

Chapter 2 – Vision

- 2.1 The vision for Stourbridge is a statement of where we want to get to and what this Area Action Plan (AAP) needs to deliver. The draft proposed vision below has been informed by and framed within the context of Stourbridge's role as a non-strategic centre, as defined in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) (2008) and the Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS) which provides a vision for the Black Country up to 2026 (see policy context chapter). The vision has also been informed by the Dudley Borough Community Strategy, "Dudley Borough Challenge" (2005 – 2020), and views of communities and key stakeholders (both external and internal stakeholders) as a result of early evidence gathering consultation completed since June 2008.
- 2.2 Dudley Council will continue to work with the community and delivery agents to develop a shared vision which delivers mixed comparison retail and housing led regeneration of a scale appropriate to improve quality of life in Stourbridge, secures accessibility improvements to deliver this regeneration, creating sustainable neighbourhoods and strengthening and diversifying a sustainable economy and improve the environmental attractiveness of the town centre. By delivering the vision, it is expected that Stourbridge Town centre will be a catalyst for regeneration for the wider area.

Vision for Stourbridge

By at least 2027, Stourbridge will be a vibrant and inclusive twenty first century town centre, retaining a modern market town feel and character but also embracing modern arts and creative industries based background, and sustainable urban living. Stourbridge Town Centre will be a thriving centre offering a wide range of shops able to meet the community's day-to-day local shopping needs and there will be excellent local services such as banks, leisure and cultural facilities and libraries. The town centre will also have a vibrant evening economy containing restaurants and bars which will be well integrated into the town centre. A high quality built environment will have been created, whilst preserving and enhancing Stourbridge's unique historic character. Strong cohesive communities will have been created where everyone feels included and has easy access to the services and facilities they need to enjoy a good quality life.

More people will live on the edge of the town centre which will add vibrancy during the day and into the evening, resulting in a safe and desirable place for its residents and visitors. High quality affordable homes and private homes will have been developed on the edge of the town centre that will address a variety of local needs, including those of the elderly and vulnerable. New development will enable the traditional High Street and the heart of the town

centre to be fully integrated into a new urban townscape.

The connectivity and legibility of High Street/ Market Street/ Lower High Street within the heart of the town centre to surrounding urban settlements located outside of the Stourbridge Ring Road will be improved by creating a network of safe and attractive surface level routes for pedestrians and cyclists. New development at Stourbridge will be sustainable and of the highest standard of design, incorporating energy efficient measures.

The town centre will be supported by a highly integrated, user friendly public transport system complemented by well managed car access and a safe, efficient and attractive provision for movement by foot or cycle.

Stourbridge will be recognised as having a high quality environment that respects and enhances local distinctiveness and the built heritage and natural wildlife features. Green infrastructure along the River Stour and Stourbridge Branch Canal networks will have been strengthened and new biodiversity features will have been included within new built developments in order to reinforce this areas nature conservation value and reinforce its effectiveness as a wildlife corridor. The tourism value and outdoor recreational value of this area will also have been sensitively enhanced to provide to a good quality attraction for visitors and residents.

Question 1

Do you think this is a good vision for Stourbridge? If not, why not? How could the draft proposed vision be improved?

Objectives

- 2.3 To deliver the vision for Stourbridge, clearly defined measurable spatial objectives are required. The objectives have been drawn from an understanding of the particular issues within Stourbridge and have been informed by the results of early frontloading evidence gathering consultation with key stakeholders. The objectives are set out below.
- (a) To ensure the Area Action Plan supports the vision and objectives of our Local Development Framework (LDF) and Community Strategy for Dudley.
 - (b) Create a sustainable, cohesive and socially inclusive community by improving accessibility to jobs, shopping, education, health, open space and leisure/ recreation facilities and ensuring that Stourbridge Town Centre complements its surrounding area.
 - (c) Protect and enhance the special role of Stourbridge Town Centre in serving its local community.
 - (d) Deliver a range of types and tenures of new homes to meet the needs of the local community and to retain and attract professional, managerial and entrepreneurial households.
 - (e) Enhance the role of Stourbridge as a non-strategic Town Centre by helping facilitate retail-led regeneration and protecting and enhancing economic prosperity of the Town Centre.
 - (f) Increase the level of economic activity and vibrancy within Stourbridge by accommodating appropriate office, retail, housing, cultural, educational and leisure facilities.
 - (g) Create a fully integrated Town Centre by connecting Stourbridge Town Centre with the urban environment located outside the ring road,, making it easier for people to travel between these areas on foot, by cycle and by public transport.
 - (h) Ensure sustainable and high quality urban design in all development that has full regard to community safety and crime reduction.
 - (i) Protect and enhance the wildlife, biodiversity and geological value of Stourbridge by using a green infrastructure approach enhancing watercourses and establishing an ecologically functional wildlife corridor linking the River Stour corridor and Stourbridge Branch Canal network into adjacent urban green space corridors to make Stourbridge more sustainable and climate proof.

- (j) To remediate land from contamination through development.
- (k) To protect and enhance the locally distinctive character of Stourbridge, including its historic environment, cultural and built heritage.
- (l) Contribute to mitigating the causes and effects of climate change by reducing the need to travel by private vehicle, promoting sustainable travel choices, delivering highest quality development, improving air quality and minimising the use of non-renewable energy sources and waste production.