

# Halesowen Area Action Plan

Preferred Options  
January 2012





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## General Information

This and other Local Development Framework documents are or will be made available on request in large copy print, audio version, Braille or languages other than English. If you require the document in one of these formats please contact:

Planning Policy Team, Directorate of the Urban Environment, 3 St James's Road, Dudley, DY1 1HZ or tel 01384 816967 or email [ldf@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@dudley.gov.uk)

### Arabic

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### Bengali

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### Chinese

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## Gujarati

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જો તમને આમાંથી કોઈ સ્વરૂપમાં દસ્તાવેજ જોઈતો હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને આ સરનામે સંપર્ક કરો:

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## Punjabi

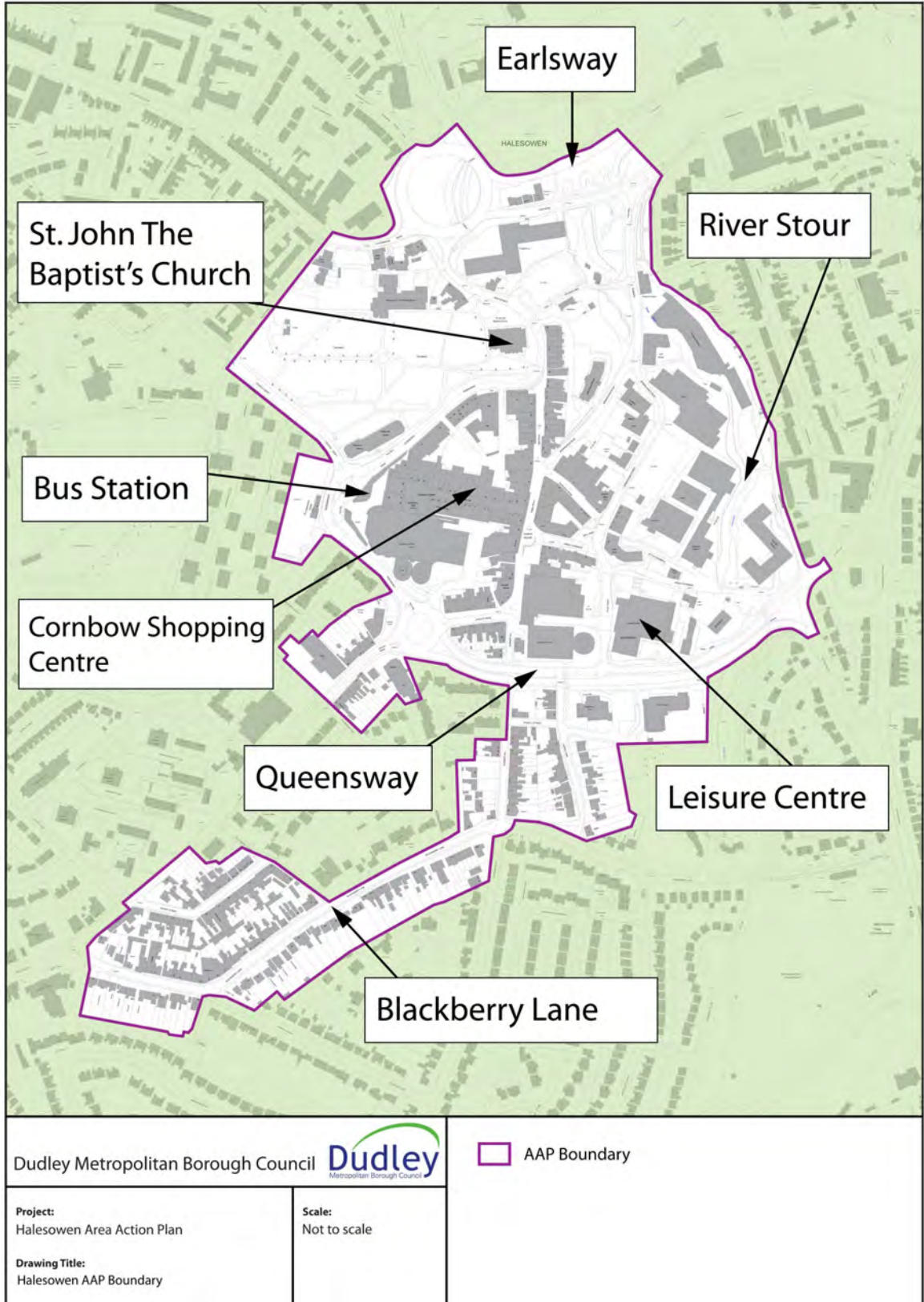
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## Urdu

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1** In late 2009, Dudley Council began work on the Halesowen Area Action Plan (AAP). The Halesowen AAP will set the planning framework for Halesowen Town Centre and once it is adopted, it will be the framework for making decisions on planning applications in the area.
- 1.2** The Halesowen AAP is being prepared to update the current site specific policy framework for the area, as set out in the Adopted Dudley Unitary Development Plan (2005) (UDP). Producing an Area Action Plan for the town centre is the best way of achieving this.
- 1.3** Once adopted by Dudley Council, the Halesowen AAP will form part of Dudley Borough's 'Local Development Framework'. The AAP will be in conformity with and complement the Adopted Black Country Core Strategy (2011). It will provide a vision for the Town Centre by 2026, and through its policies and site allocations, it will set out how that vision will be delivered. The Halesowen AAP will include a proposals map to pull together and spatially represent the various issues and themes which together inform this document.
- 1.4** Halesowen has already benefited from significant investment in recent years, including:
- The redevelopment of the Cornbow Shopping Centre including an Asda supermarket;
  - An expanded and improved bus station;
  - A one-way system for parts of the Queensway; and 20mph speed limits in place; and
  - Improvements to the Grange traffic island to the south of the town centre.
- 1.5** We now need to build on these improvements and positively plan for the future of Halesowen.
- 1.6** A map identifying the area covered by the emerging Halesowen AAP follows this page. It should be noted that the Halesowen AAP boundary remains open to change at the present time - please see the Land Use chapter of this document for further details.



Map 1 Halesowen AAP boundary



### 2 How to Use this Document

- 2.1** We have been gathering evidence about the Town Centre to identify the issues that the Halesowen Area Action Plan (AAP) should respond to and the changes that need to take place over the next 15 years.
- 2.2** Early consultation was undertaken on this emerging Area Action Plan in February and March 2010, followed by consultation on 'Options' between July and September 2010. The comments received have informed the preparation of this 'Preferred Options' consultation document.
- 2.3** This document presents the vision for what we would ultimately like to achieve in Halesowen by 2026 and the preferred strategy to deliver this.
- 2.4** This Preferred Options document is intended to provide you with an opportunity to tell us whether you agree with the vision, strategy and proposed policies. You can also suggest alternative options or other things that you think ought to be considered.
- 2.5** Throughout the later sections of this document you will find questions which are intended to get you thinking about how Halesowen Town Centre should develop. Your views on these questions, and any other comments you would like to make, would be welcomed during the consultation period from 9th January to 17th February 2012.
- 2.6** You can respond to this consultation in writing by post, email or via our website at the address below:

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West Midlands, DY1 1HZ  
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Website:

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/environment-planning/planning/local-development-framework/hales-aap>

- 2.7** The Halesowen AAP 'Preferred Options' consultation document may be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website. Hard copies are also available for viewing at main libraries within the Borough, at the reception of the Council offices at the address above and at Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge.

- 2.8** This consultation document is accompanied by a 'Sustainability Appraisal' which is also available at the locations quoted above. The Sustainability Appraisal assesses the options, policies and site allocations from this document to see what their likely significant effects would be, and whether any of the options would be more sustainable than others. This information may help you to reach informed decisions in your response to this consultation.
- 2.9** The responses received to the consultation will be used to prepare the final draft of the Halesowen Area Action Plan which is due to be published in June 2012. At this stage there will be a final opportunity for people to comment on the 'soundness' of the document before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination in September 2012. It is anticipated that the AAP will then be adopted by July 2013.

### 3 Issues and Opportunities in Halesowen

- 3.1** Before starting to plan for the future of Halesowen it is necessary to understand what the area is like now. This section highlights the key issues, opportunities and challenges facing the Town Centre.
- 3.2** The Halesowen AAP builds upon and adds a spatial dimension to the Dudley Community Strategy by working towards its vision for stronger communities and addressing its priorities. For example, one of the strategic priorities within the Community Strategy is to create an attractive environment for people to live, work and invest in by improving the vibrancy and attractiveness of the Borough's town centres.
- 3.3** Whilst having a local focus, this Area Action Plan for Halesowen is integrated with and in conformity with the adopted [Black Country Core Strategy](#) (Core Strategy) (2011) - this plan and the Halesowen Area Action Plan form part of Dudley Council's [Local Development Framework](#), which is gradually replacing the existing Dudley [Unitary Development Plan](#) (2005).
- 3.4** The Core Strategy has been prepared by the four Black Country Local Authorities to guide development throughout Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton up to 2026. The Core Strategy states Brierley Hill to be the strategic centre for Dudley Borough, and identifies Halesowen as a Town Centre which will perform an important role in day to day shopping, leisure, community and cultural activity.
- 3.5** The Core Strategy has a Vision consisting of three major directions of change, these being 'sustainable communities', 'environmental transformation' and 'economic prosperity'. The Vision gives rise to a number of Spatial Objectives, including: 'a network of vibrant and attractive town, district and local centres' and 'a high quality environment'.
- 3.6** In terms of Halesowen Town Centre, the Core Strategy and its evidence base includes:
- A need for approximately 6100m<sup>2</sup> (gross) of additional comparison shopping floorspace over the plan period to 2026 ('comparison' goods are one off purchases such as clothing, electrical items and furniture);
  - Comparison retailing proposals over 500m<sup>2</sup> gross floorspace will need to demonstrate that they are of an appropriate scale to the function of the centre and would not undermine the vitality and viability of other centres;
  - No additional convenience shopping floorspace is called for - although small proposals up to 650m<sup>2</sup> net floorspace can be considered appropriate; proposals above this size would need to satisfy criteria as per comparison retailing proposals above ('convenience' goods are day to day purchases such as foodstuffs, drinks and newspapers);

- A presumption in favour of small office developments totalling no more than 5000m<sup>2</sup> gross floorspace over the plan period to 2026;
- That town centres such as Halesowen provide entertainment, leisure and cultural facilities of an appropriate kind and scale;
- Encourages the use of upper floors for relevant town centre uses;
- Identifies support for residential development 'in and around Halesowen Town Centre';
- Recognition of the wider area forming a 'significant part of the biodiversity network' in Dudley and the Black Country (Regeneration Corridor 14);
- A need for east-west green links between Leasowes Park and the River Stour valley;
- Take opportunity to reinforce the surviving aspects of the historic character of Halesowen; and
- Supports the need for public realm improvements at Halesowen Town Centre and the wider area to the north and west (Regeneration Corridor 14).

**3.7** Meetings, discussions and evidence gathering have taken place to identify the issues that the Halesowen AAP should respond to. A SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) was produced for Halesowen Town Centre and is summarised below:

### **Strengths**

- Compact and well serviced Retail Core
- Pedestrianised areas with good street furniture
- Well served by public transport and nearby public car parks
- Recently improved/refreshed highway infrastructure
- Proximity of the River Stour
- Town has historic/medieval value
- Good green space provision

### Weaknesses

- Lacks provision for a vibrant evening/night time economy
- Lacks some character due to 1960s development
- Poor quality gateway sites, poor legibility in some areas of the town centre, poor appearance and condition of larger peripheral buildings, some central buildings also of poor appearance/repair
- Lack of blue chip comparison goods retailers (e.g. Marks & Spencer, Debenhams etc.)
- Large monolithic buildings at the edges of the town centre turn their backs on the public realm and detract from the setting of the town's historic and other assets such as St John the Baptist's Church
- Queensway carriageway also detracts from the setting of St John the Baptist's Church, and reduces pedestrian connectivity to the town's retail core

### Opportunities

- Enhance the River Stour and access to and along it - including in terms of it demarcating the town centre (including using public art to achieve this)
- Build in/add to Halesowen Town Centre's character - make better use of hidden gems, identify 'quarters' according to differing land uses, character and features
- Opportunity for improving green links/corridors into Halesowen Town Centre (e.g. River Stour Corridor, nearby Leasowes Historic Park)
- There is a surplus of public car parking spaces in the town centre which could be reduced to enable new development opportunities to become viable
- Investigate the feasibility of identifying certain development opportunity sites - including Pool Road Car Park, Trinity Point/High Street Car Park, and Fountain House.
- Carry forward appropriate elements of the Halesowen chapter of Dudley's Adopted 2005 Unitary Development Plan (UDP) - e.g. the development opportunity site identified between Birmingham Street and the River Stour

### Threats

- River Stour flood events and their impact on possible future river-side development or redevelopment

- 3.8** An early stage consultation document/questionnaire was produced in order to seek the opinions of a range of businesses, organisations and individuals in terms of their concerns and aspirations for Halesowen Town Centre. The early stage consultation document was distributed to some 170 stakeholders during February 2010, with responses being asked for by the 16th March. Responses have been summarised into a 'consultation log' which is available on the Dudley Council website.
- 3.9** Responses received from stakeholders regarding the early stage consultation repeated and gave weight to much of that identified in the SWOT exercise. These stakeholder responses informed the 'Options' document which was published for consultation between 30th July and 10th September 2010. The feedback received to the Options consultation is also available to view on the Council's website. These feedback responses have informed this 'Preferred Options' document.
- 3.10** Issues and opportunities in Halesowen town centre are discussed further in the following chapters of this document.

### 4 Spatial Vision and Objectives

- 4.1** The vision for Halesowen town centre is a statement of where we want to get to and what this Area Action Plan should deliver by 2026. The draft vision below has been informed by an understanding of the issues and opportunities in the town centre, previous consultation responses, the overarching vision for the Black Country and the views of communities as expressed through the Community Strategy.

#### **The Vision for Halesowen Town Centre**

Halesowen benefits from having a compact and generally well presented and accessible town centre providing for local shopping and community activity. A key natural asset of the town centre is its position alongside the River Stour corridor. The town centre further benefits from a variety of historical features and open spaces.

The vision for Halesowen is that these assets be maintained and enhanced, and that the town centre succeeds as a focus for retail activity and a range of other uses to include employment, housing, leisure, entertainment, culture and tourism. The town centre will continue to be supported by effective and sustainable transport connections, and be accessible for all to visit and make use of its facilities.

Above all, Halesowen will be a place that everyone will want to visit, work and live in and a centre in which people want to invest and do business.

- 4.2** To deliver the vision for Halesowen, clearly defined and measurable objectives are needed. These objectives will guide the preparation and implementation of the strategy and the monitoring of its achievements.

### **The Objectives for Halesowen Town Centre**

#### Land Use

1. To maintain and build upon Halesowen Town Centre's recognised role in providing for local needs in an accessible and sustainable way by providing appropriate day-to-day shopping facilities and other suitably scaled town centre land uses such as employment, housing, leisure, entertainment, culture and tourism.
2. To provide for and safeguard ease of movement, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, to the town centre (and in particular Halesowen Bus Station) from adjoining areas, and within the centre between points of arrival and major destinations through the integration of a network of well connected and direct streets, routes and spaces;
3. The Council will seek to ensure that Halesowen continues to enjoy the social and economic benefits to be gained from the town's successful and diverse range of education facilities, and will encourage appropriate improvements to town centre facilities and infrastructure in this regard;

#### Landscape and Public Realm

1. To provide, protect and enhance a well connected landscape and public realm setting of streets, routes and public spaces that is attractive, safe, lively and pleasant to use that also reinforces the greening of the town centre;

#### Nature Conservation

1. To capitalise on Halesowen's unique natural assets by protecting, improving access to and enhancing the River Stour, its bank-side habitats and other green open spaces and infrastructure leading to and within the town centre for people and nature;

#### Historic Environment

1. To ensure that the character and quality of Halesowen's historic environment is fully appreciated in terms of its townscape and landscape, individual buildings, plan form and archaeology - and that this is exploited to its best advantage and recognised by the community at large as one of the town's greatest assets;

#### Urban Design

1. To achieve consistently high quality urban design, architecture and landscape that is sustainable and enhances existing buildings and spaces within Halesowen town centre;



2. To improve ease of movement for pedestrians, people with limited mobility, cyclists and vehicles in and at the edges of the town centre by enhancing existing streets, routes and spaces and potentially creating new ones to provide an environment that is more direct and better integrated both physically and visually.
3. To strengthen local character and distinctiveness by setting an approach that ensures new development respects the context of the town centre;
4. To enhance the town's natural assets by bringing them into active use for everyone to enjoy;
5. To strengthen the town's evening economy by providing more family orientated cultural and leisure activities.

### Question 1

Do you support this vision and objectives? If not, please state what you would like to change and why.



## 5 Land Use

### Box 1

#### Objectives

##### Ensuring a Vibrant Town Centre

To maintain and build upon Halesowen Town Centre's recognised role in providing for local needs in an accessible and sustainable way by providing appropriate day-to-day shopping facilities and other suitably scaled town centre land uses such as employment, housing, leisure, entertainment, culture and tourism.

To provide for and safeguard ease of movement, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, to the town centre (and in particular Halesowen Bus Station) from adjoining areas, and within the centre between points of arrival and major destinations through the integration of a network of well connected and direct streets, routes and spaces;

The Council will seek to ensure that Halesowen continues to enjoy the social and economic benefits to be gained from the town's successful and diverse range of education facilities, and will encourage appropriate improvements to town centre facilities and infrastructure in this regard.

### The Area Action Plan Boundary

- 5.1** This Area Action Plan has to define the area to which it relates. The AAP Boundaries Map shows this boundary and can be found at the end of this chapter.
- 5.2** It could be argued that the New Road/Whitehall Road/Bromsgrove Road/Vine Lane/Queensway/High Street ring road forms the natural boundary for the AAP. However, there are uses and services associated with the town centre that occur beyond this ring road - such as the police station, Andrew Road car park and St John the Baptist's church and grounds. There are also established areas within this ring road where little if any change is anticipated and thus do not necessarily need to be included within the AAP boundary - for example the wider Tenterfields area. The industrial and office business area to the east of Birmingham Street remains within the proposed AAP boundary to provide opportunities for potential redevelopment.
- 5.3** The proposed AAP boundary tends to follow the boundary between the residential areas and retail or employment areas - although an exception to this is the residential areas to the south which have historical value in terms

of their relationship with the town centre. The Churchyard to the northwest of the town centre provides a valuable asset to the town centre in terms of wider pedestrian connections and as amenity value.

- 5.4** In addition to as identified in last year's Options stage consultation document, the AAP boundary as currently proposed has been extended in a southwesterly direction to include an area of significance to Halesowen town centre's nail making past - see the Historic Environment chapter of this document for further details.
- 5.5** Criteria used in determining the proposed Area Action Plan boundary include:
- The use and evaluation of criteria set out in Planning Policy Statement 12 Local Spatial Planning (PPS12, 2008);
  - The inclusion of town functions including cultural, retail, leisure facilities and strategic open space;
  - The inclusion of opportunity sites and underused buildings within a walkable area of the town centre;
  - The exclusion of established residential and other areas that will not be subject to significant change;
  - The exclusion of outlying substantial residential areas that will where necessary be covered in other development plan documents such as the Council's emerging Development Strategy DPD;
  - Drawing the boundary to logical geographical edges such as roads, paths, property and other boundaries;
  - And, additionally to last year's Options stage document, the inclusion of areas and buildings of historic townscape value in terms of their relationship to Halesowen's town centre

### **Other Boundaries and identified Frontages**

- 5.6** Note - Please see the AAP Boundaries Map at the end of this chapter.
- 5.7** The Halesowen AAP must also define the extent of the Town Centre boundary and its Primary Shopping Area (formerly the Retail Core), and should also identify the primary shopping area's primary and secondary frontages - the AAP Boundaries Map at the end of this chapter refers. The Dudley Adopted 2005 Unitary Development Plan (UDP) provides a starting point in determining these boundaries and frontages, with consideration also being given to national planning policy and the now adopted Black Country Core Strategy.
- 5.8** In land use terms and as earlier identified in the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this document, the Black Country Joint Core Strategy identifies a relatively modest amount of change to include:

- A requirement for approximately 6100m<sup>2</sup> (gross) comparison shopping floorspace at Halesowen Town Centre over the plan period to 2026,
- Although not identifying a specific target, the Black Country Joint Core Strategy states support for residential growth in and around Halesowen Town Centre,
- And as applies to the Black Country's non-strategic town centres such as Halesowen:
  - In principle support for smaller scaled retail schemes - including schemes for up to 650m<sup>2</sup> net convenience goods floorspace,
  - A need to provide entertainment, leisure and cultural facilities of an appropriate kind and scale,
  - Support for small office developments totalling not more than 5000m<sup>2</sup> gross floorspace to 2026.

