality shopping destination. The Council has therefore identified this as the key area for schemes and will look to build on the public realm implemented as part of the new Walsall Market (as per Policy AAPLV7).

Improving the linkages between Park Street and other areas of the centre is fundamental to ensuring its vitality and viability. All new large scale development is required to consider its relationship with the Primary Shopping Area, in which the Park Street shopping core falls (Policy AAPS1). Particular areas in need of improvements have been identified on the AAP Policies Map and the Council will look to prioritise links between Park Street and attractions in the centre that generate significant footfall such as edge-of-centre retail parks (particularly Crown Wharf), food stores and public transport hubs to encourage movement throughout the centre.

The table below provides further details on the development opportunities within the Park Street area.

Site Ref	Site Name	Allocation	Site Details	Capacity	Timescale	Further Information
TC04	Saddler's Centre	Retail opportunities for investment/reconfiguration (Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development)	Within the PSA	22,794 sqm (refurbishment)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of site is within flood zone 2 and 3, and a culverted watercourse. Consideration should be given to designing in flood resilient finishes to buildings (see Policy AAPINV7a). Part of site is high sensitivity (level 2) as per Characterisation Study. Reconfiguration would provide an opportunity to improve the relationship with the historic assets particularly at Bradford Place and Station Street.

TC05	Park Place	Retail opportunities for investment/reconfiguration (Policy AAPS2: New Retail Development)	Within the PSA	7,210 sqm (refurbishment)	Long term (5-10 years)	Frontage could be strengthened (as per Characterisation Study).
TC06	Townend House	Investment in existing office stock (Policy AAPB1: Office Developments)	Under-utilised office building	4,472 sqm (refurbishment)	Long term (5-10 years)	Frontage could be strengthened (as per Characterisation Study). Allocated for office reconfiguration, which is expected to be within its existing urban form.

