

Black Country | **Plan**

Planning for the future of the Black Country



HOUSING



ENVIRONMENT



EMPLOYMENT



TRANSPORT

Draft Plan Consultation

August - October 2021

Wolverhampton city summary

We are reviewing the Black Country Plan and would like to hear your views.

Introduction

The Black Country Authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton are consulting on a new Draft Plan for the Black Country. This Plan will identify where new employment and housing development will be located and where investment for new infrastructure, such as transport, schools and green space will be made.

This document provides a summary of the main proposals in the Draft Black Country Plan relating to Wolverhampton. If you would like to read the full version of the Draft Plan you can find this on the Black Country Plan website, or it is available at a number of council buildings. Details can be found at the end of this document.

What is a Local Plan?

All Local Planning Authorities are required by Government to write a Local Plan that describes where the necessary development over the next 20 years or so will be located and how it will be dealt with through the planning process.

The Local Plan is a planning document which is used to help decide planning applications. It considers the amount of land required to support future jobs and provide new housing and where additional retail, office and leisure development is needed. The Local Plan also considers whether any additional supporting infrastructure (e.g. schools, green space, utilities, health services, public transport, cycle routes and highway improvements) is required.

What is the Black Country Plan?

The Black Country Plan is a joint Local Plan prepared by the four Black Country Authorities (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton). The Plan will direct where new housing and employment development will be located in the Black Country up to 2039.

It will guide key issues like:

- **New Housing** - How much new housing is needed? How much can be provided in sustainable locations and where will it go? What type and density of housing should be provided and how much affordable housing?
- **Employment land** - Where does employment land need protection? How much new employment land is needed and where should it go?
- **Supporting infrastructure and services** - What improvements to transport, schools, green space, etc, will be needed to support new development? Where will new services be located?
- **In the face of new development** how will the natural and historic environment be protected and improved?

Why are we reviewing the Black Country Plan?

The Government requires Local Authorities to have Local Plans that are less than five years old and based on up to date information. If a Local Plan is not up to date it will have less weight at planning appeals and this will mean that local planning authorities are less able to control new development. Having an up to date Plan in place helps local planning authorities to turn down development proposed by landowners and developers where it considers the proposal to be inappropriate.

We need to review the Black Country Plan to ensure that we can plan for new homes and jobs in the right places. If we don't review the Plan, we risk seeing unplanned development which might not be supported by the right services and facilities.

Do we have a plan in place now?

Yes, our current plan, which we called the Black Country Core Strategy covers the years 2006 to 2026 and was formally adopted in 2011. This Plan provided the framework to allocate enough housing and employment land to meet the Black Country's development needs up to 2026. These allocations have been made through other Local Plan documents - in Wolverhampton these are the Bilston Corridor, Stafford Road Corridor and Wolverhampton City Centre Area Action Plans (AAPs), adopted during 2014-16.

When we have finished the new Black Country Plan and it is adopted (i.e. it has been examined and approved by an independent Planning Inspector and approved by Councillors for the four local authorities) it will replace the Black Country Core Strategy (2011) and parts of the Wolverhampton AAPs.

When did we start reviewing the Black Country Plan?

We started reviewing the Black Country Plan in 2017. We held a public consultation for eight weeks in July - September 2017 on the issues facing the Black Country and some possible solutions. Following the Issues and Options consultation we have now produced the next stage of the Plan preparation process which is the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan considers the responses we received to the Issues and Options consultation along with a range of evidence which we have produced on planning issues.

What does the Black Country Plan need to plan for?

The draft Black Country Plan we are consulting on sets out proposed planning policies and land allocations which will guide and manage the development of the Black Country up to 2039.

Our economy, our population and the number of households is growing, and the Plan needs to identify land to meet our future employment needs and ensure that a sufficient number of homes can be built to accommodate new households. We need to provide enough land to build 76,076 homes by 2039. This would mean increasing the number of homes that are currently built across the Black Country from 2,600 homes per year to 4,000 homes per year. We know this because the Government has published housing need figures for each local authority which must be used when preparing a Local Plan. We also need around 565 hectares (ha) of employment land to provide enough jobs to accommodate the growth needs of our existing and future businesses.

