

## **Chapter 5 – Issues, Opportunities and Challenges**

### **Introduction**

5.1 This section highlights the key issues, opportunities and challenges currently facing the Stourbridge area which have been drawn out of the evidence gathered from early frontloading consultation completed with key external stakeholders (including major landowners in Stourbridge, local Stourbridge Traders, developers and businesses, etc) and internal stakeholders within Dudley Council completed since April 2008. Early baseline data evidence gathering can be found in the Baseline Data report which accompanies this AAP Options document. Before starting to plan for the future of Stourbridge it is necessary to understand what the area is like now in social and economic terms and the physical characteristics.

5.2 The main key issues and challenges which have been identified as being specifically relevant to the Stourbridge Area Action Plan area are listed below. These topic issues have been grouped into sub headings and are addressed within this section. The main key topic areas relevant to the AAP are considered to be:

- Transport
- Urban Design
- Historic Environment
- Retail
- Economic Regeneration
- Landscape
- Housing
- Industry/ Employment Land
- Arts and Creative Industries / Education and Tourism
- Green Infrastructure (green open space) and Nature Conservation
- Climate Change

The above issues are addressed in detail within this section.

#### **Question 6:**

Do you agree with the list of main topic issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been missed from the above list?

# **Transport**

## **Background:**

- 5.3 One of the main issues affecting the town centre is the severance effect caused by Stourbridge Ring Road on the Town Centre. The design of the ring road underlines and compounds many of the challenges which Stourbridge has faced over recent years. However, it must be noted that the ring road forms part of a strategic north to south and east to west route serving the Black Country and the western part of the conurbation. It provides a very effective piece of transport infrastructure which allows vehicle traffic movements to efficiently move from north to south around the town centre. It does however sever the heart of the town centre from the surrounding urban environment. As a result there are poor quality surface level pedestrian and cyclist linkages into the town centre from the surrounding urban area. There is a need to address surface level connection to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists within the Area Action Plan.
- 5.4 The town centre environment itself along High Street and Market Street suffers from high levels of vehicle congestion which reduces the visitor pedestrian experience and adds to vehicle pollution within the town centre. These and other transport issues are explored in further detail below.

## **Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:**

- Ring Road and its severance effect on the town
- Interpretation of the town centre (signage etc)
- Pedestrian and cyclist provision within the town centre
- Vehicle dominated streets (Market Street and High Street)
- Subways are not inviting
- Availability of car parking

## **Transport specific questions**

### **Question 7:**

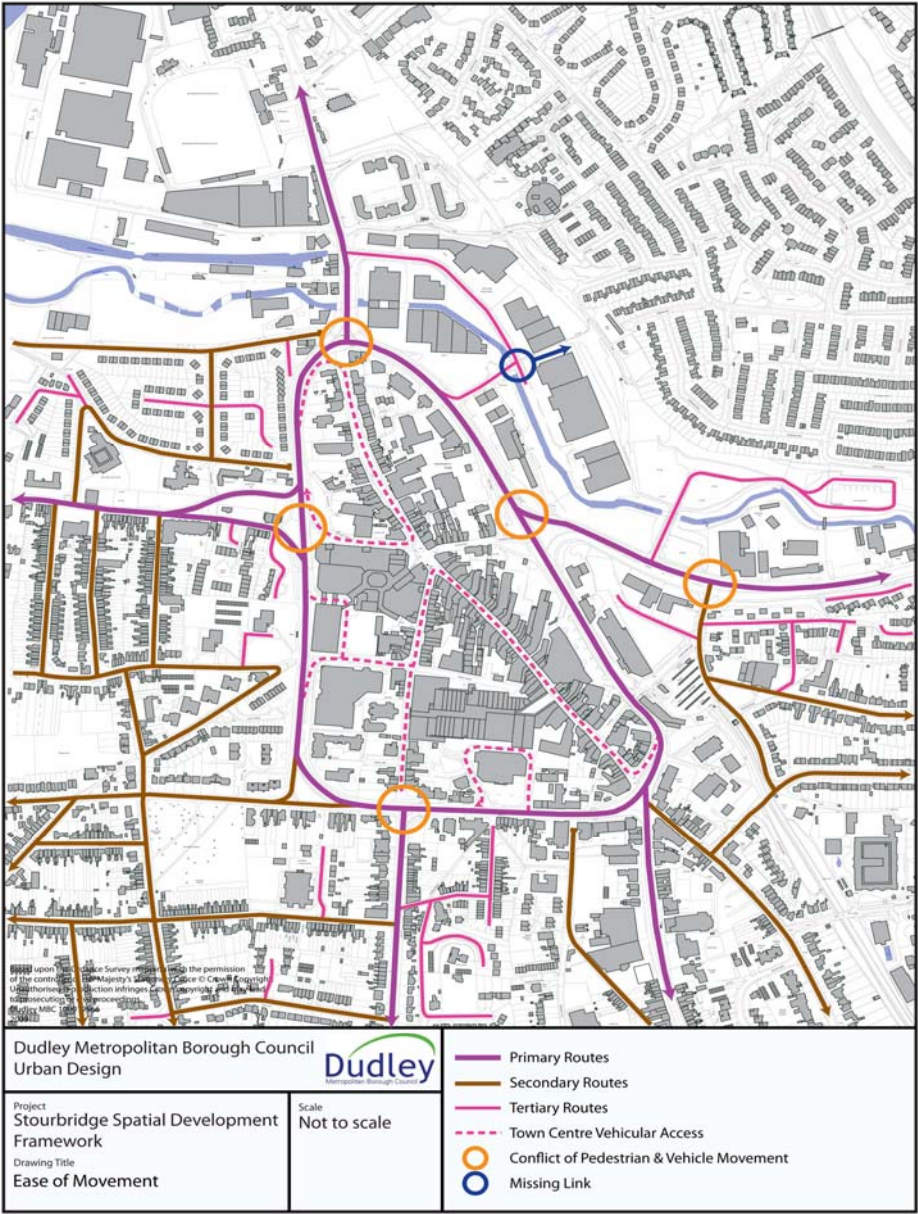
Do you think we have captured all the issues relating to transport?

### **Question 8:**

Do you agree with the list of main transport issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been

missed. If so, what issues?

**Figure 8** - Diagram showing ease of movement and Primary Routes within the Stourbridge AAP area.



## **Transport Options:**

### **Delivering an Integrated and Accessible Town Centre:**

**Option TR1 – Introduce new measures to control traffic on parts of Stourbridge Ring Road. Further strengthen surface level pedestrian and cyclist linkages.**

- 5.5 This option proposes to introduce traffic restraint measures along with improved, safe and attractive surface level pedestrian and cyclist highway crossing points on a section (or sections) of Stourbridge Ring Road in order to help improve the Town Centre's accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. The key objectives are to reduce the severance and barrier effect of Stourbridge Ring Road on the Town Centre, to improve and promote the Town Centres accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists and to help reduce the reliance on car-borne travel journeys needed to access the town centre. Essentially, there is a need to provide an alternative so people are not forced to access the town centre by private car. This option will also help make the main established residential communities on the western and southern edge of Stourbridge Ring Road more accessible on foot or by bicycle to the town centre.

### **Option TR2 – Status Quo**

- 5.6 Introduce no new traffic restraint measures or no new surface level pedestrian links across the Ring Road. Existing traffic calming measures and surface level pedestrian links will continue to remain in place.



(Photograph 1 – View of Stourbridge Ring Road. Photograph taken from the Foster Street East junction onto Ring Road. View looking north west. Date photograph taken: 09/12/2009)

## **Promoting Sustainable Travel Modes - Public Transport and Pedestrian and Cycle Linkages:**

### **Option TR3 – Enhance and improve public transport and pedestrian and cycle linkages:**

- 5.7 The town centre is currently heavily reliant on access by the private motor car as a result of the dominance and severance effect caused by Stourbridge Ring Road which encourages the need for car-borne travel journeys to access the town centre. Initial evidence gathering consultation has identified a need to promote more sustainable travel modes (such as increased use of public transport, cycling and walking) to the town centre which are less environmentally damaging, in order to significantly reduce air borne traffic pollution levels and NO<sub>2</sub> (Nitrogen Dioxide) emissions from cars, which contribute to climate change.
- 5.8 Sustainable Transport options will therefore be considered to Stourbridge Town Centre and surface level pedestrian and cycle linkages from the new bus station site and Stourbridge Train Station (bordering the south-east edge of the Ring Road) to the town centre will be enhanced and improved. Opportunities to enhance access for passengers with mobility impairments will also be explored from the new bus station and existing rail station to the town centre as part of future redevelopment proposals and these will be secured through developer contributions.

### **Option TR4 – Status Quo**

- 5.9 This option will introduce no new Sustainable Transport options or surface level pedestrian linkages from the new bus station and rail station to the town centre. Essentially, this option proposes to keep things as they are.

### **Option TR5 – Closure of the majority of subways:**

- 5.10 Whilst it is recognised that there are perceptions relating to personal safety connected to the existing subway network, the subways do however provide a convenient and efficient access point to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists away from the dangers of high volumes of efficiently moving vehicle traffic on the Ring Road. This

option therefore proposes to close a proportion of existing subways and keep some open.

**Option TR6 – Keep all subways open and continue to provide ongoing improvements and monitor existing security measures:**

- 5.11 This option does not propose to close any existing subways. Essentially, keep things as they are and monitor existing security measures within the subway network. For example, where necessary ensure improved subway lighting and maintenance which addresses pedestrian visibility issues on blind corners and include new higher quality Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV) within the subway network to help discourage crime and improve personal safety as it is developed.



(Photograph 2 – View of Ring Road subway network located adjacent to Foster Street East. Date photograph taken: 09/12/2009)



(Photograph 3 – View of Ring Road subway network located adjacent to Worcester Street (A451). Date photograph taken: 09/12/2009)





(Photograph 4 – View of Ring Road subway network located adjacent to Worcester Street (A451). Date photograph taken: 09/12/2009)

### **Town Centre signage improvements:**

#### **Option TR7 – Town Centre signage improvements to High Street (gateway route):**

- 5.12 Introduce new signage improvements so the main gateway route into the Town Centre (on the south-eastern edge of the Ring Road leading on to High Street) is more clearly visible and prominent for motorists.

#### **Option TR8 – Status Quo**

- 5.13 Do not introduce any new signage.



(Photograph 5 – Stourbridge Ring Road and High Street junction. Main gateway route into Stourbridge Town Centre (High Street area). View looking south. Date photograph taken: 09/12/2009)

## **Provision for cyclists:**

### **Option TR9 – Cycle network improvements:**

- 5.14 The Stourbridge Ring Road forms a barrier to cyclists. The severance effect created by the Ring Road on the town centre, combined with the number of lanes of efficiently moving traffic, create a dangerous environment for pedal cyclists to cross. This discourages surface level access to the town centre by pedal cycles.
- 5.15 Stourbridge is part of the Sustrans cycle network. This option proposes to introduce new cycle access improvements to help strengthen cycle connectivity through the town and the surrounding urban area, essentially to strengthen the cycle corridor from north to south. E.g. from the Bonded Warehouse (Old Wharf Road) in the north, through the Town Centre, south to (Norton Road) Mary Stevens Park (MSP).

### **Option TR10 – Introduce a secure cycle storage area within the town centre**

- 5.16 There is currently a shortage of safe and secure pedal cycle storage areas within the town centre. The purpose of this option is to help encourage more people to access the town centre by pedal cycles, and promote more sustainable travel modes by reducing reliance on car-borne travel journeys. This option therefore proposes to introduce a lock-up area within the Town Centre where bicycles can be securely stored.

### **Option TR11 – Status Quo**

- 5.17 Do not complete any cycle network improvements.

## **Traffic management/ calming or shared space improvements within the Town Centre:**

### **Option TR12 – Introduce pedestrianisation within Stourbridge Town Centre:**

- 5.18 Both High Street and Market Street within the core of the town centre are heavily congested with vehicle traffic (mainly private cars). On-street roadside car parking along High Street and Market Street adds to congestion levels. Combined with narrow pavement widths, the excessive extent of traffic intrusion can reduce the visitor pedestrian



experience, add to vehicle air-borne traffic pollution levels, and detract from the visual appearance and character of the town centre.

- 5.19 This option therefore proposes to introduce a more radical option of introducing permanent pedestrianisation along parts of High Street and /or Market Street within Stourbridge Town Centre in order to give priority to pedestrians over vehicular traffic.

**Option TR13 – Maintain access for service delivery vehicles only. Restrict access for all other types of vehicle traffic along High Street and/or Market Street.**

- 5.20 One of the key issues for shops and other local businesses located along High Street and Market Street within the Town Centre, is to ensure that their business premises remain easily served by delivery vehicles, so goods can be easily and conveniently delivered to their premises. This option therefore proposes to continue to allow access for service delivery vehicles which serve existing shops and other businesses located along High Street/ Market Street. Access will be restricted for all other types of traffic (e.g. private motor cars/ non-service delivery vehicles).

**Option TR14 – Maintain access for service delivery vehicles during set specified times.**

- 5.21 This option will allow access for service delivery vehicles (serving local town centre businesses) only along High Street and/ or Market Street during set specified times. For example, for illustrative purposes this could include allowing service vehicles to access High Street and/or Market Street on Saturday's between 5:00am to 8:30am and 4:30pm to 6:30pm, Monday's to Friday's 10:00am to 4:30pm, etc. All other vehicle movements (e.g. private motor cars/ non-service delivery vehicles) will be restricted from High Street and/ or Market Street.

**Option TR15 – Limit access to traffic (both delivery vehicles and private cars) along High Street and/ or Market Street during specified times only.**

- 5.22 This option involves introducing traffic management/ calming and shared space improvements in order to restrict all vehicular traffic movements (e.g. service delivery vehicles and cars) along High Street and/ or Market Street within the Town Centre during set specified times. For example, for illustrative purposes this could include Saturday's between 10:00am to 5:00pm, Monday's to Friday's 10:00am to 4:30pm, etc. This option would maintain vehicle access (for all types of vehicles) and roadside car parking along High Street and/or Market Street at all other times outside the set vehicle exclusion hours. Key objectives being to improve pedestrian access within the heart of the

town centre but not permanently restricting vehicle movements from the town centre.