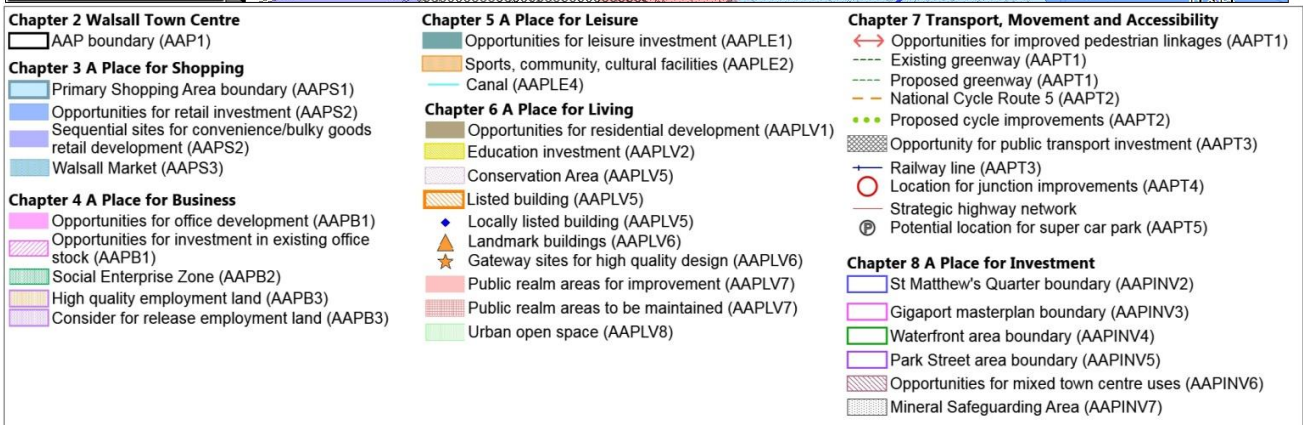
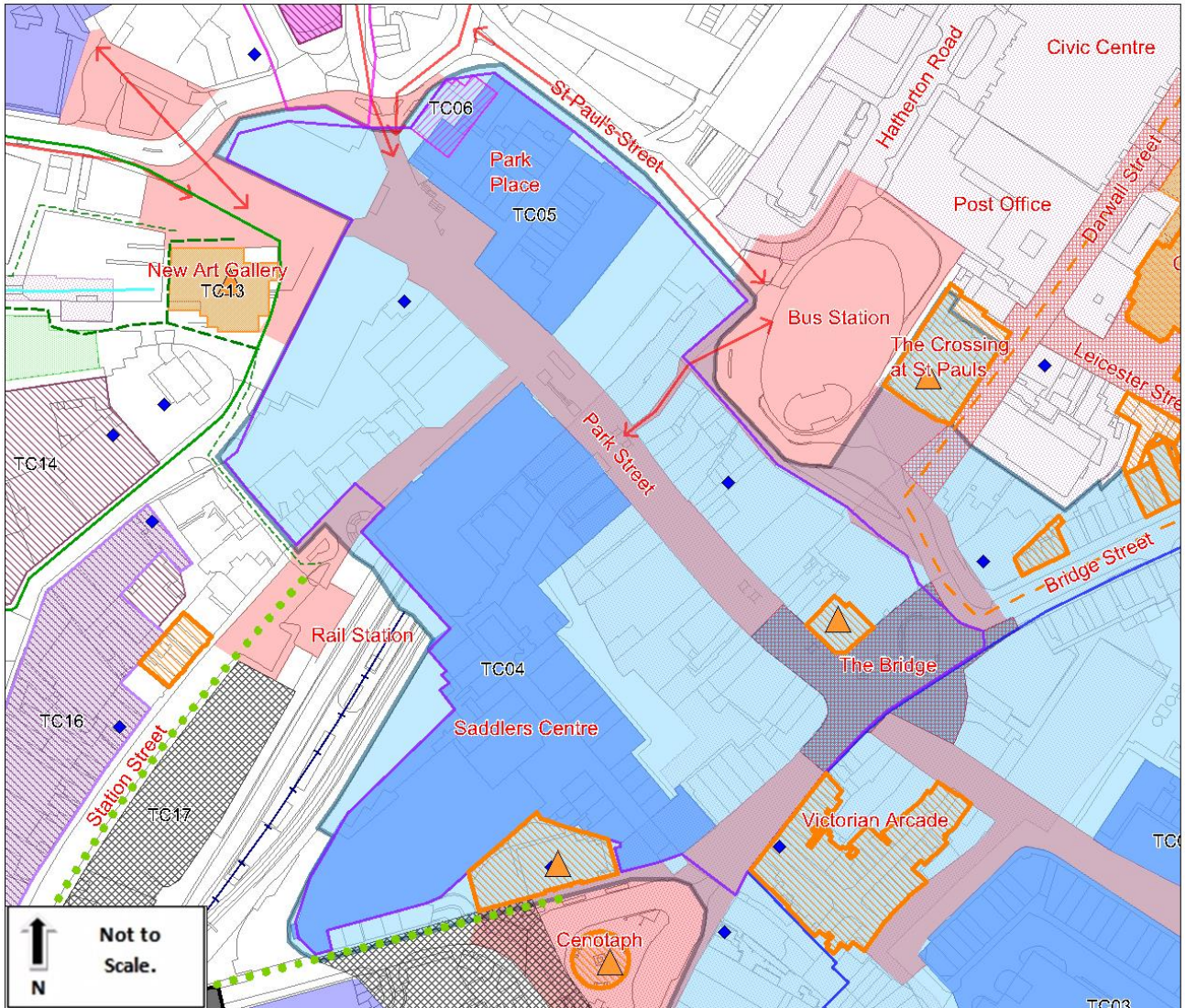


Figure 8.4 Park Street area

8.5.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Information provided in support of planning application for the new market – planning reference 14/1871/FL.
- Walsall Town Centre Characterisation Study (March 2016) Walsall Council.

8.5.3 Delivery

The key short term priority for the Park Street area is to deliver the new Walsall Market scheme (see Policy AAPS3: The New Walsall Market) and the Council is committed to delivering this scheme. The improved market layout should attract new stall holders and increase the level of footfall in the area. Park Street should also benefit from the recent Primark investment which should draw further investment into the centre and provide an improved shopping offer. The Council will further support the development of the Park Street area by:

- Continuing the public realm improvements from the New Market along Park Street (see Policy AAPLV7: Enhancing the Public Realm);
- Improving linkages, especially to Crown Wharf to encourage footfall throughout the centre (Policy AAPT1: Pedestrian Movement, Access and Linkages);
- Utilising planning policy to attract investment into the PSA and to deter developments that will have negative impacts on the centre’s health through drawing away investment and spending;
- Supporting business to invest and relocate within the PSA;
- Working with land owners and investors to explore opportunities for the reconfiguration of retail units to provide larger modern units; and
- Further direct involvement (in addition to the Primark scheme) in the development of retail opportunities in the PSA.

8.5.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPINV5.1 - Amount of additional town centre use floorspace within the Park Street Area.	Increase over the plan period. See also retail floorspace targets Policy AAPS2.