In addition, we need to plan for:

- How we will address climate change
- How we will create healthy and safe places
- How we will protect and enhance the historic and natural environment
- The design standards that new development should meet
- How we will provide housing to meet the needs of different residents, including affordable housing
- How we will maintain vibrant and attractive town centres

What does the Draft Black Country Plan propose?

- The Plan allocates around 1,200 hectares (ha) of housing land (the equivalent of 1,800 football pitches) to provide at least 47,837 new homes. This will be provided on a mix of existing sites (including those with planning permission and carried over from current Local Plan documents) and new sites.
- The Plan supports the recovery and growth of the economy, particularly in key employment sectors such as advanced manufacturing; and will deliver the development of at least 354ha of employment land (the equivalent of 531 football pitches).
- In the light of the challenges facing our high streets, the Plan will facilitate the rejuvenation and diversification of our centres as places to live, work, shop and visit.
- The Plan seeks to minimise the amount of waste generated across all sectors and increase the re-use, recycling, and recovery rates of waste material.
- Identifies provision within the Black Country for up to 6.2 million tonnes of quarried construction aggregate (sand and gravel) to 2039, and around 720,800 tonnes of secondary and recycled aggregates each year.
- The Plan ensures that sufficient physical, social and environmental infrastructure will be delivered to meet identified needs and support growth.

Where will the growth be?

- The Draft Plan seeks to deliver the majority of development in the existing urban area on brownfield sites (previously developed land), vacant properties and surplus industrial land. This will provide enough land to build approximately 40,117 new homes and 306ha of employment land.

This land is in:

- the **Strategic Centres** of Wolverhampton City Centre, Brierley Hill, West Bromwich and Walsall Town Centre;
- **Core Regeneration Areas** in and around town centres and along transport networks;
- **Towns and Neighbourhoods Areas** - existing residential areas.
- We are aiming to use as much land in the urban area as possible but there is a shortage of sites to meet our future housing and employment needs.
- We are therefore proposing an additional 7,720 homes and 47.8 ha of employment land on sites currently in the green belt. The majority of these homes are provided in the proposed new Neighbourhood Growth Areas with the remainder provided on small sites on the edge of the Towns and Neighbourhood Areas.
- The proposed Neighbourhood Growth Areas are located in highly sustainable locations on the edge of the urban area, where there are existing pedestrian and public transport routes and high levels of access to local services – or where new services can be created through development to ensure good access.

You can see these areas for Wolverhampton on the plan shown in this document.

Why are we proposing to develop in the green belt?

The green belt around the Black Country forms part of the West Midlands Green Belt which has been in place since 1975. Green belt is a national planning designation and national policy strictly controls which types of development can take place within it.

The Black Country Councils attach great importance to the green belt. However, the green belt boundary is drawn tightly around the urban edges. To help meet our future housing and employment land needs, there is an exceptional circumstance to alter green belt boundaries through the Black Country Plan review process, to release land for housing and employment development. It is proposed to remove only 6% of the green belt area in the Black Country for development. The new Black Country green belt boundaries are intended to be permanent and should not need to be changed in future.

The Councils have undertaken an extensive review of the green belt, taking into account evidence on historical, ecological and landscape value and local character. A comprehensive site assessment process has taken place to ensure that all sites selected for removal from the green belt can deliver sustainable development and supporting infrastructure by 2039, and will not cause harm to the natural or historic character of the Black Country or breach any other planning policies. Where sites are removed from the green belt, developers will be required to pay for improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining green belt land nearby.

Are we able to build all future housing and employment land that we need in the Black Country?

No. We need to find enough land to build 76,076 homes and provide 565ha of new employment land. The land identified in the Draft Plan will deliver 47,837 homes and 354ha of employment land, allowing most of our housing and employment land needs to be met in the Black Country. However, there will be a shortfall of 28,239 homes and 211 ha of employment land.

The Government requires neighbouring local authorities to work together to meet housing and employment land needs when producing Local Plans – this is called the “Duty to Cooperate”. Under the Duty to Cooperate, we are asking neighbouring authorities, such as South Staffordshire, Lichfield, Cannock Chase, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, to provide additional housing and employment land in their areas to meet the needs of the Black Country. Currently there have been offers from neighbouring authorities of between 8,000 to 9,500 homes and 102-173 ha of employment land to be tested through their own Local Plan reviews.

What does this mean for Wolverhampton?

