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Black Country Core Strategy: ISSUES & OPTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

The four Black Country local authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton are currently preparing a Core Strategy as the first stage in the replacement of their Unitary Development Plans.

The Core Strategy is a 'spatial planning document' (dealing not only with land use but also environmental, economic and social issues) that will set out the vision, objectives and strategy for future development in the Black Country up to 2026.

The Core Strategy will be used to decide planning applications throughout the Black Country. It will also provide the strategic framework for other, more detailed plans, produced by the 4 Black Country local authorities once it is formally adopted.

The Core Strategy Issues & Options document sets out the key issues facing the Black Country and proposes options for the Core Strategy to address these issues. We want to receive your views on the issues and options identified, together with any others that you wish us to consider.

The Issue & Options document can be viewed and downloaded from the following website: <http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/> The questions on this form refer to text and diagrams contained within the Issue & Options document. As such, you are advised to have a copy of the document handy when attempting to complete the questionnaire.

If you require any assistance in completing this form, or would like more information on the Joint Core Strategy, please use the contact details on page 14 of this form. The Issues & Options document includes a glossary of the terms used in these questions.

ALL REPRESENTATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5PM ON FRIDAY 10 AUGUST 2007

1. Vision (see pages 14 to 17 of Issue & Options document)

A 30 year Vision for the Black Country was established in 2003 by the Black Country Consortium. This forms the basis for the objectives and emerging spatial strategy upon which the Core Strategy will be based.

Question 1: Do we need to add anything to the vision and objectives to reflect new challenges and local needs?

Yes No

Comments.....
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2. Regeneration Corridors

(pages 18 to 25)

Fifteen Regeneration Corridors have been defined for the purposes of the Core Strategy (see Figure 2 at page 22 of the Issues & Options document).

The Regeneration Corridors will be the focus of major land use change in the Black Country over the next twenty years. The Core Strategy will need to balance uses appropriately between the Regeneration Corridors. To this end, two broad spatial options have been generated.

Question 2: Which Option do you think would best deliver the vision, objectives and spatial strategy and why?

Option 1 **Option 2**

Why?.....

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For your chosen Option, how do you think development within the Regeneration Corridors should be phased over the broad periods 2009-2016, 2016-21 and 2021-2026?

Answer.....

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Question 3: What do you think are the characteristics of high quality employment land?

Answer.....

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Is the proposed distribution of high quality employment land, as illustrated in Appendix 1, appropriate?

Yes **No**

Comments.....

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Question 4: Are any of the Regeneration Corridors more suited to a particular Option or approach? Please state the reference and the chosen Option/approach and explain why?

Regeneration Corridor reference number (see Figure 2)

Preferred Option: **Option 1** **Option 2**

Explanation.....

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Please Note: Should you want to respond on more than one corridor, please copy and attach additional copies of this page as necessary.

Question 5: Are any of the Regeneration Corridors more suited to a particular Option or approach? Please state the reference and the chosen Option / approach and explain why.

Answer.....

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Question 6: Are there any specific large sites within the Regeneration Corridors or elsewhere that you would like to see protected or allocated for a particular use?

Answer.....

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What extra infrastructure might be needed to support such a site?

Answer.....

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Question 7: Apart from Option 1 – concentration on centres and in Regeneration Corridors, and Option 2 – dispersed development within centres and corridors, do you consider there to be any other options which would achieve the objectives of the Core Strategy?

Answer.....

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Great importance is placed upon transforming the environment of the Black Country, as a necessary condition for achievement of other social and economic objectives and successful mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

In addition to the traditional approach of planning for the protection and improvement of environmental assets, it will necessary to plan for green infrastructure networks which cross local authority boundaries and links important wildlife sites (either existing or to be created) to deliver the necessary step-change in environmental quality and enable developer contributions to be maximised.

Question 8: Where should the Landscape Action Plan concentrate on delivering environmental transformation? For example, do you consider that the proposed corridors and beacons identified on Figure 4 should be the priority or is it more important to concentrate on the Regeneration Corridors identified in Figure 2?

Answer.....

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Are there any other locations that should be prioritised?

Answer.....

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Question 9: Is there any other role the Core Strategy can play in promoting sustainable and energy efficient construction? Should it adopt a minimum code or standard for new developments (e.g. using the code for sustainable homes)?