8.6 Secondary Development Sites

In addition to the 'Big Three', there are a number of other development opportunities. These sites are secondary opportunities, some of which are individual sites whilst others are made up of a number of smaller sites. They have been identified because they are either Council owned, consider for release employment sites, or vacant opportunities.

Policy AAPINV6: Secondary Development Sites

a) Secondary Sites provide a key role in meeting other needs in the centre such as community facilities, conferencing and banqueting facilities, residential, car parking and smaller leisure facilities. All proposals for these sites should:

i) Accord with all other policies within the plan;

ii) Demonstrate that where there are active uses on the sites making up the development opportunities that these can be positively relocated;

iii) Be a comprehensive scheme which makes the best use of land; and

iv) Have consideration for the character of the area and be of high quality design.

b) In order to maximise the potential of town centre sites, schemes that propose solely residential use will need to demonstrate that the proposal supports and does not prejudice the centre's retail, commercial and leisure function. Proposals will need to demonstrate that a mixed use scheme incorporating other town centre uses has been considered and that a residential development is the best option for delivering the site.

The table below sets out the sites identified in the plan and the proposed use.

c) There may be other sites that aren't specifically identified at this time which would be suitable as a development for appropriate town centre uses. Where these schemes come forward they will be expected to be in accordance with the principles and policies set out in the AAP.

Site Ref	Site Name	Allocation	Site Details	Capacity	Timescale	Site Requirements
TC16	Station Street	Town centre uses other than A1 retail. Suitable location for hotel, banqueting or conference facilities. Residential uses will be supported where a high quality living environment can be created. Station Street Car Park (TC17) adjacent is allocated for the expansion of railway services.	Consider for release employment land. Gateway site due to close proximity to the rail station, and opportunity to redevelop former Boak site.	10,500 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of site is within flood zone 2 and consideration should be given to designing in flood resilient finishes to buildings (see Policy AAPINV7a). High sensitivity (level 2) as per Characterisation Study. Parts of the site are vacant buildings and cleared areas, so the site is a significant development opportunity, and developing sensitively around the listed and locally listed buildings would improve their setting and enhance the character of the area.
TC20	Midland Road	Town centre uses other than A1 retail. Suitable location for banqueting facilities. Residential uses will be supported where a high quality living environment can be created.	Consider for release employment land.	14,095 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Some parts within Bradford Street Conservation Area. Part of site is high sensitivity (level 2) as per Characterisation Study. There is a locally listed building which should be retained, and development should be of an appropriate design and scale. Air quality issues along Wednesbury Road (see Policy AAPINV7b).

TC21	Bradford Street area	Town centre uses other than A1 retail. Residential will be supported on upper floors.	Mountrath Street Council owned car park provides redevelopment opportunity. Bradford Street is busy route into the town centre.	34,326 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Some parts within Bradford Street Conservation Area. There are listed and locally listed buildings, so the plan proposes the reuse of vacant buildings and the redevelopment of the car park and any industry that may relocate. Most of site is high sensitivity (levels 1 and 2) as per Characterisation Study. Air quality issues along Wednesbury Road and Mountrath Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC22	Vicarage Place/ Caldmore Road	Town centre uses other than A1 retail. Residential uses will be supported where a high quality living environment can be created.	Consider for release employment land	6,090 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of site within Bradford Street Conservation Area and 3 locally listed buildings. The allocation is for the reuse of employment land and we would expect where possible the locally listed buildings to be considered as part of scheme and to be retained. High sensitivity (level 2) as per Characterisation Study. Air quality issues along Mountrath Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC23	Caldmore Road/ Upper Hall Lane	Town centre uses other than retail. Residential uses will be supported where a high quality living environment can be created.	Consider for release employment land	3,373 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of site within Church Hill Conservation Area. High sensitivity (level 2) as per Characterisation Study. Some of the buildings are quite prominent but are poorly

						maintained which reduces contribution to the character of the area. Any proposals for this site would need to have consideration for the frontage which faces the Conservation Area. Air quality issues along Upper Hall Lane (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC24	Lower Hall Lane/ Newport Street	Opportunities for investment in office stock Town centre uses other than A1 retail.	Office building with vacancies that would benefit from refurbishment or redevelopment.	3,327 sqm over 3 storeys refurbishment	Long term (5-10 years)	The site is allocated for reconfiguration or redevelopment. Reconfiguration would not have an impact on the character of the area, and redevelopment could improve its relationship with the nearby Conservation Areas. Any proposal for redevelopment would need to consider the scale of the nearby listed buildings so as not to dominate the area. Air quality issues at junction of Mountrath Street/ Upper Hall Lane (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC27	New Street	Town centre uses other than A1 retail. Residential uses will be supported where a high quality living environment can be created.	Consider for release employment land	4,047 sqm over 2 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	The redevelopment of this site would need to be sympathetic to location adjacent to the ground of St Matthew's Church. Air quality issues along Dudley Street/ Peal Street (Policy AAPINV7b).

