

Black Country Joint Core Strategy



Frontloading Consultation Report

September 2007

Introduction

This report reviews the consultation undertaken during the 'frontloading' stage of the Joint Core Strategy's production between December 2006 and May 2007.

Background to Joint Core Strategy

The four Black Country local authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton are in the process of preparing new planning documents to replace their current Unitary Development Plans. The Joint Core Strategy will be the key document in the portfolio of planning documents (the Local Development Framework) for each local authority. It will be a spatial planning document that will set out the vision, objectives and detailed spatial strategy for future development in the Black Country up to 2026, and contain specific strategic policies and targets. The document will not just consider land use, but also a comprehensive range of environmental, economic and social issues.

The timetable for the production of the Joint Core Strategy is set out below. Key consultation stages are also identified :

December 2006 – May 2007 Frontloading: Preparation of Issues and Options
July 2007 Publication of Issues and Options Consultation Document
August 2007 – October 2007 Analyse responses and undertake Sustainability Appraisal of options
November 2007 Develop Preferred Options
January 2008 Public participation on Preferred Options document and Sustainability Appraisal

March 2008 – September 2008 Analyse responses and take into account through preparation of the detailed Core Strategy
September 2008 Submission of Core Strategy and final Sustainability Appraisal Report Public Consultation (6 weeks) This stage is important as it is the start of the examination process
December 2008 – April 2009 Prepare for examination
April 2009 Independent examination of Submission Core Strategy
October 2009 Adoption and publication of Core Strategy

Management of consultation

Responsibility for managing and delivering the consultation process for the Core Strategy rests with The Core Strategy Consultation Group which consists of officers from the 4 Black Country Local Authorities. The Consultation Group's agreed Terms of Reference is included within **Appendix A**.

Consultation has been developed and delivered in accordance with the 4 Black Country Local Authorities' Adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCIs) Documents. These documents set out the standards to be achieved by the local authority in involving the community in the preparation of Local Development Framework documents. The Joint Core Strategy's 'soundness' will be tested by examination using 9 tests of soundness and Test number 2 places the onus on officers to prove that it has been prepared in compliance with the SCIs.

The Core Strategy Consultation Group has overseen the consultation with statutory organisations (i.e. national, regional and sub regional organisations). This has involved preparing and managing a Core Strategy database as the basis for information mail outs, producing and managing a dedicated Core Strategy website as the 'host' of Core Strategy library of related documents and contact

information, organising Black Country Core Strategy stakeholder events, producing literature and displays and releasing joint press releases. Consultation with communities at the individual local authority level has been organised and delivered by each of the 4 individual authorities in accordance with the requirements of their respective SCIs..

The Frontloading consultation process

Government guidance on preparing Local Development Documents emphasises the importance of ‘frontloading’ and ‘continuous involvement of stakeholders and communities’ from the outset of producing a Core Strategy document. The consultation has attempted to comply with these principles; and ensure that anyone with an interest in the planning of the Black Country can have their say during its first stage of identifying issues and evidence and therefore receive real, sustained opportunities to influence and have a sense of ownership of the Core Strategy from the outset.

Core Strategy consultation objective

The consultation group’s approach to consultation is based on the following objective:

‘ to deliver meaningful opportunities for stakeholders and communities to get involved from the outset and identify the issues to take forward, therefore developing foundations for real and sustained influence in its development throughout its subsequent stages of production’

Consultation methods

Consultation has been delivered in accordance with this objective, utilising the consultation techniques envisaged appropriate for the frontloading stage of Development Plan Documents such as the Joint Core Strategy.

The intended audience to consult with at the frontloading stage is set out in the SCIs and government guidance contained within PPS12: Creating Local Development Frameworks and the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. Statutory organisations (including national, regional and sub regional organisations and bodies, adjoining authorities, businesses and voluntary and community organisations) are included within a Core Strategy database which was produced and managed by the consultation group to distribute information and invitations to events. Key PPS12 statutory organisations were

targeted by the consultation group in order to obtain their views. Reminder letters, emails and telephone calls were utilised and the result of this targeted approach is contained within the table shown in **Appendix B**:

A considerable amount of discretion exists in terms of who was consulted at the local authority level to reflect local circumstances and organisational structures. Each local authority has a local LDF database of local organisations, businesses and interested individuals who receive information and invitations to local events.