Answer.....

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If so, what types of development should be subject to such standards and what should the standards be?

Answer.....

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Question 10: Do you consider that the Black Country should adopt the minimum national targets for generation of renewable energy on new developments or set more ambitious targets – if so, how ambitious?

Question 10 continues on the next page....



Walsall Council



Black Country See it in colour



Use minimum national targets: Yes No

Suggested alternative target.....

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How could these targets best be delivered? For example, are there any particular types of renewable energy that you consider to be most suited to the Black Country? If so, please explain what these are and where you consider these could be located. Are there any locations that are not suitable for renewable energy generation?

Answer.....

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Question 11: Are there any areas where local character and distinctiveness should be preserved and enhanced? Are there any locations where a different approach could be taken? For example, where should new iconic buildings be located?

Answer.....

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4. Economy **(pages 32 to 35)**

The Black Country has a strong industrial heritage but de-industrialisation has seriously eroded the Black Country's economic position. The Black Country needs to attract a significant quantity of new jobs, and better quality jobs, focusing on the key growth sectors in services and high technology manufacturing, including research and development facilities.

The Core Strategy will set out the location and phasing of the employment land requirements in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Phase 1 Revision. A major overhaul of the land use and transport structure is required to create modern, fit for purpose, employment sites to take advantage of these opportunities. There is also a need for enhanced training, skills and education so the Black Country workforce can fully contribute to the creation of a modern economy.

Question 12: Where should innovative new and expanding high technology businesses be located? Do you think that specific locations should be identified, for example, clustered around Wolverhampton University or hospitals or other locations?

Answer.....

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Question 13: What are the best locations for manufacturing and should locations be reserved only for manufacturing activity, or should we allow a mix of manufacturing and logistics activity?

Answer.....
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Should we reserve specific areas for logistics activity, and where should these uses be located?

Yes **No**

Suggested locations.....
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5. Centres

(pages 36 to 39)

The four strategic centres proposed in the Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 1 Revision are Brierley Hill, Walsall, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton. The strategic centres are supported by a hierarchy of other centres which play a more localised role such as Bilston, Lye, Oldbury and Darlaston.

Historically, the Black Country has had a large number of centres and a large amount of shopping provision but the area has suffered a decline in trade with trade leaking to neighbouring towns and cities elsewhere in the region and beyond.

Currently, retail in Black Country Centres is relatively low value, reflecting the income distribution of local consumers. As a result the Black Country's centres are generally in less robust health than centres in surrounding areas. The Core Strategy must plan for the needs of communities and opportunities for investment to be met by the four strategic centres and in most of the smaller centres.

Whilst recognising the need to improve the market attractiveness of the Black Country strategic centres, the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that there is a fair balance of retail development between the four centres.

Question 14: Figures for retail and office development set out in RSS Phase 1 are given. However, the amounts of development proposed might be increased, including through work on the RSS Phase 2 Revision. If so, do you consider that there is a need to manage the growth, and development, over and above that set out in RSS Phase 1, of comparison retail and office floorspace in the strategic and other non-strategic centres?

Yes, manage growth **No need to manage growth**

Comments.....

Question 14 continues on the next page....

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If so, what mechanisms would you consider appropriate for managing that growth and how could these be monitored.

Answer.....
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Question 15: Having in mind the potential implications of growth in the Regeneration Corridors and the increase in demand for local centre facilities, are there any particular centres where there is a need for improved convenience shopping/foodstore, or other local provision, or where existing convenience shops and local services need to be protected?

Answer.....
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Are there any locations outside of an existing centre that either now or in the future might benefit from a new district or local centre or improved local shopping?

Answer.....
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Question 16: Are there particular needs for cultural, leisure and entertainment facilities for the Black Country? If so, what are they and where should these be located?

Answer.....
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6. Community Facilities and Infrastructure (pages 39 to 41)

Community facilities play an important role for social cohesion and the well being of communities. The provision and location of such facilities needs to be focused within sustainable locations in the communities they are intended to serve.

The four Black Country Local Authorities will be working closely with their respective Education Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and the Strategic Health Authority to look in detail at the need for additional education and health facilities and the potential locations for these uses.