- In Wolverhampton we are proposing to provide enough land to build 12,100 new homes up to 2039 and provide 69ha of new employment land.
- We have carried out ecological surveys for all potential development sites in the green belt and will be using this evidence to make changes to Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs) designations later in 2021.
- We have carried out Conservation Area appraisals for all existing Conservation Areas in the green belt and will be consulting on these during summer 2021.

Where will future growth be allocated?

- The maps overleaf show the proposed distribution of housing sites and new employment land across Wolverhampton.
- The majority of sites are located in the urban area on brownfield (previously developed) land. Sites are concentrated in Wolverhampton City Centre and three Core Regeneration Areas which extend from the City Centre to Bilston in the south east, Wednesfield in the north east, and north along the Stafford Road.

New homes

- 11,083 homes will be provided in the urban area. Most of this housing will be delivered on sites which have planning permission or are allocated in existing Area Action Plans. New sites are proposed on surplus Council land, industrial land at Land Street / Highfields Road in Bradley and part of Moseley Road Open Space in Bilston.
- The 11,083 total includes a 4,838 home target for Wolverhampton City Centre, which will be delivered through a review of the Wolverhampton City Centre Area Action Plan in 2023.
- 1,013 homes will also be provided on 38 ha of land to be released from the green belt – 5% of all green belt land in Wolverhampton. The majority of these will be provided on two clusters of sites at Bushbury and Fallings Park, and at the site of City of Wolverhampton College buildings off Paget Road, Compton Park.

Site Name	Number of homes to be built	Hectares (ha) of land to be developed	Infrastructure and Environmental Requirements
Bushbury Strategic Allocation - development to be guided by a Master Plan	532	15.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a new primary school on land at Bushbury Lane / Legs Lane (if needed) • Contribution to extend existing secondary school(s) • Delivery of a 10.4 ha extension to Northcote Farm Country Park and accessibility, biodiversity and environmental quality improvements to the extended Country Park, which will remain in the green belt • Improvements to highways junctions along Northcote Lane / Legs Lane / Bushbury Lane route and upgrading of Moseley Road
Fallings Park Strategic Allocation - development to be guided by a Master Plan	303	8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards provision of a new primary school at Bushbury Land / Legs Lane (if needed) • Contribution to extend existing secondary school(s) • Creation of a high quality recreational open space on site, including play facilities • Improvements to accessibility, biodiversity and environmental quality of open space in the green belt at Bushbury Hill
City of Wolverhampton College Buildings, Paget Road, Compton Park	140	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to local open space to meet the needs of new residents • Improvements to accessibility, biodiversity and environmental quality of green belt land at Smestow Valley Local Nature Reserve
Total	975	27.3	