Finally, it is important to note that approach to consultation has recognised the need to try and engage 'hard to reach groups' i.e. those groups which have not traditionally been involved in planning decisions and include young people, BME communities, faith based communities, disabled groups and individuals, small businesses, older people and people on low incomes.

Each Statement of Community Involvement sets out the appropriate technique and intended audience for the Frontloading stage of the document's production. A range of consultation techniques have been used to deliver the following 3 levels of involvement as it is recognised that although where possible level 3 should be aimed for, not everyone is able to give up their time or wish to be involved in lengthy exercises.

1. **Tell people what is planned** (communicating information)
2. **Consultation-offer a number of options and listen and act on feedback received** (questionnaires and discussions)
3. **Deciding together-encourage others to provide some additional ideas and options and join in deciding the best way forward** (participatory exercises)

Appendix C reviews the consultation techniques used and the participants recorded

Regardless of which level is adopted, it has been intended that the outcome of the consultation has been the same i.e. that it has created opportunities for those taking part to have their say and influence this stage of the process. This has required adhering to the following principles:

1. Targeting communities

- The different techniques used have outreached to communities where they are and the visual techniques have involved some hard to reach groups i.e. young people and certain BME communities.
- Working with partner organisations to arrange and deliver joined up consultations, for example Walsall Community Empowerment Network (CEN) and the 4 Black Country LSPs has reduced costs, shared expertise and experience.
- Monitoring the background of participants has assisted in identifying who was being consulted and which groups and communities were being excluded. This has resulted in a more focused approach being devised to target specific groups at subsequent consultations. The work of Walsall CEN as a 'critical friend' has proved invaluable in this process.

2. Open and transparent information to all

- Information has been made available in a range of formats including electronically on the Core Strategy website, newsletters, displays and leaflets
- Consistent contact information in terms of named officers and dedicated telephone numbers and emails were included on all formats.

3. Opportunities for people to put forward ideas and comments

- A range of techniques were used from information giving to participatory techniques. These were delivered after careful consideration of the needs of the intended audience.
- The suitability of the techniques were also monitored which lead to several techniques being refined in light of comments and suggestions being received.

4. Provision of feedback

- Feedback reports from the various consultation exercises were produced and made available on the Core Strategy website and in physical formats and circulated on request.

Findings of the frontloading consultation

The following chapter summarises the main findings of the frontloading consultation. They have been summarised within the theme topics and a full list of all the representations received is available from the Core strategy website.

Consultation responses: Environment

Consultation responses: Economy

Respondents and participants accept the key Black Country Study finding that doing nothing is not an option, and that economic restructuring is essential to the future prosperity of the area.

Against this background, the views expressed at the launch event and feedback from local events highlight a wide range of other issues. The most dominant theme is the need for enhanced training, skills and education so the Black Country workforce can fully contribute to the creation of a modern, knowledge based economy. Other themes include the need to attract a significant quantity of new jobs, and better quality jobs, focussing on the key growth sectors in services and high technology manufacturing.

In terms of land use issues, consultation has identified the need for new development to be in accessible locations, particularly for public transport, and for workplaces to be near to homes in order to reduce the need to travel long distances to work. In terms of offices, views varied between directing all office requirements to strategic centres, and utilising sites at good public transport nodes.

While these themes are representative of a wide range of interest groups and individuals, representations from commercial development interests have been more limited.

Consultation responses: The role of centres

The views expressed at the launch event were divided between those who wanted opportunities for commercial development and those who were concerned with promoting higher quality shopping but also greater investment that reflected the needs of local communities. Similar differences of views are apparent in the views received since that time. The so far relatively limited representations from commercial interests have generally supported the focus on strategic and other centres, but seek a flexible approach to the definition of development opportunities and access by car. Representations from local people and organisations have expressed broad support for investment in centres, rather than in out-of-centre development. However, whilst some people wanted to see the strategic centres as the focus for high quality shopping, a significant minority did not identify with the strategic centres and thought too much emphasis was placed upon them. Members of the public generally were more concerned at the relative decline of the centre of Dudley and the smaller town and district centres, and more expressed a wish to support independent traders than superstore developments. On the other hand, the strategic centres were favoured as the locations for large-scale leisure development, with a cinema for Walsall seen as the most particular need. There was also a desire for facilities for children and young people in centres at all levels in the hierarchy. Most people thought centres could be improved environmentally and with better facilities (notably public toilets), and more and better car parking, as well as access for disabled people. Many people perceived problems of safety and litter, although this was most among those who used centres least.