### Town Centre Boundary

- 5.9** The Government's Planning Policy Statement 4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4, 2009) identifies a town centre to be a defined area, including the primary shopping area and areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area.
- 5.10** Halesowen enjoys and is characterised by its relatively compact town centre. Therefore and noting the fairly modest level of change that is anticipated for Halesowen, it is not proposed to significantly amend the Halesowen Town Centre boundary as was put forward at last year's Options consultation stage (which reflected that contained in Dudley's Adopted 2005 UDP).
- 5.11** The only exception in this regard is that we are now proposing to include St John the Baptist's Church and adjacent grounds within the town centre boundary (but not the wider graveyard and Church of England primary school). Our reasons for this change include that:
- Representations received at the Options stage called for this, including that the church was a historic focal point to the town centre, and that it should be available for wider community uses as well as for worship.
  - The Diocese of Worcester additionally sought that the wider graveyard and Church of England primary school be included within the identified town centre. However, it is considered that St John's Church and its adjacent grounds are nearer and better relate to the town centre as exists, and are materially different in character to the wider graveyard and Church of England primary school which remain within the more widely drawn Halesowen AAP boundary.

- Although of some interest in historic environment terms, the Church of England primary school is not locally or statutorily listed.
- The revised town centre boundary includes features recognised as being of the most significant value from an historic environment perspective - grade 1 listed church, medieval stone cross, grade 2 listed wall and gates, probable site of William Shenstone's tomb.
- National planning guidance as Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4) Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (paragraph 7) identifies culture and tourism as town centre uses, with education not being recognised in these terms.

### **Primary Shopping Area Boundary**

**5.12** PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth states a primary shopping area to be a defined area where retail development is concentrated. Given this, the Primary Shopping Area boundary is necessarily more tightly drawn than that for the town centre, with last year's Options stage Primary Shopping Area boundary being as per the Retail Core identified in Dudley's Adopted 2005 UDP. Informed by representations received at last year's Options stage consultation exercise and by further work carried out in terms of where best to accommodate some 6100m<sup>2</sup> (gross) of additional comparison goods retail floorspace within the town centre, we are now proposing to extend the Primary Shopping Area boundary a short way northwards to include High Street Car Park and the adjacent Trinity Point office building. Please see the Development Opportunity Sites chapter for further details.

### **Primary and Secondary Frontages (within the Primary Shopping Area)**

**5.13** PPS 4 defines primary frontages as those likely to include a high proportion of retail uses, and secondary frontages as those offering more opportunity for a diversity of uses.

**5.14** In defining primary frontages and given the relatively modest requirements of the Black Country Joint Core Strategy discussed above, it remains proposed that the Halesowen AAP largely repeats those protected (retail) frontages identified in the Halesowen chapter of the Dudley Adopted 2005 UDP. As per the Options stage document last year, it remains our intention to additionally include the Wilkinsons and WH Smith shop frontages onto Hagley Street.

**5.15** Informed by support expressed for this approach at the Options consultation stage last year, it is proposed that secondary frontages will be defined in the Halesowen AAP as all those frontages within the Primary Shopping Area other than those identified as primary ones.

### Question 2

The Halesowen Area Action Plan boundary, other boundaries and identified retail frontages remain open to change. Do you support these boundaries and frontages as they are currently being proposed? Are there any areas which you feel should be added or removed, and if so, can you please provide a plan showing your suggested amendments?

### Inside Halesowen's (now amended) Primary Shopping Area

- 5.16** Note - Please see the AAP Boundaries Map at the end of this chapter.
- 5.17** Halesowen Town Centre should complement Brierley Hill's role as Dudley Borough's strategic centre, and it thus remains important that Halesowen continues to serve as a town centre catering for the largely day to day shopping needs of its local community and hinterland. Halesowen's Primary Shopping Area must therefore remain a focus for providing any additionally required retail land use and for safeguarding that which already exists.
- 5.18** The now adopted Black Country Joint Core Strategy and or its supporting evidence base identifies a requirement for approximately 6100m<sup>2</sup> (gross) of additional comparison shopping floorspace within Halesowen Town Centre over the plan period to 2026. This could be as one or two fairly large stores, or as a number of smaller ones, and the Primary Shopping Area boundary has now been moderately extended to help accommodate this. Such development should be located at the Pool Road Car Park or Trinity Point/High Street Car Park development opportunity sites or elsewhere within the Primary Shopping Area - please see the Development Opportunity Sites chapter for further details.
- 5.19** The Core Strategy does not identify a specific requirement for additional convenience (day to day) shopping floorspace for Halesowen, but gives in principle support for smaller scaled convenience retail schemes of up to 650m<sup>2</sup> net floorspace.

## Policy 1

### Suggested Policy - Retail Floorspace

Subject to other policies in its Local Development Framework, the Council will give in-principle support to proposals totalling up to 6100m<sup>2</sup> (gross) of comparison retail floorspace within Halesowen Town Centre's Primary Shopping Area.

Proposals for comparison retail floorspace beyond this level of provision, or for any additional convenience retail provision, should be located within the Primary Shopping Area and will be considered on their merits and with regard to the Council's Local Development Framework and national planning guidance.

- 5.20** There remains a continued and important need to retain and strengthen the Primary Shopping Area's locally focused retail function. For this to be achieved, it is necessary to limit the amount of non-retail uses (i.e. those other than Use Class A1 Shops) that will be permitted within the Primary Shopping Area.

## Policy 2

### Suggested Policy - Primary Shopping Area - Primary Frontages

This proposed policy will seek to maintain or enhance the role of Halesowen's Primary Shopping Area. Where primary frontages are identified within this Primary Shopping Area, the Council will resist proposals that will lead to:

- Bunching of non-retail uses (i.e. uses other than comparison or convenience shopping) - no more than two non-retail uses adjacent to each other will be allowed,
- More than 35% of all units identified as Primary Frontages being taken by non-retail uses.

- 5.21** Recent land use monitoring carried out by the Council regarding Halesowen Town Centre's Primary Shopping Area (April 2011) identifies that 42% of units are for other than shopping (Use Class A1 Shops) purposes. This is above that proposed 35% maximum level as first used in Dudley Adopted 2005 UDP Policy CR4 Protected Frontages, and repeated in the above Primary Frontages policy. This indicates a need for an additional layer of policy safeguard for Use Class A1 Shops within the Primary Shopping Area. As per last year's Options stage consultation document, it remains proposed



that this be achieved by identifying some secondary frontages within the primary shopping area, in addition to the primary ones identified and discussed above.

### Policy 3

#### **Suggested Policy - Primary Shopping Area - Secondary Frontages**

This proposed policy will seek to maintain or enhance the role of Halesowen's Primary Shopping Area. Where secondary frontages are identified within this Primary Shopping Area, the Council will resist proposals that will lead to:

- Excessive bunching of non-retail uses (i.e. uses other than comparison or convenience shopping) - no more than three non-retail uses adjacent to each other will be allowed,
- More than 50% of all units identified as Secondary Frontages being taken by non-retail uses.

**5.22** Dudley Adopted 2005 UDP Policy CR4 Protected Frontages is similar in approach to those proposed above, requiring that non-retail uses do not exceed 35% of all units in the retail core of Town Centres such as Halesowen and 50% of all units in the Borough's (smaller) district and local centres. The latter percentage figure allows an increased level of land uses other than Use Class A1 Shops - using a 50% figure regarding Halesowen's secondary frontages thus accords with the Government's PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth requirement that secondary frontages should offer more opportunity for a diversity of uses as compared to primary frontages.

**5.23** As supported in 2010's Options consultation stage and to further add to Halesowen Town Centre's vitality and viability, the use of upper floors in the Primary Shopping Area for other appropriate town centre uses will be supported – including for example as offices or apartments. The now adopted Black Country Joint Core Strategy Policy CEN4 'Regeneration of Town Centres' includes that: 'The use of upper floors will be encouraged to accommodate relevant town centre uses'. The Black Country Joint Core Strategy forms part of Dudley's local development framework, and there is therefore no need to repeat such a policy in the Halesowen AAP.

### Question 3

Do you support the above policy approach regarding that area of Halesowen Town Centre that is within the identified Primary Shopping Area? Is there anything that should be changed or added?

## Beyond Halesowen Town Centre's Primary Shopping Area

- 5.24** Beyond Halesowen's Primary Shopping Area, the wider town centre must continue its important role as a focus for a range of other town centre land uses such as offices, leisure, entertainment, health and cultural activities.
- 5.25** Therefore and for areas outside of the primary shopping area, there is ordinarily a need to prevent shopping (use class A1 Shops) and to encourage other land uses appropriate to town centres. Town centre land uses are identified in PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth paragraph 7 and include leisure, entertainment, offices, arts culture and tourism (as well as retail). The now adopted (in February 2011) Black Country Joint Core Strategy Policy CEN4 'Regeneration of Town Centres' supports that town centres such as Halesowen provide appropriately scaled entertainment, leisure and cultural facilities.
- 5.26** Consultation feedback from initial informal consultation and from the 2010 Options stage included that efforts should be made to encourage improvements to Halesowen Town Centre's evening and night-time economy - with the caveat that we should not increase opportunity for anti-social behaviour late at night. Family and non-alcoholic facilities were favoured, such as a cinema and or a bowling alley, with further support that such facilities be located in proximity to the existing Council-ran leisure centre.
- 5.27** There was generally positive support for requiring a minimum of 35 new dwellings within the proposed Little Cornbow development opportunity site to the immediate west of the River Stour - this being a requirement in Dudley's Adopted 2005 UDP which remains to be carried out. In identifying 35 dwellings as a minimum requirement, we are recognising that a higher level of provision could be acceptable at this site.
- 5.28** The Black Country Joint Core Strategy gives support for residential growth in and around Halesowen Town Centre. On this basis, each of the Halesowen AAP development opportunity sites include residential as an acceptable land use (albeit on the basis that any still needed town centre land uses are not lost, and that retail land use and development is given priority within the town centre's primary shopping area). Please see the Development Opportunity Sites chapter for further details.

**5.29** Although there was some support expressed in the 2010 Options stage for a modern new health centre, we have decided not to carry this proposal forward in the Halesowen AAP on the basis that:

- The Black Country Core Strategy (Appendix 2, paragraph 14.6) informed the 2010 Options stage, but has since been found to be incorrect in identifying a need for a modern health centre 'in or around Halesowen Town Centre' - although not meant to be site specific, the Core Strategy should have been referring to a wider area of land some way north of the town centre,
- The town centre already benefits from a modern health centre in Birmingham Street.

## Policy 4

### **Suggested Policy – Land Uses outside Halesowen’s Primary Shopping Area**

Dudley Council will resist development proposals for comparison or convenience shopping (use class A1 Shops) outside the boundary of Halesowen’s Primary Shopping Area – these proposals will only be given further consideration if relevant criteria in national planning policy (currently PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth) and the Council’s local development framework have been satisfied.

Dudley Council will give support in principle to development proposals outside the Primary Shopping Area proposing town centre uses other than shopping (use class A1 Shops) – appropriate town centre land uses being as identified in the most recent national planning policy guidance for town centres (currently Planning Policy Statement 4 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' - PPS4).

Family and non-alcohol based proposals that add to or improve Halesowen Town Centre's evening and night-time economy will be encouraged by the Council.

Proposals for residential land use will also be supported where appropriate and where the proposal does not result in the loss of a still needed town centre land use.

Proposals for office development (land use class B1a) will need to be in accordance with the requirements of Joint Core Strategy Policy CEN4 'Regeneration of Town Centres'

- 5.30** Feedback from the early stage consultation during February and March 2010 included that the wider Halesowen area should be seen as a centre of excellence for education with regard to its schools and (importantly) Halesowen College. The Council share this view and recognise the education sector's benefits to Halesowen in terms of adding to the town centre's vitality and viability, providing for local jobs in schools and the college, and preparing local people for future employment.
- 5.31** A response by Halesowen College to the 2010 Options stage consultation exercise (July to September 2010) stressed the above in terms of the social and economic benefits that Halesowen enjoys as a result of its successful and diverse range of education facilities, and that support should be given to suitable proposals for both education facilities and those further facilities and transport infrastructure needed for students. Dudley Council supports this approach, and although not stated by Halesowen College, takes such facilities and infrastructure to include public transport, cycling and walking, library and other study need, food and drink, leisure, recreation, etc. In addition to the following suggested policy, please also note the amended Objective at the start of this chapter.

## Policy 5

### **Suggested Policy – Education in Halesowen**

Existing education facilities in Halesowen Town Centre will be safeguarded where there is a recognised need for them.

Any additionally proposed education facilities will be supported in principle where appropriate within the Town Centre - within the Primary Shopping Area, this should generally be above the ground floor (and mainly retail) frontages.

Dudley Council will also give in principle support where appropriate to proposals for further facilities and transport infrastructure to meet student need.

- 5.32** The River Stour is a key natural asset of Halesowen that runs from south to north along the eastern edge of the town centre. The open character of the riverside environment has been lost, partially as a result of topographical features, but also as a result of relatively modern development which has tended to turn its back on the river. There is thus a need to protect and improve access to the River Stour.

## Policy 6

### **Suggested Policy – Proposed Development and the River Stour**

Development adjacent or in close proximity to the River Stour will be expected to enhance the river and its setting, improve access to and along the river, guard against adding to flood risk, and safeguard and enhance biodiversity. Development should face onto the watercourse where feasible to do so.

- 5.33** Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council like other Local Authorities are in the process of taking on responsibility for the management of surface water, including that resulting from built development such as how rain water is managed within a development and how its run off from the building or site is controlled. This was previously the role of the Environment Agency, who retains responsibility for rivers and most other watercourses - including the River Stour and Illey Brook. Surface water can be managed in various ways, including the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), which include natural drainage techniques such as creating ponds, reed beds and swale ditches - please also see the Nature Conservation, Public Realm & Landscape, and Urban Design chapters. The Council's civil engineering service is currently producing a surface water management plan for the borough, and can give further advice in these terms.

## Policy 7

### **Suggested Policy - Surface Water**

The design and layout of new development will be required to take into consideration surface water issues, and to mitigate for such problems that may arise such as surface water run off and flooding.

## Question 4

Do you support the above policy approach regarding that area of Halesowen Town Centre that is beyond the identified Primary Shopping Area? Is there anything that should be changed or added?

## Halesowen Town Centre as a Whole

- 5.34** The town centre must also continue to provide the necessary supporting services and infrastructure, including public transport facilities, walking and cycling infrastructure and publicly available car parks. It is important that there is a good public transport, walking and cycling network to develop sustainable connectivity supporting all developments in the area, particularly residential developments and essential services and facilities such as health, education and employment.

### The Highway Network

- 5.35** Dudley MBC will continue to develop and manage the highway network to improve access to the town centre whilst at the same time discouraging the inappropriate use of roads within the AAP boundary for through traffic, and therefore building upon the highway enabling works already delivered in High Street and Queensway that have provided improved access to the redeveloped Bus Station and the Cornbow Centre.

#### Policy 8

##### **Suggested Policy – Managing and developing the highway network in the Town Centre**

Dudley MBC will continue to maintain and improve access in and around the town centre and safeguard the existing highway network as appropriate.

### Public Transport

- 5.36** To support the aspirations of the Halesowen AAP, the promotion of Public Transport has a vital role to play within an overall strategy to:
- Reduce the growth in the number and length of private motorised journeys,
  - Promote economic regeneration,
  - Ensure accessibility for all.
- 5.37** The Dudley Adopted 2005 UDP gave policy support to Halesowen Town Centre proposals to provide bus lanes, bus shelters and a new expanded bus station with associated alterations to the Queensway road layout. Although this work has now been completed, the Halesowen AAP should

continue to support an effective and sustainable public transport network that will allow people to make smarter choices and therefore contribute to reducing congestion in and around the town centre.

## Policy 9

### **Suggested Policy - Public Transport**

The Council will continue to work with its partners (Centro and Bus Operators) to safeguard existing public transport provision as appropriate and give in principle support to any future proposed appropriate improvements to the public transport network in and around Halesowen Town Centre.

## **Walking and Cycling**

- 5.38** Good pedestrian access both into and within the town centre is vital to support sustainable growth in Halesowen. Various types of severance are experienced across the town centre and this has resulted in physical barriers to pedestrian movement and visual/perceived barriers, including the River Stour. Policies to address these pedestrian access and movement issues are contained in the Urban Design chapter.
- 5.39** Policy TRAN4 'Priorities for the Development of the Transport Network' of the adopted Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) (February 2011) seeks to ensure that the Black Country has a comprehensive walking and cycle network, especially to encourage sustainable forms of travel, with positive health benefits. In addition the Council is seeking to promote linkages to nearby parks and open spaces, including the Healthy Hub at HuntingtreePark (as part of its strategy to promote healthy living within the Borough) and the River Stour.

## Policy 10

### **Suggested Policy – Walking & Cycling**

The Council will safeguard existing walking and cycle facilities and give in principle support to any proposed walking and cycling infrastructure including cycle parking in and around Halesowen Town Centre.

## Car Parking

- 5.40** Policy CEN8 'Car Parking in Centres' of the adopted Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) (February 2011) considers the management of the demand for road space and car parking together with influencing travel choices as fundamental to achieving the vision for sustainable communities.
- 5.41** Halesowen has a number of public car parks located around the town centre and, in strategic terms, it is considered that provision for cars is adequately catered for in all parts of the town. Informed by evidence gathering that included surveys of the public parking provision carried out between 2009 and 2011, Dudley Council have identified in the order of 380 surplus spaces in and around the Town Centre.
- 5.42** Where development is being proposed, Policy CEN8 of the adopted BCCS requires that the application of maximum parking standards will be consistent with PPG13 'Transport' and any subsequent government guidance, which, in the case of long stay parking will encourage reduced levels of provision where public transport accessibility is highest.
- 5.43** Dudley Council have developed a Parking Standards and Travel Plans Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which sets out detailed guidance on the way the Council expects parking and travel plan policies to be applied to new development in particular circumstances or areas, and in particular seeks a reduction in parking standards for areas with good sustainable transport accessibility.
- 5.44** As defined in the Land Use Chapter there is an additional need for some 6,100sqm of comparison goods retail floorspace within Halesowen town centre, which will require in the order of 200 further public parking spaces to be accommodated within such proposed development schemes.
- 5.45** This 6,100sqm of retail redevelopment will be focussed at development opportunity sites identified for Pool Road car park and Trinity Point/High Street car park. A quantum of the existing public car parking spaces at these sites will be retained within any proposed redevelopment scheme, together with additional car parking provision as required by the Parking Standards and Travel Plans SPD. Public car parking requirements for retail led redevelopment at these sites is given in the Development Opportunity Sites Chapter.



## Policy 11

### Suggested Policy – Car Parking

The Council will continue to provide and safeguard the required quantity of public car parking spaces of the right type in convenient and suitable locations where appropriate and feasible to do so.