TC30	Ablewell Street (east)	Town centre uses other than A1 retail. Residential uses will be supported as part of a comprehensive scheme for the area including other centre uses and where a high quality living environment can be created.	Parts of the site are consider for release employment sites.	41,592 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of site within Church Hill Conservation Area and there are some locally listed buildings. Part of site is high sensitivity (level 2) and some parts of the frontage could be strengthened, as per Characterisation Study. This is a large site and parts of it could be redeveloped with little impact on the historic character. Proposals for sites adjacent to the locally listed buildings should be sensitive in scale and design to these assets. Some air quality issues at Ablewell Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC31	Upper Rushall Street/ Town Hill	Town centre uses other than A1 retail. Residential uses will be supported where a high quality living environment can be created.	Council owned vacant site, located on a key route in the town.	3,997 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Part of site within Church Hill Conservation Area. Part of site is high sensitivity (level 2) and frontage could be strengthened, as per Characterisation Study. The site is currently a Council owned car park and some vacant space, therefore redevelopment of this site would be positive in bringing further footfall to the area. Proposals should be of an appropriate scale and design to the adjacent buildings, in particular the locally listed building adjacent the site.

						Part of the site is over a culverted watercourse (see Policy AAPINV7a). Some air quality issues along Upper Rushall Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC32	Regina Court	Town centre uses other than retail, Investment in existing office stock	Largely Council owned and partly vacant.	14,708 sqm over 4 storeys refurbishment	Long term (5-10 years)	The frontage of the site is within the Bridge Street Conservation Area. The allocation for office reconfiguration could be undertaken without harming the character of the area, and would actually improve it. Part of the site is over a culverted watercourse (see Policy AAPINV7a). Some air quality issues along Upper Rushall Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC33	Tameway Tower	Investment in existing office stock	Vacant/ under-utilised office building	9,432 sqm refurbishment	Long term (5-10 years)	This site is not sensitive to change as the building does not contribute positively to the town centre's appearance. The allocation for office reconfiguration could be undertaken without harming the character of the area, and would actually improve it.
TC34	Intown area	Town centre uses other than A1 retail, Multi storey car park. Residential uses will be	Council owned car parks and consider for release employment sites.	19,113 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Small parts of site are high sensitivity (level 1) as per Characterisation Study. There is substantial capacity for change

		supported as part of a comprehensive scheme for the area including other centre uses and where a high quality living environment can be created.				through the development of clear land and surface level parking areas. The scale of development should be informed by the falling topography and due to its largely 'back land' location, should not exceed the height of frontage buildings. A small part of site is within flood zone 2 and consideration should be given to designing in flood resilient finishes to buildings (see Policy AAPINV7a). Some air quality issues along Lower Rushall Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).
TC35	Lower Rushall Street/ Holtshill Lane	Town centre uses other than A1 retail. Residential uses will be supported where a high quality living environment can be created.	Council owned car park and consider for release employment sites.	2,850 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	Frontage could be strengthened (as per Characterisation Study). Site includes a listed building which should be retained. Any development of the frontage should be of an appropriate scale and design bearing in the mind flats to the rear. Part of the site is over a culverted watercourse (see Policy AAPINV7a). Some air quality issues along Lower Rushall Street (see Policy AAPINV7b).

TC38	Lower Forster Street	Town centre uses other than retail. Residential uses will be supported where a high quality living environment can be created.	Consider for release employment sites.	3,429 sqm over 3 storeys (estimate)	Long term (5-10 years)	High sensitivity (level 2) as per Characterisation Study. Buildings should be retained if possible, otherwise a new development would need to be in keeping with the surrounding area in terms of design and scale.
------	----------------------	--	--	-------------------------------------	------------------------	---

8.6.1 Policy Justification

The AAP has adopted an approach around concentrating development in three key locations (St Matthew's Quarter, Gigaport and Waterfront) along with the Park Street core shopping area, in order to provide the best strategy for regeneration (see policies AAPINV2-5 above). There are however, a number of other secondary sites in the town centre which provide opportunities for development. These sites are still important to the regeneration of the town and many provide key opportunities for main town centre uses. The sites have mainly been identified because they are:

- Consider for release employment sites (see policy AAPB3: Town Centre Employment Land)
- Council owned car parks that could be redeveloped (See policy AAPT5: Car Parking)

Generally these sites will be suitable for a mix of town centre uses apart from A1 retailing as they are outside of the Primary Shopping Area (AAPS1: Primary Shopping Area). Mixed use developments will be encouraged including the provision of residential on upper floors. All developments will be expected to consider main town centre uses before solely residential schemes in order to protect the function of the town centre and to help realise the potential of sites in supporting the regeneration strategy.