Consultation responses: Housing

Key factors in attracting people to the Black Country include environmental quality, crime and facilities; not just the types of housing on offer. There is a tension between people's demands and aspirations for larger family homes and building to higher densities. The capacity of the existing housing stock to contribute to environmental improvement should also be addressed; a comprehensive approach to neighbourhood management is necessary. The affordability of housing in general is a critical issue across the Black Country but in particular in some of the more affluent suburbs.

Consultation Responses: Transport

The views expressed at the launch event were wide ranging and diverse. There was a well supported plea for better integration between transport and other Black Country issues. However a strong view was put that the highway network needed improvement with strategic road building to the western side of the Black Country needed. Respondents were impatient and despondent at the

slow pace of Government investment in transport networks in the Black Country. There was general agreement on the need to greatly improve the coverage, quality and choice of public transport across the Black Country.

Reducing the need to travel was proposed as important with land use planning being the key to this. Making better use of the transport networks we already have and more measures to support walking and cycling were also supported.

Consultation responses: Minerals

Stakeholders identified that the Black Country should continue to make provision for the extraction of minerals to maintain local supplies in the longer-term and minimise the distance that primary minerals need to travel – need to identify locations where mineral extraction is supported. It should adopt a holistic approach towards the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources – including minerals – should safeguard mineral reserves, and promote re-use and recycling of buildings and building materials and use of secondary/ recycled aggregates. Others noted that the Black Country should adopt a flexible approach towards planning for minerals in the Black Country – cannot predict future needs of building industry with certainty; whilst addressing the implications of new housing/ economic development proposed in the Black Country for minerals, such as likely need/ demand for primary mineral resources as well as alternatives. The quality of the environment is of particular importance to the Black Country - impacts of mineral extraction are long-term, therefore need to minimise adverse effects, maximise benefits, and secure timely/ appropriate restoration and after-use; and that the Core Strategy should be followed-up by minerals and waste DPD for the Black Country, setting out detailed policies.

Consultation Responses: Waste

Respondents agreed that the Black Country should accept responsibility to manage its own waste within its own area, in order to reduce distances that waste needs to travel to be managed – need to identify locations suitable for developing new waste management facilities. Others noted that it should manage its waste in more sustainable ways/ move it up the “waste hierarchy” – there should be more emphasis on waste reduction, re-use and recycling and less reliance on landfill; whilst re-branding waste management as “resource management,” as waste has negative connotations - should encourage lifecycle approach and opportunities to find new uses for materials;

It has been suggested that the Black Country should adopt a holistic approach towards the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources – including waste materials - and should exploit economic, employment and business opportunities offered by the development of new technologies for managing these resources; It Should adopt a flexible approach towards planning for waste management in the Black Country – cannot predict the future with certainty;. Respondents also emphasised the to address waste management implications of new housing/ economic development proposed in the Black Country, such as generation of construction and demolition waste and ensuring that new development makes adequate provision for sustainable waste management. It was also noted that the quality of the environment is of particular importance to the Black Country - need to minimise impact of waste management on the environment and on climate change, and avoid impacts on important environmental assets. Finally there was support for the Core Strategy to be followed-up by minerals and waste DPD for the Black Country, setting out detailed policies.

Conclusions

What has worked well...

Communication techniques, including the website and leaflets and letters have proved useful in both raising awareness about the Core Strategy and updating people on its progress. Combining the leaflet with a questionnaire asking people for their views on several themed issues enabled people to offer their opinions.

Using a range of consultation techniques has successfully engaged a variety of organisations and communities across the Black Country. In particular, the use of outreaching techniques has enabled officers to target communities and 'hard to reach' groups such as young people and the elderly and some BME communities. Where specified and recorded, 11% of respondees identified themselves as being from a Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) background and 7% of respondees recorded a disability. The use of events has facilitated the dissemination of information to key organisations and statutory bodies. This combined with workshops has resulted in useful discussions and a degree of consensus on the important issues for the Core strategy to address and develop through the identification of options and the refinement of issues.

Monitoring the background of participants has enabled officers to ascertain how representative attendees are of the wider population and to ultimately ensure a representative and inclusive views are obtained.

The targeting of statutory organisations, whilst time consuming, resulted in a number of responses which should hopefully result in a firm foundation for future input as work on the Core Strategy progresses.

What hasn't worked so well...