Guidance in Dudley Council's latest adopted Parking Standards and Travel Plans SPD will apply to all new development proposals coming forward within the Halesowen AAP area.

## Question 5

Do you support the above transport-related policy approach for Halesowen Town Centre as a whole? Is there anything that should be changed or added?

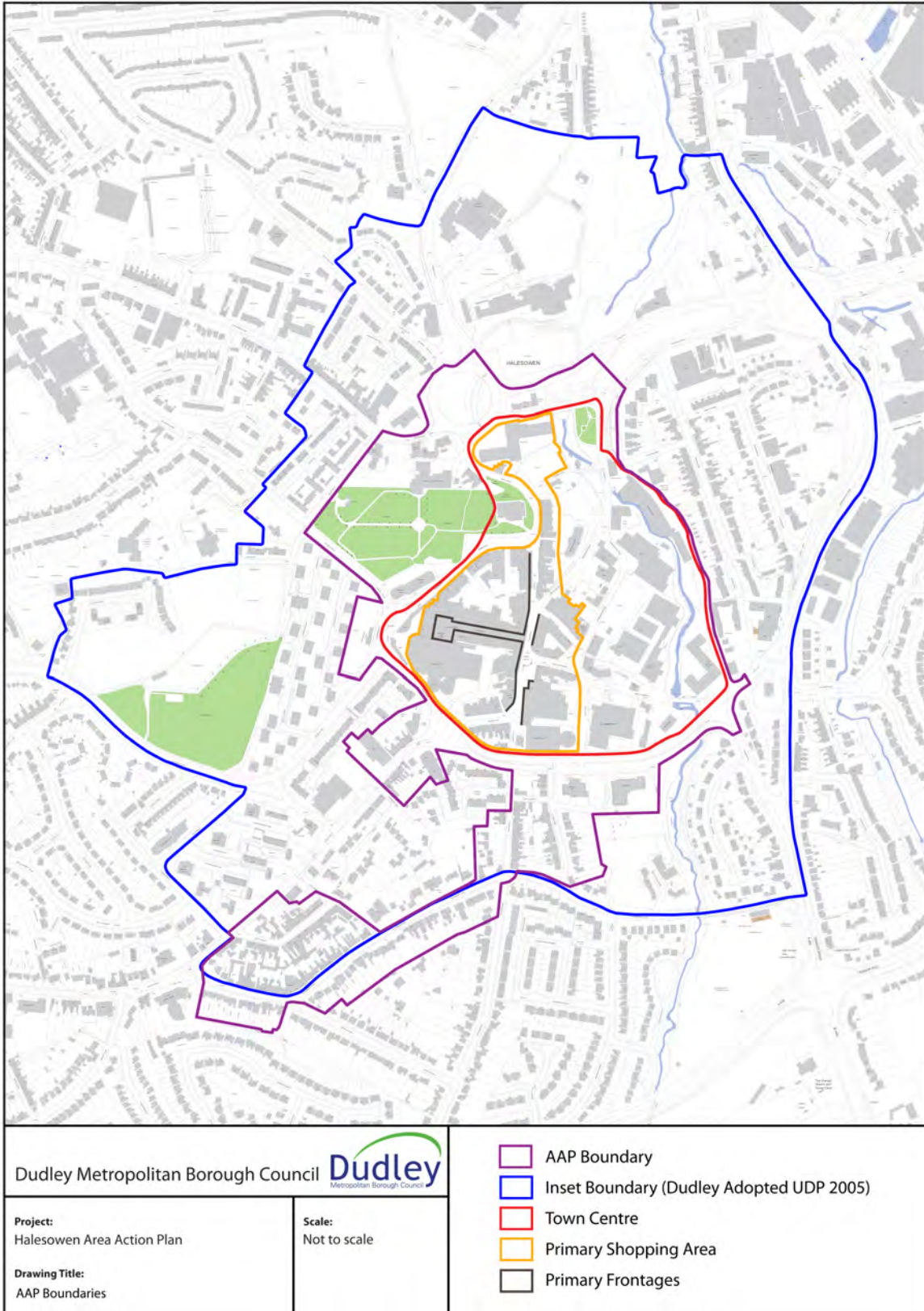
## Monitoring

**5.46** The suggested proposed policies will need to be monitored in order to ensure that they are being effectively delivered. Suggested (annual) monitoring indicators could include:

- Amount of new comparison retail floorspace provided in the Primary Shopping Area
- Amount of new convenience retail floorspace provided in the Primary Shopping Area
- Percentage of new retail floorspace (Use Class A1 Shops) provided in the Town Centre but outside the Primary Shopping Area
- Loss of comparison retail floorspace in the Primary Shopping Area
- Loss of convenience retail floorspace in the Primary Shopping Area
- Percentage of units in the Primary Shopping Area occupied by uses other than Use Class A1 Shops
- Bunching of units used for other than Use Class A1 Shops in the Primary Shopping Area ('bunching' being 3 or more adjacent units in Primary Frontages; 4 or more adjacent units in Secondary Frontages)
- Amount of new dwellings provided inside the Halesowen AAP boundary

### Question 1

Do you support the above suggested monitoring indicators? Is there anything else you could additionally suggest?



**Map 2 Halesowen AAP Boundaries**



### 6 Development Opportunity Sites

- 6.1** The Development Opportunity Sites map highlights the proposed development opportunity sites in Halesowen and can be found at the end of this chapter.
- 6.2** Each of these sites are considered to have potential for redevelopment to better contribute to the vitality, viability and quality of the Town Centre. They have been subject to public consultation through an earlier version of this document and correspondence has been received by the Council supporting their allocation. Each has different characteristics that can be exploited to add to Halesowen Town Centre as a whole and assist regeneration.
- 6.3** Evidence is continuing to be gathered about these sites suitability, availability and viability for redevelopment. Through this consultation process we are seeking views and confirmation from landowners as to whether these sites are realistically likely to become available for redevelopment between now and 2026, whether there are any constraints on them, and to what uses the sites could viably be redeveloped for. We are further seeking views from the public and other stakeholders as to whether they support the redevelopment of these sites, and if appropriate to identify any alternative sites.
- 6.4** Some of the key design considerations for each of these sites are highlighted below but for more guidance in this regard, please refer to Appendix 1 of this document and the "Halesowen Spatial Framework", available on the Council's website at [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://www.dudley.gov.uk).
- 6.5** A number of potential development opportunity sites have been disregarded since the previous consultation. These sites are:
- Andrew Road Car Park: This site has been deleted due to the desire to retain the Queensway Centre and the public car park.
  - Maybrook House: The representations received to the previous consultation favoured accommodating any additional required comparison retail floorspace within the existing retail core area (Pool Road Car Park), or at Trinity Point/High Street Car Park. Representations from the development industry further suggest that retail land use at this location would not be feasible. Correspondence received from the current leaseholder of Maybrook House confirms their aspiration to refurbish the property for office use, as it is currently used. B1 office use remains appropriate and welcome at this location and so the site has been deleted as a development opportunity site.
  - Will Thorne House: There was support through the consultation to retain this site's existing employment use as offices, including from a current occupier of the building. Given that an alternative preferred site has

been suggested for comparison retail development it is considered that this site should not be identified as a redevelopment opportunity.

- High Street: Some support was received through the consultation for the redevelopment of this site for mixed uses, either as a standalone development or in combination with the redevelopment of the Trinity Point and High Street Car Park site. It is acknowledged that sensitive redevelopment here could provide a better setting to St. John the Baptist's Church and Whitefriars. However, a preliminary viability study of the site suggests that residential and/or offices on the upper floors is not currently viable and that any redevelopment would not generate a higher residual land value than the existing use. As such, it is considered that this site is undeliverable as a redevelopment opportunity and so has been removed from this plan.

### **Proposed Development Opportunity Site 1: Pool Road Car Park**

- 6.6** This site, within the Primary Shopping Area, is considered to be the most attractive for accommodating new comparison retail development within Halesowen Town Centre. It is the most attractive in terms of drawing developer interest, the first preference within the consultation feedback received on this plan and is closest to existing retail development for the benefit of shoppers and other traders.
- 6.7** At the 2010 Options consultation stage, the site comprised Pool Road multi storey car park, Cornbow Hall and the Wilkinsons and WH Smith stores. Cornbow Hall offers a large function room and other public facilities and is well used by the local community. The car park is in need of investment. As a whole, these buildings currently present a negative gateway into the Primary Shopping Area. Redevelopment could provide an opportunity to improve the quality of the car parking facilities, maintain and enhance frontages to Hagley Road and Summer Hill and improve the quality of the built environment in this area.
- 6.8** Wilkinsons have expressed their desire to continue trading in this location and in any case, it is considered that a comprehensive redevelopment of the whole site would not be viable and so the existing Wilkinsons and WH Smith stores should remain and the Cornbow Hall facility should be safeguarded. However, a scheme that redevelops the Pool Road Car Park to enable an additional comparison retail unit to be provided adjacent to Wilkinsons could be deliverable. Such a scheme should respect the presence of 1 Summer Hill, a building which has an important role in defining a historic route into the Town Centre and which provides a high positive contribution to Halesowen's townscape.

- 6.9** Pool Road car park, designated long and short stay, in part services the south side of the town but more importantly provides very convenient parking for both the Leisure Centre and Cornbow Hall and thus has an important role to play, including as regards the night time economy of the town.
- 6.10** Enabling retail development on this site would however necessitate a reduction in the number of car parking spaces available. Evidence suggests that there is a surplus of car parking available in the town centre, with ample short stay capacity available nearby at both Asda and Birmingham Street. On balance, the erosion of some of this short stay surplus to enable a positive development to go forward for the overall benefit of the Town Centre is considered to be desirable. However, the loss of the long stay parking could seriously affect the attractiveness of the town to investors and an element of long stay parking will therefore need to be re-provided within the redevelopment of this site.

### Policy 12

#### **Development Opportunity Site 1: Pool Road Car Park**

The preferred use is A1 comparison retail development in accordance with Policy 1 'Suggested Policy - Retail Floorspace'.

Other acceptable uses are A2 financial and professional services, A3 restaurants and cafés, A4 drinking establishments, A5 hot food take-aways, residential, B1 business, D1 non-residential institutions and D2 assembly and leisure uses.

In order to deliver improved retail facilities at the ground floor it is accepted that redevelopment of the Pool Road car park will be necessary. The developer should re-provide at least 80 long stay spaces plus provide the quantum of car parking required for their proposed development, in accordance with the Parking Standards and Travel Plans SPD.

#### **Proposed Development Opportunity Site 2: Trinity Point and High Street Car Park**

- 6.11** This opportunity site is dominated by Trinity Point, a large office block which marks a gateway into the town centre. The other structure within this site is the two storey High Street car park.
- 6.12** The evidence and consultation responses do not provide a clear indication of the future potential of this site. On the one hand, there was general support for the redevelopment of Trinity Point for comparison retail and representations have been received on behalf of a prospective developer supporting its allocation. On the other hand, a preliminary viability study into

the site identifies that the property has recently changed hands, and that the site may not be viable for leisure uses or attractive for comparison retail given its distance from the Primary Shopping Area of the Town Centre.

- 6.13** It is anticipated that over the long term there will be a demand for further comparison retail over and above what can be delivered in the Pool Road Car Park site. As such, this site within the Primary Shopping Area, would provide a suitable location for such development. This would enable the Town Centre to expand and provide a retail anchor to the northern end of the High Street, promoting more footfall between the north and south of the centre and enhancing the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole. However, redevelopment could also mean the loss of the existing office use at Trinity Point and a reduced level of car parking facilities to enable a viable development opportunity.
- 6.14** High Street car park services the northern part of the town and in particular provides footfall to the retail units fronting Queensway, High Street and car parking for St John's Church. Surveys suggest the car park is under used at weekday peak times and is in need of investment. However, the full removal of this facility could affect the economy of the north of the town and seriously reduce the availability of short stay space. As such, any redevelopment proposals for this site will be required to retain an element of short stay parking.
- 6.15** Through this consultation, the Council particularly welcomes further representations in relation to this site to demonstrate whether it could realistically be redeveloped within the plan period.
- 6.16** Should it be demonstrated that this site is a viable redevelopment opportunity it should be noted that it has important boundary edges on all sides which will need to be appropriately addressed in any redevelopment scheme. To the north is New Road, a key approach road to the town centre. To the east, down a steep gradient, is the River Stour and Rumbow Gardens. To the south is Church Lane and two historically significant timber framed cottages at 10 Church Lane and Whitefriars. The car park abuts Church Lane and is visible within the view along this road between the Church and cottages. To the west of the site is Ivy House, the High Street and the Church of St. John the Baptist. Any development within this block should establish frontages to New Road and High Street and recognise the relationship to, and impact upon, Rumbow and Church Lane.
- 6.17** Particular consideration would need to be given to the impact of any scheme on the setting of the Church and other historical buildings. Any development proposals will be required to positively enhance these assets and the river corridor by virtue of design and layout. In utilising this opportunity, a green link should also be provided composed of amenity focused green infrastructure.



### Policy 13

#### Development Opportunity Site 2: Trinity Point and High Street Car Park

This site is considered suitable for a range of town centre uses. In particular, A1 comparison retail development is encouraged in accordance with Policy 1 'Suggested Policy - Retail Floorspace'.

Other acceptable uses are A2 financial and professional services, A3 restaurants and cafés, A4 drinking establishments, A5 hot food take-aways, residential, B1 business, D1 non-residential institutions and D2 assembly and leisure uses.

The developer should retain or re-provide at least 31 short stay car parking spaces plus provide the quantum of car parking required for their proposed development, in accordance with the Parking Standards and Travel Plans SPD.

#### Proposed Development Opportunity Site 3: Link House and Pioneer House

- 6.18** Link House is a five storey brick built office building with car parking to the rear. Pioneer House fronts the northern end of Birmingham Street car park and houses a variety of uses including a gym. The low level of demand for office accommodation with the town centre has resulted in high levels of vacancy on this site. Consultation feedback has been received from representatives of the owners of Link House supporting it's allocation within the proposed Development Opportunity Site.
- 6.19** This area has the potential to play a far more positive role enhancing both the vitality and viability of Halesowen. Development proposals should provide a strong frontage to Birmingham Street and Rumbow. An active and attractive frontage onto the River Stour together with an enhanced pedestrian route along it will also be required. Development should be set back from the River Stour and have due regard to flood risk.
- 6.20** Steep level changes in topography, the route of the river and the existing urban form on this site all mean that access through this central area into the Town Centre from Tenterfields to the east of the River Stour is restricted and difficult. Provision of pedestrian access from the Tenterfields area is encouraged.
- 6.21** On the eastern side of the River Stour sits the Rumbow Works which provides valuable local employment and is expected to continue in its current use. Any redevelopment scheme will need to ensure that it does not adversely affect the operation of this employment use. Should the Rumbow Works site

unexpectedly come forward in the future, it could form an appropriate extension to this development opportunity site and provision of a new east-west pedestrian access across the River Stour should be a high priority.

## Policy 14

### Development Opportunity Site 3: Link House and Pioneer House

The following uses are encouraged on this site:

- C2/C3 residential
- D1 non-residential institutions
- D2 assembly and leisure
- B1 offices
- C1 hotels
- A3 food and drink
- A4 drinking establishments

### Proposed Development Opportunity Site 4: Little Cornbow

- 6.22** This under-utilised site is currently dominated by the Zion Christian Centre who are pro-actively pursuing development opportunities. Development in this area should provide active and attractive frontages onto areas of public space, and pay regard to existing and potential linkages throughout the site. Cornbow is of particular significance as it is one of the original streets through the town centre and has great potential for improvement as a public space and key link into the town from south east areas.
- 6.23** There is a major opportunity within this site to provide a strong frontage to Little Cornbow whilst retaining and enhancing the key route between Peckingham Street and Cornbow. Strong frontages should also be established along the riverside, together with an enhanced pedestrian route along it. This opportunity site, together with the Link House and Pioneer House site, should be able to deliver a minimum of 35 residential units towards the town centre housing provision.
- 6.24** The Birmingham Street Car Park makes a valuable contribution to the town centre and this parking provision should be retained. The Health Centre and properties adjacent to it are relatively new and make a positive contribution to the area. As such, these properties have been removed from the boundary of this proposed development opportunity site.

### Policy 15

#### Development Opportunity Site 4: Little Cornbow

The following uses are encouraged on this site:

- C2/C3 residential
- D1 non-residential institutions
- D2 assembly and leisure
- B1 offices
- C1 hotels
- A3 food and drink
- A4 drinking establishments

#### Proposed Development Opportunity Site 5: Fountain House

- 6.25** Fountain House is a large office building which sits on the eastern bank of the River Stour. It is largely unoccupied and has suffered from high and growing vacancy levels for some years despite proactive marketing and investment in the property. This site should be put into more productive use through a change of use and/or redevelopment. This allocation has been supported in the consultation responses, including from representatives of the site owners.
- 6.26** Combined with Development Opportunity Site 4 'Little Cornbow' there is an opportunity to significantly improve the quality of the built environment in this area which will enhance the setting of the River Stour and establish a pedestrian route along the riverside, in accordance with Policy 6 'Suggested Policy – Proposed Development and the River Stour'. The Environment Agency support the banks of the River Stour being restored to a natural condition in this location.

## Policy 16

### Development Opportunity Site 5: Fountain House

The following uses are encouraged on this site:

- C2/C3 residential
- D1 non-residential institutions
- D2 assembly and leisure
- B1 offices
- C1 hotels
- A3 food and drink
- A4 drinking establishments

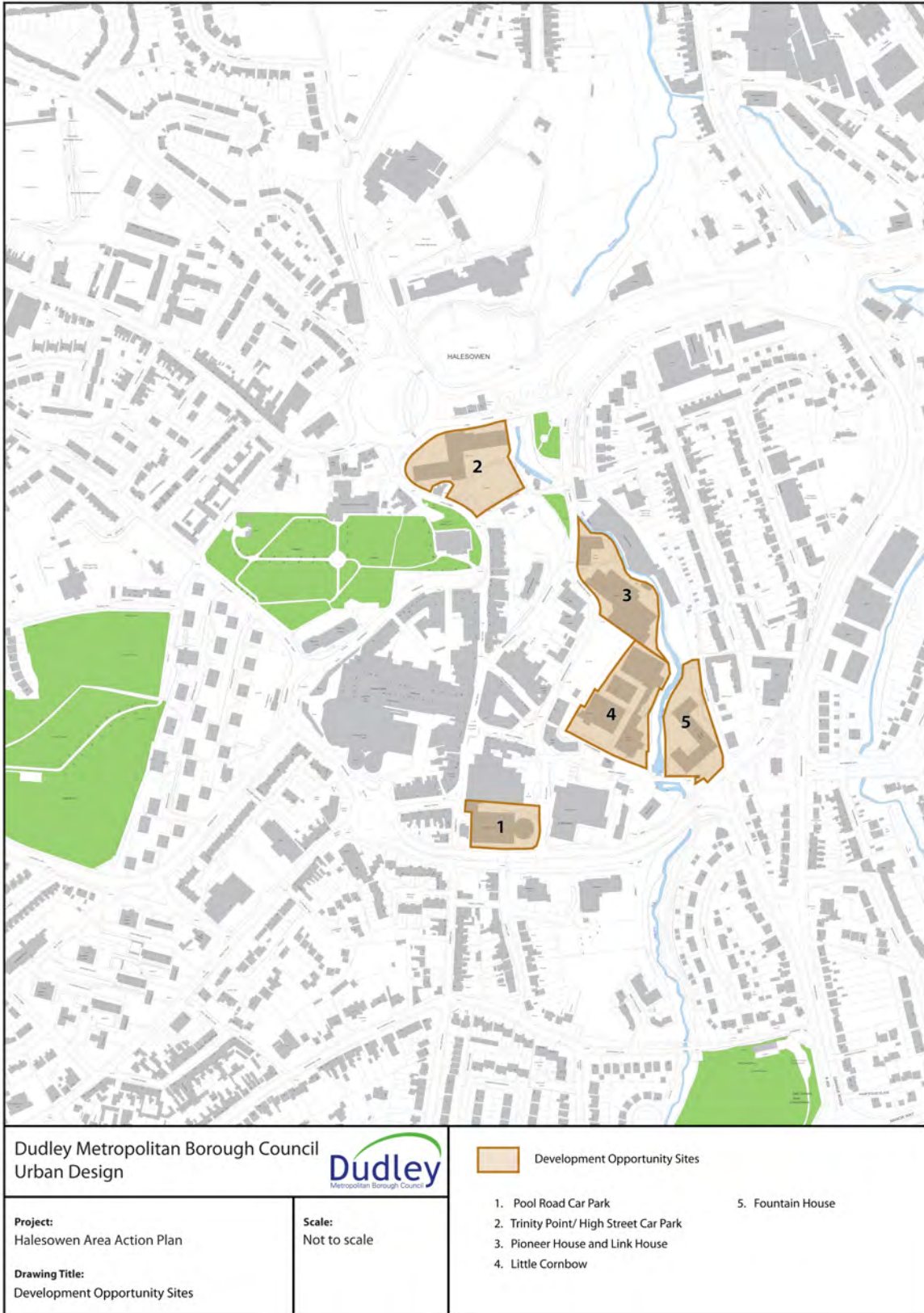
## Question 6

Do you support the proposed development opportunity sites identified above? Do you agree with the proposed land uses allocated for each site? Your views are also welcomed on the additional design guidance contained within Appendix 1 and the supporting evidence in the "Halesowen Spatial Framework". Are there any alternative development opportunity sites you think should be considered?