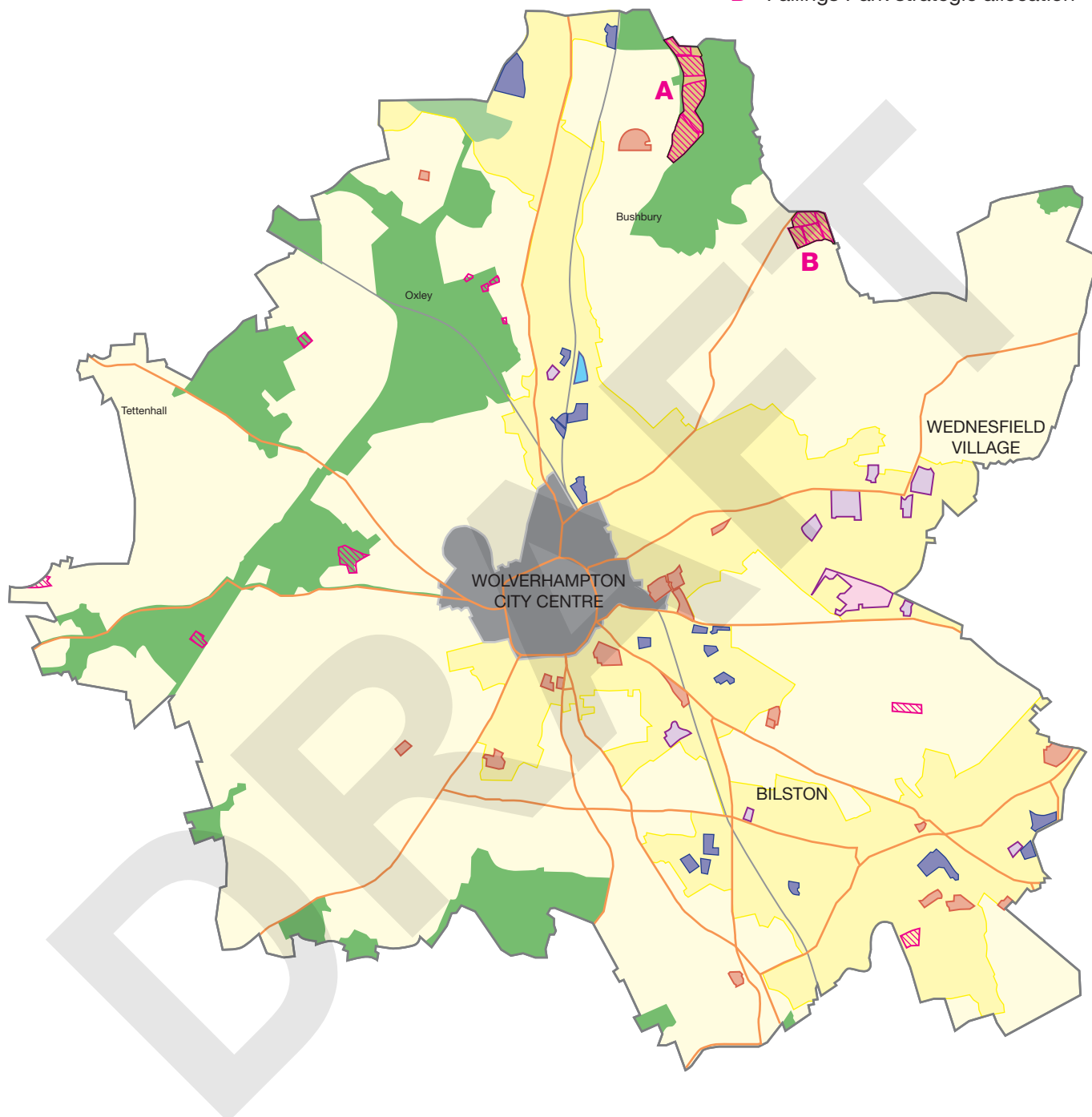
New Employment Land

- 69ha of new employment land will be allocated in the urban area. Most of this land has already been identified in existing Area Action Plans and will be carried over into the new Plan. New sites are proposed at Neachells Lane, Wednesfield and Ettingshall.

PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS

Note - subject to amendment following cabinet meetings, before public consultation.