Analysis of the monitoring of participants at both the Black Country and local events revealed that certain groups have not been successfully engaged. These include: small businesses, commercial interests and developers, together with certain 'hard to reach' groups; in particular Asian Women and disability organisations.

Despite the targeted approach, several statutory organisations have not yet engaged with the Core Strategy. In particular utility organisations and umbrella bodies do not appear to have the capacity to engage during the frontloading process and other organisations ; in particular the Equality organisations have stated their preference to engage at later stages; preferring to respond to a document and policies which of course is not in the spirit of frontloading.

Way forward

The next state of producing the Core Strategy (producing Issues & Options) requires continuous consultation and engagement with key stakeholders and the community. The approach, once again, is governed by that contained within the 4 SCIs. The approach to consultation will need to take into account the need to attempt to target the groups and communities that have not been successfully engaged to date. Moreover these should include:

- Small businesses, organisations representing commercial interests and developers
- Utility and infrastructure providers
- Certain BM communities i.e. Asian women
- Disability organisations

APPENDIX A

Black Country Core Strategy: Consultation Sub-group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Membership

Jon Lord (Walsall) – Leader
Nicki Dale (Dudley) - Second
Joanne Bozdoganli (Sandwell) - Support
James Langler (Wolverhampton) – Support

2. Responsibility

Managing and coordinating all consultation relating to the Black Country Core Strategy. Ensuring compliance with the Regulations and each authority's SCI.

3. Relevant legislation, policy and guidance.

Each authority's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Framework (2004)

4. Key tasks

- Overseeing the preparation of all consultation material, including:
 - Branding
 - Information leaflets

- Questionnaires
- Representation forms
- Consultation documents
- Website
- Creating and maintaining a database of the contact details for relevant consultees across the four authorities.
- Organising for the distribution of consultation material.
- Arranging venues, invitations and programs for consultation events.
- Coordinating presentations and speakers at events.
- Identifying resources available for consultation.
- Arranging for public notices and advertisements to be posted.
- Organising translation material, large print, audio tape etc.
- Writing the brief for any consultancy work required.

5. Working arrangements

The group will meet monthly, soon after each Core Steering Group meeting and at any other time where necessary.

Appendix B: Statutory Bodies consultation (status as of May 2007)

Key

Response received
Contact made awaiting response
Initial contact made but no response offered

PPS12 Consultee	Contact Info	Response	Notes
GOWM	Rachael Pipkin	Yes-continuous through steering group	
WMRA	Dave Thew	Yes-received letter requesting meeting	Meeting to be arranged
Highways Agency	Neil Hansen	Yes-meetings held with GVA Grimleys 30/4/07, Letters received 22./3/07	
Network Rail	Steven Austin	Letter received 30/3/07	
Centro	John Sidebotham	Yes-meetings held XXX????	
English Heritage	Amanda Smith	Initial email received but no response received	
Natural England	Robert Dutt	Initial letter received	Forwarded to colleague in regional office
Environment Agency	Hilary Berry	Yes-letter received 11/4/07 , Involved in SFRA, Attended 17/4/07 Event	
Severn Trent	Karen Martin	No	
South Staffordshire Water		No	
Strategic Health Authority (West Midlands Health Authority)	Vernon Jones	Yes-Letter received meeting postponed	Meeting to be rescheduled
AWM	Sam Holder	Yes-letter received 26/3/07 Attended Launch Event 6/12/2006	
Black Country Consortium	Tina Corfield	Yes-continuous through steering group	

Transco	Craig Watkiss	No	
Sport England	Maggie Taylor	Yes-response received 26/3/07 Represented at 17 th April event	
British Waterways	Andrew Tyrer	No	
British Gas		No	
BT	MONO consultants	No	
MOA-Mobile Operators Association	Kevin Johnson	Yes-letter received 30/3/07	
Adjoining Authorities	<p>Birmingham</p> <p>Wyre Forest Bromsgrove South Staffordshire Staffordshire County Council</p> <p>Cannock Chase Lichfield Shropshire County Council</p> <p>Worcestershire County Council Telford & Wrekin</p> <p>Warwickshire County Council Solihull MBC</p> <p>Parish Councils</p>	<p>Yes-Meeting held 11/5/07 Representative attended 17th April event Yes-Meeting Held 1/5/07 Declined offer of meeting Yes-Meeting held XXX Yes-Meeting held 25/4/07 Yes-Representative attended 17th April event</p> <p>Declined offer of meeting No response No response</p> <p>No response to offer of meeting</p> <p>Contact to be made</p> <p>Attended Waste & Minerals meeting 2/5/07 Attended Waste & Minerals meeting 2/5/07</p> <p>One attended 17th April event</p>	