### **Option TR16 – Status Quo**

- 5.23 Continue to allow vehicle traffic movements and roadside car parking along High Street and Market Street. Essentially, this option proposes to keep things as they are.



(Photograph 6 – View of High Street, Stourbridge Town Centre. View looking north west. Date photograph taken: 09/12/2009)

### **Town Centre surface level off-street public car parking provision:**

- 5.24 Evidence gathered from frontloading consultation has identified a perceived shortage of public car parking provision within Stourbridge Town Centre (inside the Ring Road). This could help to discourage shoppers from visiting the town centre as off-street car parking is not conveniently located and easily available. This could adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town centre. The options below therefore propose to consider various options connected to public car parking.

### **Option TR17 – Explore additional public car parking areas within the Town Centre.**

- 5.25 Explore additional car parking areas within the town centre.

## **Option TR18 – Status Quo**

- 5.26 This option will not introduce any new public car parks within the town centre. Essentially, this option proposes to keep things as they are.

## **Questions specifically related to Transport Options:**

### Question 9:

Do you think we have captured all the options for transport?

### Question 10:

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for transport?

### Question 11:

Do you think town centre pedestrianisation would help improve the town centre and encourage more shoppers to visit the town centre, improving town centre vitality and viability?

### Question 12:

If you drive to Stourbridge Town Centre, where do you mostly park and why?

### Question 13:

Do you think that facilities should be improved for cyclists? If so, briefly explain what improvements you would suggest.

## **Technical evidence:**

- 5.27 In addition to the input received through this consultation process, the Council has compiled a number of 'evidence base' documents, which provide technical information on a number of key issues specific to the Dudley Borough. The following list included under each topic issue subheading (e.g. Transport, Urban Design, Historic Environment, etc) identifies some of the key background technical studies that have been adopted, or are currently being carried out to inform Dudley Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) and which are specifically relevant to the Stourbridge AAP document.

### Transport technical evidence base:

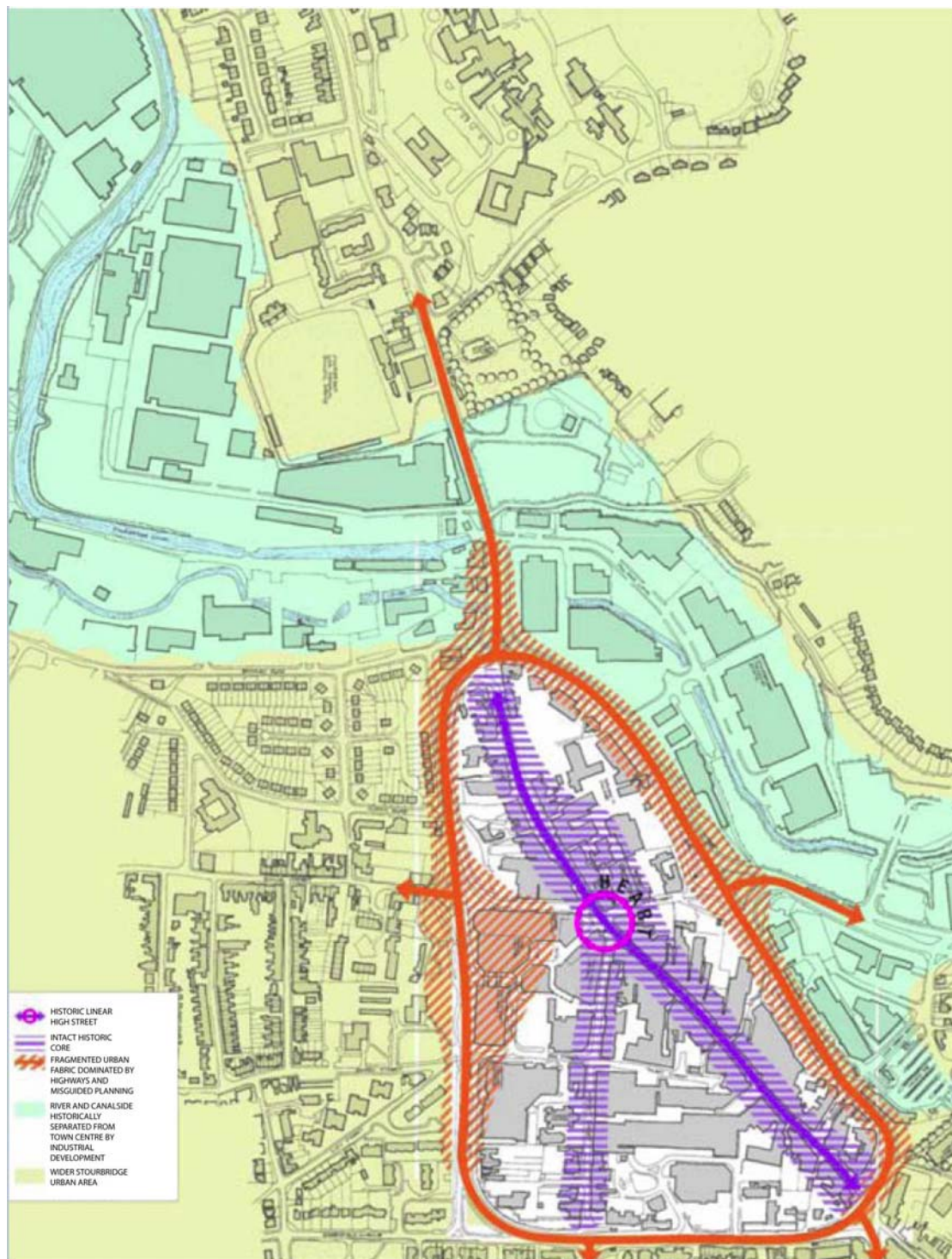
- Dudley Council's Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted 2007).
- Dudley Council's Planning Obligations SPD (adopted March 2009)
- Dudley Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted October 2005)

## **Urban Design**

### Background:

- 5.28 The character, image and appearance of Stourbridge, particularly its town centre, is dominated by the experience of the ring road, namely Bath Street, St. John's Road and New Road. In contrast the town centre core is of greater historical and architectural interest, which presents an image and experience of 'two towns'. Part of the area proposed for the AAP is a designated Conservation Area and is recognised as being of some local importance. The appearance and local distinctiveness is undermined by development that backs onto the Stourbridge ring road and the inward looking town centre core is of much more interest in terms of its use and aesthetic quality.
- 5.29 Much of the radial pattern of streets are still evident (Coventry Street/ Birmingham Street, Enville Street, Lion Street, Market Street/Worcester Street) but their function as multi-modal streets for cars, people, bicycles and public transport is severed by the construction of Stourbridge ring road in the late 1960s. The centre still has a discernable heart associated with the small public space where the severed "limbs" of the historic street pattern still come together and the clock tower now stands.
- 5.30 Construction of the ring road had a devastating impact on the urban fabric of the fringes of the centre. A wide swathe of built development was removed to make way for the road. For the most part broken frontages were not repaired or replaced. Travelling around the ring road, the back of properties, rear service yards, left over land that serves no particular purpose and fragmented built development dominate the view.
- 5.31 Where new development has occurred since construction of the ring road, such as the Crown Centre, it has tended to turn its back on the ring road. This has reinforced the 'fortress' character of the town centre.

Figure 9 – The simple diagram below shows the principal structuring elements of the urban environment associated with the Stourbridge town centre.



Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:

- Environmental quality of the town for pedestrians and shoppers.
- Lack of active frontages onto the ring road needs to be more urban in character.
- Need to celebrate Stourbridge's townscape and vistas.
- Fragmentation of high street/ centre and relationship to areas outside the ring road.
- Poor environmental quality of River Stour.
- Quality of public realm.

Urban Design specific questions

Question 14

Do you think we have captured all the issues relating to urban design?

Question 15

Do you agree with the list of main urban design issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been missed. If so, what issues?



Figure 10 – Diagram showing existing Urban Form and Layout.

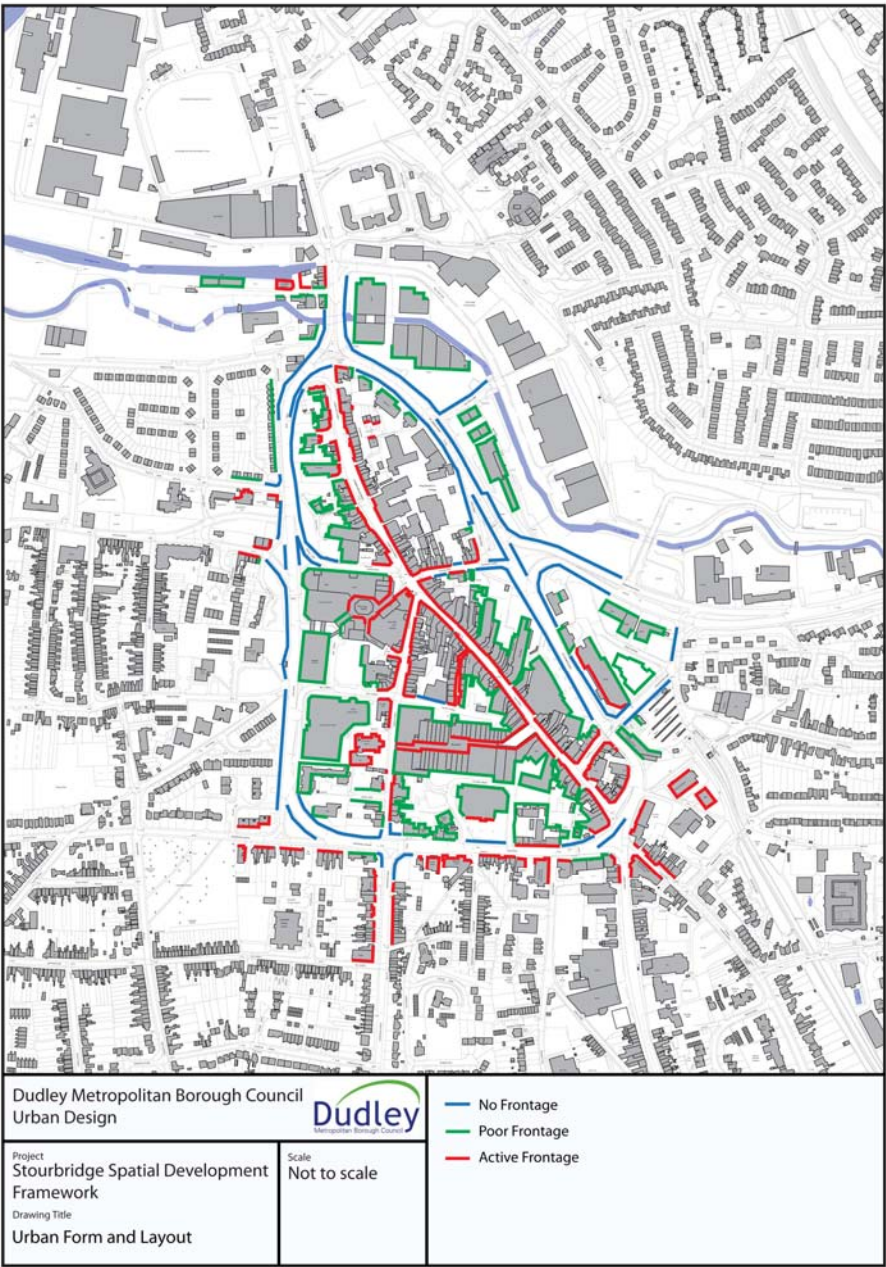




Figure 11 – Diagram showing existing Views and Vistas.

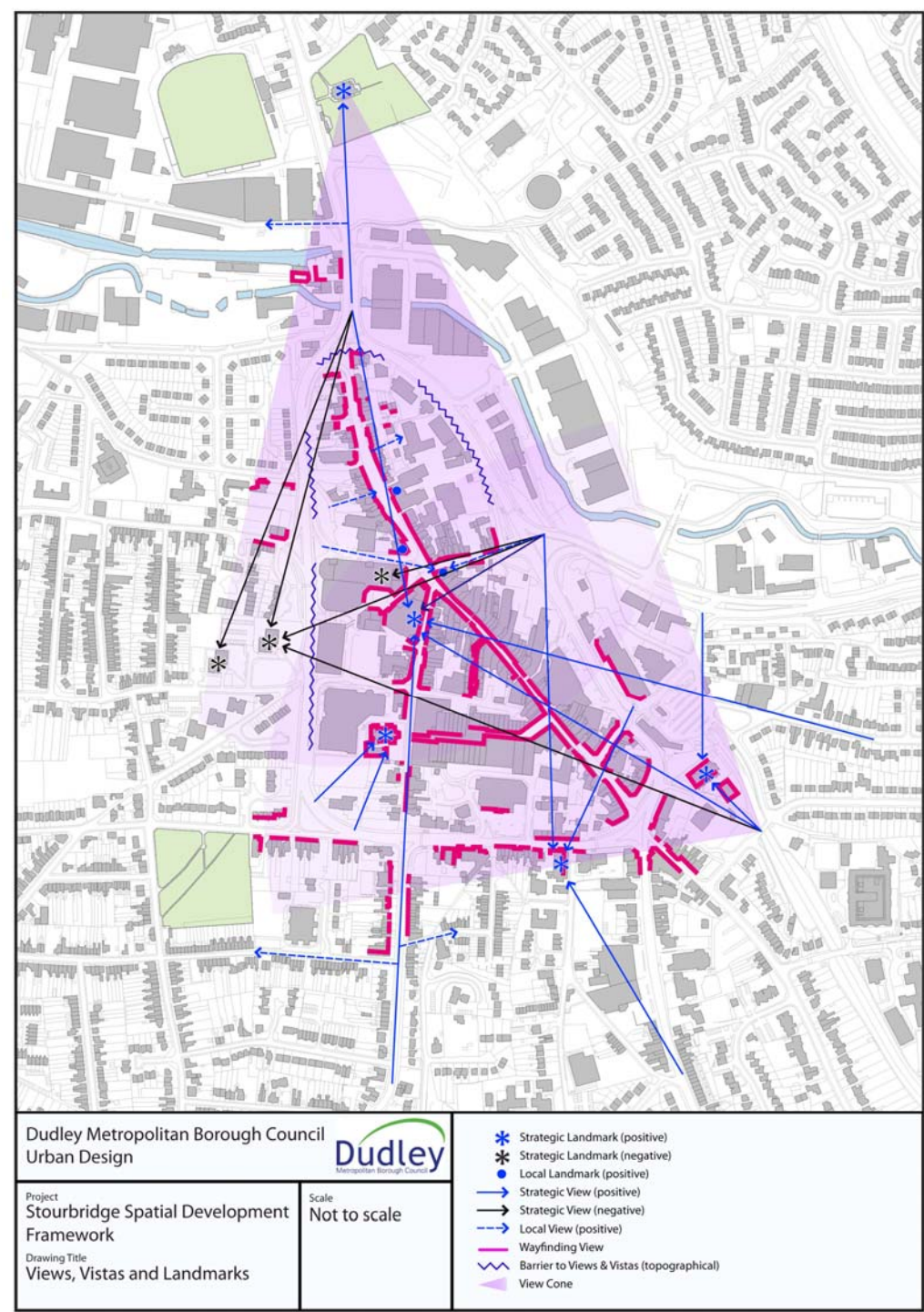


Figure 12 – Diagram showing existing Public Realm.