Although the sites are called secondary it may be that some come forward for development before other sites identified by the Council as priorities. This will be supported where the development of secondary sites does not undermine the regeneration strategy – in particular the delivery of Gigaport for offices or Waterfront for leisure (see AAPINV3: Walsall Gigaport and AAPINV4: Walsall Waterfront).

There are other sites within the town centre that are suitable for development and the Council will be supportive of proposals that accord with the principles and policies set out in the AAP.

8.6.2 Evidence

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

8.6.3 Delivery

Whilst these sites are not considered as the Council's main priorities, the Council is keen to work with developers and investors to bring forward the sites for suitable uses that support the regeneration strategy of the plan. This will include:

- Creating the right environment through public realm, road improvements and improved linkages (see Policy AAPLV7: Enhancing the Public Realm and all the policies within Chapter 7: Transport, Movement and Accessibility);
- Delivering the other improvements to the town centre as proposed in the AAP, including increased leisure provision, an improved retail offer and an office corridor to make the centre an attractive place to invest in but also to work in;
- Promoting the town centre for inward investment for public and private sector businesses;
- Where necessary using the WMBC's covenant in order to improve scheme viability (i.e. acting as the rental guarantor to encourage development); and
- Strategic acquisitions / assembly of development opportunity sites (using the Council's powers of compulsory purchase where necessary) to enable delivery on sites the Council consider as crucial to the centres regeneration.

It must be noted however that the Council has limited resources and the plan has set out properties which are considered to have the most potential for knock-on benefits for the centre as a whole. It is anticipated that through the concentration of efforts and resources there will be further investment in the town centre as a whole and these secondary sites will come forward through the private sector. Once the priority sites have been developed the Council will review its regeneration programme to focus on those secondary sites which are considered to be in prominent locations or most suitable for development.

8.6.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPINV6.1 - Amount of additional town centre use floorspace within the Secondary Sites.	Increase over the plan period.

8.7 Addressing Potential Site Constraints

There are a number of constraints in the town centre, many stemming from the industrial history of the area and historic drainage systems. As such, development in Walsall is often impeded by abnormal development costs. The Council is proactive at working with developers and landowners to address site constraints wherever practicable and the policy below provides the information to developers to allow these to be fully considered.

Policy AAPINV7: Addressing Potential Site Constraints

The Council will work with developers, agents and landowners to understand the constraints of individual sites and where possible provide support in addressing constraints that prevent the delivery of sites.

a) Flood Risk

i) Development proposals will be determined in accordance with the NPPF and BCCS Policy ENV5 UDP, Policy ENV40 and government advice;

ii) The Council require Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) to be provided in support of planning applications for:

- all development proposals within Flood Zone 1 of 1 hectare or more and all proposals for development in Flood Zones 2 and 3.

- developments in other areas with critical drainage problems.

- all other proposals for major development with the exception of those that are not affected by any source of flood risk and that have a site area less than 1 hectare.

iii) Development that cannot be located in zones with a lower probability of flooding, or within the appropriate Flood Zone for the proposed use, the application of the 'Exception Test' may be required and should meet the requirements of NPPF Paragraph 102 and national planning practice guidance;

iv) The Council requires that:-

- major development proposals incorporate a sustainable drainage system (SDS) to manage surface water runoff, unless the applicant can demonstrate it is inappropriate to do so,

- a drainage strategy based on SuDS principles, in accordance with the NPPF, non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems and / or any other local standards or SPDs, is provided for all major proposals that are not affected by any source of flood risk and that have a site area of less than 1 hectare.

- Open up culverted watercourses where feasible as in accordance with BCCS Policy ENV5.