Appendix C: Frontloading Consultation: Review of Techniques used and Participants Recorded

ACTIVITY	TECHNIQUES USED	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	Type of Stakeholders				Levels of involvement achieved			Feedback available
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	
Establishing Core Strategy Website	Website containing news on its progress, information to download		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N/A
Producing and distributing combined Leaflet and questionnaire explaining the remit and process and questionnaire for respondents to identify main issues	Leaflet and questionnaire distributed to Core Strategy database Copies available at Planning Reception Areas and Libraries	250 produced and distributed	Y	Y	Y (partly)	N	Y	Y	N	N/A
Producing and distributing 'Core News Newsletter'	Distributed to organisations and elected members Copies available at Planning Reception Areas	NT to confirm	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	
Core Strategy Launch Event	Presentations and facilitated theme workshops Q&A session	120	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Yes-Report available and participants monitored
Core Strategy Issues & Options Update Event	Presentations and 'drop in' discussions with officers	51	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	
Stakeholder meetings and Workshops	Workshops with representatives of key organisations and bodies Proformas attached as Appendix D	Waste & minerals 36 LSPs-8 Transport -46 Housing-3 Economy-9	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	
Articles in newspapers and other publications	Walsall Pride Article	Distributed to all households across the borough	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N/A
Local Core Strategy Road Shows/Drop in Sessions and Exhibitions	Held across the boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell & Wolverhampton Use of display boards and visuals and questionnaire Consultation Bus in locations across Walsall using displays, questionnaires and visualisation using proximity game'	Dudley-270 Walsall-350 Wolverhampton-237 Sandwell-200	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Yes-reports available and participants monitored

Appendix D

Workshops and Meetings held with organisations

Topic Group		Minerals & Waste Group
Membership	Dawn Harris, Walsall (Chair) Mohammed Salim, Sandwell (Second) David Piper, Dudley Martin Downs, Dudley (Waste Management) Katie Dickson, Wolverhampton Les Brazier, Wolverhampton (Waste Management)	
External Membership	N/A	
Details of Engagement		
Date	Details of engagement	Evidence
2/5/07	Meeting between Dawn Harris (Walsall MBC), Maurice Barlow (Solihull MBC) and Jim Davies (Warwickshire County Council/ RAWP) in Walsall on 2 May 2007 to discuss the current sub-regional aggregates apportionment and the extent of reserves within Solihull and Walsall, the only authorities providing aggregates within the West Midlands Metropolitan Area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott Wilson survey shows that permitted reserves of sand in the Black Country are running very low (estimated to be 150,000 tonnes @ March 2007), but there is estimated to be a further 3 million tonnes within the MSAs defined in the Walsall UDP, which do not have planning permission. 	Note of meeting 2/5/07.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are around 2 million tonnes of permitted reserves in Solihull, plus applications that could provide further reserves but these are subject to significant constraints and will not necessarily all be permitted.• It looks as though Solihull and Walsall are unable to meet the current requirement to maintain a 7 year landbank of sand and gravel in line with the sub-regional apportionment of 0.5 million tonnes per annum.• To have a 7 year landbank now the authorities would need to identify 3.5 million tonnes of permitted reserves, and at present they can only identify around 2.1 million tonnes.• To have a 7 year landbank up to 2026, the authorities would need to make provision for about 9.5 million tonnes of permitted reserves.• Even if the applications in the pipeline were approved, there would still be a significant shortfall, and the implication is that the authorities are likely to be expected to allocate sites capable of meeting this shortfall.• There is a particular issue regarding groundwater protection zones, which may give rise to difficulties with the restoration of sites after extraction had taken place – both Walsall's and Solihull's sand and gravel resources appear to be similarly affected. | |
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Topic Group	Minerals & Waste Group	
Membership	Dawn Harris, Walsall (Chair) Mohammed Salim, Sandwell (Second) David Piper, Dudley Martin Downs, Dudley (Waste Management) Katie Dickson, Wolverhampton Les Brazier, Wolverhampton (Waste Management)	
External Membership	N/A	
Details of Engagement		
Date	Details of engagement	Evidence
29/3/07	<p>Minerals & Waste Stakeholder Event: Developing a Strategy for Minerals and Waste, Walsall Council House</p> <p>Approximately 260 people/ organisations invited, including local quarry operators, waste operators, professional bodies relating to minerals and waste, Government agencies, Black Country Consortium, Black Country authorities' environment/ waste management portfolio holders, waste management and pollution control officers, local MPs, LNP representatives, environmental groups, adjoining minerals and waste planning authorities. 36 delegates attended. Event comprised of two sessions, minerals in the morning and waste in the afternoon. Each session included presentations from speakers followed by workshops where delegates were invited to comment on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision for minerals/ waste 	<p>Event report, April 2007, available on request, shortly to be published on Core Strategy website: http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/how-can-i-get-involved/other-events/minerals-waste</p>