## Monitoring

**6.27** There will be a need to annually monitor the identified development opportunity site policies in order to determine their success and attractiveness to the development market. This could include:

- Quantity and type of development proposed at each development opportunity site
- Whether such proposed development was approved or refused
- Whether approved development is in accordance with the policy for that development opportunity site
- The 'development stage' of a submitted proposed development - i.e. is it refused, approved, in progress or completed?



Map 3 Development opportunity sites



### 7 Landscape and Public Realm

#### Objective

##### Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape and Public Realm

**“To provide, protect and enhance a well connected landscape and public realm setting of streets, routes and public spaces that is attractive, safe, lively and pleasant to use that also reinforces the greening of the town centre.”**

- 7.1** When reading the following, please also see the Landscape and Public Realm map at the end of this chapter.

#### Landscape Context

- 7.2** Landscape elements include physical features such as trees, hedges, banks and boundary walls, forming an important part of the street scene and can help to integrate new development into its context.
- 7.3** The environmental success or failure of a development often owes much to the quality of its landscape setting, which also includes the topography and character of the land-form, such as steep slopes, cliff edges as well as flat planes which in turn cause different approaches to be found, such as the creation of building plateaus and terracing in order to achieve the maximisation of building space.
- 7.4** Topography therefore affects the forms of building within Halesowen town centre, and how level changes are accommodated. The range and type of landscape features such as boundary walls, fencing and hard surfacing as well as trees, shrubs and other forms of planting add to and form the character of the town’s landscape.
- 7.5** To add to the sense and uniqueness of place, the selection of hard landscape materials and street furniture should be drawn from local references and colours where appropriate and explained within a development’s Landscape Strategy Plan.
- 7.6** Some landscape elements such as trees within the river corridor and other spaces have arrived through natural colonisation and contribute a “wild” character, and may sometimes be native species. Another landscape element is that of ornamental planting, found in domestic gardens and some parks, such as hedges for screening and borders, adding colour and visual amenity interest. It is sometimes of a more formal designed nature, depending on its setting and purpose within the wider designed context.

- 7.7** The quality and value of the existing landscape setting and context of the town is therefore important. Development site proposals need to analyse and understand how their current and future setting affects the overall townscape. Where existing trees are to be retained within a redevelopment scheme, the layout of the built form must accommodate their future growth. Likewise, the landscape elements overall within development sites need to be managed in order to secure their longevity, value and continued presence.
- 7.8** The Halesowen AAP recognises the role of individual landscape elements, and their unique characteristics that contribute to the wider green infrastructure and landscape setting and how this complex and dynamic relationship is altered and changed by time and interaction with people and activity.
- 7.9** Within Halesowen, the landscape is important because it is:
- An essential part of our natural resources and a key element towards modifying the effects of climate change.
  - Provides the setting for important historical buildings which link the past, present and future.
  - The environment and place where a range of plants and animals (its biodiversity) are found, need to be supported and sustained.
  - A resource that provides an attractive amenity and setting for community and cultural events, linking people with their town centre and providing an enhanced quality of life, supporting tourism and encouraging return visits.
  - A valuable recreation and learning resource bringing opportunities to improve the well-being of residents and inspiration and confidence for visitors and business.

### Public Realm

- 7.10** The public realm can be defined as all areas that the public have free, unfettered physical and visual access to 24 hours a day, such as streets, squares, alleyways, open spaces, parks, and riversides. These various components of the public realm form connections into, within and out from Halesowen town centre.
- 7.11** Public open spaces provide a focus for community activity, they can be pleasant places to meet with others or just to sit and watch the world go by, and they can provide an attractive visual counterpoint to buildings as part of the street-scene. There are currently few public spaces in the town centre, there being the central outdoor space in Hagley Street, Somers Square, and HighfieldsPark, although the latter is somewhat apart from the main flows of people in the town centre. Any Design Strategy should give guidance on the protection of existing spaces and or the provision of new ones.



### Parks and Open Space Provision

- 7.12** Within the Halesowen AAP boundary, there are few public spaces, and an under provision of natural and semi-natural green space especially in the north eastern areas of the town centre. Existing public spaces include St John the Baptist's churchyard but this is cut off from the pedestrianised areas, and Somers Square within the primary shopping area which provides a good example of new high quality public space which Dudley Council has designed and implemented of recent years.
- 7.13** The Council's Parks and Green Space Strategy (adopted June 2009) however confirms that the surrounding urban area bordering the AAP boundary is reasonably well served by parks and gardens and green space. The Leasowes Historic Grade I listed Park is located within a 1km distance of the town centre and Highfields Park is much closer. Huntingtree Park is just beyond and is one of the Healthy Hub Sites identified as part of the Dudley Healthy Town's Initiative. The route from Huntingtree Park to the town centre is designated as an active corridor, promoting cycling and walking.
- 7.14** Also in close proximity is Coombswood Wedge, a privately owned natural and semi-natural green space with footpath accesses located to the north east of the town.
- 7.15** However due to severance created by development, major roads and topography, pedestrian accessibility to these important spaces from the town centre is, in some instances, challenging and routes are unclear - and therefore where possible ease of pedestrian access and the enjoyment of the journey should be improved.
- 7.16** The Parks and Green Space Strategy (2009) indicates the northeast of the town centre has an under provision of natural and semi-natural green space. However, creating better access and landscape enhancement to the currently underutilised River Stour corridor will offer an opportunity to begin to address this shortfall, by way of linear green space links, publicly accessible amenity green space in this area and other improvements to the open space network. Support for such an approach can be found in the Black Country Core Strategy (adopted 2011).

### Outdoor Play Provision

- 7.17** Established outdoor play provision is located beyond the Halesowen AAP boundary. Space to create new outdoor play provision within the Halesowen AAP boundary will be limited, and therefore other forms of provision such as the ambition to create a riverside walk that has exercise, educational and leisure purposes with informal and informal nature spaces may bridge that gap in provision.

- 7.18** Research tells us that play helps to combat childhood obesity, aids children's mental and emotional responsiveness, improves their social skills, and promotes their resilience and supports learning. The riverside walk could help to address these issues.

## Public Spaces

- 7.19** Formal and informal public spaces provide a focus for people to meet, plays a role in encouraging a healthy lifestyle, and serves as a catalyst around which housing, shops and businesses can benefit. They can also bring a unique selling point, enhancing the image of a place.

- 7.20** Currently there are few public spaces or connected green spaces, and no town park in Halesowen town centre. However, the town centre's Somers Square is an urban public space providing for visual focus, meetings and events within the townscape.

- 7.21** An analysis of the location, variety and opportunity for enhancing Halesowen's landscape spaces carried out by Dudley Council and LDA consultants (Public Realm Study, Dec. 2009) revealed the following:-

- Poorly connected and appreciated landscape and townscape assets, segregated from the town centre core (E.g. St John the Baptist's Church, Churchyard and Cemetery).
- Concealed and poorly connected green spaces within a predominately hard urban environment e.g. New Road and the outer road networks, isolated grass verges, and occasional green spaces such as Rumbow/FingerpostGardens.
- Historic buildings concealed and poorly appreciated within poor quality landscape settings, fragmented by roads.
- Predominantly hard, vehicle dominated spaces with fragmented pedestrian links such as Pool Road and the residential areas beyond.
- Key pedestrian links and vehicle dominated spaces (such as around the Cornbow) that are separated from the town centre's core and the river frontage.

- 7.22** The potential redevelopment of the identified opportunity sites could provide the best possibility for a new 'square' or other types of spaces within the town centre that will act as a focus within the new development and increase connections across the town. However, the chances to provide much needed public space will be limited in location and size and the approach should be to create well linked high quality smaller spaces.

- 7.23** Potential locations for new or enhanced public spaces are identified on the Landscape and Public Realm Map and include:
- Adjacent to the River Stour as part of a new bridge connection gateway space,
  - An enhanced public space on the Queensway Road frontage opposite the Church that would also help provide a visual focus to the town centre,
  - Pool Road Car Park development opportunity site could provide a public square/space that could enhance the southern pedestrian gateway and create a focus for new development and entrance to the Cornbow Hall.
  - Trinity Point/High Street Car Park development opportunity site could create the much needed green link between the River Stour corridor and St John's Churchyard.

### **Green Network / infrastructure**

- 7.24** The connections between green and open spaces are just as important as the spaces themselves. Connections are the links that people use to access local open spaces from where they live and to integrate those spaces within the fabric of the town and its surroundings. If we wish people to visit their local green and open spaces, we must also have easy and attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists to get to them.
- 7.25** Within Halesowen, many existing streets would benefit from landscape enhancement that will provide the necessary green infrastructure to improve and define the open space network and act to improve the public realm overall. The Landscape and Public Realm Map indicates key streets that are highlighted for enhancement.
- 7.26** As seen from some of these isolated areas, views and vistas to the green corridors and townscape are sometimes of a poor standard and would benefit from improvement when opportunities arise.
- 7.27** There is the need to look for opportunities to provide safe and useful routes and connections to join up spaces and places within the town and its edges. The challenge and need is to provide new meaning and value to residents, visitors and investors by means of a landscape and public realm strategy for Halesowen town centre. This strategy recognises that the public landscape has an important role to play in terms of providing greater biodiversity value and in seeking ways to address and modify the effects of climate change.

### Question 7

Do you support the the various Landscape and Public Realm issues and requirements set out above? Is there anything you disagree with or feel should additionally be included?

### Policy 17

#### **Suggested Policy - Parks, open space, green infrastructure and public realm**

Development should:

Safeguard existing open space provision from loss or harm and provide new and missing spaces to create a hierarchy of inspiring landscape and public realm projects to form a unique selling point for and improve the image of Halesowen town Centre.

Development proposals should:

1. Consider and provide ways of increasing the amount of on-site amenity green space and publicly accessible natural and semi-natural green space within the town centre (in particular at the north-eastern area of the town centre). Dudley Council's 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation' and 'Planning Obligations' supplementary planning documents (SPDs) give further guidance.
2. Provide a hierarchy of external spaces that have clarity of purpose and function, demonstrating an understanding of the need for the retention of existing or creation of new landscape elements and spaces.
3. Provide a range for choice and opportunity for children's play.
4. Reflect and enhance the local identity of parks, open spaces and the public realm.
5. Make the most of past heritage by retaining and integrating structures that can become the focus and setting for newly created or re-invigorated landscapes and public realm.
6. Integrate green infrastructure within a building or development's building design as an intrinsic part of the scheme's landscape strategy and enhancement of biodiversity. Green infrastructure includes such as green roof and wall technology, and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).
7. Be adaptable and flexible to changing social, physical and environmental needs.
8. Provide spaces that help link communities together and reduce severance, seek opportunities for environmental enhancement of the connections network, create connections where sections are missing, encourage public use or enhance their value for biodiversity as appropriate.
9. Be inclusive and not dominated by any single group, catering for a range of needs and involving a range of users.
10. Employ low-cost remediation techniques where possible to bring contaminated and lower quality land back into use.

## Policy 18

### **Suggested Policy - Public Realm**

The quality of streets and open spaces will be improved through development proposals or local initiatives having regard to the following measures:

1. The provision of high quality hard landscape, street furniture, lighting, signage and art to help create a clear identity for Halesowen Town Centre. Developers are encouraged to prepare strategies to coordinate the choice and location of these features, including as regards their role in linking places.
2. Mature tree planting and other landscape elements will assist the 'greening' of the Town Centre.
3. Streets and spaces will be designed so that pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles can mix safely, with priority given to pedestrians where possible.
4. Existing landscape features will be protected where they make a significant contribution to the streetscene.
5. Development in the vicinity of Green Corridors as identified on the Landscape and Public Realm Map will be required to preserve their landscape character.

Development proposals should also satisfy those public realm requirements set out in the Urban Design chapter of this document.

## Policy 19

### **Suggested Policy - Open Space Network**

The following public open spaces, as shown on Landscape and Public Realm Map, will be protected, enhanced or created as part of development proposals and other initiatives:

1. Queensway south of St. John the Baptist's Church (enhanced space)
2. The River Stour (new and enhanced space)
3. Summer Hill (new space)
4. Great Cornbow and Little Cornbow (enhanced space)
5. Rumbow/Fingerpost Gardens (enhanced)
6. Hagley Road (enhanced space)
7. Birmingham Road (enhanced space)

### Policy 20

#### **Suggested Policy - Landscape: survey, analysis and design principles**

1. All landscape associated with new development should be considered as an intrinsic part of the overall design concept and should be considered in detail at the outset. For more major developments, applicants will be expected to prepare and submit a landscape strategy with survey and analysis informing a summary of landscape design principles - the implementation of this strategy being required and secured where appropriate by the use of conditions.
2. Applicants will be expected to provide sufficiently detailed landscape information to enable the scheme to be considered in context. Landscape strategies should ensure that:
  - a. Any trees, existing natural habitats or other features that can be effectively incorporated are retained.
  - b. Plant species, surfacing and other materials are appropriate to the site and locality with due regard to water consumption issues and nature conservation.
  - c. Trees and other natural/green elements will be encouraged on the edges of new development to help soften Halesowen.

### Question 8

**Do you support the updated policies? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else that should be included?**

### Further design guidance

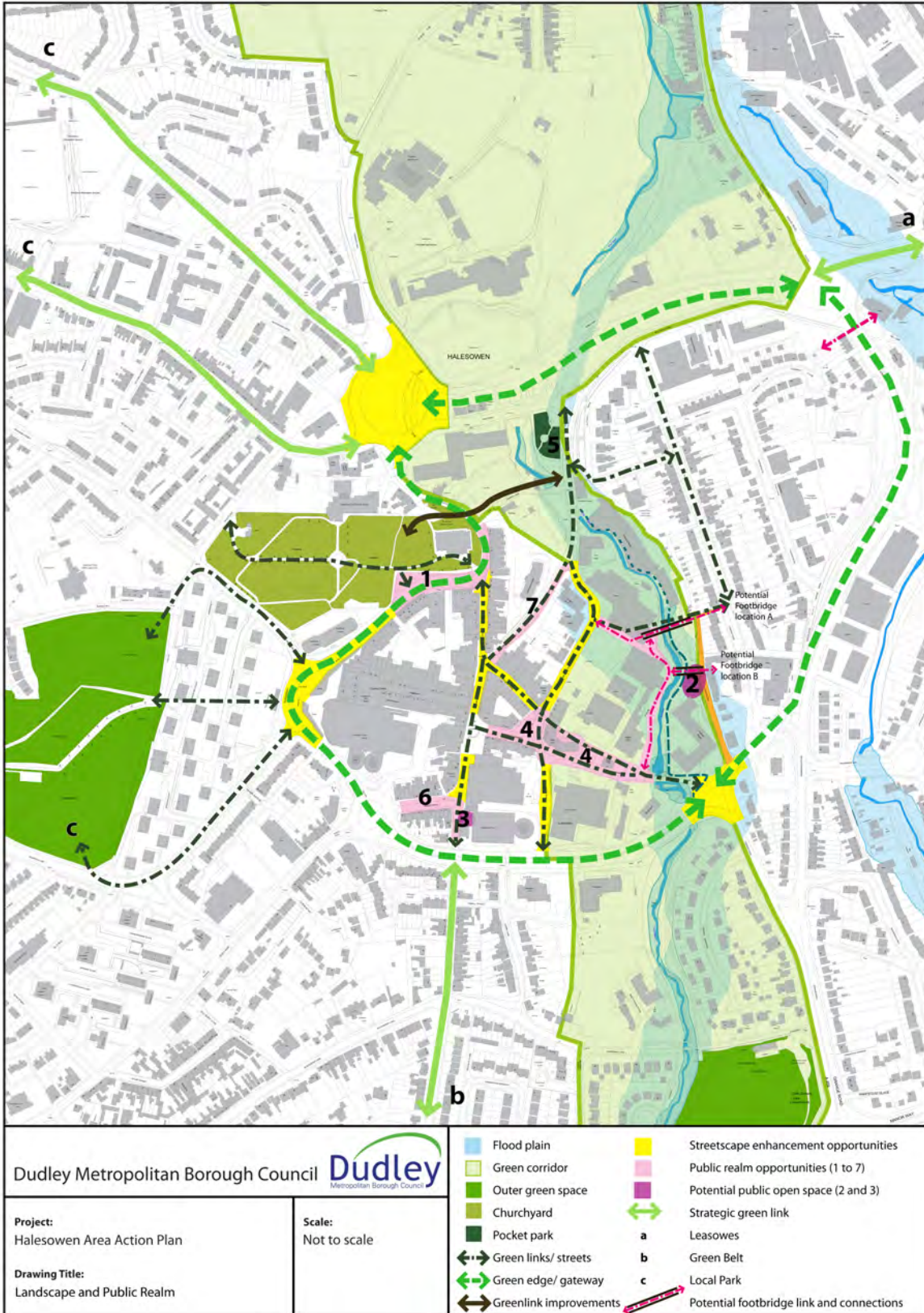
- 7.28** A final Spatial Development Framework, with a detailed 'Halesowen Town Centre Urban Design, Regeneration and Public Realm Design and Implementation Guide' will follow publication and adoption of the Halesowen AAP. This will be produced by Dudley Council's Landscape & Urban Design Team and will assist in delivering the changes that are needed.

### Monitoring Indicators

#### Question 9

Do you support the above suggested monitoring indicators? Is there anything else you could additionally suggest?