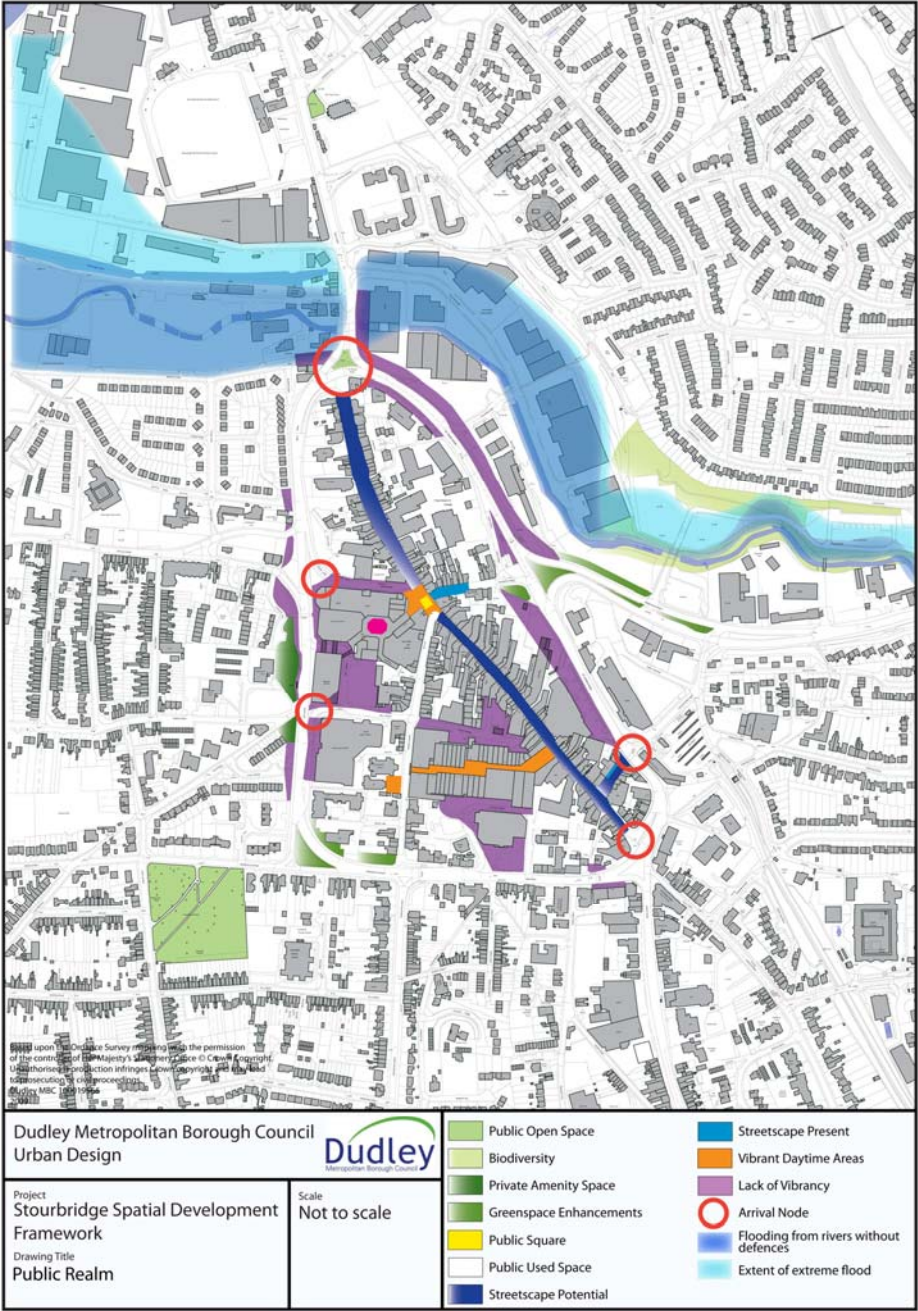
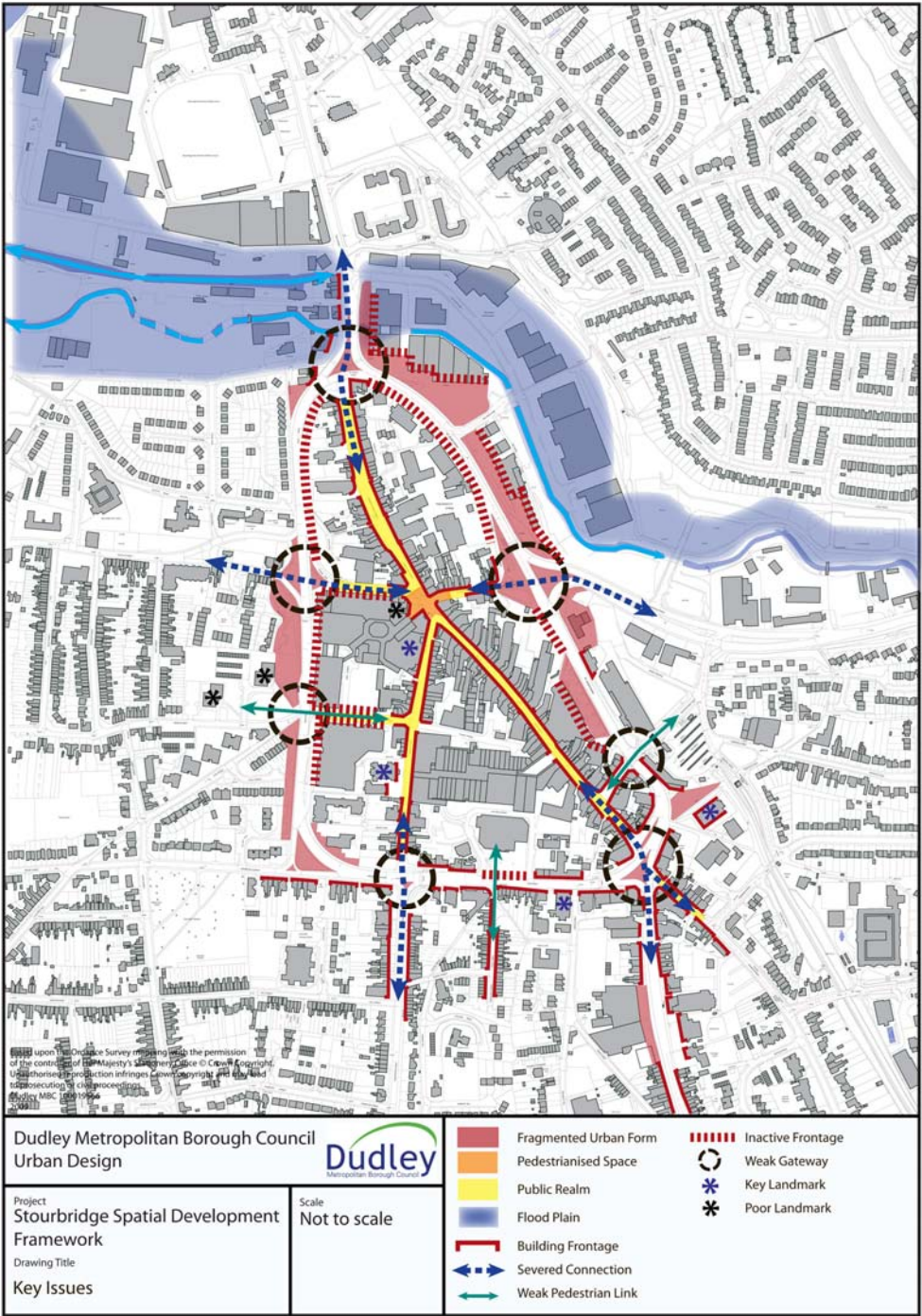




Figure 13 – Key Urban Design issues diagram.



## **Urban Design Options:**

### **Urban Design and Public Realm:**

#### **Option UD19 – Protect local character and visual quality.**

- 5.32 Protect local character and visual quality by ensuring that new development and improvements to the public realm are of a high quality design and create a safe and secure environment accessible to all, by protecting and improving Conservation Areas and Listed buildings and be raising awareness of Stourbridge's history and heritage.

### **In active frontages:**

#### **Option UD20 – Using new development to address in active frontages**

- 5.33 As new development proposals come forward seek to address the problem of dead frontages facing onto Stourbridge ring road to help integrate the town centre into the immediate urban surroundings. Encourage high quality development that integrates well into its surroundings and ensure that the backs of buildings do not face onto the pedestrian environment.

### **Design Guidelines:**

#### **Option UD21 – Introduce Design Guidelines**

- 5.34 Enhance the quality of the streetscape through the de-cluttering of street furniture, the repaving of footpaths within the town centre, and where possible the inclusion of more urban greenery.

#### **Option UD22 – Use of Development Briefs**

- 5.35 Encourage the use of Development Briefs and nationally recognised design criteria within the AAP area in order to act as a driver and catalyst for higher quality design within new built development.

#### **Option UD23 – Use of Design Codes**

- 5.36 Promote the development of a design code to help ensure that where new built proposals sit outside the Conservation Area, that they are in keeping and/ or are sympathetic with the surrounding urban area.

**Option UD24 – Design requirements**

- 5.37 The AAP should spell out all urban design requirements and principles for all new development, improvements and other changes through the development of a master plan.

**Option UD25 – Introduce a General Design Policy Framework**

- 5.38 Provide a general policy framework for all new built development design in the town and rely on the production of more detailed and specific design Strategies with standards and guidance. Use of a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) should be explored to help deliver the changes needed.

**Pedestrian spaces:**

**Option UD26 – Improve the pedestrian network**

- 5.39 Improve pedestrian links through the town centre and into the immediate urban surroundings by identifying the full desirable network or permeable and accessible routes which need to be created through change and redevelopment.

**Questions specifically related to Urban Design Options:**

**Question 14:**

Do you think we have captured all the options for urban design?

**Question 15:**

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for urban design?

**Question 16:**

Should the AAP identify all buildings, spaces and views which are important to the townscape and character of the town centre in order to ensure that these views and buildings are safeguarded and enhanced?

Question 17.

Do you think the AAP should allow a more 'ad-hoc' approach to the design of new built developments with the town centre or should the AAP include specific Design Guidelines for new development?

Question 18.

A number of potential options for breaking the collar of the ring road and improving pedestrian accessibility to the town centre are discussed in the 'Transport Options' section of this paper. Do you think these suggested improvements would help improve urban design within the town centre?

Question 19.

Do you think the AAP should provide a general policy framework for protecting buildings, spaces and views?

Question 20.

Should the AAP be focusing in detail on specific design based issues? For example, architectural styles, the external appearance of new buildings, the colour and type of materials being used in external facades of new buildings within the AAP area, the height, scale, visual appearance and massing of new development?

Question 21.

Could new public art play a major role in the town centre renaissance and help to create a greater sense of place, promote local heritage and identity?

Urban Design technical evidence base:

- Dudley Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted October 2005)
- Dudley Council's Stourbridge Urban Design Departments Options Report (January 2010)
- Dudley Council's adopted Parks and Green Space Strategy (PPG17 Audit) (adopted June 2009).
- Dudley Council's adopted Glass Quarter Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (December 2009)
- Habitat Survey of Dudley Borough (1996)
- David Lock's Planning Consultants draft Stourbridge AAP Issues and Options report (February 2006)

## **Historic Environment**

### **Background:**

- 5.40 As an historic town centre, Stourbridge plays an important role in forming the identity of a particular area and community within the borough. The historic landscape of the area, including buildings, streets, landscape features and even hidden archaeological remains, creates a sense of place that makes Stourbridge's town centre distinct from others in the region. The quality of its historic environment is the result of investment in architecture, materials and civic pride that reflect the high points of its town centre role over the past seven hundred years. It is one of the key factors that make it an attractive environment in which people choose to live, work and visit. It will be an objective of the Area Action Plan to ensure that the value of this inheritance is protected and put to good use in the future.
- 5.41 Historic town centres are subject to changes that were often unforeseen by the planners, architects and builders responsible for their creation. They therefore require adaptation to effectively respond to new requirements to continue providing a town centre function. Where the historic environment makes such an important contribution to the quality of the environment careful management is required to ensure that regeneration and new development make the best use of historic buildings and spaces. It will be important to ensure that the value of each element of the historic environment is appreciated early in the planning process, and appropriately treated within proposals for change. Management plans will need to include the maintenance and enhancement of historic environment resources, as well as new developments. These should aim to breathe new life into historic buildings and spaces as part of the wider regeneration of the town centre to ensure their continued contribution to a sustainable and distinctive town centre.