- Consider the use of flood resilient finishes to buildings in Flood Zone 2 and 3 to limit the damage should flooding occur.

b) Water Quality

In line with the objectives of the Humber River Basin Management Plan development proposals must not adversely affect the ecological status of a waterbody and wherever possible take measures to improve its ecological value in order to help meet the required status.

c) Air Quality

Developments need to accord with BCCS Policy ENV8 Air Quality and the NPPF. Where schemes for either sensitive uses (residential, education, healthcare and education facilities and places of work) are proposed in areas where air quality does not meet national air quality objectives, or cause an exceedance of national air quality objectives, or otherwise bring about an increase in pollutant burden in areas of existing poor air quality, an appropriate detailed air quality assessment will be required. Measures may be necessary in some locations to permit development provided satisfactory mitigation can be achieved and developers will be expected to consider the siting and design of schemes to address air quality issues.

d) Noise Pollution

There may be some areas in the town centre where developments need to have consideration to the level of noise. Proposals for residential developments and other sensitive uses such as healthcare and education facilities should be designed in a way to ensure impacts of environmental noise are at an acceptable standard. Noise producing development will be

required to control and mitigate noise to avoid significant adverse impacts on sensitive receptors, and to reduce to a minimum all other impacts.

e) Ground Contamination and Ground Conditions

Developers will be expected to undertake ground contamination and condition assessments and where necessary address them as part of the scheme. The Council will where possible work with developers to overcome any issues which are preventing the delivery of development. Where difficult ground conditions and/or contamination is present, this will be taken into account when assessing development viability and appropriate mitigation strategies.

f) Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA)

A minerals safeguarding area (MSA) is defined on the AAP Policies Map.

This is based on the MSA shown on the BCCS Minerals Key Diagram, which has been further refined to identify the extent of minerals of local and national importance occurring in Walsall. These are as follows in the town centre:

- i. Sands and gravels – Bedrock (Triassic, Sherwood Sandstone, Kidderminster Formation) and Superficial (River and Glacial)**
- ii. Coal (Carboniferous – Upper and Lower Coal Measures) and associated minerals including fireclays**
- iv. Limestone (Silurian – Barr and Wenlock Formations)**

Separate technical documents are available, containing maps showing the parts of Walsall Borough where each of these minerals can be found.

Where non-mineral development is proposed in the MSA, which falls within the thresholds identified in BCCS Policy MIN1, applicants will be expected to consider the feasibility of extracting any minerals present in advance of the development (“prior extraction”). It is recognised that in Walsall “prior extraction” of the above minerals will rarely be feasible. The Council will therefore support non-mineral developments within the MSA where it can be demonstrated that “prior extraction” is not feasible, such as in the situations described in BCCS Policy MIN1.

8.7.1 Policy Justification

AAPINV7(a) Flooding: The Council is in the process of updating the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Borough. The Functional Floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) shown in the technical appendices is part of the ongoing work on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and will continue to be updated as further information becomes available. An updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be published in due course.

Flooding poses a costly risk to property and can also pose a risk to life and livelihoods. It is essential that future development is planned carefully so that areas most at risk from flooding are avoided where possible, ensuring that known flooding issues are not exacerbated and new ones are not created elsewhere.

Section 10 of the NPPF, and particularly paragraph 100, requires the Council to concentrate development within areas of lower risk from flooding following the application of a sequential test. Following the Pitt review (2008) significant changes have been made to national policy and guidance relating to flood risk, in particular, emphasis has been placed on the planning system as a delivery mechanism for flood mitigation measures as part of new major development (as defined in the Development Management Procedure Order – SI 2015/595) through the installation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS). There may also be a need for mitigation measures to be delivered in the centre such as an early warning system to reduce the impact of flooding on the town centre.

The policy applies the provisions of the NPPF and BCCS and takes into account local circumstances that aren't mentioned in the NPPF by requesting that major development less than 1 hectare (e.g. 10+ houses) provide a drainage strategy. Walsall is susceptible to surface water flooding and the requirement for major developments of less than 1 hectare to consider and provide a sustainable means of drainage will contribute towards mitigating flood risk from a source of local concern.

Under the BCCS Policy ENV5 all developments over a culvert should seek to open them up where feasible. The main watercourse under the town centre (Ford Brook) was culverted in the late 1970s/ early 1980s and provides the centre with a reasonable degree of flood protection. The Council considers that it is unlikely to be feasible for developers to open up the Ford Brook as the town centre is heavily built-up and space for vehicles and pedestrians is at a premium. Furthermore the Ford Brook is extremely deep in some places.

There are other culverted watercourses throughout the town centre but it is not considered generally feasible to open these up for infill development or developments adjacent to buildings that are to be retained or where circulation space would be reduced. The Council will however welcome discussions around the

opening up of culverts with developers. Where this is to be done or is a realistic prospect then flood risk modelling should be amended to reflect this.

Overall as the chance of a blockage or capacity being exceeded is extremely low an early warning system is considered the best solution to managing flood risk in the centre. Developers are also encouraged to incorporate flood resilient finishes to buildings in Flood Zone 2 in the town centre to limit the damage should flooding occur, for example higher finished floor levels, solid floors, raised electric sockets.