Map 4 Landscape and public realm



## 8 Nature Conservation

### Objective

#### **Safeguarding and improving Halesowen's natural environment**

**To capitalise on Halesowen's unique natural assets by protecting, improving access to and enhancing the River Stour, its bank-side habitats and other green open spaces and infrastructure leading to and within the town centre for people and nature.**

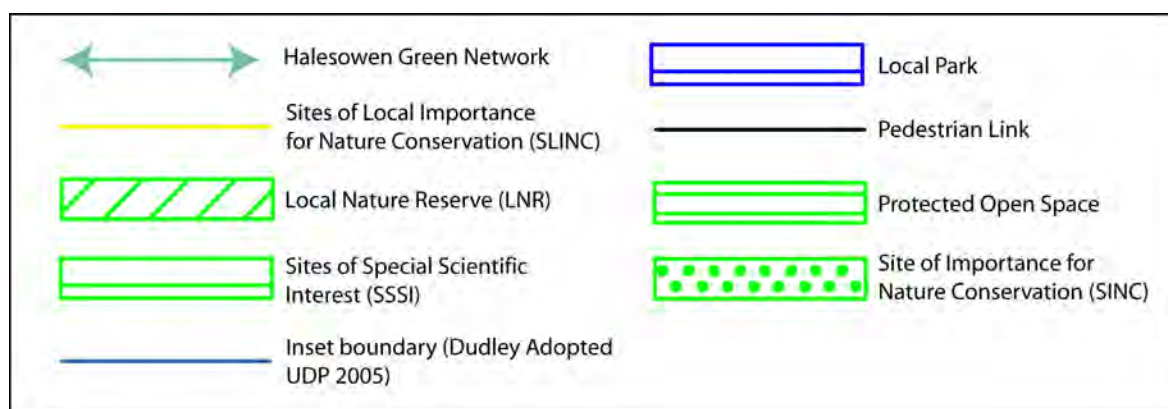
- 8.1** Halesowen is located on the south eastern outskirts of the Black Country. Its character is affected not only by the historical and ongoing development but also the natural and green assets present within and next to it. To the east of Halesowen's town centre is The Leasowes, a historic and beautiful landscape created by William Shenstone and slightly further to the east Woodgate Valley Country Park in Birmingham. To the south lies the streams and open countryside of Illey and ancient woodlands of Worcestershire.
- 8.2** A map showing nature conservation assets in the vicinity of the town centre and how they relate to the proposed Halesowen AAP boundary can be found at the end of this chapter.
- 8.3** The AAP sits under a higher tier planning policy which informs its direction. At a national level, Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (PPS9) requires planning policy to ensure development protects important natural assets (including nature conservation sites and wildlife corridors) and is used to improve the overall natural environment.
- 8.4** As described in the Black Country Core Strategy the whole of the Black Country is to undergo an environmental transformation to aid, attract and maintain inward investment. This is based on the findings of the Black Country Study. The Core Strategy is progressing this environmental transformation through policies such as CSP3: Environmental Infrastructure and ENV1: Nature Conservation.
- 8.5** It is anticipated that this AAP will progress these requirements through the following preferred policies, which are relevant to retain and augment the assets and distinctiveness of Halesowen. Many of the environmental improvements needed are not possible without development, however this will need to be undertaken in a sympathetic fashion to ensure the aims are fully achieved.

## Green Network

- 8.6** Halesowen is a vibrant, distinctive town which has retained a relatively good supply of green space, both natural and more heavily managed. A green swath is present stretching from the Highfields Park and adjacent open spaces in the west linking to the north of the town centre, via St John's Churchyard to the River Stour in the east. The river connects the town to the Illey countryside in the south and also north to Furnace Coppice and further downstream to Stourbridge in the west. However, as yet no formal public access is possible to these areas along the river banks.
- 8.7** Halesowen is set within the Black Country Core Regional Biodiversity Opportunity Area (RBOA). This RBOA is identified within the 50 year Biodiversity Vision and Opportunity of the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership.



**Map 5 Halesowen Green Network**



### Key to Map

- 8.8** Improving the natural environment is seen as being an essential tool in retaining and increasing inward investment within the Black Country sub-region. The relatively good supply present offers Halesowen a real opportunity to capitalise on this for the benefit of residents, businesses and wildlife. However, despite the volume of green space present it is recognised that this is often not in an attractive state, or is completely hidden from view, especially along the River Stour.
- 8.9** The River Stour is a major wildlife corridor which is arguably of regional/sub-regional importance. It is a major wildlife corridor in the southern part of the Black Country Core Regional Biodiversity Opportunity Area (RBOA) which helps to link the Forest of Feckenham RBOA in Warwickshire with the Cannock Chase and Sutton Park RBOA in Staffordshire and Birmingham.
- 8.10** Connected green space can provide better public access which encourages walking and cycling. As well as encouraging free healthy activity, it can reduce car use and therefore traffic entering the town centre. This is likely to have an increased effect in Halesowen as it can encourage greater use of the bus station therefore aiding a reduction in traffic in the wider area.
- 8.11** Wildlife present along the River Stour, such as Water voles and Kingfisher can be harmed by inappropriate disturbance. Indirect pressures can also have a negative impact on wildlife, such as increases in light pollution on Common pipistrelle and Brown long-eared bat and water pollution from car park runoff reducing fish stocks and therefore numbers of Otters and Kingfishers.
- 8.12** The Halesowen AAP should therefore increase the ecological quality and public access present within the Green Network. The balance between amenity and wildlife will need to be determined as is appropriate to the specific location. An example of where wildlife would be given a high priority would be along the River Stour through the following works:

- widening the vegetation along the length
- making the banksides less steep
- improving the bankside habitats for local species
- reducing the levels of light pollution
- opening up vistas of the river to surrounding areas
- creating an informal style cycle/footpath along the town centre side
- reducing flood risk

## Policy 21

### Policy - Green Network

Development will protect and improve the Green Network within the Halesowen AAP boundary. It will create and strengthen pedestrian and bicycle links and significantly enhance the habitats for wildlife within it. Development along the River Stour will be expected to be set back, to provide natural green space at least 10m from the top of both slopes, to enable new public access, essential maintenance and ecological improvements.

## Question 10

### Question - Green Network

**Does this proposed policy require amending to ensure the Green Network is adequately protected and improved?**

### Greening the Streets

- 8.13** Challenges which will face the town over the next 25 years include increased impacts of climate change, both in terms of peak summer temperatures (urban heat island effect) and flooding (more high intensity storm events).
- 8.14** Halesowen is urban in character, therefore residents and also visitors will experience hotter, more uncomfortable temperatures in high summer which can seriously affect health (especially of the elderly, the very young and those with certain illnesses) and wellbeing. Increasing the amount of green space and tree cover is proven to reduce these peak temperatures back towards those found in the wider countryside. Techniques such as green walls and roofs can be used, especially where space is limited on the ground.
- 8.15** The town has suffered from occasional localised flooding. Natural sustainable drainage techniques such as permeable surfaces, increasing cover of vegetation and ponds helps absorb rainwater into the ground and release a

higher proportion back into the atmosphere as water evaporates. This reduces the volume and rate that rainwater enters drains and water courses which helps prevent existing drainage systems from becoming overloaded and resulting in floods.

- 8.16** The Council believes that this AAP should ensure that land is used in an efficient and multi-functional way which benefits visual amenity, wildlife, reduces urban heat island effect and flooding. It is our preferred option that new development should proactively enable this transformation to take place in a manner that is appropriate and proportionate to the scale, kind and location of the works.

## Policy 22

### Policy - Greening the Streets

Development will be expected to positively contribute to climate proofing Halesowen by increasing tree cover, areas of wildlife friendly vegetation, green roofs and or wetland features to benefit natural sustainable drainage (such as ponds, reed beds and swales) as is appropriate to its scale, kind and location. Development will contribute either directly through onsite works or, where this is not possible, offsite through mechanisms such as proportionate planning obligations.

## Question 11

### Question - Greening the Streets

Does this proposed policy require amending to ensure that development will help sufficiently to climate proof the town through ecological processes?








## Protecting Key Nature Conservation Sites and Corridors

- 8.17** Areas of importance for wildlife have been identified over many years and are protected through the Core Strategy Policy ENV1 Nature Conservation. The boundaries of these sites are shown on the current UDP (2005) proposals map.
- 8.18** The River Stour is designated as Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) along its length. In addition to this the River Stour and its environs are designated as Linear Open Space, which underlines its importance as a sub-regional wildlife corridor.

- 8.19 St John’s Churchyard is also declared a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC). The Common Pipistrelle bat and several important bird species are known to use the site.
- 8.20 As these nature conservation designations are all of a sub-regional and/or borough character the Council therefore believes that the Halesowen AAP should conform to the policies stated at these levels.



Map 6 Sites and Corridors

	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)		Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC)
	Local Nature Reserve (LNR)		Linear Open Space
	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)		Greenbelt
	Inset boundary (Dudley Adopted UDP 2005)		

Key to Map



### Policy 23

#### Policy - Protecting Key Nature Conservation Sites and Corridors

Development will conform to policy ENV1 in the Core Strategy and the emerging Development Strategy DPD with regard to nature conservation designations. Development within the AAP boundary will only be supported where it protects the designated nature conservation sites within and outside this boundary. In addition to these it should protect and improve the wildlife corridor and public access functions of Linear Open Space.

### Question 12

#### Question - Protecting Key Nature Conservation Sites and Corridors

**Does this proposed policy provide a effective mechanism to protect key spaces for nature conservation? Should we provide different levels of protection within Halesowen AAP boundary than the rest of the borough?**

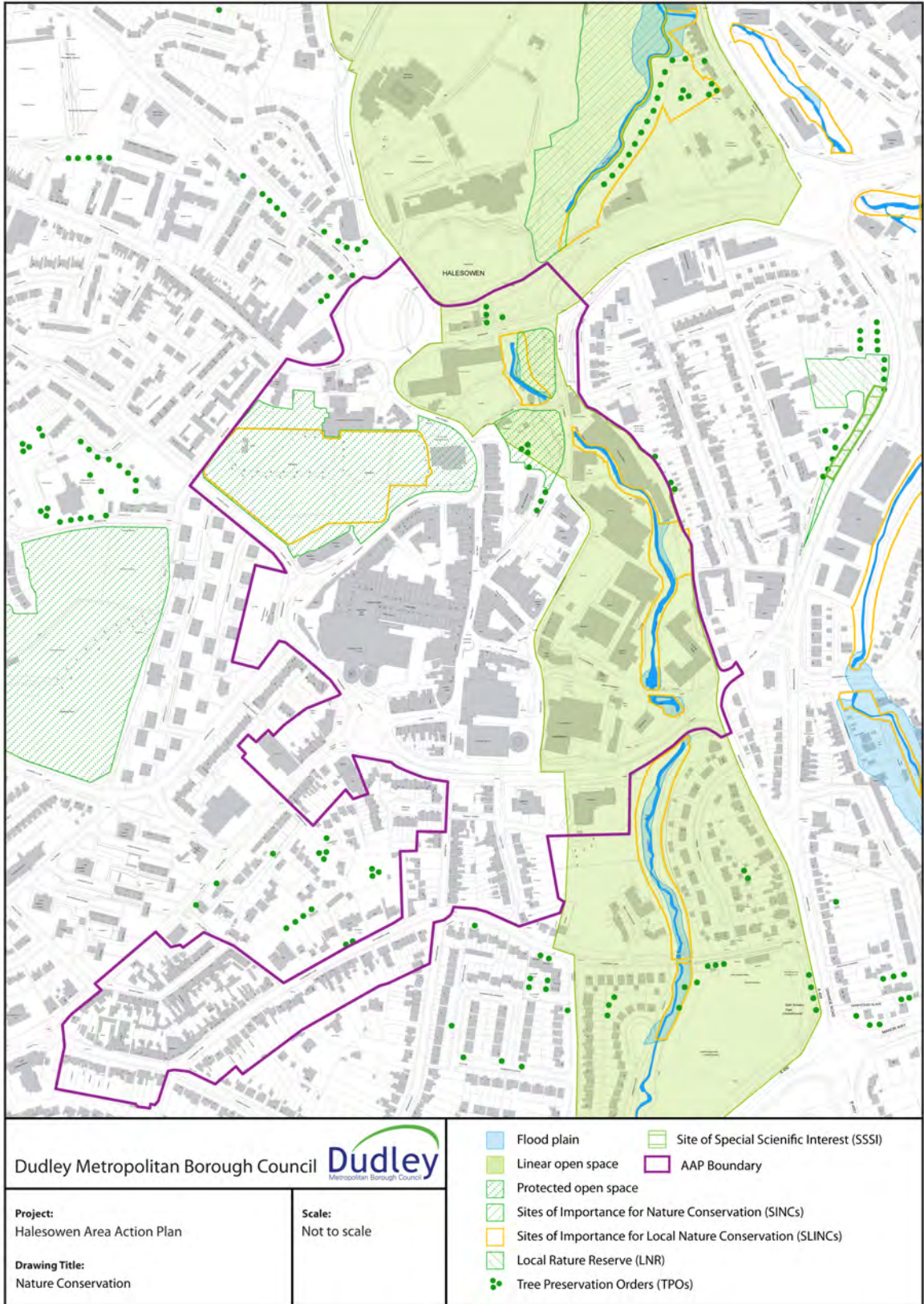
### Monitoring Framework

**8.21** The set of annual monitoring indicators for nature conservation policy will include:

- Percentage of planning approvals in the Green Network which improve green links for people and wildlife.
- Percentage of planning approvals which fully offset their heat island and surface water burdens using sustainable techniques.
- Percentage of planning approvals which protect designated nature conservation sites.
- Percentage of planning approvals within Linear Open Space which protect and positively benefit the wildlife corridor and public access functions.

### Question 13

Do you support the above suggested monitoring indicators? Is there anything else you could additionally suggest?



Map 7 Nature conservation

## 9 Historic Environment

### Objective

#### Local Character and Distinctiveness

**To ensure that the character and quality of Halesowen's historic environment is fully appreciated in terms of its townscape and landscape, individual buildings, plan form and archaeology – and that this is exploited to its best advantage and recognised by the community at large as one of the town's greatest assets.**

**9.1** Please see the various Historic Environment maps at the end of this chapter:

- Historic Environment Issues
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Proposed Designations Map A
- Proposed Designations Map B

**9.2** Halesowen retains overall a distinctive character that is underpinned by its StourValley topography and a historic street pattern first laid down in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Then, the Abbots of Halesowen Abbey created a medieval planned town, with a market centred on the Cornbow and properties set out in evenly spaced burgage plots. The town became a local centre for the woollen cloth weaving industry and a regional market centre for corn. Subsequently, Halesowen became increasingly populous and industrialized, particularly in relation to the iron trades with the River Stour's water power being harnessed for forges, furnaces and mills. At the height of the Industrial Revolution, Halesowen was nationally pre-eminent in the manufacture of hand-made nails, produced both in large factories and in domestic nail shops set in yards behind distinctive frontages of purpose built housing, such as still survive in the Blackberry Lane, Mount Street and Summer Hill areas of the town.

**9.3** Today, it is generally evident that there are elements of the surviving historic built environment that reflect Halesowen's evolving history and are of a high quality. However, within that context there are also extensive areas of 1960's and later redevelopment where historic character has largely been expunged. It will be important in future to pay special attention to retaining those elements of historic character that do remain. Further losses in relation to an already sadly decimated "critical mass" cannot realistically be sustained if the local distinctiveness of Halesowen is to be maintained. It is also readily apparent that an opportunity to strengthen local distinctiveness exists in relation to localised areas of somewhat degraded historic and environmental character that would benefit from overall enhancement, including through varying degrees of sensitive modern redevelopment.

- 9.4** Arising from all this and from the start of the plan making process it was recognised that the relationship between new development and locally distinctive townscapes and landscapes, including individual Heritage Assets and archaeological remains, needed to be fully understood and thereafter carefully managed. Therefore and in preparing the Area Action Plan for Halesowen, Dudley MBC has been very aware that in promoting new development and the enhancement of existing townscapes and landscapes through good urban design, there is also a need for the town's overall historic character to be properly understood and appreciated and for its conservation to be taken fully into account.
- 9.5** Such an approach is in complete accordance with the adopted Black Country Core Strategy Policy ENV2 'Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness'. The Core Strategy notes at paragraph 6.10 that both nationally and in the Black Country itself considerable progress has already been made towards achieving a fuller analysis and understanding of local character and distinctiveness through using Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) techniques. Undertaking HLC in any given area allows a proper definition of local distinctiveness to be arrived at whilst identifying the whole range of Heritage Assets contributing to overall historic character, providing also an assessment of their relative significance.
- 9.6** That said, it was acknowledged at the informal Early Stage Consultation phase of the Area Action Plan that no such detailed analysis of the historic environment of Halesowen was then available, nor was there anything like comprehensive information about the location and relative significance of individual "Heritage Assets" contributing to the town's historic character. It was suggested that it would not be possible to effectively conserve or manage Halesowen's historic environment including through Area Action Plan Policies without a much better level of knowledge being achieved.
- 9.7** The consultation feedback received supported the undertaking of detailed Historic Landscape Characterisation to address the situation through defining locally distinctive character areas and significant Heritage Assets, including areas of high archaeological potential in order to assist in protecting overall character.

### **Halesowen Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study**

- 9.8** Please see the Historic Landscape Characterisation map at the end of this chapter.
- 9.9** During 2010 and 2011 the Historic Environment Team accordingly undertook survey and analysis work leading towards the production of a '*Halesowen Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation*' (HUHLC) study that constitutes the principal historic environment evidence base for the Halesowen Area Action Plan.

- 9.10** The boundary of the study area is not contiguous with that for the Area Action Plan but spreads wider in order to more fully capture the historic extent of Halesowen and to include its associated hinterland. The study describes the historical development of Halesowen and identifies a number of Historic Townscape Character Zones within the Town Centre and beyond as shown on the Historic Landscape Characterisation map. Large scale mapping for each Character Zone was then undertaken that identifies individual buildings and spaces which contribute positively or otherwise to local character.
- 9.11** Within this process and as envisaged in the Black Country Core Strategy, it has proved possible to identify locally significant areas of high historic townscape and landscape value and a wide range of individual Heritage Assets of varying degrees of significance, including buildings with potential for inclusion on the Local List and archaeological priority areas. A review of statutorily designated assets has also been a part of the process with consideration being given to the potential for future new designations and including the potential for Conservation Area designation.
- 9.12** Full details of buildings felt to have the potential to meet statutory list criteria and those which meet the criteria for the Council's Local List can be found at Appendix 2 of the final version Halesowen UHLC evidence base document - which will be subject to further discussion with landowners and wider consultation on that matter.
- 9.13** A particular finding arising from the research and analysis undertaken for the UHLC was the recognition that Character Zone 9, covering principally Blackberry Lane, Mount Street and Summer Hill constituted an extremely well preserved nail-making suburb of the town. The area developed piecemeal from around 1850 to 1900 and it has its own highly specialised townscape comprising of two storey, often architecturally polite, houses in continuous frontages punctuated at regular intervals by cart arches. These lead to large backyards containing outbuildings that appear to have been nail shops. The cart arches would have been designed to accommodate wagons delivering long bundles of iron rods as the raw material for nail making and would equally have been used for the later despatch of the finished nails, quite possibly to the surviving Nail Warehouse in Laurel Lane. Census records for Blackberry Lane reveal that in 1881 people employed in making nails occupied every single house bar one, which was lived in by a bricklayer.
- 9.14** It was felt that this exceptional survival, relating to an industry that epitomised Halesowen in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, fully justified the south-west extension of the AAP boundary to encompass the character zone so that AAP Policies can be brought to bear.

## Using the results of the Halesowen Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation

- 9.15** The results of the Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation (UHLC) can be used by strategic planners, urban designers, intending developers and others to gain a proper appreciation of the historic character of Halesowen. This will assist in positive place making and the promotion of a sense of place and help to foster responsive design. Through alerting individual developers at an early stage to historic environment constraints and opportunities that may affect proposed development sites, it will also convey for them a high degree of certainty and thus positively assist in guiding and facilitating new development which is actively encouraged.
- 9.16** In this context the Plan sets out that where physical evidence of local historic character persists in the form of assets that make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness such assets should be conserved and wherever possible enhanced. Equally, new development should respect and respond to the positive characteristics of the locality such that local distinctiveness is reinforced in a complementary manner.
- 9.17** Using the information contained in the Characterisation study (HUHLC) will enable developers to properly assess the impact of new development upon any affected Heritage Assets and their setting and avoid harm. They will equally be in a position to, in a timely fashion, develop design proposals that respect and reinforce local distinctiveness. In this way, as is required by both the Black Country Core Strategy and Government Guidance, the content of Design and Access Statements submitted in support of planning applications can be properly informed.
- 9.18** As can be appreciated from the foregoing, the overarching aim of Historic Environment Policies in the Halesowen Area Action Plan is, therefore, to assist in maintaining the individual identity and character of Halesowen as a whole rather than focusing solely on locally or nationally designated assets. This is very much in line with the objectives of Black Country Core Strategy Policy ENV2 Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness.