### **Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:**

- Need to protect the special historic character of Stourbridge town centre.
- New development should respect the character of the town.
- Need to understand the detailed historic character of the town centre.
- Effect of the ring road on the centre.
- Areas of industrial dereliction detracting from the town centre.
- Changing economic time leads to requirements to change use of buildings.
- Some historic buildings at risk.
- Improve physical links from canal side area to town centre.
- Street furniture and street environment needs to respect the character of the area.



## Historic Environment specific questions

### Question 22

Do you think we have captured all the issues relating to historic environment?

### Question 23

Do you agree with the list of main historic environment issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been missed?

## **Historic Environment Options:**

### **Protection of historic assets:**

- 5.42 To inform the preparation of the AAP the Council are undertaking an Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation study, which will provide a comprehensive review of historic features of the landscape in the AAP area and its surroundings. Many of these have not been recognised as of importance previously and, therefore, planning decisions will not be focused on protecting the contribution they make to the local environment.

### **Option HE27 - Extend Conservation Area Designations**

- 5.43 The Stourbridge Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in the 1970s and has been extended on a number of occasions to protect areas that contribute to the special historic and architectural interest of the area. However, other areas within the town centre might be regarded as contributing to the special historic and architectural interest. This option proposes to review the conservation area through a formal character appraisal and boundary review to identify areas that should be covered by this designation. Designation as a Conservation Area would provide additional planning control for the Council but could also attract additional grant aid and funding for repair of historic buildings and improvements to the public realm.

### **Option HE28 – Identify areas of High Historic Townscape Value**

- 5.44 Where areas stand out as of interest due to the contribution of the historic environment but lie outside existing conservation area boundaries, their contribution can still be recognised by the Council

through the identification of Areas of High Historic Townscape Value. This Option proposes to designate Areas of High Historic Townscape Value identified through the Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation study, the local character and distinctiveness of which would be protected through planning policy within the AAP or the LDF. These areas will also be prioritised for consideration for Conservation Area Designation.

**Option HE29 – Identify buildings to be added to the local list or candidates for consideration for statutory listing by English Heritage**

- 5.45 This option proposes to add buildings identified by the Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation study as of local historic interest for addition to the Council's 'Local List,' which are protected by planning policy within the LDF. Where these buildings are also considered to be of special historic and architectural importance the Council will bring them to the attention of English Heritage for designation as statutory listed buildings, which are protected for detrimental change through national legislation.

**Option HE30 – Status Quo**

- 5.46 Although this option would provide no additional protection of historic environment assets through the AAP, the Council continues to have a statutory obligation to identify parts of their area that merit protection as conservation area and to prepare management proposals to ensure they are protected and enhanced. However, in such circumstances the Conservation Areas within and around Stourbridge Town Centre may not be prioritised over others within the borough.

**Guidelines for new development:**

**Option HE31 – Provide guidelines for new development**

- 5.47 Provide guidelines for new development affecting historic buildings and spaces across the Area Action Plan area in order to ensure that new development is sensitive to its historical context and makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

**Option HE32 – Provide 'site specific' focused guidelines for new development**

- 5.48 Provide guidance that is focused on the needs of specific site land parcels within the AAP area that have been identified through the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) as making a negative contribution to local character and distinctiveness or for significant potential for improvement. A key objective of this option would be to reunite areas of fragmented townscape and to protect the historic

surroundings. This will help to provide certainty to developers for development proposals within the planning process.

Footnote: Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is explained in the glossary of terms section and within the Historic Landscape Characterisation Chapter of this document.

### **Option HE33 – Status Quo.**

- 5.49 Do not provide any guidelines for any new development or review Historic Environment management and designations.

### **Introduce signage improvements:**

#### **Option HE34 – Introduce signage improvements**

- 5.50 The town centre currently lacks a clearly defined identity as expressed through signage and public realm. This option proposes to introduce new signage improvements and public realm enhancements to strengthen and reinforce the character and identity of the AAP area.

### **Option HE35 – Status Quo.**

- 5.51 This option does not propose to introduce any new signage improvements and public realm enhancements.



**Photograph 7** - View of Bonded Warehouse Grade II Listed Building bordering Canal Street. View looking south. Date photograph taken: 25/08/2009

**Questions specifically related to Historic Environment Options:**

Question 24:

Do you think we have captured all the options for historic environment?

Question 25:

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for historic environment?

Question 26:

Do you think there is a need to include Archaeological Priority Areas in the Stourbridge AAP? (Archaeological Priority Areas is explained in the glossary of terms section)

Question 27:

Is there a need to improve and strengthen pedestrian links from the core of the town centre (along High Street) to the Canalside area?

Question 28:

Do you think it is necessary to increase the level of protection available to conserve historic buildings and areas in Stourbridge?

Historic Environment technical evidence base:

- Dudley Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (1993) – Areas of Special Townscape Value Technical Appendix.
- Dudley Council's Historic Environment SPD (adopted September 2006)
- Dudley Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted October 2005)
- Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals for Stourbridge Branch Canal (Amblecote), Stourbridge Branch Canal (Canal Street), Stourbridge Sixteen Locks, and Delph "Nine" Locks (March 2007)
- Dudley Council's Stourbridge Urban Design Departments Options Report (January 2010)

- Stourbridge Town Character Study (1996)
- Dudley Council's Glass Quarter SPD (adopted December 2009)
- Stourbridge Heritage Trail (published pre 1992)
- Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation
- David Lock's Planning Consultants draft Stourbridge AAP Issues and Options report (February 2006)

## **Retail**

### **Background:**

- 5.52 Retailing in the town centre comprises a mixture of independent family-owned retailers together with a number of national multiples. There are a significant number of niche shops of good quality, which contribute to a strong retail profile, enhanced by the presence of Waitrose and the Farmers market. It is this retail offer which offers the basis for clear differentiation from nearby centres such as Kidderminster and Merry Hill. There are a limited number of national multiples in Stourbridge, indeed there is only a limited number of top retailers present, this may be due to the lack of larger units which exist or can be accommodated within the town centre. The current focus of retail activity is High Street, Market Street, Crown Centre and the Ryemarket all situated within the heart of the town centre inside the ring road. The new Tesco's food store recently approved planning application will strengthen the convenience retail offer within the town centre.
- 5.53 Stourbridge has been identified as a non-strategic centre within the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (RSS) (2008) and the emerging Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2009). The main focus of non-strategic centres will be on meeting day-to-day local needs, in particular convenience shopping, the provision of local services (such as banks, post offices, local health care facilities, sports centres, libraries and restaurants) and limited amount of day-to-day comparison shopping.
- 5.54 The GVA Black Country Centres Study (November 2009) provides soundly-based evidence for the Joint Core Strategy, Local Development Framework (LDF) documents and to assist in the determination of planning applications. As part of the Study an assessment of Stourbridge's current performance has been carried out. The town centre was assessed in terms of health-check indicators with regard to needs and opportunities for investment and regeneration. Overall Stourbridge has good provision of a range of retail goods and services and is considered 'vital and viable'.

- 5.55 The GVA Centres Study has examined the capacity for further convenience and comparison goods floorspace from 2009 up to 2026. For convenience retail the study projects negative capacity in Stourbridge arising as a consequence of the foodstore permitted as part of the Crown Centre redevelopment and insufficient capacity to accommodate all the identified allocation/pipeline proposals.
- 5.56 For comparison goods in Stourbridge there is permission for additional comparison floorspace as part of the Crown Centre redevelopment scheme. Capacity to support new floorspace above existing allocations will be predicated on redirecting surplus expenditure arising in out-of-centre locations back into the town centre. Specific retail floorspace requirements for the town centre will be identified in the Stourbridge AAP Publication Report.

### **Definition of Retail Terms**

**Convenience Floorspace:** Convenience retailing is the provision of everyday essential items, including food, drinks, newspapers/magazines and confectionery.

**Comparison Floorspace:** Comparison retailing is the provision of items not obtained on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.

### Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:

- Recently approved consent for large scale convenience store at Crown Centre.
- Main opportunities exist for growth in mixed comparison shopping retail floorspace.
- Future new retail development will need to be in accordance and compatible with the towns role as a non-strategic town centre.
- Small retail units, locally owned, independent traders/ family businesses form a major part of the town centre and define its main character and should be celebrated.
- There is a shortage of large scale, flexible retail space which large multiples look for when making investment decisions.
- Prevalence and concentrations of Hot food take aways within some parts of Stourbridge Town Centre primary shopping area. Erosion of Class A1 retail uses within the primary shopping area and the impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre.

### Retail specific questions

#### Question 29:

Do you think we have captured all the issues relating to retail?

#### Question 30:

Do you agree with the list of main retail issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been missed?

## **Retail Options:**

### **Location of New Shopping Facilities (sites 'within' the town centre):**

**Option RET36** – Provide more shopping facilities within Stourbridge Town Centre (inside the ring road) in suitable locations.

5.57 This option will explore identifying new sites within the town centre to provide more additional shopping facilities (e.g. increase the amount of shopping floorspace within the town centre).

### **New Leisure, Cultural and Community Facilities (key town centre uses) (sites 'within' the town centre):**

**Option RET37** – Delivering a balanced town centre that meets community need.

5.58 Provide more leisure, cultural and community facilities in addition to those already found within the town centre (inside the ring road) in suitable locations in order to support the growing community.



**New Leisure, Cultural and Community Facilities (key town centre uses) on peripheral sites outside the ring road and create linkages to the Town Centre :**

**Option RET38 – Sites located outside the town centre.**

- 5.59 A range of leisure, cultural and community facilities are needed to support the growing community in the Area Action Plan area. This option therefore proposes to provide more leisure, cultural and community facilities in addition to those already found outside the town centre (outside the ring road) in suitable locations in order to support the growing community.

**Restaurants and Bars (evening entertainment):**

**Option RET39 – Increase the amount of restaurants and bars.**

- 5.60 Provide more restaurants and bars within the town centre (inside the ring road) in order to support the vitality and viability of the town centre.

**Option RET40 – Status Quo.**

- 5.61 Retain the existing number of restaurants and bars already found within the town centre. Do not increase the amount of restaurants and bars.

**Option RET41 – Introduce controls**

- 5.62 Control and limit the number of restaurants and bars within the core of the town centre in order to protect the primary shopping area and ensure that there is a good diverse range of retail uses (shops) present within the primary shopping area, to protect its day-to-day shopping offer.

**Option RET42 – Confine restaurants and bars to a single area of the town centre where they are already concentrated**

- 5.63 Confine additional restaurants and bars to the south-east edge of the town centre along part of High Street where the majority of the restaurants and bars are already located.

**Option RET43 – Allow more even distribution of restaurants and bars throughout the town centre.**

- 5.64 Make it easier for restaurants and bars to be allowed more evenly throughout the town centre (inside the ring road) including the whole of the High Street and Market Street.

**Option RET44 – Allow restaurants and bars outside the town centre**

- 5.65 Allow restaurants and bars to locate outside the town centre within the major opportunity sites located outside the ring road.

**Hot food takeaways:**

**Option RET45 – Control the amount of Hot food takeaways within Stourbridge Town Centre.**

- 5.66 Introduce controls to control the amount of hot food takeaways within the primary shopping area within the core of the town centre in order to enhance and protect the vitality and viability of the town centre.

**Option RET46 – Status Quo.**

- 5.67 Do not introduce any controls in relation to hot food takeaways.

**Town Centre Mixed Use Development:**

- 5.68 As discussed under the 'Housing' section within this paper, town centres often contain a vibrant mix of uses both within the area and often within individual premises themselves. It is, therefore, not uncommon to find homes next to small offices, shops or leisure uses either one above the other (vertical mix) or side by side (horizontal). The idea of mixing land uses has re-emerged as a way of maximising the vitality, viability and security of town centres.
- 5.69 In Stourbridge, the mix is still only developing and particularly the residential community within the town centre itself remains limited. However, a number of sites identified in the 'Potential Opportunity Sites and Development Options' section of this paper are earmarked for mixed uses.

**Option RET47 – Encourage mixed-use development within the town centre**

- 5.70 Encourage further mixed use development within the town centre (inside the ring road) such as residential or office uses on upper floors above shops.

**Option RET48 – Status Quo.**

- 5.71 Do not encourage mixed use development within the town centre.

**Protected Frontages:**

**Option RET49 – Increase the current percentage threshold within the town centre Protected Frontage designation**

- 5.72 Within the core of the town centre, the majority of High Street, Market Street and the Ryemarket fall inside a Protected Frontage designation. The purpose of the protected frontage designation is to ensure that the primary shopping area within the core of the town centre is dominated by Class A1 Retail uses (e.g. shops) in order to ensure that the town centre remains an attractive shopping destination and to support the vitality and viability of the town centre. Within the Protected Frontage designation, the amount of non-class A1 retail uses allowed is carefully controlled through the planning process. In Stourbridge town centre, the current policy threshold is that 35% of all units within the Protected Frontage have to remain in Class A1 retail use.
- 5.73 This option proposes to increase the current policy threshold within the Protected Frontage designation from 35% to 45%.