Question 17: Are there any particular community facilities that are needed in the Black Country and where should these be located?

Answer.....

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What facilities could best be located together?

Answer.....

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Question 18: Do you consider that promoting clusters and beacons is the right approach (see page 41 of the Issues & Options document)?

Yes **No**

Comments.....

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Where would regionally important facilities best be located?

Answer.....

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Question 19: What additional provision will be needed for water, sewage, energy and communications to support the regeneration of the Black Country?

Answer.....

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Where and how should any increased capacity be provided?

Answer.....

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Question 20: Are there any specific constraints that might mean it would be difficult to accommodate development in particular locations?

Answer.....
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7. Housing **(pages 41 to 45)**

The Core Strategy must plan to deliver sufficient new homes to meet the vision for the future of the Black Country. The quantity of new homes to be delivered will be set out in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.

Improving the quality and widening the choice of housing across the Black Country is a key issue. Today the housing market does not adequately meet the needs of many residents and the overall environment in many neighbourhoods is unattractive. As a result, for many years, prosperous households have chosen to move out to areas beyond the Black Country. To reverse this trend it will be necessary to accelerate the rate of house-building and housing stock renewal, and ensure that every neighbourhood provides a wider choice of better quality housing.

Achieving the necessary scale of housing growth will require a significant change in patterns of land use. In particular, old and underused industrial areas need to be redeveloped to create new housing environments in Regeneration Corridors, some existing residential areas need to be renewed and more housing needs to be delivered in sustainable locations.

Question 21: Do you agree with the extent and location of the Housing Market Intervention Areas shown on Figure 7?

Yes **No**

If not, please explain why and where you consider they should be located.

Answer.....
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Question 22: The Black Country needs to attract and retain professional, entrepreneurial and managerial households by providing suitable homes and environments to meet their needs. Where do you consider that such homes should be provided?

Answer.....
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Question 22 continues on the next page....

What infrastructure needs to be provided alongside such homes to create the attractive environments for managerial, entrepreneurial and professional households?

Answer.....
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Question 23: Do you consider that currently popular and aspirational housing areas should be protected from further intensification or do you consider that more housing should be developed in these areas?

Protect existing popular housing areas **Allow further development**

Comments.....
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Should the redevelopment of certain types of site, e.g. large houses in large grounds be resisted or are there certain neighbourhoods (e.g. Tettenhall, Wightwick) that should be protected from residential intensification?

Answer.....
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Question 24: Do you consider that there is any justification for asking for different levels of affordable housing provision in any particular areas within the Black Country?

Yes **No**

If yes, please explain where and why.

Answer.....
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8. Transport and Accessibility (pages 46 to 49)

The Black Country has established strategic road, rail and air links to the local, national and international markets. By air, Birmingham International Airport provides the main facility serving the Black Country. Rail services provide the Black Country with regional and national connectivity for both passengers and freight. Some areas of the rail network, particularly between Wolverhampton and Birmingham New Street, have little or no capacity for more services during peak times. Whereas other areas, such as around Walsall, have more scope to expand.

The Black Country benefits from its position at one of the major crossroads of Britain’s motorway network, astride the M5 and M6. However, excessive congestion on these and other local networks is now constraining local economic growth, by impacting on local and national freight movements and restricting access to our key industrial areas and retail centres.

Question 25: Poor accessibility within the Black Country, particularly to existing employment areas in the West of the sub-region, together with congested connections leading in and out from the Black Country, has been identified as a constraint on business. Are there any particular locations where new or better transport networks should be delivered?

Answer.....

Question 26: How should the transport networks serving the strategic centres of Brierley Hill, Walsall, West Bromwich, and Wolverhampton and the non-strategic centres be improved to support their expansion?

Answer.....

Question 27: Are there particular parts of the highway corridors where the balance needs to favour cycling and walking or where the needs of other traffic should dominate?

Answer.....

9. Minerals (pages 50 to 53)

The Black Country is rich in mineral resources including iron, fireclay, coal, limestone, sands and gravels, hard rock and brick clay. At the present time only sand and brick clay are actively exploited.

The Core Strategy will be expected to make provision for the future supply of aggregates and brick clay (and possibly other minerals) up to 2026. The Joint Core Strategy therefore needs to identify locations where mineral extraction is supported and where the Black Country’s mineral resources should be safeguarded and protected against sterilisation by other uses.