## Policy 24

### **Suggested Policy - Conservation and Enhancement of Local Character and Distinctiveness in Halesowen**

All development proposals should take account of the locally distinctive character of the area in which they are to be sited, including its historic character, and should respect and respond to its positive attributes. Physical assets (buildings, sites or areas together with their settings) whether man made or natural that positively contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of Halesowen's landscape and townscape should be retained and wherever possible enhanced and their settings be respected.

The Halesowen Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation has mapped out for each identified character zone various buildings and spaces and assigned a degree of significance to them based upon the contribution they make to the overall character of the historic environment. This includes Locally Listed Buildings that are felt to make a particularly special contribution to local character. The UHLC document, therefore, provides baseline data that in conjunction with the information held in the Council's Historic Buildings Sites and Monuments Record must be used for land use appraisals and to inform proposals for development.

New development in Halesowen should be designed so as to reinforce and enhance local distinctiveness and full reference should be made in Design and Access Statements accompanying planning applications to the Halesowen Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation. Design and Access Statements should clearly set out the steps that have been taken to achieve locally responsive outcomes through either traditional or more contemporary design solutions.

In respect of major individual developments or in relation to particularly environmentally sensitive areas, developers may in future themselves be required to commission more detailed "Local Area Character Appraisals" (as defined in the Dudley Historic Environment SPD) in order to more fully inform specific land use proposals.

In cases where changes of character or demolition are unavoidable the Council will seek to ensure that provision is made for an appropriate level of archaeological recording to take place prior to the alteration of the features concerned.

## Question 14

**Do you support the above proposed policy? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?**

## Identification of Areas of High Historic Townscape Value

**9.19** Please see Proposed Designations Map A at the end of this chapter.

**9.20** As noted above, each Character Zone identified by the Halesowen UHLC was mapped at a large scale in order to specifically identify the contribution made by individual buildings and spaces to the character of the local historic environment. The buildings were ranked through colour coding into those making a High (red), Medium (orange), Neutral (yellow) or Negative (blue) contribution to local character. Proposed Designations Map A illustrates the combined results when the buildings identified for each Character Zone were mapped at a lesser scale and combined to give a picture across the whole of the study area.

**9.21** As can be seen from the Proposed Designations Map A, that exercise highlighted the existence of certain areas that exhibited a concentration of historic assets that it was felt in combination made a particularly positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. These areas were tested against a range of criteria including:

- Contribution of historic buildings to a 'sense of place'
- Street plan and form
- Completeness
- Views and setting
- Representation and historic interest

**9.22** Those areas that met the necessary criteria were thereby considered to be "Areas of High Historic Townscape Value" (AHHTV) and identified as such on the Proposed Designations Map A.



## Policy 25

### Suggested Policy - Areas of High Historic Townscape Value (AHHTV)

Areas of High Historic Townscape Value (AHHTV) are recognised in the *Halesowen Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation* (UHLC) as defining discrete areas of townscape of acknowledged importance. Where new development is proposed in an AHHTV every effort must be made to ensure it consolidates or enhances the existing positive characteristics of the locality including the public realm. Not only should existing townscape in these areas be conserved and enhanced but the opportunity should be taken to create complementary good quality townscape through extension, new build or redevelopment. Views into, out of and within the AHHTV must be respected.

Design and Access Statements accompanying planning applications in AHHTV's must be prepared with full reference to the Halesowen UHLC and must clearly evidence how the proposal has taken account of its detailed findings in order to produce a locally responsive high quality design that, wherever appropriate, also conserves and where possible enhances significant historic assets together with their settings. Proposals that fail to respond adequately to their townscape context or that would prejudice views into, out of or within AHHTV's will not be permitted.

## Identification of Areas of High Historic Landscape Value

- 9.23** Please see the Proposed Designations Map A at the end of this chapter.
- 9.24** The Council has identified Landscape Heritage Areas in the past that are incorporated within the Dudley Adopted 2005 Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and that were protected by UDP Policies HE2 and HE3. Those policies have now been deleted causing the Council to review that historic landscape designation. Considering the results of ongoing historic characterisation work across the Borough and specifically in Halesowen it is now felt appropriate to re-identify existing Landscape Heritage Areas and other areas that meet a set of defined criteria as Areas of High Historic Landscape Value (AHHLV).
- 9.25** This is in order to better demonstrate that it is the importance of the elements of the historic environment to the character and distinctiveness of these areas that is recognised by this designation. Whereas the designation of AHHTV recognises the contribution to local character and distinctiveness of the structures within built-up areas, which might be complemented by features of the wider landscape, the value of AHHLV is considered to reside primarily in the quality of the wider landscape, such as areas of open space, woodland, watercourses, hedgerows and archaeological features and their historic, communal, ecological and aesthetic values. The following criteria have been used to identify Areas of High Historic Landscape Value:

- Representation of Cultural Heritage
- Representation of Natural Heritage
- Preservation
- Amenity

**9.26** In the case of Halesowen the area identified relates to the very strong linear wooded open space provided by the course of the River Stour in the Furnace Coppice area (Character Zone 3 in the HUHLC). This area contains the steep sided gorge through which the River Stour runs to the north of Halesowen Town Centre.

**9.27** The gorge is heavily wooded with the river following a sinuous course over a rocky bed and comprises an area of attractive broad-leafed woodland and riverscape that forms part of a ribbon of green open space running from Halesowen in the east to Stourbridge and the edge of the Borough in the west. The area has high value for wildlife, not the least as part of a wildlife corridor running through the urban area from the rural edges of Worcestershire and Staffordshire and has been designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. The wider River Stour corridor contains a string of water-powered industrial sites of importance for their potential or known archaeological interest. Many of these relate to the early development of iron working and other industries in the area, including Halesowen Furnace.

## Policy 26

### **Suggested Policy - Areas of High Historic Landscape Value (AHHLV)**

Within Areas of High Historic Landscape Value the Council will resist any development or other works taking place which would be detrimental to the character, quality and historic integrity of the landscape. The Council will seek to protect and enhance views into, from or within Areas of High Historic Landscape Value. Approval will not be given where such views would be unduly interrupted or harmed, or where the opportunity to enhance such a view would be lost.

## **Identification of Designed Landscapes of High Historic Value**

**9.28** Some areas retain landscape features that are the product of a formal design process with the intention of producing both a functional and aesthetically pleasing landscape. Such areas include Parks, gardens and cemeteries.

**9.29** Nationally a Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic or Horticultural Interest is maintained by English Heritage to recognise the contribution to the nation's heritage of the finest designed landscapes. However, there are numerous landscaped areas within the borough that make an important

contribution to its character as a result of their design and historic associations which would not meet the criteria for inclusion on this national register. To ensure that the contribution of these areas to local character and distinctiveness is recognised in planning for the future of the borough, it is proposed to identify the most historically significant of these as Designed Landscapes of High Historic Value.

**9.30** To identify the Designed Landscapes with the highest historic value the following criteria have been used:

- Date
- Preservation
- Aesthetic Value
- Historical Association

**9.31** In the case of Halesowen it is considered that the formally landscaped grounds of the cemetery associated with St John the Baptist Parish Church justifies designation as a Designed Landscape of High Historic Value.

## Policy 27

### **Suggested Policy - Designed Landscapes of High Historic Value (DLHHV)**

Designed Landscapes of High Historic Value will be preserved and wherever possible enhanced and the Council will resist any development or other works taking place which would be detrimental to the setting, character, quality and historic integrity of the landscape including detailed design features and individual historic components whether man made or natural.

## Question 15

Do you support the above proposed policy approach towards Halesowen's historic townscapes, landscapes and designed landscapes? Are there any parts of these policies that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?

## Identification of Archaeological Priority Areas

**9.32** Please see the Proposed Designations Map B at the end of this chapter.

**9.33** The Borough contains a number of sites of archaeological remains identified as important at the national level that have therefore been formally designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. However, there are other sites throughout

the Borough including in Halesowen recorded in the Council's Historic Environment Record that have also been identified as having a high potential for the survival of archaeological remains of regional or national importance but have yet to be designated. The Council will need to consider the preservation of such archaeological remains when assessing applications for new development, as well as identifying opportunities to make greater use of the archaeological resource in sustaining the area's character and distinctiveness.

**9.34** Criteria used to identify sites that should be recognised as Archaeological Priority Areas are as follows:

- Survival
- Rarity
- Representation
- Vulnerability
- Visibility and Accessibility

**9.35** In order to recognise the potential importance of such archaeologically sensitive areas it is proposed to formally identify them as "Archaeological Priority Areas" (APA) as shown on the Proposed Designations Map B. Other areas of high archaeological potential may also be identified over the life of this Area Action Plan which will be subject to the same policy.

**9.36** In Halesowen it is considered that the whole "footprint" of the medieval planned town (Dudley Council's Historic Buildings Sites and Monuments Record, HBSMR, reference 12337) should be considered to be an APA as should the location of the Cornbow Mill (a medieval Corn Mill, post-medieval Blade Mill and early modern Malt Mill; HBSMR 4632) and the Cornbow Bridge itself (first mentioned in documents of 1668-9; HBSMR 7396).

**9.37** The early pre-Norman history of Halesowen and the historical development of both the bridge and mill complex are poorly recorded in documentary sources and as such, archaeological remains are likely to be the best source to illuminate the town's early history and the development of these at least regionally important individual Heritage Assets.

**9.38** A further APA, the Forge Lane Industrial Area, was also identified but falls outside of the AAP boundary. This was the site historically of Halesowen Forge - an extremely significant water-powered site with associated industry.

## Policy 28

### Suggested Policy - Archaeological Priority Areas (APA)

Archaeological Priority Areas have been identified in the Halesowen Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation and in respect of these and any other areas of potential archaeological significance that may be identified and included in the Dudley Council *Historic Buildings Sites and Monuments Record* through the life of the plan the Council will:

- Expect developers as part of any planning application to provide adequate information to allow the full and proper consideration of the impact of the proposed development on archaeological remains through desk top archaeological appraisal and as the Council deems appropriate subsequent physical site evaluation/building recording.
- Resist development that would have a damaging impact upon significant archaeological remains and where potentially negative impacts have been identified expect developers to devise and put forward for agreement suitable measures designed to mitigate such impact in order to preserve buildings, structures or buried deposits in situ.
- Where preservation in situ would be unreasonable seek to ensure that provision is made for an appropriate level of archaeological investigation and recording of any building, structure or buried deposit of interest prior to the commencement of development, site clearance or infrastructure works and for appropriate publication of the results.

### Question 16

Do you support the above proposed policy? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?

## Review of the built environment encompassed by the Halesowen Area Action Plan and assessment of the potential for Conservation Area designation.

- 9.39** Criteria used for the identification of areas that should be protected as Conservation Areas are set nationally through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 and detailed in English Heritage Guidance. The Act places a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to review their areas from time to time and to identify those parts of their areas that have special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and to designate them. In order

to qualify for designation an area should be identifiable as possessing a special level of significance (i.e. more than ordinary) for either its historic or architectural value or both. It must also contain features that can either be protected or enhanced through the use of the powers provided within the Act or through the preparation of management proposals as described within the Act.

- 9.40** The evidence contained in the Halesowen Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation is very germane to this process and the study was accordingly used as a vehicle through which a review could be undertaken. Of obvious relevance in this context was the fact that the UHLC had already been able to identify Areas of High Historic Townscape Value, some of which it was felt might have the potential to be of sufficient special interest as to warrant formal conservation area designation.
- 9.41** On analysis it was felt, however, that this was not the case. There are delightful historic enclaves, such as the area around the Parish Church, Ivy House and Whitefriars, whilst the High Street, anchored by the Lyttleton Arms, still feels historic. However, because of the nature of the modern redevelopment of the historic core of Halesowen there is a greater tendency for Heritage Assets to be “pepper potted” across the townscape rather than agglomerated in such a way as to make them susceptible to conservation area designation.
- 9.42** Added to this is the need to consider what conservation area designation might actually achieve in practice. Its main effect would be to allow closer planning controls over demolition but it is notable that most of the surviving Heritage Assets in Halesowen’s historic core are already either statutorily or Locally Listed and/or fall within a proposed Area of High Historic Townscape Value. In reality, therefore the existing statutory controls allied with the policy framework developed as part of this Area Action Plan will in themselves allow the Council to confer a high degree of protection to both individual Heritage Assets and local distinctiveness more generally.
- 9.43** For all of these reasons it is not considered that conservation area designation is warranted at this time.

### Question 17

Do you support the above review of the built environment and assessment for potential conservation area designation? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?

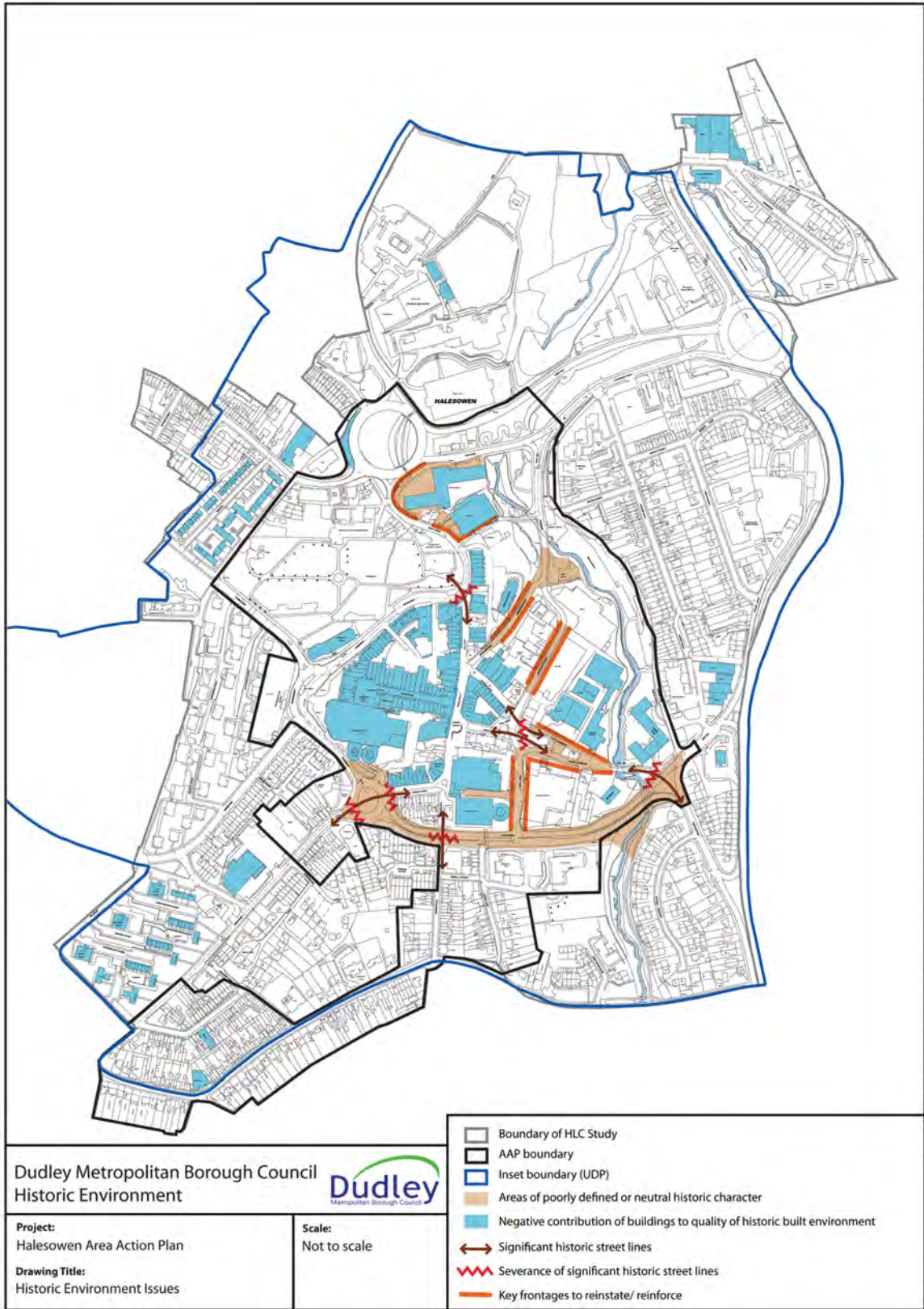
## Monitoring

**9.44** The suggested proposed policies will need to be monitored in order to ensure that they are being effectively delivered. Suggested (annual) monitoring indicators could include:

- Local Character and Distinctiveness - Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Historic Environment Officer recommendation (target = 0)
- Local Character and Distinctiveness - Number of locally listed buildings lost (target = 0)
- Areas of High Historic Townscape Value - Number of planning permissions within the Areas of High Historic Townscape Value granted contrary to Historic Environment Officer recommendation (target = 0)
- Archaeological Priority Areas - Number of planning permissions granted without an archaeological desk based assessment/evaluation when requested to be supplied by the Historic Environment Officer (target = 0)

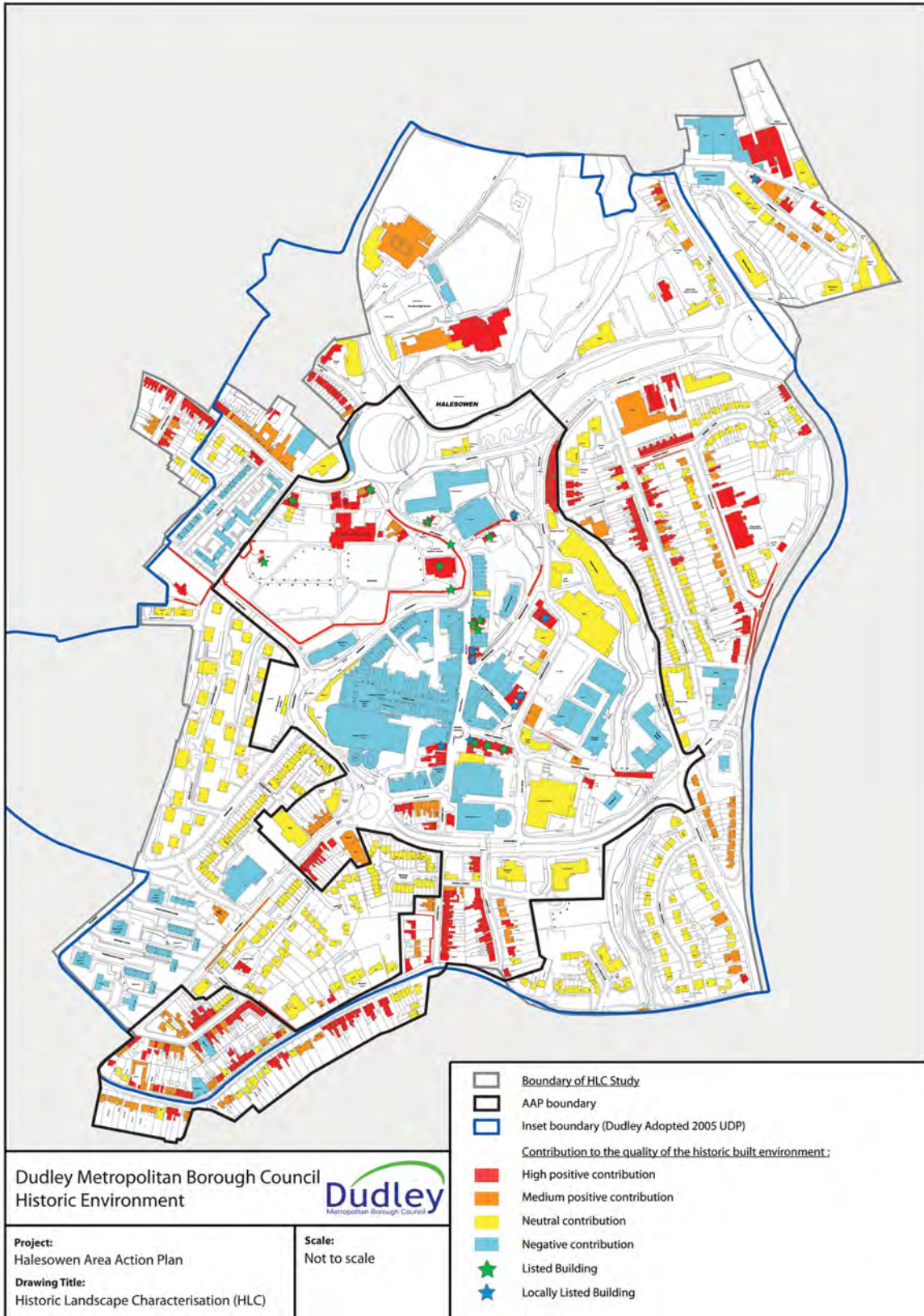
### Question 18

Do you support the above suggested monitoring indicators? Is there anything else you could additionally suggest?