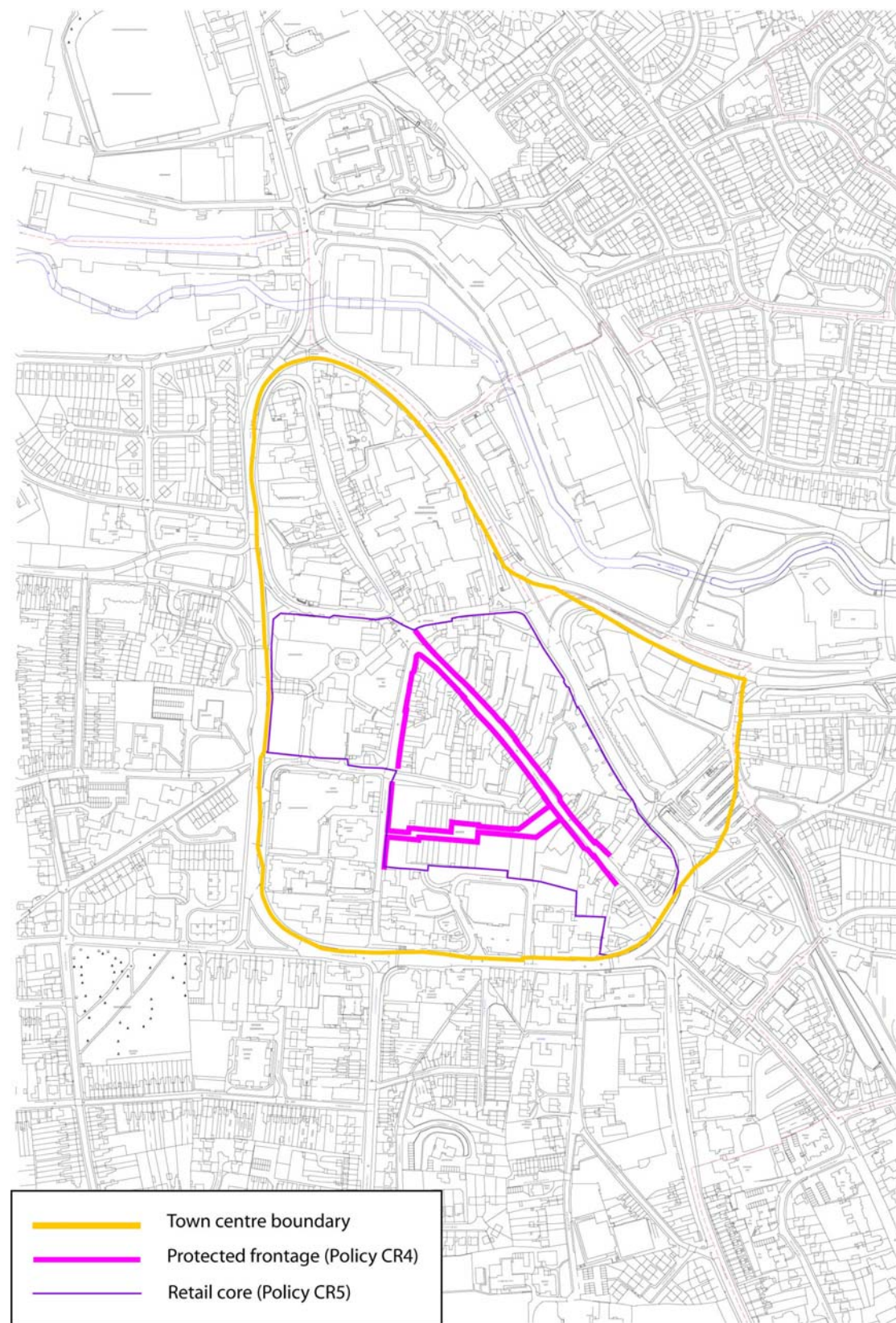
**Option RET50 – Maintain current policy level at 35%**

- 5.74 This option proposes to maintain the current 35% policy threshold within the town centre Protected Frontage designation.

**Option RET51 – Remove the Protected Frontage**

- 5.75 Fully remove the Protected Frontage designation from the town centre core shopping area.

**Figure 14** - Map showing current Stourbridge Town Centre boundary, Protected Frontage and Retail Core boundaries.



### **Current Town Centre boundary, its Primary Shopping Area, and its Primary and Secondary Frontages.**

- 5.76 The town centre current boundary, its primary shopping area (Retail Core), and its primary frontages is shown in Figure 14 above.

#### **Option RET52 – Extend Retail Core (Primary Shopping Area) and Primary and Secondary Frontages further within the town centre**

- 5.77 This radical option proposes to extend the Primary Shopping Area (Retail Core), and its primary and secondary frontages to other parts of the town centre inside the ring road.
- 5.78 This could potentially include extending the Primary Shopping Area (Retail Core), and its primary and secondary frontages boundary north to encompass Lower High Street, and further south which will allow the boundary to extend further along Market Street and Victoria Street.

#### **Option RET53 – Re-align the current town centre boundary to fall fully inside the ring road**

- 5.79 This option proposes to remove the Angel Passage site (which falls outside the ring road) from the current town centre boundary and re-align the town centre boundary so that it falls fully inside Stourbridge ring road.

#### **Option RET54 – Extend the town centre and primary shopping area (retail core) boundary north**

- 5.80 Extend the Town Centre boundary and the Primary Shopping Area (Retail Core) boundary north outside the ring road to cover parts of Mill Race Lane Trading Estate.

#### **Option RET55 – Status Quo**

- 5.81 Do not introduce any changes to either the Town Centre boundary or the Primary Shopping Area (Retail Core) or primary and secondary frontages boundaries. The boundaries currently in place will remain.

**Questions specifically related to Retail Options:**

Question 31:

Do you think we have captured all the options for retail?

Question 32:

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for retail?

Question 33:

Do you think that more shopping facilities should be provided within the town centre (inside the ring road)?

Question 34:

If you agree that more shopping facilities are required within the town centre (within the ring road), then what types of new shops should be particularly encouraged within the town centre (inside the ring road)?  
Please tick ONE OR MORE options.

More larger stores .....  
More standard sized stores .....  
More smaller, independent stores .....

Additional comments – Type of New Shopping Facilities.

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Question 35:

Would further increasing the amount of comparison shopping retail floorspace within town centre help to improve and strengthen the town centre and encourage more shoppers to visit the town centre, improving town centre vitality and viability?

Question 36:

Do you think that small, specialist niche shops and independent traders should be encouraged and protected within the town centre?

Question 37:

Should controls be introduced to control the amount of hot food takeaways within the town centre? Please briefly explain.

Question 38:

Is there a need to control the number of bars and restaurants within the town centre?

Question 39:

Do you think the outdoor market should be extended to cover further different parts of the town centre and the frequency of outdoor markets (the number of times it takes place) should be increased within the town centre?

Question 40:

Should mixed-use development be encouraged within the town centre core and the wider Area Action Plan area?

Question 41:

Do you think that the Primary Shopping Area (Retail Core) boundary and its primary and secondary frontages should be extended to include other parts of the town centre located inside the ring road? If so, which areas would you suggest are included and why. (Primary Shopping Area and Secondary frontages – see Glossary section).





(Photograph 8 – View of the Crown Centre, Stourbridge Town Centre. View looking west from Coventry Street. Date photograph taken: 20/08/2009)



(Photograph 9 – View of Lower High Street, Stourbridge Town Centre. View looking north-west. Date photograph taken: 20/08/2009)



(Photograph 10 – View of Market Street, Stourbridge Town Centre. View looking north. Date photograph taken: 20/08/2009)

Retail technical evidence base:

- Dudley Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted October 2005)
- Various Centres and Retail technical evidence completed to support Dudley Council's Adopted UDP (2005)
- Black Country Centres and Retail Study (November 2009) prepared as part of the technical evidence to support the emerging Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS).
- Emerging Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Publication Stage document (November 2009).

## **Economic Regeneration**

### **Background:**

- 5.82 Stourbridge town centre is very important to the local community as it provides a place to access local services, shop, and is important for local business and commerce. The town like many other similar centres has been responding to maintain its vitality and to adapt to retail trends. Stourbridge still has many of the attributes of a thriving market town, but it is also the place for education, to live and for evening entertainment. Diversification of function brings challenges and potential conflicts, as well as commercial benefit, but these can be managed.
- 5.83 Assets and weaknesses are evident in equal measure within the town and need to be exploited and tackled in turn. More importantly there are major opportunities for new investment once the economic situation begins to improve and if planned and integrated properly, this will give a huge boost to the town and deliver some of the solutions to its problems.
- 5.84 The visitor experience needs to be improved in order to attract more footfall and businesses to support the vitality and viability of the town. The main issues being the severance effect caused by the Ring Road, the excessive traffic intrusion on High Street and Market Street combined with high levels of roadside car parking and narrow pavement widths reducing the pedestrian experience. Poor quality public car parking provision and the lack of room for the centre to grow and develop. The town centre has suffered in recent years from the uncertainty created by a number of stalled development proposals at Angel Passage and the Crown Centre which has added to the poor image of the town with vacant and boarded up properties. This uncertainty needs to be lifted and progress with regeneration of the town taken forward positively

### **Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:**

- Night time evening economy at weekends. Importance to the vitality of the town centre and as a important financial revenue stream.
- Loss of a significant number of retail units from the Crown Centre which has affected the wider town centre in terms of the visitor experience and the town centre vitality and viability
- Character of the town centre, dominated by local, family owned, small independent traders.
- Need to ensure that family-owned, small independent traders are supported.

- Limited supply of good quality office accommodation. This dearth of supply is due in part to the location of Stourbridge and also due to the constraints of the town centre.
- Majority of the office space which is available is occupied by professional firms often in converted Victorian houses. The majority of these properties have small floor plates which limits the type of occupier which can be accommodated.
- Arts based background needs to be exploited.
- Need to identify a modern, up-to-date and relevant vision for the town centre.
- Quality of the Town Centre environment needs to be enhanced and improved in order to attract more shoppers to support town centre vitality and viability.
- Strong small independent traders in town playing a key role in the centre.

### Economic Regeneration specific questions

#### Question 42:

Do you agree with the list of main economic regeneration issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been missed. If so, what issues?

## **Economic Regeneration Options:**

### **Local traders and small independent shops:**

#### **Option ER56 – Support local traders and small independent shops.**

5.85 Local traders are important to the special character and identity of the town centre. This option will provide an environment which encourages small independent traders within the town centre in order to support economic regeneration within the town centre by ensuring that there is appropriate space for businesses to operate.

### **Public Realm enhancements:**

#### **Option ER57 – Public realm enhancements to support economic regeneration.**

- 5.86 Use public realm enhancements such as use of new high quality public art, improvements to the pedestrian environment within the core of the town centre (e.g. pathway surfacing improvements) to support economic regeneration. Key objectives being to attract more shoppers to the town centre to support town centre vitality and viability and help make the town a more attractive place for businesses to locate (help attract inward investment to support economic regeneration).

**Option ER58 – Status Quo.**

- 5.87 Do not introduce public realm enhancements.

**Job creation opportunities:**

**Option ER59 – Mixed use developments to promote local job creation.**

- 5.88 Identify opportunity sites within and on the edge of the town centre that can support local job creation and stimulate vitality by promoting mixed use developments in parts of the town centre. For example, mixed office and retail floor space on the ground floor with office and residential accommodation on the upper floors.

**Questions specifically related to Economic Regeneration options:**

**Question 43:**

Do you think we have captured all the options for economic regeneration?

**Question 44:**

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for economic regeneration?

**Question 45:**

A number of options are discussed in the 'Transport Options' section in relation to improving the accessibility of the town centre (partial pedestrianisation) for pedestrians and cyclists and the need to break the collar of the ring road. Do you think these improvements are necessary and will help to secure the future economic regeneration of the town centre?

**Question 46:**

Would introducing new public realm enhancements (new public art, improving pedestrian access, etc) have a beneficial impact in supporting economic regeneration? Or should we focus and prioritise on other issues. If so, what other priorities within the town centre should we be focusing on?

Economic Regeneration technical evidence base:

- Dudley Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted October 2005)
- David Lock's Planning Consultants draft Stourbridge AAP Issues and Options report (February 2006)

## **Landscape**

Background:

5.89 Within the town centre core (inside the ring road), the urban grain is heavily urbanised. There is no significant area of public open space. There are small squares at the entrance to and within the Ryemarket and within the Crown Centre and a very modest green space associated with St Thomas's Church yard. The natural, and indeed historic, gathering place is the space associated with the clock tower. This tends to be the preferred location for outdoor events (such as markets and festivals). The space is however physically constrained and could be enhanced to better reflect civic pride and function.

Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:

- Town centre is compact and heavily urbanised, very limited urban green space currently present to break up the built urban form within the heart of the town centre.
- There is no communal green space (public open space) area for pedestrians to go and relax within the Town Centre. At the moment students and other pedestrians use St. Thomas's churchyard within the town Centre as a communal green space area.
- Shortage of outdoor children's play space/ facilities within the AAP boundary.
- Limited opportunities to create new public green space within the town centre (inside the ring road) given the town centres compact and heavily urbanised character. There are limited sites available to accommodate new green space.

- Deciduous tree cover limited within the AAP area primarily as a result of the areas urbanised character.

### Landscape specific questions

#### Question 47:

Do you think we have captured all the issues relating to landscape?

#### Question 48:

Do you agree with the list of main landscape issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been missed?

## **Landscape Options:**

### **Explore the possibility of creating a new small pocket park (public green space) within the town centre:**

#### **Option LSC60 – Identify a site to create a new public open space (green space) (small pocket park) area within the town centre**

5.90 There is currently a shortage of public green space within the heart of the town centre (inside the ring road). The only area available at present is the St. Thomas's Churchyard. This option therefore proposes to explore the potential of creating a new public green space area (small pocket park) within the town centre for the benefit of visitors, shoppers, students and residents to go and relax. (This is a difficult option as there are very limited opportunity sites available within the town centre core (inside the ring road) for reasons already stated above. However, this option needs to be explored given the current shortage of green space within the town centre).

#### **Option LSC61 – Identify a site to create a new public open space (green space) (small pocket park) outside of the town centre**



- 5.91 Explore the potential of creating a new public green space area (small pocket park) outside of the town centre (outside the ring road) possibly within a major redevelopment opportunity site.

**Children's outdoor play space (equipped children's play area):**

**Option LSC62 – Identify a site to create new outdoor children's play space.**

- 5.92 There is currently a shortage of outdoor children's play space within the Area Action Plan boundary. This option therefore proposes to explore the potential of creating new outdoor children's play space either within the town centre or outside the town centre on one of the opportunity sites bordering the ring road.

**Option LSC63 – Status Quo**

- 5.93 Do not introduce any new outdoor children's play space or a new pocket park within the Area Action Plan boundary.

**Encourage new Green Space provision within major redevelopment proposals:**

**Option LSC64 – New green space provision.**

- 5.94 Encourage the provision of new green space areas (including green landscaping and public open space) within major new-build redevelopment proposals within the Area Action Plan area.

**Option LSC65 – Status Quo**

- 5.95 Do not encourage the provision of any new green space provision within major new-build developments.

**Questions specifically related to Landscape Options:**

**Question 49:**

Do you think we have captured all the options for landscape?

Question 50:

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for landscape?