AAPINV7(b) Water Quality: The Humber River Basin Management Plan is the local delivery tool for achieving the targets of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The WFD will be supported through only permitting developments that will not pose an obstacle to meeting WFD objectives and do not have a negative impact on water quality, either directly through the pollution of surface or ground water, or indirectly through overloading of Wastewater Treatment Works. The technical appendices for the Site Allocation Document include a plan illustrating the overall status of waterbodies, which are either entirely within Walsall or are in part, according to the Environment Agency's 2015 baseline data. For more information, and the most recent baseline data, concerning the Humber River Basin Management Plan and / or the Water Framework Directive consult the Environment Agency.

AAPINV7(c) Air Quality: Air pollution is a major concern in the Borough with road traffic being the main contributor to adverse air quality, a significant issue in the town centre. Poor air quality affects the health and well-being of local people living along key road corridors which carry high volumes of traffic. The technical appendices show the areas of air quality (nitrogen dioxide, NO₂) exceedence in the town centre. The AAP has identified for the development sites included in the plan where air quality may need to be a consideration but this may not be a definitive list and it may change over the plan period; air quality will therefore need to be considered on an individual site basis in consultation with the Council. For some developments a basic screening assessment of air quality may be all that is required whereas other developments may need a full air quality assessment.

Walsall proposes to adopt a Black Country wide Supplementary Planning Document on air quality. The draft documents states it aims to:

- Incorporate air quality mitigation measures within new developments to offset the incremental creep in pollutant emissions;
- Present the method for identifying development proposals where an air quality assessment will be required, and the processes involved;

- Propose various options for site specific mitigation to protect future occupiers from poor air and how such measures will be secured and delivered;
- Confirm where a damage calculation is required and payment made to the Local Authority where mitigation is not appropriate.

Once adopted this will be used by the Council to improve air quality and reduce its impacts.

AAPINV7(d) Noise: There may be some areas in the town centre, such as along the ring road, where road traffic generates levels of noise that could impact on amenity. Developments for residential uses or other sensitive uses will need to consider the impact of noise if they are located next to a busy road or existing noise-producing development, and include mitigation methods such as the siting and design of buildings. Some leisure and commercial uses in the centre, especially those which operate in the evenings and night-time, may also create higher levels of noise. Proposals for noise-sensitive development will not be supported near to such uses unless it can be demonstrated that any impacts can be mitigated to an acceptable level. Securing a high quality residential environment is crucial to creating a centre where people want to live, however a balance is needed as the centre is the main location for leisure and residential developments should not be allowed to negatively impact on these uses.

AAPINV7(e) Ground Contamination and Ground Conditions: Significant areas of land within the Borough have been developed and redeveloped over time with consequential impacts upon the underlying ground conditions. Based on historical usage, areas in the Borough where potentially problematic ground conditions may be encountered have been shown as indicative areas in the technical appendices and for example include:

- Made Ground (artificially changing the level of land);
- Landfill; (disposing of waste or unwanted materials by burying)
- Potentially contaminated ground attributable to previous industrial or commercial operations;
- Near surface or open cast coal mining

The town centre is entirely situated on top of Coal Measures bedrock, with superficial deposits overlying this in places. These layers are all designated as Secondary 'A' aquifers, which means they which will hold various amounts of groundwater that could provide a resource in itself and/or provide base flow to nearby surface water receptors, such as the Ford Brook or the Arboretum pools.

Developers should also be aware of recorded mine entries within the AAP area. Mine entries are a potential constraint on development and The Coal Authority does not generally support the building over of mine entries. As such this can be a factor which reduces the potential capacity of sites and/or affects layout options. Information of mine entries can be found on the Governments website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coal-mining-data>

Potential new sites for allocation that fall within these indicative areas may be affected by one or more of the factors set out above and where the Council is aware of adverse site conditions these have been included as part of the site information tables. The presence of difficult underlying ground conditions may not necessarily prevent development, for example, new development proposals within Coal Mining Development Referral Areas would not automatically be deemed as undeliverable, but would be expected to undertake a Coal Mining Risk Assessment. Where difficult ground conditions are present they will be taken into account when assessing development scheme viability.

Up-to-date technical guidance should to be used when dealing with land affected by contamination, including the joint Defra and Environment Agency publication CLR11: Model procedures for the management of land contamination.

AAPINV7(f) Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA): The purpose of the MSA is to safeguard mineral resources from needless sterilisation by non-mineral development in accordance with BCCS Policy MIN1 and national policy guidance which states that minerals planning authorities should not normally permit other development proposals in mineral safeguarding areas where they might constrain future mineral extraction.