- Objectives and key priorities for minerals/ waste
- Spatial strategy – relationship of minerals/ waste to other topics
- Suggested Issues and Options for minerals/ waste

Discussions informed by minerals and waste fact sheets and workshop sheets provided in delegates' packs. Suggested issues and options were developed from national, regional and local policy requirements and key issues raised by stakeholders during the Launch Event workshops and through other engagement between November 2006 and March 2007.

Topic Group		Minerals & Waste Group
Membership	Dawn Harris, Walsall (Chair) Mohammed Salim, Sandwell (Second) David Piper, Dudley Martin Downs, Dudley (Waste Management) Katie Dickson, Wolverhampton Les Brazier, Wolverhampton (Waste Management)	
External Membership	N/A	
Details of Engagement		
Date	Details of engagement	Evidence
6/12/06 - 4/5/07	Liaison with Black Country Geodiversity Partnership (BCGP) . Methods of engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCGP representatives attended Launch Event on 6/12/06 and Minerals & Waste Stakeholder Event on 29/3/07 • Black Country authority representatives (Dawn Harris, Simon Phipps & Dave Piper) attended Geological Conservation Seminar held in Dudley on 26/4/07 • BCGP representatives and BGS representatives attended special meeting of BCCS Minerals & Waste Group in Dudley on 4/5/07 • Comments provided by BCGP by letter dated 30/4/07. Key issues raised by BCGP:	Launch Event Report, Minerals & Waste Event Report, letter from BCGP dated 30/4/07, notes of BCCS Minerals & Waste Group, 4/5/07.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint Core Strategy should not consider the needs and interests of geological heritage/ conservation in isolation but alongside related issues, such as biodiversity, the historic environment and other environmental policy (including Urban Park), and policy towards tourism, built development, minerals and waste• Policies towards historic environment, landscape and biodiversity should acknowledge contribution of underlying geology to local character and distinctiveness, and should support the retention of features that reflect this, such as former quarries, other important landscape features and traditional building materials• Joint Core Strategy should adopt a positive approach towards the Black Country's unique geological heritage and should support the retention of important geological features that are likely to provide linkages with or contribute towards the proposed Black Country Geopark and Urban Park• Joint Core Strategy should address potential adverse effects of development (e.g. loss or concealment of geological features and sterilization of mineral resources), and should require new development to protect, retain and enhance the geological heritage• Policies towards mineral extraction and restoration of former mineral workings should balance the need for raw materials and waste disposal facilities against the need to conserve the Black Country's geological heritage | |
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Topic Group	Minerals & Waste Group	
Membership	Dawn Harris, Walsall (Chair) Mohammed Salim, Sandwell (Second) David Piper, Dudley Martin Downs, Dudley (Waste Management) Katie Dickson, Wolverhampton Les Brazier, Wolverhampton (Waste Management)	
External Membership	N/A	
Details of Engagement		
Date	Details of engagement	Evidence
March – May 2007	Liaison with British Geological Survey (BGS) regarding mineral safeguarding and sources of data on mineral resources in the Black Country, including attendance at Seminar on Mineral Safeguarding for Sustainable Communities, held on 27 March 2007 and subsequent telephone conversation with Emma Bee at BGS and email from Roger Parnaby at BGS. On 12 April 2007 BGS published draft guidance on mineral safeguarding, setting out step-by-step methodology for defining mineral safeguarding areas (MSAs), which is a requirement of MPS1 – this was also explained at the Seminar. A DCLG representative was present at the Seminar and appeared to endorse it. Main purposes of MSAs are to safeguard mineral resources against	Delegates' pack from event held on 27/3/07, information and draft guidance on mineral safeguarding on Minerals UK website (http://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/free_downloads/home.html#SAFE), note of telephone conversation 30/4/07 and email from BGS to Walsall Council dated 1/5/07.