Question 51:

Will encouraging new green space provision (including green landscaping and public open space) within major new-build redevelopment proposals within the Area Action Plan area help improve the local environment and improve the image and identity of the town? Do you think that including new green space is important and should be encouraged?

Question 52:

Would you like to see more outdoor children's play space (equipped children's play areas) within the Stourbridge Area Action Plan area?

Landscape technical evidence base:

- Dudley Council's emerging draft Strategic Housing Land availability Assessment (SHLAA) (Draft January 2010)
- Dudley Council's adopted Parks and Green Space Strategy (PPG17 Audit) (adopted June 2009).
- Dudley Council's Stourbridge Urban Design Departments Options Report (January 2010)
- Dudley Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted October 2005)



(Photograph 11 – View of the St. Thomas's churchyard, Stourbridge Town Centre. View looking north from Market Street. Date photograph taken: 20/08/2009)

## **Housing**

### **Background:**

- 5.96 Many town centre sites are constrained in size and often have multiple ownerships. There is limited opportunity therefore to provide significant numbers of new housing development within the town centre, particularly larger family homes which is one of the housing needs within the Dudley Borough.
- 5.97 Within the town centre area there is opportunity to accommodate residential uses (flatted development) on upper floors above ground floor commercial uses. Town centre living and mixed uses both add to the vitality and viability of the centre throughout the day and through the evening and they also create additional opportunities for natural surveillance i.e. people looking out of their living rooms onto the streetscene.
- 5.98 Delivering sufficient levels of affordable housing is a key issue for the AAP. Main opportunities for delivering significant levels of affordable housing exist outside the town centre on land areas bordering Stourbridge Ring Road such as existing employment areas and within other opportunity sites located on the edge of Stourbridge Ring Road.

### **Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:**

- Need to incorporate housing in the centre to cater for all needs.
- Consider living above shop opportunities in the centre and opportunity sites in the town centre for residential use.
- Consider using land outside the ring road for housing and improving linkages into the town centre.
- Having residential uses in the centre will allow greater footfall in the centre to help improve vitality of the centre.
- There is a defined need for Extra Care Housing in the Stourbridge area locating a facility such as this close to existing services would be beneficial to users and contribute to sustainable development.

### **Housing specific questions:**

**Question 53:**

Do you think we have captured all the issues relating to housing?

**Question 54:**

Do you agree with the list of main housing issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been missed?

## **Housing Options:**

### **High quality new homes:**

#### **Option HOU66 – Delivering good quality new homes**

- 5.99 Homes will be provided that are high quality in a range of types and tenures. New homes should be built alongside employment, leisure and open spaces to create a pleasant and safe environment.

### **Sites for new housing:**

#### **Option HOU67 – New housing in the Stourbridge Area Action Plan area.**

- 5.100 A number of potential sites for new homes (major new housing sites) are listed within the 'Potential Major Opportunity Sites and Development Options' section of this document. Do you think that these sites are suitable for a significant amount of new housing development?

### **Specialist Housing:**

#### **Option HOU68 – New Extra Care Housing facility to meet the housing needs of older people and other vulnerable groups.**

- 5.101 The Council's Housing Strategy Section is looking to identify suitable sites for new Extra Care Housing schemes in suitable locations across the Dudley Borough to help meet the future needs of an increasingly elderly borough population. Do you think that there are suitable sites

available within the Stourbridge AAP area for this type of development?  
Do you consider that this option should be pursued within the Stourbridge AAP area.

(Footnote: 'Extra Care Housing' is explained in the Glossary of terms section within the Appendix to this document).

**Questions specifically related to Housing Options:**

**Question 55:**

Do you think we have captured all the options for housing?

**Question 56:**

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for housing?

**Question 57:**

Should new housing development incorporate nature conservation and biodiversity features integrated into new developments? For example, bat boxes and bird hole nest boxes located on the external walls of buildings, biodiversity friendly green landscaping around buildings, etc.

**Question 58:**

Do you think that new housing development should be encouraged within the town centre core (inside the ring road)? If yes, where could new homes be provided?

**Housing technical evidence base:**

- Dudley Council's Housing Needs and Demand Study (adopted 2006)
- Dudley Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted June 2006)
- Dudley Council's New Housing Development SPD (adopted June 2007)
- Dudley Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted October 2005)
- Dudley Council's emerging draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (draft 2009)
- Local housing waiting lists for Stourbridge.

## **Industry/ Employment land**

### **Background:**

5.102 Stourbridge has a proud and very important history particularly the associations with the glass industry. The cluster of historic buildings and structures associated with the Stourbridge Branch Canal is quite a remarkable legacy to have so close to the town centre. This area around Canal Street and Old Wharf Road is in need of sensitive and sympathetic regeneration to celebrate this areas industrial past.

5.103 The term employment use, when considered through the Local Development Framework (LDF), relates purely to the “B” class uses which are defined in the Use Class Order 2005. There are three sub-sections of this use class, and these are as follows:

- B1: Business:
  - (a) Offices other than in use within Class A2 (Financial and Professional)
  - (b) Research and Development – Laboratories, Studios
  - (c) Light industry
- B2: General Industrial – Other than as classified in B1
- B8: Storage and distribution – Storage and Distribution centres – Wholesale Warehouses, Distribution Centres and Repositories.

5.104 All other employment generating uses do not fall within the definition of ‘employment space’ for the purpose of preparing the LDF.

5.105 There are currently two main sites within the Stourbridge Area Action Plan area which contains the B1 – B8 business uses listed above. These are located at the Mill Race Lane Trading Estate located to the north-east of the town centre. This area contains relatively modern warehouse style industrial buildings containing a mix of industrial uses and some leisure uses. The second area is located at Old Wharf Road/ Lowndes Road to the north of the town centre. This area contains mixed light and heavy industrial uses and suffers from out-dated former factory premises. There is also cleared industrial land awaiting redevelopment in this area.

5.106 Within the Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS) draft ‘Publication Stage document’ (November 2009), on page 107, the Stourbridge area falls inside Regeneration Corridor 11b (Brierley Hill – Stourbridge). Regeneration Corridor 11b promotes new housing growth within existing industrial areas (employment land) located north of the town centre (including the Canal Street/ Lowndes Road and Old Wharf Road areas). Mixed use development comprising local employment retention

and new housing growth is promoted within the adjacent Mill Race Lane Trading Estate. Regeneration Corridor 11b also reinforces the importance of strengthening the existing wildlife corridor along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal network.

Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:

- Older run down industrial areas around Lowndes Road/ Bradley Road which can help regenerate the town centre and create better linkages to the centre.
- Mill Race Lane has witnessed a move from pure B1, B2 and B8 uses to other uses in recent years.
- Need for space for local small medium enterprises and incubation space.
- Need to provide for the arts based industries to support education sector in the town.
- Strong education sector in the town (good schools and colleges) – Employment opportunities should be promoted to link to colleges.

Industry/ employment land specific questions:

Question 59:

Do you think we have captured all the issues relating to industry/ employment land?

## **Industry/ Employment land Options:**

### **Mill Race Lane Trading Estate:**

**Option IND69 – Allow some mixed-use residential development and retain some industrial employment uses**

5.107 This option will allow some mixed-use development within the Mill Race Lane Trading Estate comprising local employment 'retention' growth.

**Option IND70 – Retain a mix of industrial uses – Status Quo**

5.108 Mill Race Lane Trading Estate will remain the focus for B1 (light industry), B2 and B8 businesses use and will be strict about change of use to other uses.



**Option IND71 – Redevelop the site**

- 5.109 Redevelop the site to ensure some employment opportunity, whilst also ensuring that the regeneration potential of residential development can be seen.

**Older employment areas located at Old Wharf Road and Lowndes Road:**

**Option IND72 – Retain a mix of industrial uses at this location**

- 5.110 Industrial areas at Old Wharf Road and Lowndes Road will remain the focus for B1 (light industry), B2 and B8 business use.

**Option IND73 – Redevelop entire industrial estate for new-build housing**

- 5.111 Remove existing light and heavy industrial uses and redevelop entire Old Wharf Road and Lowndes Road for new housing development.

**Office uses:**

**Option IND74 – New office uses within the town centre.**

- 5.112 Encourage new office development (modern high quality office space) of an appropriate scale compatible with the non-strategic town centre location in suitable locations inside the town centre (inside the ring road) and in edge-of-centre locations. Key objectives being to provide a mixed-use environment to help attract inward investment, provide local jobs, and stimulate vitality and viability of the adjacent town centre.

**Option IND75 – Mixed-use development of larger existing office premises.**

- 5.113 Redevelop some larger existing office premises located within the town centre (inside the ring road) and in edge-of-centre locations with new mixed-use development comprising new high quality modern office space (of an appropriate scale compatible with the non-strategic town centre location) and new housing to stimulate the vitality and viability of the town centre, provide local jobs and help attract inward investment.

**Option IND76 – Small scale office accommodation above existing shops.**

- 5.114 Encourage small-scale new office space on upper floors above existing shops within the town centre core.

**Questions specifically related to Industry/ employment Options:**

Question 60:

Do you think we have captured all the options for industry/ employment land?

Question 61:

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for industry/ employment land?

Question 62:

Do you think emphasis should be on supporting manufacturing based jobs or should our emphasis be on offices?

Question 63:

A number of potential sites for new office development are discussed in the "Potential Opportunity Sites and Development Options" section of this paper. Do you think that these sites within the Area Action Plan boundary are suitable for new office development?

Employment land technical evidence base:

- Dudley Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted October 2005).
- Black Country Employment Land Capacity Report (May 2005) completed by GVA Grimley Planning Consultants.
- Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Employment Land Review (February 2008) completed by GVA Grimley.
- Black Country JCS Assessment of Employment Sites (November 2009) completed by GVA Grimley.

## **Arts/ Education/ tourism and creative industries:**

### **Background:**

5.115 Stourbridge has a long and successful image associated with arts and creative industries, not least glassmaking. Stourbridge's colleges and schools play an important part in the unique role of the town and its ability to adapt to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:**

- Stourbridge has a long history of creative industries.
- Artistic population has a high demand for space and premises to exhibit, perform, record and create visual art.
- Tourism can play a large part in the towns economic growth – canalside location and its facilities should be exploited and links to town centre should be improved.
- Current limited hotel provision to cater for tourism needs.

### **Arts/ creative industries/ education/ tourism specific questions:**

#### **Question 64:**

Do you think we have captured all the issues relating to arts/ tourism/ creative industries?

#### **Question 65:**

Do you agree with the list of main arts/ tourism/ creative industries issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been missed. If so, what issues?

## **Arts/ Education/ Tourism and Creative Industries Options:**

### **Education and student economy:**

#### **Option ART77 – Strengthen the student economy**

- 5.116 This option proposes to build on and strengthen the student economy within the town centre. This could include in appropriate locations encouraging more internet cafes within the town centre to support students, encourage further bars, restaurants in appropriate locations and coffee shops within the town centre and strengthening links to the creative industries and arts sector.

### **Creative arts:**

#### **Option ART78 – Exploit creative arts economy**

- 5.117 Identify suitable sites within the AAP area to locate incubator units/ studios for local artists to use. Identify space for performance arts facilities (musicians and actors) facilities and meeting places for local performance arts.

#### **Option ART79 – Display space for visual arts**

- 5.118 Use vacant shop premises within the core of the town centre to display and promote local visual arts (including glass industry art and paintings from local artists). Visual art could be displayed on a temporary basis within shop windows whilst the shop premises remain empty (vacant) to help support and encourage local artists, and to create interest and add vitality to the street scene.

### **Public realm enhancements:**

#### **Option ART80 – New public art enhancements**

- 5.119 Introduce new high quality and innovative public art within the AAP area to celebrate the Stourbridge areas arts history. This could include new high quality sculptures which celebrate the areas glass making history within town centre public realm areas, within major opportunity sites on the edge of the town centre and along main gateway routes leading into the AAP area in order to strengthen links to the nearby Glass Quarter area. (Public realm – See Glossary of terms).

**Option ART81 – Status Quo.**

5.120 Do not introduce any public art enhancements within the public realm.

**Tourism enhancements:**

**Option ART82 – New hotel accommodation**

5.121 Existing hotel accommodation is currently very limited within and on the edge of the town centre. In order to promote local tourism, this option will explore providing new hotel accommodation of an appropriate scale compatible with the non-strategic town centre, within the Mill Race Lane or Angel Passage major opportunity sites. New hotel accommodation could also help support local businesses and help encourage inward investment.

**Option ART83 – Promote canal-based tourism**

5.122 Enhance the Stourbridge Branch canal network at Canal Street (north of the town centre) to enhance this areas canal-based tourism potential. This option could include public realm enhancements adjacent to the canal, where appropriate introduce additional moorings space specifically for tourists and promoting canal-based tourism in this area. Pedestrian and cyclist linkages from the canal area to the core of the town centre along High Street would also be improved (to break the severance effect of the ring road on this area) to encourage more canal boat tourists to visit the town centre to increase income from tourists to support town centre vitality and viability.

**Questions specifically related to arts/ creative industries/ education/ tourism Options:**

**Question 66:**

Do you think we have captured all the options for arts/ tourism/ creative industries? Are there any arts based issues and options which we have overlooked or which are missing?

**Question 67:**

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for arts/ tourism/ creative industries?

Question 68:

Do you think the town recognises and celebrates its industrial and manufacturing heritage as much as it should?

Question 69:

Could the use of public art help to celebrate this heritage further?

Question 70:

A number of options in relation to the night time economy (bars and restaurants) within the town centre are considered under the 'Retail Options' section of this paper. Do you think that the night time economy has an important role to play in helping support local tourism, economic regeneration and the vitality and viability of the town centre? Should the night time economy be encouraged?

Question 71:

Do you think that the Stourbridge AAP area is an appropriate location for a new hotel development?

Question 72:

What other facilities do you think would help to increase visitor numbers to the town?