Quality of the environment is a key issue for the Black Country and it will be vital to minimise the environmental impact of quarrying, and to restrict the number of active quarries to the minimum needed to maintain sufficient local supplies of minerals

Question 28: Which of the Black Country’s mineral resources should be safeguarded from sterilisation from other uses, and how should these resources be protected?

Answer.....
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Question 29: What quantity of sand, brick clay and other minerals should we aim to produce each year in the Black Country?

Answer.....
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Question 30: Which locations in the Black Country should be identified as the preferred locations for future mineral extraction?

Answer.....
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10. Waste (pages 54 to 57)

The Black Country authorities are responsible for planning for the future management of all of the waste arising in the area. The facilities currently available in the Black Country for managing municipal waste are limited to the two existing energy from waste plants in Dudley and Wolverhampton, and six civic amenity sites, four of which also include transfer stations. As a consequence, significant amounts of waste currently have to be transported outside the area for recycling, composting and recovery.

Although the Black Country already has a large number of commercial and industrial waste management facilities, their capacity also appears to fall short of what we need now and what we are likely to need in the future. The existing network of household recycling sites and waste transfer sites is also inadequate to cope with current and future requirements. There is clearly a need to identify suitable sites in appropriate locations throughout the Black Country, but at present, none have been identified.

Question 31: The Black Country needs to plan for the development of new facilities and the protection of existing facilities, to meet national and regional requirements for the management of waste by 2026. Are there particular kinds of facilities you consider are needed or need to be protected?

Answer.....
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Question 32: Do you agree that the Black Country should continue to allow former mineral workings – presently in Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall – to be restored by landfilling with waste?

Yes No

Comments.....
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Are there particular sites that would be appropriate for particular kinds of waste? If you do not think landfilling to be appropriate what alternatives would you suggest?

Answer.....
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Question 33: Do you agree that the Core Strategy should identify Hill Top as the principal location for new municipal and other waste management facilities?

Yes No

Comments.....
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Are there any other locations that you consider to be appropriate?

Answer.....
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Question 34: Do you consider that the Core Strategy should identify broad locations for the provision of new open windrow composting facilities and household recycling sites/waste transfer facilities?

Yes No

Comments.....
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Question 34 continues on the next page....

Are there any broad locations or types of locations where these facilities should be provided?

Answer.....
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Question 35: Where do you consider that new commercial waste management and treatment facilities, including facilities for managing hazardous waste, construction and demolition waste, should be provided?

Answer.....
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Are there any locations or types of locations in the Black Country where waste management facilities should not be developed, and if so, what are they?

Answer.....
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Question 36: Do you think the Core Strategy should require new developments to demonstrate how they would minimise and manage waste both during the demolition and construction and during the lifetime of scheme, e.g. by making provision for the storage of segregated waste? Should all new developments be subject to such a requirement?

Answer.....
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How else might the Black Country Core Strategy help to minimise waste and to encourage increased re-use and recycling?

Answer.....
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Respondent Information

In order to ensure that we are reaching all sections of the community when organising consultation on the Joint Core Strategy, please provide us with the following information:

Gender: Female Male

Age: under 20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61+

Ethnic Group: White Asian/Asian British Mixed
Black/Black British Chinese/Other ethnic group

Disability: The Disability Discrimination Act considers a person disabled if: you have a ‘...longstanding physical or mental condition or disability that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months and this condition or disability has a substantial adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out under the above definition?

Yes No

Thank you for commenting on the Joint Core Strategy Issues & Options, your interest and contribution is valued. We will use the views received to help us choose our preferred options for the Core Strategy. A Preferred Options document will be produced for further consultation early in 2008.

Please return this form by no later than **5pm on Friday 10 August 2007** to:

**SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING POLICY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
DEVELOPMENT HOUSE
LOMBARD STREET
WEST BROMWICH
B70 8BR**

Alternatively you can return this form via fax on (0121) 569 4082 or by email to: blackcountrycorestrategy@dudley.gov.uk A copy of this form can also be downloaded from the following website: <http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/>

If you require any assistance in completing this form, or would like more information on the Core Strategy, please use the contact details below:

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