needless sterilization by other uses and to ensure that they are given due consideration in planning decisions. However, MPS1 indicates there is no presumption that mineral resources within MSAs will be worked or be acceptable for mineral extraction. Draft guidance recommends five steps towards defining MSAs: 1. Assess information available on mineral resources, 2. Decide which minerals are of/ may become of economic importance, 3. Decide how the physical extent of mineral resource areas should be determined, 4. Incorporate outcome in planning policies on identification/ designation of MSAs, and 5. Decide how MSAs can be used most effectively to safeguard mineral resources through the development control process. The guidance implies that we should have some sort of policy in the Core Strategy relating to mineral safeguarding (i.e. at Step 4). The final version of the guidance is expected to be published towards the end of May 2007 .In telephone conversation with Emma Bee of BGS on 30 March 2007, she indicated that BGS can only provide information and advice on technical issues and is unable to comment on policy related issues and on the extent to which mineral safeguarding needs to be reflected in the Core Strategy – this is a matter for the DCLG. BGS can supply digitized data on mineral resources and can also undertake other work on request – Staffordshire County Council

	<p>appointed them to liaise with operators to obtain more detailed survey information and refine the mapping of the mineral reserves (they have told us that this cost them a considerable amount of money). Emma Bee indicated that any MSAs defined by the Black Country authorities will be expected to be consistent with those in Staffordshire. Main implication of this is that the existing MSAs in the Dudley and Walsall UDPs must be reviewed, and we must do this in liaison with BGS and Staffordshire County Council. BCCS options for minerals have been revised to focus primarily on alternative approaches towards safeguarding the Black Country's mineral resources and avoiding sterilization by other uses. The authorities are currently considering what mineral resources data they require from BGS with a view to defining new MSAs, and how best to procure this.</p>	
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Membership	Dawn Harris, Walsall (Chair) Mohammed Salim, Sandwell (Second) David Piper, Dudley Martin Downs, Dudley (Waste Management) Katie Dickson, Wolverhampton Les Brazier, Wolverhampton (Waste Management)	
External Membership	N/A	
Details of Engagement		
Date	Details of engagement	Evidence
26/3/07	Discussions with Environment Agency over the telephone to determine the extent to which groundwater protection zones were a constraint to mineral working and restoration of quarries by landfill, and whether or not they should be excluded from any MSAs that the authorities may define in the future. This is a particular issue in Aldridge in Walsall, where sand and gravel resources overlie a groundwater protection zone. Confirmed over the telephone and by subsequent letter that Agency has no objection in principle to mineral working above vulnerable aquifer zones, provided that working takes place in an appropriate manner and that restoration was with inert materials. However, acknowledged that it may be difficult to restore workings as it was unlikely that the quantities of inert materials required to restore them will be available, as they are now generally used for development purposes. However, restoration does not necessarily need to involve restoration to pre-development levels and quarries can be restored to lower levels to provide biodiversity habitats or recreational areas (e.g. pools).	Letter dated 26 March 2007

Topic Group	Transportation	
Membership	Special one off Workshop on core strategy in the Black Country with the Highways Agency	
External Membership	Attendance Neil Hansen HA, Sean Nethercott, GVA Grimley Mark Clough, Mike Smith", Martyn Holloway, Martin Wheeler, Philippa Smith	
Details of Engagement		
Date	Details of engagement	Evidence
30/04/07	Special one off Workshop on planning with Highways Agency in the Black Country hosted by Centro at Centro House.	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Action Notes</p> <p>1.The Highways Agency would assist the Black Country Districts in refreshing the original PRISM related RSS Phase 1 Revision Transport Evidence Base to underpin the preparation of the BCJCS. This would be in addition to any future work undertaken by the HA in relation to the Phase 2 Review.</p>	
	2. The Districts would forward a copy of the emerging BCJCS Issue and Options Document to the HA in order that it could advise on whether those issues affecting the SRN had been properly identified and reflected.	