Arts/education and creative industries existing technical evidence base:

- Dudley Council's Glass Quarter Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted December 2009)
- Dudley Council's Historic Environment SPD (adopted September 2006)
- Dudley Council's Adopted UDP (adopted October 2005)

## **Green open space (Green Infrastructure) and nature conservation**

### **Background:**

- 5.123 The main existing green infrastructure is located on the northern edge of Stourbridge Town Centre (north of Stourbridge Ring Road) along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal corridors. This area provides an important green corridor or green lung within the heart of the urban area allowing the movement of wildlife species between habitats. It also provides an important outdoor recreational resource for local residents providing a relaxing green space environment for walking and cycling, particularly along the Stourbridge Branch Canal towpaths. This area faces some significant challenges.
- 5.124 There is a lack of green space within Stourbridge Town Centre (within the inner Ring Road). This is primarily as a result of the areas urbanised character. There is currently no public green space within the Town Centre where pedestrians can go and relax.
- 5.125 Findings from Dudley Council's Parks and Green Space Strategy (PPG17 Audit) (adopted June 2009) indicate that Stourbridge Committee Area has the least amount of urban green space provision in comparison to all other Committee Areas. Evidence from the Audit reveals that large parts of the Stourbridge Committee Area have no coverage to both publicly accessible urban green space and accessible natural and semi-natural green space. (Parks and Green Space Strategy is explained in the Glossary of Terms and the Policy Context within the Appendix to this document).

### **Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:**

- Majority of green space in the town is located along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal green corridor.
- Need to improve existing wildlife corridors/ nature conservation habitat.
- Protect and improve the Geodiversity of the area (Geodiversity is explained in the Glossary of Terms Section within the Appendix)
- Improve outdoor recreational amenity use along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal corridors.
- The level of street trees/ soft landscaping needs to be improved within the AAP area.
- Recognise importance of using green space to help reduce flood risk and the effects of the urban heat island.
- Development can improve environmental structure of the area.
- Green spaces can help to improve healthier lifestyles and promote more sustainable living opportunities.



Green infrastructure and nature conservation specific questions:

Question 73:

Do you think we have captured all the issues relating to green infrastructure and nature conservation?

Question 74:

Do you agree with the list of main green infrastructure and nature conservation issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been missed? If so, what issues?

**Green open space (Green Infrastructure) and nature conservation Options:**

**Enhancing the green corridor (green infrastructure) along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal corridors:**

**Option GRE84 – Introduce outdoor recreational improvements only.**

5.126 Improve and enhance the outdoor informal recreational offer of urban green space located along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal corridors. This option will only introduce outdoor recreational improvements such as new or improved public footpaths to improve pedestrian access and enhance this areas potential for walkers and cyclists, inclusion of new landscaping to enhance the attractiveness of this area, new benches to provide areas for people to relax and enjoy the waterside environment. Including some new equipped children's play areas in safe and appropriate locations could also be explored. New external flood lighting to serve play areas would not be encouraged in this location as this could harm this areas sensitive nature conservation interest and damage this areas important continued role as a wildlife corridor. This option will not introduce any nature conservation enhancements to this area. Outdoor recreational improvements will be prioritised above all other issues.

**Option GRE85 – Introduce nature conservation (wildlife habitat) improvements only.**

- 5.127 The River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal corridors present a significant opportunity in terms of natural green space provision and potential biodiversity enhancement. This option will therefore improve and enhance the nature conservation (wildlife habitat value) along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal corridors. This option will only introduce nature conservation improvements such as protecting and improving areas of existing deciduous woodland and river bank wetland habitat, protecting and improving canal edge wetland habitat, including new green landscaping with locally occurring indigenous plant species to improve biodiversity and strengthen this areas wildlife corridor value.
- 5.128 This option will also encourage building in new wildlife features into the built environment along the Stour corridor and where possible de-culverting currently covered (covered by concrete and built development) parts of the River Stour corridor. This option will not introduce any outdoor recreational improvements to this area. Nature conservation (wildlife habitats) enhancements will take priority above all other issues.

**Option GRE86 – Introduce both outdoor recreation and nature conservation improvements.**

- 5.129 Introduce and encourage improvements to both natural green space (wildlife habitat) and also introduce outdoor recreational improvements which remain sensitive to this areas nature conservation interest.
- 5.130 The types of natural green space improvements (wildlife habitat improvements) and outdoor recreational improvements could include those as already suggested above. Key objectives of this option are to carefully balance the needs of nature conservation against the needs for outdoor recreation for local residents and visitors to this area, and also to create an outdoor study classroom where residents can study nature conservation close to home.

**Improve pedestrian and cyclist linkages from the Stourbridge Branch Canal/ River Stour to the core of the town centre:**

**Option GRE87 – Strengthen pedestrian/ cyclist linkages.**

- 5.131 Green infrastructure is not currently well integrated into the primary pedestrian network of the town centre. This option will therefore improve pedestrian and cyclist linkages from the Stourbridge Branch Canal network and River Stour to the High Street (within the town centre core). Improving access to the canal green space environment from the core of the town centre will help to encourage healthy lifestyles (walking/cycling – physical exercise), help remove reliance on

car-borne travel journeys, and encourage canal boat tourists and boat residents to visit the town centre to support town centre vitality and viability.

**Option GRE88 – Status Quo.**

- 5.132 Do not improve pedestrian and cyclist linkages from the Stourbridge Branch Canal network/ River Stour to the core of the town centre (along High Street).



Photograph 12 - View of Stourbridge Branch Canal adjacent to the former Stourbridge Rolling Mills site. View looking west. Date photograph taken: 25/08/2009



Photograph 13 - View of River Stour network. View looking east towards High Street bridge. Location closely bordering the Bonded Warehouse. Date photograph taken: 25/08/2009



Photograph 14 - View showing a culverted section of the River Stour corridor located within Mill Race Lane Trading Estate. View looking west looking towards High Street bridge. Date photograph taken: 25/01/2010

**Questions specifically related to Green Infrastructure and Nature Conservation Options:**

**Question 75:**

Do you think we have captured all the options for green infrastructure and nature conservation?

**Question 76:**

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for green infrastructure and nature conservation?

**Question 77:**

Is there a need to improve pedestrian and cyclist links to green spaces and the waterside natural environment along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal corridors within the AAP area? Is there a need to improve pedestrian and cyclist linkages from these green corridors to the town centre core (along High Street)?

Question 78:

Where it is practical and possible to do so, would de-culverting currently covered parts of the River Stour corridor help improve local environmental quality?

Question 79:

Should nature conservation improvements be given priority over outdoor recreational improvements along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal corridors?

Question 80:

What type of new outdoor recreational improvements would you like to see included along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal corridors? What should our main priorities be?

Green infrastructure and nature conservation technical evidence base:

- Dudley Council's adopted Parks and Green Space Strategy (PPG17 Audit) (adopted June 2009)
- Dudley Council's adopted Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted September 2006)
- Dudley Council's adopted Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision SPD (adopted June 2007)
- Black Country Environmental Infrastructure Guidance (EIG) Phase 1 (2009)
- Habitat Survey of Dudley Borough (1996)
- Dudley Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted October 2005)
- Dudley Council's Planning Obligations SPD (adopted March 2009)
- Birmingham and The Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan – A Framework for Action (July 2000)
- Draft review Birmingham and The Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan (draft 2009)
- Black Country Geodiversity Action Plan (2006)
- Emerging Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS) – Draft “Publication Stage” Report (November 2009)
- Emerging Black Country Environmental Infrastructure Guidance (EIG) Phase 2

## **Climate Change**

### **Background:**

- 5.133 The Area Action Plan presents an opportunity to take an approach to the transformation of Stourbridge that will address the causes and consequences of climate change and that will promote more sustainable forms of development.
- 5.134 The approach that this Area Action Plan will take to climate change will have to conform to climate change policies arising in the national policy, regional policy and the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for the Black Country. The strategy for Stourbridge as a whole should help to address climate change, for example by encouraging more sustainable modes of travel and therefore reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality within the heart of the town centre (inside the ring road) and the immediately surrounding urban area, by seeking to improve biodiversity and environmental assets along the River Stour corridor and Stourbridge Branch Canal network, and by promoting climate aware urban design and energy efficiency in new buildings. There is however an opportunity to consider whether there are any specific measures or approaches to renewable energy generation, minimising flood risk that would be particularly appropriate within the Stourbridge AAP area.

### **Key issues raised from early consultation and evidence gathered:**

- Balancing the needs of urban regeneration against the need to reduce flood risk and carbon emissions within the AAP area.
- Heavily urbanised character of the Stourbridge Town Centre and surrounding urban environment. Contribution to the urban heat island effect - lack of green space.
- Need to reduce reliance on private car-borne travel journeys and do more to encourage more environmentally sustainable forms of transport such as increasing use of public transport, cycling and walking in order to reduce carbon emissions.
- Poor pedestrian and cyclist linkages/ access into the town centre.
- Damaged and broken green open space (green infrastructure) linkages. For example, culverted parts of the River Stour corridor. Biodiversity movement restricted as a result.
- Shortage of mature deciduous trees within AAP area (street trees).
- Flood Risk pressures connected to the River Stour.
- Lack of sustainable urban drainage opportunities within the AAP boundary given the areas heavily urbanised character. Area dominated by typical impermeable urban surfaces such as concrete and asphalt.

- Need to encourage sustainable design and environmentally friendly new built developments incorporating renewable energy technologies (solar power, etc), energy efficient buildings.
- Lack of renewable energy technologies and energy efficient construction standards present within the existing building stock.
- The level of vehicular traffic congestion within the town centre.

Climate change specific questions:

Question 81:

Do you think we have captured all the issues relating to climate change?

Question 82:

Do you agree with the list of main climate change issues identified above? If not, what issues do you disagree with and why? Have any key issues been missed. If so, what issues?

## **Climate Change Options:**

### **Promote more environmentally sustainable forms of transport in order to help reduce carbon emissions (CO2 emissions):**

#### **Option CC89 – Introduce measures to help promote walking and cycling and promote use of public transport**

- 5.135 Motor vehicles are responsible for a significant level of emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). Motor vehicle emissions will continue to increase as more vehicles use the roads and the number of miles driven grows. The need to promote more environmentally friendly alternatives such as walking, cycling or use of public transport is therefore important.
- 5.136 This option proposes to promote measures which encourage more sustainable travel journeys such as walking and cycling and encourage further use of public transport. Key objectives being to help reduce the amount of carbon emissions (CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) caused by cars and other vehicular traffic movements within the Area Action Plan boundary. Measures to improve, strengthen and enhance pedestrian and cyclist linkages and promote use of public transport will be



encouraged.

**Option CC90 – Status Quo.**

5.137 Do not encourage more sustainable travel journeys.

**Using green open space (green infrastructure) to assist urban cooling:**

**Option CC91 – Protect areas of existing green space and introduce new green space as part of major new developments to help assist urban cooling.**

5.138 Protect existing green infrastructure (green open space) and seek out new opportunities to create new pockets of urban green space as part of major redevelopment proposals within the AAP boundary to help assist urban cooling (reduce the effects of the urban heat island).

(Footnote: The term 'Urban heat island and urban cooling' is explained in the Glossary of terms section within the Appendix to this document).

**Option CC92 – Plant more deciduous trees (locally occurring tree species)**

5.139 There is limited existing tree cover and urban woodland within the AAP boundary given the areas urbanised character. Trees are important as mature tree canopies can help to make urban environments pleasantly cooler during hot summer months by providing increased shading opportunities and by helping to release moisture into the air which produces a cooling effect (beneficial for urban cooling). This will become increasingly important in future years as the summers become hotter and drier as a result of future climate change. Trees can also help absorb air pollution and improve air quality and help reduce flood risk.

5.140 This option therefore proposes to seek out opportunities, where possible, to increase the amount of deciduous tree cover within the AAP boundary in order to assist urban cooling and reduce the AAP areas contribution to the urban heat island effect.

**Option CC93 – Status Quo**

5.141 Do not encourage new tree planting. Do not protect and create new pockets of urban green space within the AAP boundary.

**Reducing Flood Risk:**

**Option CC94 – Encourage Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to reduce flood risk.**

- 5.142 Encourage Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) within major redevelopment proposals in order to reduce surface water run-off. This should be considered in conjunction with the capacity of the receiving sewers to ensure that containment during exceptional rainfall is controlled. Developers will be encouraged to investigate measures which could be practicably applied within those receiving areas. It is anticipated that greater opportunities may exist within areas of major redevelopment along the River Stour corridor on the northern edge of the AAP boundary. The River Stour corridor falls within a designated flood risk area.
- 5.143 Urban green spaces can help reduce flood risk from localised flash flooding caused by intense rainfall by slowing down the rate at which rainfall runs off land into watercourses and sewers. Green spaces within built up areas can absorb and retain more water than typical urban surfaces such as concrete and asphalt. Opportunities to use existing and new urban green space (green infrastructure) and, where possible, minimising the amount of unnecessary hard impermeable surfaces (such as concrete and asphalt) within major redevelopment sites to help reduce flood risk will also therefore be explored within this option. Again, this is particularly relevant along stretches of the River Stour corridor.

**Option CC95 – Status Quo.**

- 5.144 Do not encourage Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) or other flood risk reduction measures within the AAP area.

**Improving the energy efficiency of new buildings:**

**Option CC96 – Energy efficient new housing development**

- 5.145 Evidence from the Energy Savings Trust (UK) suggests that more than 40% of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions actually come from energy we use every day - at home and when we travel. To generate that energy, we burn fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) that produce greenhouse gases - in particular carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Car emissions are a huge problem but the majority of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from the energy we use at home. The average household creates around five and a half tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year, and it's that same CO<sub>2</sub> that's changing our climate and damaging the environment.
- 5.146 New housing developments should comply to the provisions of the current Building Regulations. The Code for Sustainable Homes is

currently a voluntary aspiration by the Government. Compliance to current Building Regulations falls short of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 1.

- 5.147 This option proposes to encourage developers of new-build housing developments of 10 houses or more to build to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 2 within the AAP boundary (e.g. exceed current building regulation standards).

**Option CC97 – Status Quo**

- 5.148 This option will not encourage housing developers of 10 dwellings or more to build to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 2. Developments will be expected to meet current Building Regulation standards. Essentially, this option proposes to keep things as they are.

