

Question

Response

Why was the study produced?

Our approach, as in the previous Core Strategy, was to focus new development within the Black Country urban area through the re-use of brownfield or previously developed land. The housing requirement using the standard method, as set out in the [Urban Capacity Study](#), demonstrates that we need to be building more homes. In addition, we also need additional land for employment development.

The Urban Capacity Study also identifies that the majority of the need can be met by sites in the urban area, but not all of it. As a result of this we are working with neighbouring authorities to see if some of our development needs could be accommodated beyond the Black Country. As there is not enough space within the Black Country urban area to provide land for all of the required growth, exceptional circumstances apply to allow a review of the Black Country Green Belt boundary.

The Green Belt Assessment forms a key part of the Green Belt review. The Assessment firstly considers the contribution that different areas of the Black Country Green Belt make to the nationally identified Green Belt purposes. It then assesses the harm to the remaining Green Belt that would result if certain areas of land were removed from the Green Belt. Finally, it assesses the sensitivity of the different landscape areas within the Green Belt to housing and employment development.

Why do you need to produce an evidence base to prepare the Black Country Plan?

Every local authority should ensure that their local plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence. We need to gather evidence to inform the Black Country Plan to help us determine what our future housing, employment, retail, leisure and infrastructure (utilities and transport, education, health facilities) requirements are up to 2038 and to help us plan for where this future development will take place.

It is important to note that the evidence base, by itself, does not allocate land or alter any policies or land use designations. The evidence informs the plan making process, which is subject to layers of additional assessment and consultation.

In addition, the evidence base will also inform us on alternative strategies to meet our growth targets, allowing us, through the plan making process, to recommend a preferred, appropriate strategy.

Why is the study being made available now?

The Black Country Local Authorities are publishing the evidence base that has been completed to date. This is because:

- Publishing our evidence base will demonstrate to all stakeholders that the Black Country Authorities are progressing with the Black Country Plan
- The evidence base will inform our discussions with neighboring authorities and other statutory bodies
- The Government encourages Local Authorities to publish the evidence base (that is being used to inform the preparation of Local Plan) when it has been completed.

Who produced the study?

LUC were commissioned by the four Black Country Authorities [and South Staffordshire District Council] to undertake an independent study – the Green Belt Assessment - to inform the preparation of the Black Country Plan.

Why was the study not produced by officers in the local authorities?

Consultants have been commissioned where necessary and appropriate to get a consistent and objective expert view across the Black Country.

What will the findings be used for?

To inform the ways in which we assess different areas of land and choose sites for future development. The findings will also ensure that Green Belt harm and landscape sensitivity are fully taken into account when deciding the best locations for housing and employment development in the Black Country Plan area.

Where can I see a copy of the study?

A copy of the Green Belt Assessment, along with various other evidence that has been produced for the preparation of the Draft Black Country Plan can be viewed on the [Black Country Plan website](#).

Where can I see a summary of the main findings for the study?

A summary of the main findings from the study is available on the [Black Country Plan website](#).

Can I comment on the findings of the study?

You will be able to make comments on the findings of this study and all other evidence work when the Draft Black Country Plan is published for public consultation in Autumn 2020. The public consultation period will last for 8 weeks. The evidence base will need to be formally consulted on alongside the Draft Black Country Plan to demonstrate how we have taken on board the evidence base to inform the draft policies and allocations contained within the plan.



HOUSING



ENVIRONMENT



EMPLOYMENT



TRANSPORT

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