	<p>3. The HA would provide the Districts with copies of its report on the potential for adopting a ringmaster/tariff based approach to funding the provision of future transport and other infrastructure needed to support the BCJCS.</p>	
	<p>4. Future meetings would be arranged as necessary to co-incide with key milestones/stages in the BCJCS calendar.</p>	
	<p>5. The Highways Agency would supply information to the Districts on the programme for de-trunking the SRN within and adjoining the Black Country.</p> <p>It should be noted that there were no representatives present from Wolverhampton City Council at the meeting or any planners in attendance from Dudley</p>	
	<p>With the BCJCS Issues and Options Consultation Document now available it might be an opportune time to arrange a follow up meeting to discuss any matters arising and to further consider how the HA can assist in developing the technical evidence base.</p>	

Topic Group	Transportation	
Membership	Cycling in Sandwell	
External Membership	<i>If applicable</i>	
Details of Engagement		
Date	Details of engagement	Evidence
01/03/07	Cycling in Sandwell (CiS) meet on a quarterly basis to discuss cycling issues within Sandwell. The Black Country Core Strategy was discussed during the meeting and the members a survey / questionnaire was circulated, which attempts to rank the priorities for action for issues and options.	The minutes of the meeting are available upon request

Topic Group	Transportation	
Membership	Transport and Accessibility Group	
External Membership		
Details of Engagement		
Date	Details of engagement	Evidence
22 nd February 2007	<p>JCS engagement was carried out at a quarterly key stakeholders' meeting of the Transport and Accessibility Group. There were around 60 individuals on the mailing list, from external stakeholder organisations, as well as relevant Sandwell MBC officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement was carried out by means of a tally chart. • Voting was restricted to external members of the group in attendance. • Voting was carried out to identify the top 5 priorities out of the 11 options gathered in the Examination in Public exercise. • Voters gave 5 points for their top priority, and 1 point for the lowest. <p>The issues identified from the outcomes of voting were as follows (<i>in order of priority</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Better coverage, quality and choice in public transport. 2) Reducing the need to travel. 3) Better integration between transport and other Black Country issues. 4) Improving actual and perceived safety (cycling and walking) 5) Commitments to investment and better delivery / Accessible development and links with land use* 6) More lorry parking to ease congestion at peak times 7) Better use of what we already have 8) Partnership approach and strong unified leadership 9) Road improvement to western side of Black Country / More redundancy and systems to cope with problems* 	Evidence can be provided in the form of the minutes of the meeting (available on request).

*5th Place and 9th Place were tied between two options.

Other issues identified included updating the route network to be centred around new developments and less on “*traditional routes*”. Better car-parking provision, especially for workers, e.g. more Park and Ride facilities. More regulation of public transport / franchise system similar to Transport for London’s. This should be on the “*shopping list*” in return for road pricing. Better information on the network for public transport users – i.e. if there is a delay, information on congestion, alternative routes if needed. There should be more “*spreading out*” of services.

Topic Group	Transportation	
Membership	Sandwell Walking Forum	
External Membership		
Details of Engagement		
Date	Details of engagement	Evidence
5 th March 2007	<p>JCS engagement was carried out at a quarterly key stakeholders' meeting of the Sandwell Walking Forum. There are several individuals on the mailing list, from external stakeholder organisations, as well as relevant Sandwell MBC officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement was carried out by means of a tally chart. • Voting was restricted to external members of the group in attendance. • Voting was carried out to identify the top 5 priorities out of the 11 options gathered in the Examination in Public exercise. • Voters gave 5 points for their top priority, and 1 point for the lowest. <p>The issues identified from the outcomes of voting were as follows (<i>in order of priority</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Better Provision for walking and cycling 2) Improving actual & perceived safety (cycling & walking) 3) Reduce the need to travel. 4) Better integration transport & other Black Country issues. 5) Better coverage, quality and choice in public transport. 6) Road improvements to western side of Black Country / Commitments to investment and better delivery* 7) Partnership approach & strong unified leadership. 8) More redundancy & systems to cope with problems / More lorry parking to ease congestion at peak times / Accessible development /links to land use** 	Evidence can be provided in the form of the minutes of the meeting (available on request).

	<p><i>*6th Place was tied between two options.</i></p> <p><i>**8th Place was tied between three options.</i></p> <p>Other issues were raised regarding late night public transport, regarding not just safety but also convenience. Also more provision is required. More segregated routes were needed for cycling and walking. Members agreed on an amended description of the issue. Lorry parking was needed not just to ease congestion at peak time. Stephen Spencer was surprised at EIP about lack of other cycling and walking representations.</p>	
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