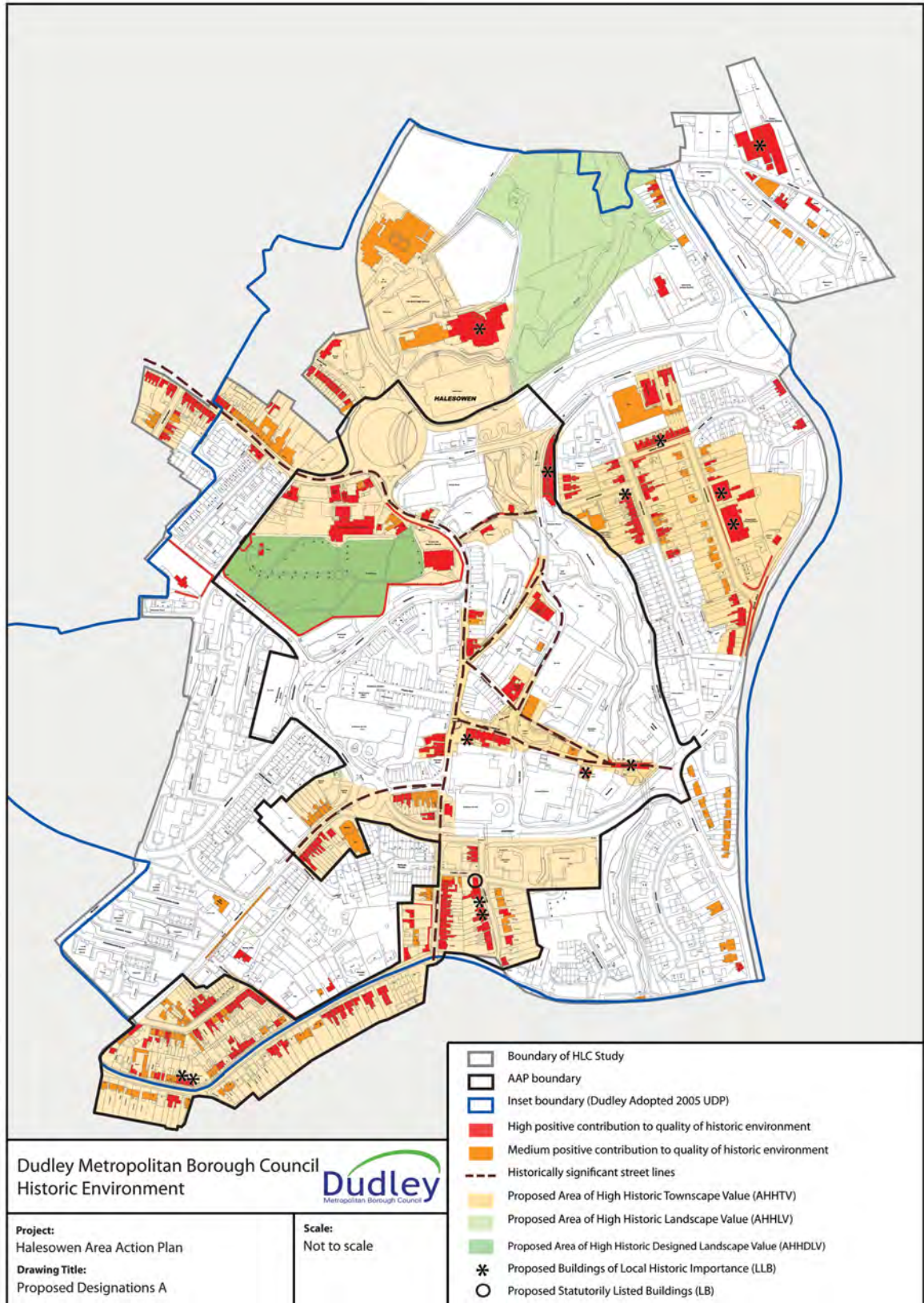


Map 8 Historic Environment Issues

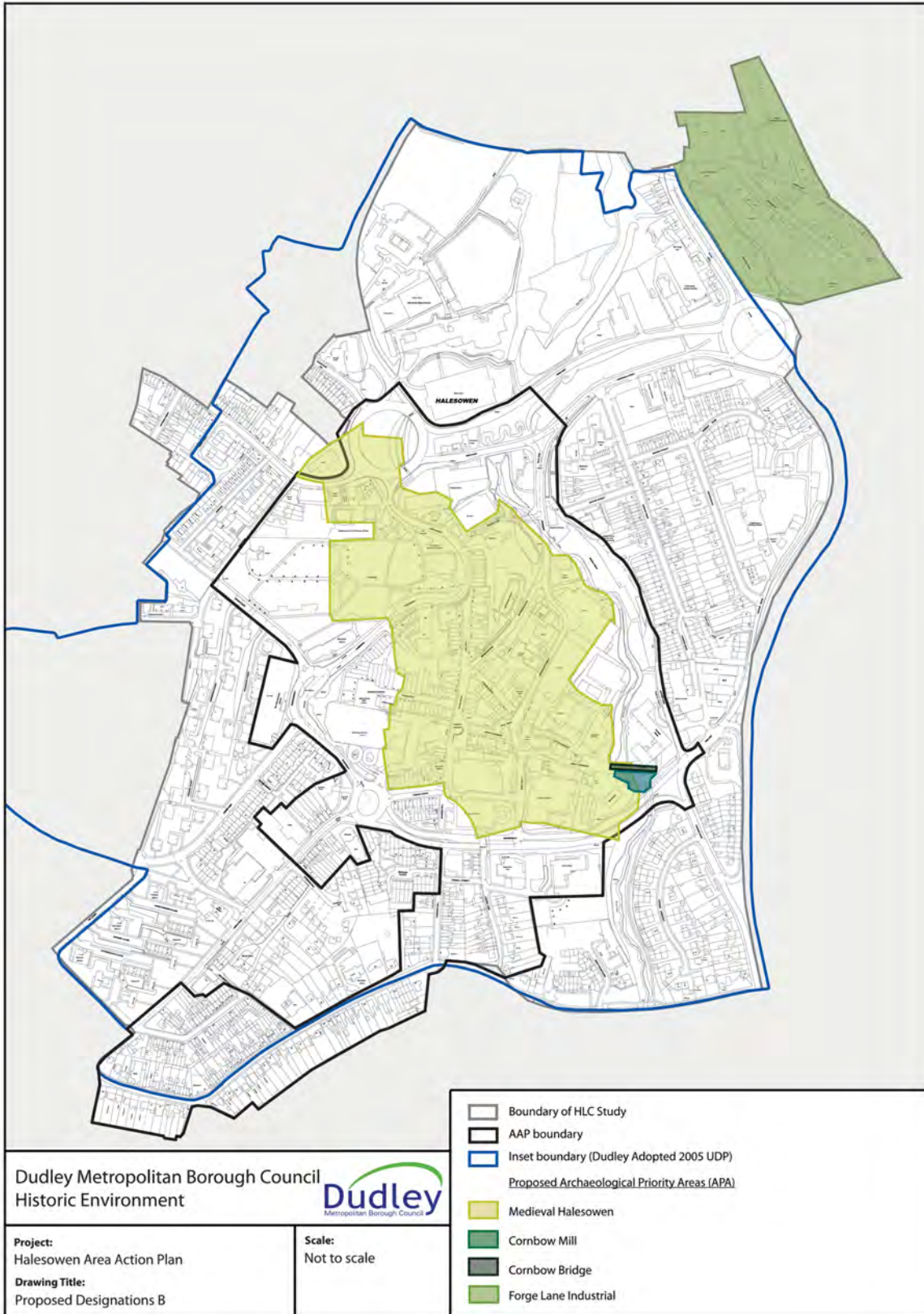




Map 9 Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)



Map 10 Proposed Designations Map A



Map 11 Proposed Designations Map B



## 10 Urban Design

### Objectives

To achieve consistently high quality urban design, architecture and landscape that is sustainable and enhances existing buildings and spaces within Halesowen town centre.

To improve ease of movement for pedestrians, people with limited mobility, cyclists and vehicles in and at the edges of the town centre by enhancing existing streets, routes and spaces and potentially creating new ones to provide an environment that is more direct and better integrated both physically and visually.

To strengthen local character and distinctiveness by setting an approach that ensures new development respects the context of the town centre.

To enhance the town's natural assets by bringing them into active use for everyone to enjoy.

To strengthen the town's evening economy by providing more family orientated cultural and leisure activities.

**10.1** Please also see the various Urban Design maps at the end of this chapter:

- Key Issues
- Character Areas
- Views, Vistas and Landmarks
- Development Framework

### Design Quality

**10.2** A high quality environment with well designed buildings and spaces is essential for the well-being of residents and visitors to Halesowen town centre. Good design relates to the layout and function of the different parts of the town centre as well as their detailed appearance. Pressure for development is such that there will be opportunity to change the environment , for better or worse, over the Halesowen AAP's plan period to 2026.

**10.3** The character, image and appearance of Halesowen Town Centre, is beginning to deteriorate. The quality of buildings and spaces are dated and are in need of some repair to help raise the perception and overall quality of the town. While much of the urban fabric remains intact, providing well-defined urban spaces and activity, the edges of the town centre are fragmented with large monolithic buildings that turn their backs onto the public realm. In

contrast, the town centre displays many good qualities such as its form and to some extent, its integration with neighbouring residential areas. As with most towns in the Black Country and around Birmingham, Halesowen has many hidden 'gems' including its network of footpaths routes and the River Stour.

- 10.4** Parts of the town centre have been improved to raise the quality of the area, and there are some listed buildings that are recognised for their historical or architectural importance. The appearance and local distinctiveness of the town centre is somewhat undermined by recent developments that have failed to make any real impact on the town centre, other than of course, to provide jobs to boost the local economy.
- 10.5** It is therefore important that the Halesowen Area Action Plan provides a strong framework for the design of future developments in the town centre. This can encompass protecting those areas which are valued and providing guidelines for new development for those areas where change is encouraged.
- 10.6** We think the Halesowen Area Action Plan provides guidance on which areas should be protected, and which areas could be redeveloped, and what design guidelines should be followed by redevelopment schemes. Design guidance should address a whole range of matters ranging from the shape of streets, to the height of buildings, to protecting key views and vistas, and to the appearance of new buildings.

## Policy 29

### Suggested Policy- Design Quality

Development should:

- Be of the highest standards of architecture, landscape and urban design;
- Include a level of detail which gives the building visual interest for views both near and far;
- Have active ground floors that provide overlooking “eyes on the street” and increased social interaction and a feeling of safety which assists in reducing the potential for crime and antisocial behaviour;
- Have clear distinctions between public and private space;
- Reinforce the definition of streets and spaces by creating common building lines and strong landscape edges;
- Reduce the physical and visual impact of vehicles and service areas by providing a mix of parking solutions such as on-street, within a building's curtilage, and rear parking courts. Other parking solutions such as underground and above development should also be considered;
- Have a scale and massing which respects its locality or is in accordance with other policies of this plan;
- Contribute to gateways and landmarks, identified on the Views, Vistas and Landmarks Plan as appropriate, by reinforcing the identity and character of the routes and spaces they serve;
- Be designed in such a way as to be adaptable for a range of future uses;
- Ensure new developments are designed and constructed to high environmental standards and thereby minimise energy requirements, reduce water consumption, and use materials which are of low environmental impact.

### Question 19

**Do you support the above 'design quality' policy? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?**

## Sustainable Urban Development

- 10.7** Sustainability encompasses social, economic, transport and environmental factors and good design can help create places which bring together all these elements to make places that are truly sustainable.

- 10.8** Halesowen has many positive attributes that can help to work towards a more sustainable town centre. The following paragraphs describe some of these key attributes that need to be recognised and improved upon to make a truly sustainable environment.
- 10.9** The finer grain of the historic sections, such as that provided by High Street and Hagley Street, has stood the test of time because it is more durable, flexible and can adapt to changes in economic markets, consumer needs and lifestyles. For Halesowen town centre to be more sustainable, new buildings need to be as adaptable and enduring as some of Halesowen's past examples.
- 10.10** Halesowen is also home to a variety of land uses ranging from high street chains to smaller independent shops and these all assist in making Halesowen able to change and adapt when needed. This ethos of providing variety and adaptability in uses and built form is essential to maintain the town for generations to come. The Cornbow Centre and new Asda food store not only provides for local people but also attracts consumers from further afield and thus helping the economy of the town. Industrial and office premises are scattered across the centre offering a degree of local employment.
- 10.11** Halesowen has good access to the local and wider public transport network and has recently benefited from and upgraded bus station. This provides a platform for people to be less reliant on private transport and will support the ambition to encourage an increase where appropriate in town centre living.
- 10.12** Halesowen has a range of community and leisure services that help to sustain the town centre and its population. Nearby parks and open spaces offer recreational opportunities. The existing green network needs to be extended, enhanced and managed so that the river corridor and other open spaces are protected and made more accessible and usable for all. Investing in the natural environment will ensure a richer biodiversity in the town centre.
- 10.13** The Halesowen AAP process is the vehicle to see how we can learn from the past, understand what is good and not so good about the town, and how its recognised attributes can be improved upon to help create a more sustainable town centre.
- 10.14** Development has a large impact on issues such as global warming, resource depletion and pollution, therefore new and refurbished buildings should be designed in a way that reduces such harmful impacts and respects the principles of a sustainable environment.



## Policy 30

### Suggested Policy - Sustainable Urban Design

**The purpose of this policy is to ensure new development proposals are sustainable and promote sustainable living through the design, construction, use and management of buildings, open spaces and supporting infrastructure, with the principle aim of showcasing best practice in all forms of sustainable development.**

Development should:

1. Reuse existing buildings wherever possible, contributing to environmental quality;
2. Use environmentally friendly materials, including the re-use of salvaged and renewable materials;
3. Consider orientation, external and internal design of buildings, use of existing and new landscape, maximise the use of natural heat and light, and make use of active and passive solar gain technologies;
4. Contribute to local biodiversity, minimise the use of non-renewable energy resources, and encourage renewable energy technologies within the development;
5. Encourage rain water harvesting and grey water recycling to minimise water usage, ideally on a plot by plot basis, within an overall Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SUDS);
6. Provide for an appropriate mix of uses within buildings to ensure longevity, adaptability, and possible future extension.
7. Provide a mix of building types, and tenures;
8. Incorporate appropriate provision for recycling, storage and collection of waste materials and composting;
9. Encourage green roof construction methods both for new build and retrofitting proposals;
10. Be designed to minimise reliance on the private car and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
11. Major developments will be required to show how heating, cooling and power systems will minimise Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions;
12. Residential development should achieve a sustainability rating of at least Level 3 as set out in the Governments Code for Sustainable Homes or equivalent. Major development schemes should seek to achieve the highest possible level, including provision of 'zero carbon' homes (Level 6).

### Question 20

**Do you support the above 'sustainable urban design' policy? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?**

## Character and Appearance

- 10.15** Local distinctiveness plays an important role and is a key characteristic of successful places. Distinctiveness is achieved through identifying the predominant land use, character of specific areas within a place and through strengthening overall identity, which can help assist in tailoring future intervention.
- 10.16** It is vital to understand what parts of the environment are valued, and what kind of character an area has in order to appreciate it more and assist in its preservation and enhancement. Understanding character can help to create new buildings and spaces that fit in with its context and strengthen the appearance and experience of the town for the better.
- 10.17** Halesowen varies in character. The redevelopment of the town centre in the 1960s has in many parts maintained the structure of the historic core. However, many buildings are of low quality and lack character. There is an opportunity for the Halesowen AAP to provide some guidance on what the future character of the area could be, without being too prescriptive, with certain areas reflecting the character of the historic core while others could be more contemporary in style.
- 10.18** Halesowen Town Centre currently includes a range of more or less defined areas of dominant character and this has been understood from an Urban Design perspective. These areas have been broadly defined in terms of streetscape, urban form and grain, building type, height and mass. The purpose of the Character Areas map (at the end of this chapter) is to illustrate an area's identity, how it is to be protected, enhanced, or if necessary strengthened.
- 10.19** The following list describes what the character areas could be like in the future (please read in conjunction with the Character Areas map):
- 1. A458 Earls Way, A459 Bromsgrove Road, Queensway** - Principle highway that defines the edge of the town centre and would benefit from landscape improvements that enhances the approach to the town.

Aim - To strengthen the landscape character that improves the gateway status and defines the edges of the town centre.

2. **Churchyard** – Probably the most distinctive area in the town. The area is home to St. John the Baptist Church which is the strategic landmark feature for the town and the wider area. The churchyard is a significant landscape feature and a green asset.

Aim - To further enhance the setting of this area and to integrate it more with the High Street.

3. **High Street/Hagley Street** - Principle pedestrianised retail area with a mix of historic and contemporary built form, a place of vitality during the day.

Aim- To enhance shopping facilities for the town by extending in both directions of the High Street from the north up to the southern gateway by Summer Hill / Hagley Road.

4. **New Road/Church Lane** - This area has a key role to play in further strengthening the sense of arrival to the town and improve views to St. John the Baptist's Church.

Aim - New built form will need to announce the entrance to the town whilst respecting the views and setting of the church. Maintaining and enhancing the character of this area will help to extend the townscape value of High Street.

5. **Fingerpost Gardens** – A significant formal landscape green space in character which defines the north eastern edge of the town centre.

Aim - To maintain its character and strengthen its links to the emerging open space network proposals.

6. **Tenterfields** – a significant area in character comprising early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential accommodation located east of the town. Somewhat cut off from the town by the River Stour.

Aim - To maintain the character as a good quality sustainable residential area that supports the town centre's diversity. To establish a connection across the River Stour that increases access to the town.

7. **Rumbow** – An area of mixed quality of built form comprising mostly commercial/employment uses. The area functions as a transitional area providing good links to the town centre; however the quality of the streetscene is poor.

Aim - To strengthen the links to the town centre by improving street enclosure through new development and good quality landscaping. Maintain employment uses to compliment adjacent character areas and provide greater diversity.

8. **River Stour** – Mostly commercial area with a mix of light industrial, offices, leisure and assembly uses such as the Zion Christian Centre and Rumbow works.

Aim - To encourage new development that will assist in reuniting the river to the town centre as a natural and leisure asset.

9. **Great & Little Cornbow, Bull Ring** – historic route into the town from the east, and approach to the town's historic market place.

Aim - To strengthen the area in terms of public realm improvements and stronger street frontage to give a greater sense of place.

10. **Pool Road** – Dominant uses includes the leisure centre and access to the Cornbow Hall. Therefore new development opportunities in this area should strengthen/support the cultural and leisure theme.