The policy therefore requires planning applications for non-mineral development within the MSA, which fall within the BCCS Policy MIN1 thresholds, to demonstrate that “prior extraction” of minerals has been considered and applicants are expected to provide justification if “prior extraction” is not proposed. The term “prior extraction” means the extraction of minerals in advance of a redevelopment scheme, as a means of avoiding further “sterilisation” of the resource. However, “prior extraction” is only likely to be feasible where minerals occur close to the surface, and where significant land remediation is required.

The recent viability and delivery study by Amec Foster Wheeler has considered the potential for “prior extraction” in Walsall. The study has identified situations where “prior extraction” of sand and conglomerate may be able to provide a source of construction aggregates for use on-site or for sale, which may help offset the costs of individual development. However, “prior extraction” of coal is only likely to be feasible in the urban areas of Walsall on very large sites where extensive remediation is required. Overall, the study concurs with the Council’s view that “prior

extraction” is rarely likely to be feasible or economically viable in Walsall. The policy therefore adopts the same pragmatic approach as the BCCS, recognising that in the urban areas of Walsall, the need for new development will often outweigh the need to safeguard any minerals that remain present beneath the ground, even if it is feasible in practice to extract them.

8.1.2 Evidence

- Walsall Town Centre Demand Study and Development Sites Assessment (July 2015) DTZ.
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Black Country (Level 1), (2009) Jacobs.
- Walsall Council Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, (2011) Walsall Council.
- Walsall Cabinet Report and Draft Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document (February 2016).
- Walsall Council SAD & AAP Minerals Project: Review of Evidence Base for Minerals and Viability and Deliverability of Mineral Development Options (July 2015), Amec Foster Wheeler.
- West Midlands Low Emissions Towns and Cities Programme Planning Guidance (May 2014) West Midlands Low Emissions Towns & Cities Programme.

8.1.3 Delivery

Any potential issue around constraints will need to be addressed on an individual proposal basis. Council teams will work with landowners, developers and investors to understand the constraints on sites and the impact this has on a site’s delivery. More specifically the Council will:

- Look to deliver through CIL an early warning system for the centre to reduce the impact of flooding on developments and the cost of mitigation on developers;
- Work in partnership with the other Black Country authorities to adopt an air quality SPD that will look to mitigate against the impacts of air pollution, especially from vehicle emissions;
- Support with understanding the impact of noise on developments and the possible mitigation methods; and
- Where necessary support the development of sites through undertaking work on contamination remediation, such as the Waterfront Lex site which the Council is remediating with Local Growth Fund assistance.

8.1.4 Monitoring

Indicator	Target
AAPINV7.1 (BCCS indicator COI ENV5) - number of planning permissions granted in accordance with EA advice (or Lead Local Flood Authority advice) on flooding and water quality ground.	100%
AAPINV7.2 (BCCS indicator COI ENV5) - Number of major developments with SuDs incorporated.	100%
AAPINV7.3 (BCCS indicator LOI ENV8) - Proportion of planning permissions granted in accordance with Air Quality/Environmental Protection Section's recommendations.	100%
AAPINV7.4 - Adoption of an Air Quality SPD.	By 2017
AAPINV7.5 - Noise - the proportion of planning permissions granted in accordance with Environmental Protection Section's recommendations.	100%
AAPINV7.6 - Contaminated land - proportion of planning permissions granted in accordance with Environmental Protection Section's recommendations.	100%
AAPINV7.7 (BCCS indicator LOI MIN1) - % of non-mineral development proposals approved within the MSA (falling within the policy thresholds) which do not needlessly sterilise mineral resources.	100%

9. Get Involved

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

As this is the Publication Stage to make your comments more effective it would be useful to provide a response focussing on the 'soundness' of the plan. This can cover the following –

Is the plan:

- **Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

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.

In order to make sure we have recorded your views correctly, you must submit them in writing. To make your comments more effective it is advised that you provide suggested modifications to the plan. You can do this by filling in the questionnaire, either in paper form or online, or by submitting a letter or email. If you are submitting a letter or email, please make it clear which site(s) or policy(ies) you are referring to. You should submit any representations during the consultation period between 7th March and 3rd May 2016. Comments received after the latter date may not be taken into account.

Planning Policy Team

Regeneration and Development
Economy and Environment Directorate
Walsall Council
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1DG
Telephone: 01922 658020
Fax: 01922 652670

Email: planningpolicy@walsall.gov.uk
Website: www.walsall.gov.uk/planning_policy