**Option CC98 – Encourage renewable energy technologies in major new developments**

- 5.149 This option will encourage the inclusion of renewable energy generation technologies within major new-build redevelopment proposals (including developments of 10 houses or more) within the AAP boundary. For example, the inclusion of small-scale wind power turbines (micro wind turbines) or solar energy panels on a proportion of new buildings to help reduce carbon emissions and increase the sustainability of new development.

**Option CC99 – Status Quo**

- 5.150 Do not encourage renewable energy generation technologies within new major redevelopment proposals.

**Green roofs and green external walls within major redevelopment proposals:**

**Option CC100 – Include a proportion of green roofs and green walls within major redevelopment proposals within the AAP area.**

- 5.151 Where possible and practical, this option will explore including green roofs and green external walls (see glossary of terms for further explanation) on a proportion of new buildings within major redevelopment proposals within the AAP area. Key objectives of this option are to use green roofs and green walls to help reduce flood risk (sustainable urban drainage), provide a habitat for some species of

wildlife (e.g. some bird species and airbourne insects), and use the vegetation found on green roofs and green walls to assist urban cooling (reduce the effect of the urban heat island).

(Footnote: Urban Heat Island / urban cooling is explained in the glossary of terms section within the Appendix to this document).

### **Option CC101 – Status Quo**

5.152 This option will not encourage green roofs or green walls within major redevelopment proposals within the AAP area.

### **Questions specifically related to Climate Change Options:**

#### **Question 83:**

Do you think we have captured all the options for climate change?

#### **Question 84:**

Which of the options, or combination of options, do you prefer? Are there any other options for climate change?

#### **Question 85:**

Are there any particular approaches to renewable energy that would be appropriate or inappropriate to use within the Stourbridge AAP area (e.g. including small scale wind turbines or solar panels on a proportion of new buildings within major redevelopment proposals)?

#### **Question 86:**

If more new built development (including major housing redevelopment) is to occur within the AAP area, should a proportion of these new buildings incorporate climate change mitigation measures such as solar panels, small scale wind turbines, higher level building insulation standards within loft spaces and cavity walls (energy efficient construction), sustainable urban drainage (flood risk reduction measures), etc?

#### **Question 87:**

Do you think that there is a need to ensure that new development within the AAP area incorporates measures to address the issue of flood risk and climate change?

Question 88:

Do you think that there is a need to ensure that new development within the AAP area is as environmentally responsible as is practicable?

Question 89:

Below is a list of possible green infrastructure elements. Are there any missing from the list? Which elements would you like to see developed in the Stourbridge AAP area and where? (Please refer to glossary for explanations)

- a. wildlife corridors
- b. sustainable drainage systems
- c. wildlife friendly landscaping and street trees.
- d. Wildlife roofs (green roofs) and walls
- e. Historical characteristics preserved
- f. Increased levels of public open space
- g. Integrated cycleways and footpaths.

Waste Management

- 5.153 Better management of waste can significantly reduce emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. Using waste hierarchy principles, waste materials can be turned into a valuable resource reducing the need for increasing extraction of raw materials and fossil fuels.
- 5.154 National policy and the emerging Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country encourage recycling, a move towards more sustainable waste management and greater protection to the environment. All the planning decisions about waste management within Stourbridge will be taken in accordance with the policies and strategies set out in the Joint Core Strategy for the Black Country.
- 5.155 Nevertheless, it is envisaged that there will be a lot of regeneration taking place in Stourbridge in the forthcoming years and this will provide opportunities and threats to the way waste is managed. Particular challenges for Stourbridge relate to the management of construction and demolition waste in a more sustainable way and ensuring all types of properties and lifestyles have opportunities for waste recycling.

Question 90:

What measures do you think the Area Action Plan should take to manage waste in a more sustainable way?

Climate change technical evidence base:

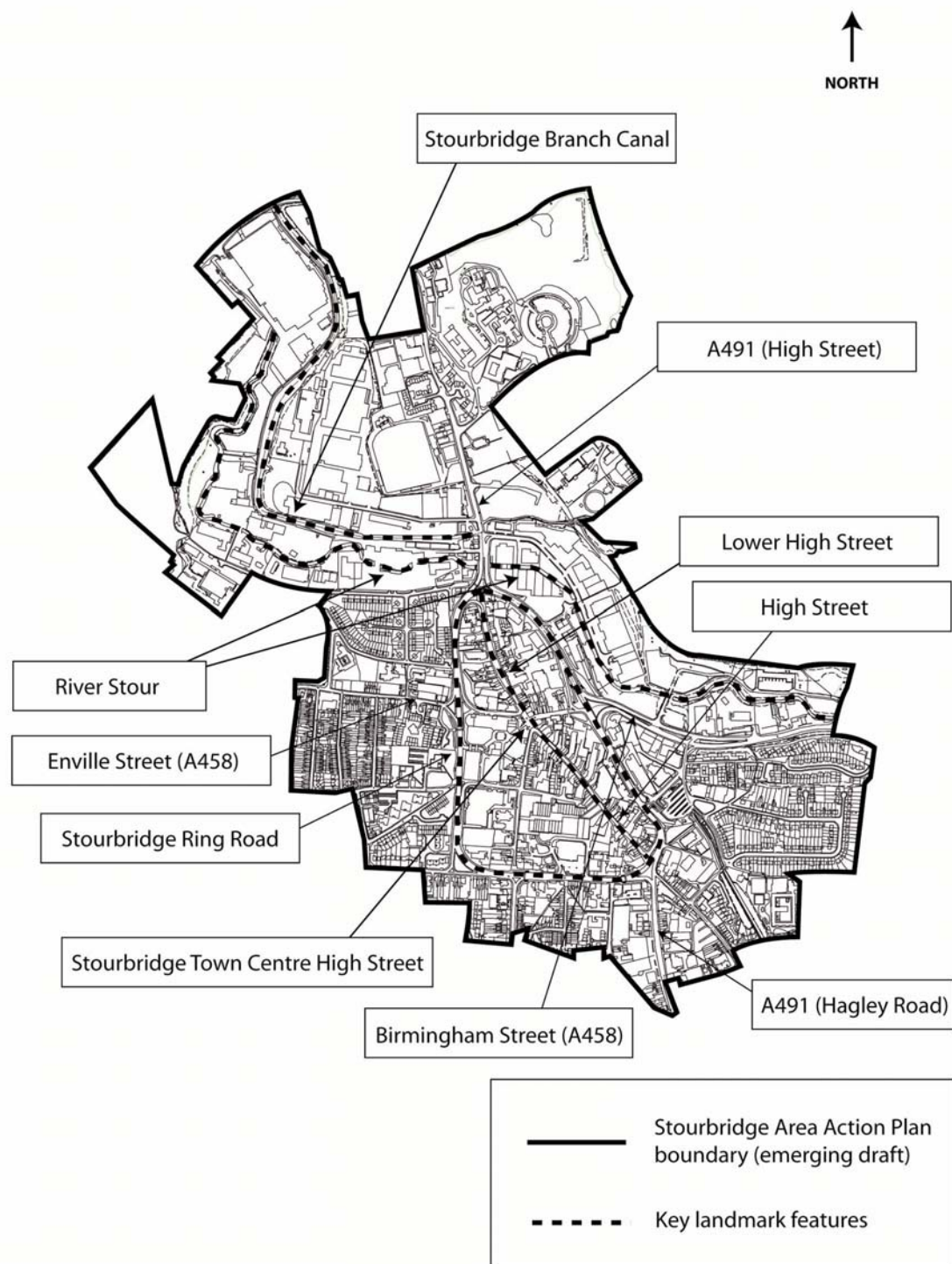
- Black Country Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level .1. SFRA) (February 2009) previously completed as part of the technical evidence for the emerging Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS).
- Black Country Outline Water Cycle Study and Scoping Surface Water Management Plan (September 2009)
- Dudley Council's adopted Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision SPD (adopted June 2007)
- Dudley Council's adopted Parks and Green Space Strategy (PPG17 Audit) (adopted June 2009)
- Black Country Environmental Infrastructure Guidance (EIG) Phase 1 (2009)
- Emerging Black Country Environmental Infrastructure Guidance (EIG) Phase 2

## **Other Important Issues in Stourbridge**

### **Defining the Area Action Plan Boundary**

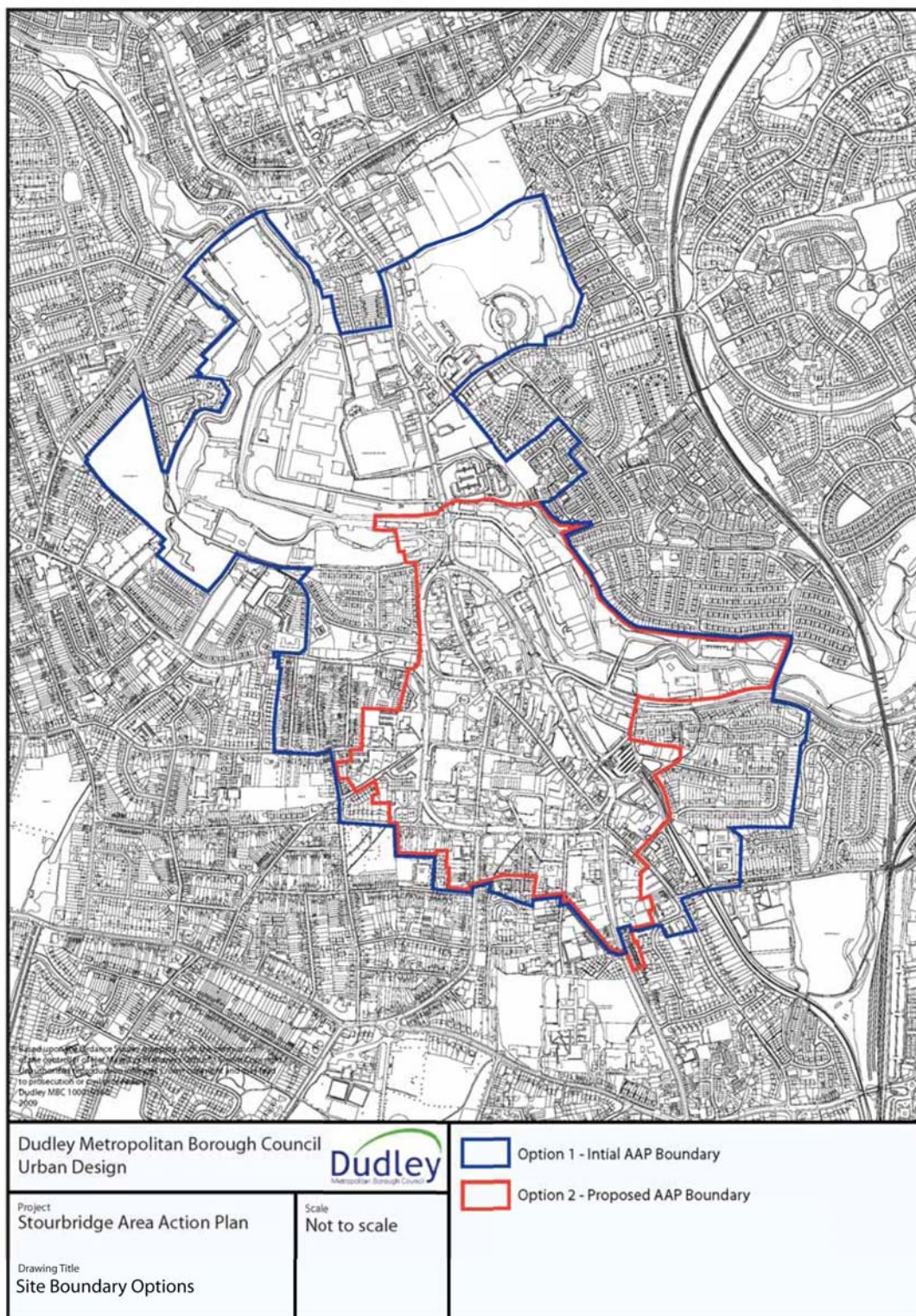
- 5.156 The Stourbridge Area Action Plan boundary is made up of many different areas with wide ranging characteristics. This includes the town centre, which is made of a mix of uses, buildings and spaces each with their issues and constraints that need specific attention. The industrial areas to the north of the town centre are made up of an array of industrial buildings and spaces that have their own particular value and while there will be a need to connect these two areas with each other the issues and options will be very different.
- 5.157 At present, the site boundary includes the industrial area to the north so that the issues and opportunities are raised by the vacant, derelict and under-used sites. It would be far too easy to say that the ring road forms the natural boundary for the AAP. However, there are uses and services associated with the town centre that occur beyond the ring road. The premises south of the town centre are included within the AAP area because they are mainly facilities associated with the town centre. The AAP boundary generally follows the boundary between the residential areas and retail or employment areas.
- 5.158 The options below present two alternatives for defining the AAP boundary. Whatever boundary is decided upon, the relationship between the town centre and its surrounding areas and communities will be considered and the planning framework for those areas will be reviewed at a later date. Indeed, it is expected that the regeneration of Stourbridge will be a driver for regenerating the areas and communities surrounding it.

**Boundary Option B1** – This proposed boundary extends further north and further to the south east and covers the largest land parcel area of the two boundary options.





**Boundary Option B2** – This proposed boundary covers a significantly reduced land parcel area and focuses more on the core of the town centre (inside the ring road) and immediately adjacent industrial areas located on the northern edge of the ring road. (Boundary B2 is the smaller of the two boundary options being proposed and is highlighted by a solid red line).



**Questions specifically related to 'Boundary' Options:**

**Question 91:**

Which of the two emerging boundary options referred to above do you consider would be the most appropriate for the AAP document?  
Please briefly explain.

**Question 92:**

The AAP boundary should be flexible and can change at this stage. Are there any areas which you feel should be added to the draft AAP area, or removed? If so please provide a plan showing the area and details why you consider it either should or should not be included within the AAP area.

**Question 93:**

Do you think that the Canalside area (Stourbridge Branch Canal network at Canal Street, Bonded Warehouse) is an important part of Stourbridge town centre and should therefore be included within the Area Action Plan boundary?

**Question 94:**

Are there any other issues or options that haven't been considered in this paper that you would like to see considered?