- A** - Bushbury strategic allocation
- B** - Fallings Park strategic allocation



KEY

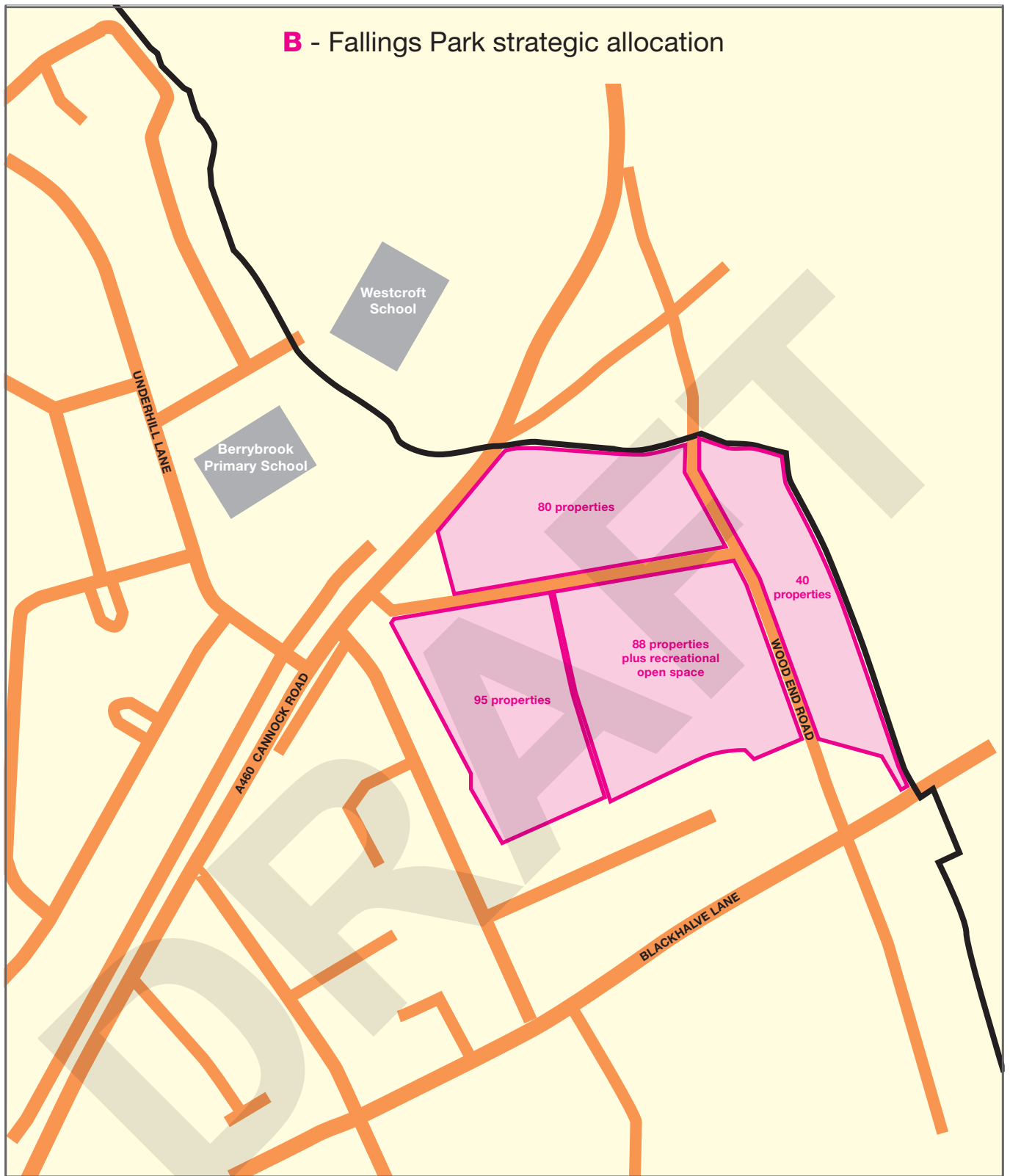
- Proposed new housing land
- Proposed large housing site (Strategic Allocation)
- Existing housing land to be carried forward into the new Plan
- Proposed new employment land
- Existing employment land to be carried forward into the new Plan
- Existing Gypsy and Traveller sites to be carried forward into the new Plan
- Wolverhampton Strategic Centre
- Regeneration Growth Areas - focus of housing and employment growth
- Proposed housing growth area
- Wolverhampton Green Belt

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A complete list of all sites can be found at
<https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/bcp/>



B - Fallings Park strategic allocation



What happens next?

We want your views

You can view the Draft Plan and evidence base documents at <https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/t2/p4/>. You can also view copies of the Draft Plan documents and a map of proposed land allocations at the following venues:

Wolverhampton Civic Centre

St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1RP

Wolverhampton Central Library

Snow Hill, Wolverhampton WV1 3AX

Bilston Library

Mount Pleasant, Bilston WV14 7LU

Wednesfield Library

2 Well Lane, Wednesfield WV11 1XT

Have your say

Visit the website:

Complete our online response form at: www.blackcountryplan.co.uk

Email:

blackcountryplan@dudley.gov.uk

Write to us:

Black Country Plan
Planning & Regeneration, 4 Ednam Road, Dudley DY1 1HL

Pop in:

Pick up a response form, complete it and hand it in at our Reception Desk:

- Wolverhampton Central Library
- Bilston Library
- Wednesfield Library
- Wolverhampton Civic Centre

If you need assistance to explain the documents or fill in your response form please contact the Wolverhampton Planning Policy Team at: planning@wolverhampton.gov.uk

We will use the responses to inform the preparation of the next stage of the Plan, which is called the Publication Black Country Plan. There will be further consultation on the Publication Plan in summer 2022 – however, at this stage, responses will only be sought on whether the Plan has been prepared in accordance with legislation and national planning guidance.

Plan making process timetable

Stage	Date
Consultation on the Draft Publication Plan	August - September 2022
Submission of Plan to Secretary of State for Examination	March 2023
Examination in Public	April 2023 – March 2024
Adoption	April 2024