Aim - To strengthen the area as a cultural/leisure area through redevelopment opportunities and public realm improvements.

11. **Cornbow and Bus Station**– Enclosed mall type shopping area circa 1960's, was recently part-redeveloped along with an improved public transport interchange.

Aim - To strengthen the character of the area through public realm enhancements.

### Question 21

**Do you support the identification, description and aims for each of the 11 character areas as set out above and identified on the Character Areas map at the rear of this chapter? If not can you indicate what changes should be made.**

- 10.20** Defining character areas is intended to assist the urban design issues when considering major development proposals and ensure that they take account of local distinctiveness and enhance the overall quality of Halesowen's varied townscape.

## Policy 31

### Suggested Policy - Character and Appearance

1. All development should include elements of local distinctiveness in terms of street pattern, siting of the building in relation to the street, scale, massing, plot widths, building shapes, architectural style, materials and colour.
2. The choice of which locally distinctive elements are incorporated into the design of a development, and the degree to which they are incorporated, depends upon the location of the proposal, and the function the building serves in the townscape as described by other Policies in this Plan:
  - a) In the High Street/Hagley Street Character Area, developments will incorporate a high degree of locally distinctive elements;
  - b) Outside of this area, developments have the option of using a smaller choice and degree of locally distinctive elements provided that the overall character of the Town Centre is not prejudiced.
3. Developments can incorporate elements not described as 'locally distinctive' or be of a more contemporary style provided that the overall design of the development does not harm the achievement of a locally distinctive Town Centre.

## Question 22

**Do you support the above 'character and appearance' preferred policy? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?**

## Layout and Form

- 10.21** Design has a crucial role to play in delivering and creating a sense of safety and security. A key issue is that of natural surveillance and the overlooking of streets and spaces in the town centre. Streets which are well overlooked and have activity in them throughout the day and evening benefit from the presence and surveillance of residents and visitors, which can be demonstrated along the High Street. Making frontages active adds interest, life and vitality to the public realm. Where this is not always possible, new buildings can be animated in other ways to encourage active edges.

- 10.22** The redevelopment of the town during the 1960s began to erode the original historic core and street pattern leaving large undefined areas where monolithic structures now exist, particularly on the edges of the town centre. These buildings can lack visual interest, with inactive frontages and edges resulting in poorly overlooked spaces.

## Policy 32

### Suggested Policy - Layout and Form

1. All development should require that issues of safety and security are an intrinsic consideration in the detailed design and layout of buildings and the spaces around, helping to deter crime and reduce the fear of crime in the Halesowen's town centre.
2. Whilst supporting the overall Design Quality policy, all new development will be required to achieve the following:
  - a) Paths and open spaces should be well overlooked by buildings, whilst maintaining privacy for residents;
  - b) A clear distinction between public, private and semi-private spaces;
  - c) The provision and maintenance of adequate lighting;
  - d) The avoidance of dark or secluded areas;
  - e) Integration into the existing pattern of pedestrian and vehicular movement; and
  - f) Streets and public spaces should be defined and enclosed by buildings with active frontages, structures and landscaping.

## Question 23

**Do you support the above 'layout and form' policy? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?**

## Mixed Use

- 10.23** Vital places develop where there is interaction between users of different facilities, buildings and cafes serving business uses, residents supporting local shops and people accessing leisure facilities. Such integration also ensures the use of areas extends over day and night which creates safer environments.
- 10.24** Within the town centre, uses could be more mixed horizontally and vertically to increase the levels of people living there. An example is 'living above the shops' such as can currently be found in Hagley Road. Although the re-use of vacant upper floors in a town centre location is only one part of the urban regeneration process, it is a vital part to help a town to become a living place 24 hours a day. Other approaches such as flexible design solutions that allow for expansion and changes of use enable places to remain vital. It is crucial to encourage appropriate mixed use solutions to give people greater purpose to live, work and visit Halesowen town centre throughout the day, evening and night-time.
- 10.25** Halesowen would also benefit from improving its night time economy and increasing appropriate leisure/evening uses that are non alcohol driven activities would attract people of varied backgrounds. Offering a range of activities helps to reduce trouble, creates more democratic places and helps people to feel safer.
- 10.26** Halesowen needs to diversify the night time economy towards being more family orientated, to encourage where appropriate living above the shops so as to increase the doorstep population, and to protect the compact finer grained parts of the town that support a more mixed use environment. All of these elements are key to maintaining the vitality of the town.

### Policy 33

#### Suggested Policy - Mixed Use

Development should:

- Encourage appropriate levels of living above the shop in order to bring existing buildings back into positive use and to improve the town's vitality in the evenings;
- Increase the range of activities and venues that will provide a more diverse experience in the town;
- Improve lighting to make the town more attractive and safer at night;
- Create a safe, accessible, inclusive and innovative evening late night economy;
- Integrate land uses to avoid unsustainable zoning of development;
- Ensure that mixed use schemes minimise potential conflicts between different users, including in terms of noise, amenity and servicing;
- Where possible break up the bulk of larger development land uses by wrapping smaller units around key frontages - thereby ensuring good active frontages;
- Develop a good relationship between open spaces, streets and built form.

### Question 24

**Do you support the above 'mixed use' policy? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?**

### Access and Movement

- 10.27** Various types of severance are experienced across Halesowen town centre. This has resulted in physical barriers to pedestrian movement and visual or other perceived barriers. The latter often reduces the perception of safety and thereby inhibits movement and the accessing of what the other areas of the town centre have to offer.
- 10.28** An example of severance in and around the town centre is the River Stour which inhibits access for those living to the east of the town centre.



## Policy 34

### Suggested Policy - Access and Movement

1. All development should retain and improve all useful, safe and appropriate vehicular and pedestrian routes and provide new ones that make access and movement easier, safer, more attractive and visually varied through and within built up areas.

2. Development should also make sure that:

a) Streets generally link up and layouts are designed to encourage safer walking, cycling, use by people with limited mobility, and access to public transport;

b) Direct, convenient and safe access should be provided to new development for pedestrians, cyclists and people with limited mobility;

c) In new areas of residential development, new streets should be designed to prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and people with limited mobility;

d) All development should seek to incorporate measures for the ease of access of everybody. This is particularly to ensure unhindered movement for everyone within Halesowen Town Centre and also along the River Stour corridor pathways. It is also to enable disabled, infirm and partially sighted persons to have ease of access to, and avail themselves of, the facilities provided within the town centre;

e) In some instances a proposal may have substantial benefits to the wider local community but may not be able to achieve full accessibility due to heritage assets status, and therefore a considered pragmatic approach should be adopted;

f) Development should not compromise the ambition of creating a riverside walk along the eastern edge of the River Stour from Great Cornbow to Rumbow. The implementation of this route may be in phases as and when redevelopment opportunities occur.

3. In addition to this and where development comes forward, we propose to improve carriageway and river crossing points in the locations listed below that will help to improve pedestrian access and movement. The Council will require that proposed development schemes within the Halesowen AAP boundary contribute towards the delivery of these improvements where appropriate.

a) Birmingham Street north of Great Cornbow/Bull Ring

b) Rumbow between Church Lane and Siviter Street;

- c) Linkage between Birmingham Street and Cobham Road/Centre Lane across the River Stour;
- d) An at-grade crossing point at Queensway between Great Cornbow and the River Stour;
- e) Queensway/Summer Hill crossing point and ramped access to be improved in conjunction with the redevelopment of Pool Road Car Park opportunity site;
- f) Queensway/Grange Road junction to improve access to the southern stretch of the River Stour.

**10.29** All new development and townscape and landscape enhancements within the plan area shall be required to be designed with ease of access for all users as a prime consideration at the outset. Proposals are required to incorporate an Access Statement that shows how the principles of inclusive design have been integrated.

### Question 25

**Do you support the above 'access and movement' policy? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?**

## Views, Vistas and Landmarks

**10.30** The Council recognises that views and landmarks within Halesowen help people find their way around the town centre and creates a variety and interest to the townscape that reinforces its sense of place and gives local identity. Unfortunately out of scale, poorly designed or sited buildings and structures within particular sight-lines of viewing corridors and local views around the town have had a detrimental impact on the quality of the view and amenity it offers to local people and visitors.

## Policy 35

### Suggested Policy - Views, Vistas and Landmarks

1. All development and any proposed alterations to existing buildings should not have an adverse impact on the designated local views and landmarks. Where the opportunity arises, development will be encouraged to frame views, vistas and landmarks.
2. New development should respect the height, mass and visibility of existing Halesowen landmarks. Such landmarks should not be overpowered by new development, and their setting should be improved.
3. New development should emphasise key points of arrival (gateways) that may include distinctive corner features and built form edges that reinforce principle nodes, routes and spaces.
4. Development should have regard to and respect the following important views, vistas and landmarks:

#### Panoramic Views in/out Halesowen\*

PV1 – From Hagley Road to St. John the Baptist's Church

PV2 – From Bundle Hill to Queensway/Bromsgrove Road

PV3 – From Townsend Roundabout to St. John the Baptist's Church

PV4 – From Earls Way to St. John the Baptist's Church

\*Views outside of Halesowen town centre boundary - Dudley's Adopted 2005 Unitary development Plan (UDP) refers.

#### Strategic View

SV1 – From Highfields Park to St. John the Baptist's Church

SV2 – From Stourbridge Road to St. John the Baptist's Church

SV3 – From Furnace Lane to St. John the Baptist's Church

#### Local View

LV1 – Summer Hill to High Street

LV2 – Rumbow to St. John the Baptist's Church

LV3 – Cobham Road to St. John the Baptist's Church

## LV4 – Bull Ring to St. John the Baptist's Church

**Landmark**

## LM1 - St. John the Baptist's Church

5. Where new development is likely to have an impact on a designated view or landmark, accurate visual representation of changes to the view will be required. Careful consideration will need to be paid to building materials and finishes, skylines and silhouettes.

**Building Heights, Scale and Massing**

- New development must integrate well with its surrounding context especially in areas or adjacent to buildings with high townscape value;
- New development should offer variations in roofscape that respects local and panoramic views;
- Larger development facades should seek to reduce its scale and massing by subdividing into smaller elements.

**Question 26**

**Do you support the above 'views, vistas and landmarks' policy? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?**

**Development Framework - Bringing it all Together**

- 10.31** Please see the Development Framework map at the end of this chapter.
- 10.32** The overall aim and purpose of the Development Framework map is to encapsulate/summarise the key issues and design policy principles that have been set out within this Halesowen AAP document. This framework map shows in broad terms the future redevelopment potential within the town centre. The map represents both the Council's and Community's aspirations for how development should be shaped in the future.
- 10.33** The framework map builds upon Halesowen town centre's strengths such as its attractive historic church and churchyard, its vibrant and compact high street, its cultural and leisure facilities, and its proximity to the River Stour and green open space network. The framework seeks to enhance Halesowen's role as a successful town centre, whilst reinforcing its local character and distinctiveness.

- 10.34** The framework also aims to address the town centre's weaknesses - its town centre pedestrian access routes, its key gateways and approaches, its streetscape and public realm, its under-utilised hidden assets, its weak definition of character areas, and its poor provision for the evening economy.
- 10.35** In addition to this Development Framework, further advice will be prepared in the form of a forthcoming 'Halesowen Urban Design Regeneration and Public Realm Implementation Guide' which, alongside the Halesowen Area Action Plan, will help guide and shape the final design of the town centre.

### Question 27

Do you support the proposed Development Framework map? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?

## Further Work

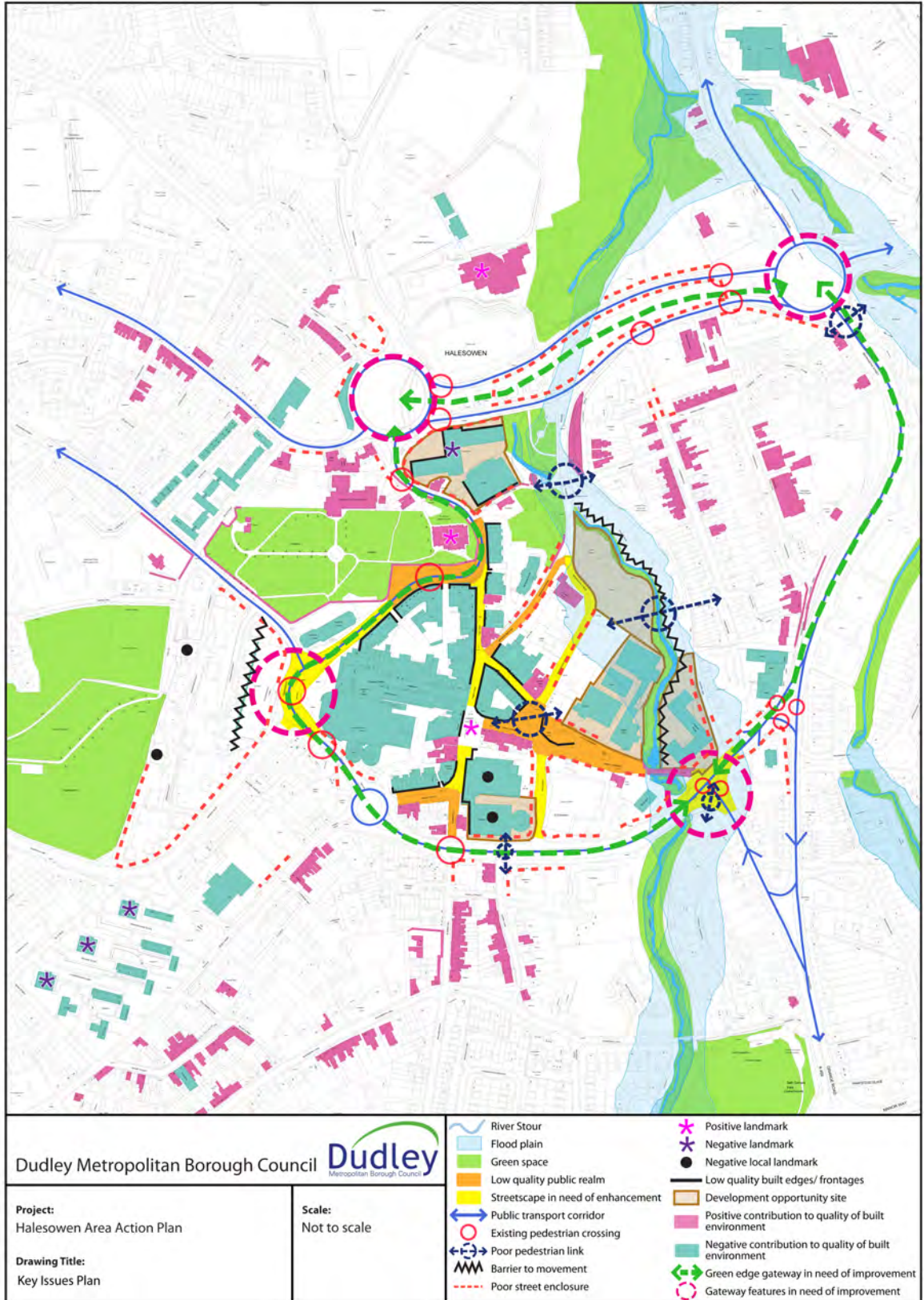
- 10.36** After the publication and adoption of the Halesowen AAP, a more detailed Halesowen Urban Design Regeneration and Public Realm Implementation Guide will follow to advise on delivering the changes needed for Halesowen.

## Urban Design Monitoring Indicators

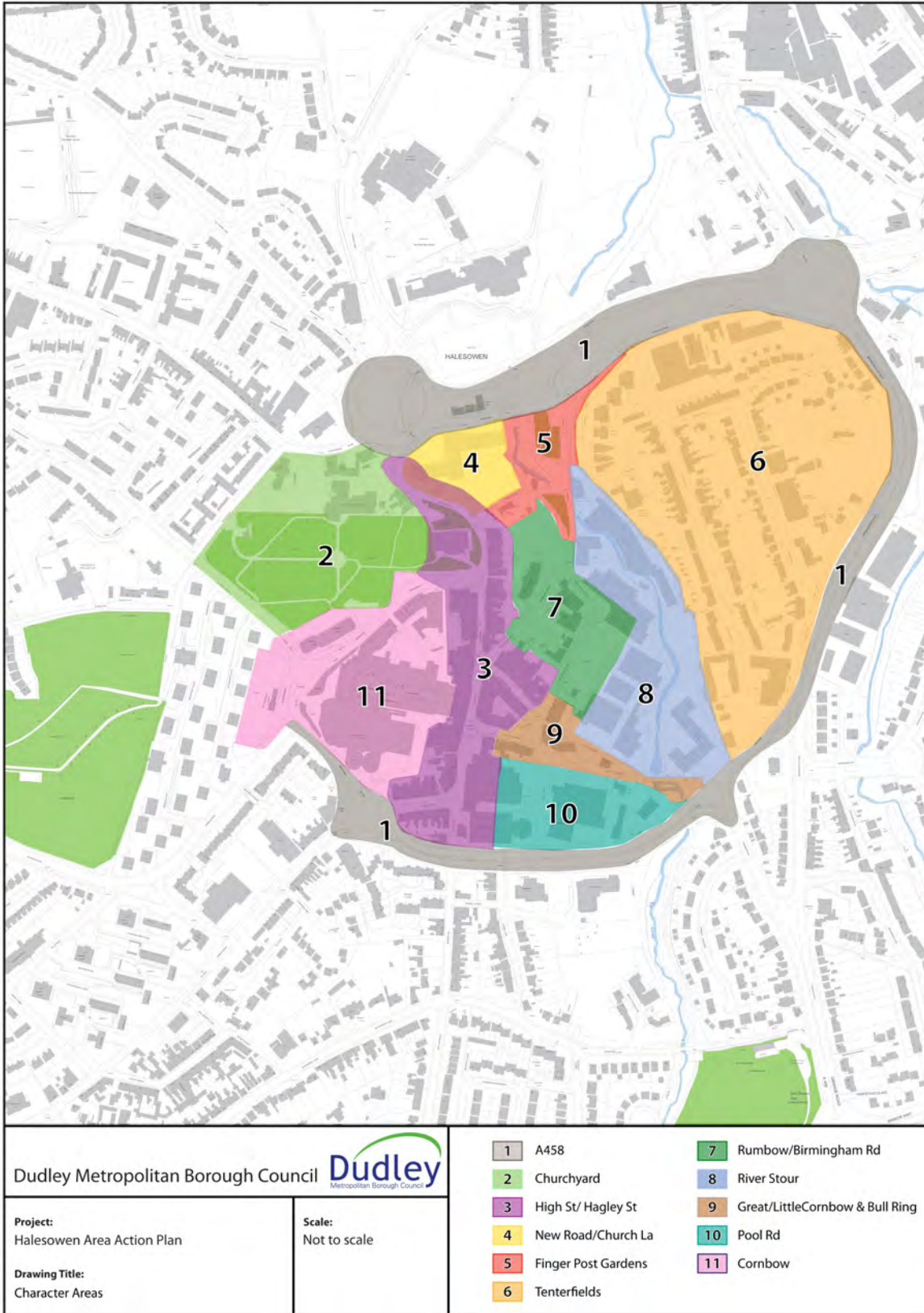
- 10.37** Once the Halesowen AAP has been adopted it will be important to ensure that its policies are meeting their objectives, targets are being reached and that assumptions behind the policies are still relevant and valid. Therefore the progress of the AAP will be monitored to check how well it is achieving its objectives.
- 10.38** Noting the Urban Design Objectives set out at the start of this chapter the table below sets out the indicators and targets that will be used to monitor the progress of the Halesowen AAP. We will use this framework to monitor the AAP and the results will be reported in Dudley Council's annual monitoring report.
- 10.39** Where necessary and as a result of the monitoring process, actions will be taken to adjust or amend the AAP to ensure that the objectives are being realised.

### Question 28

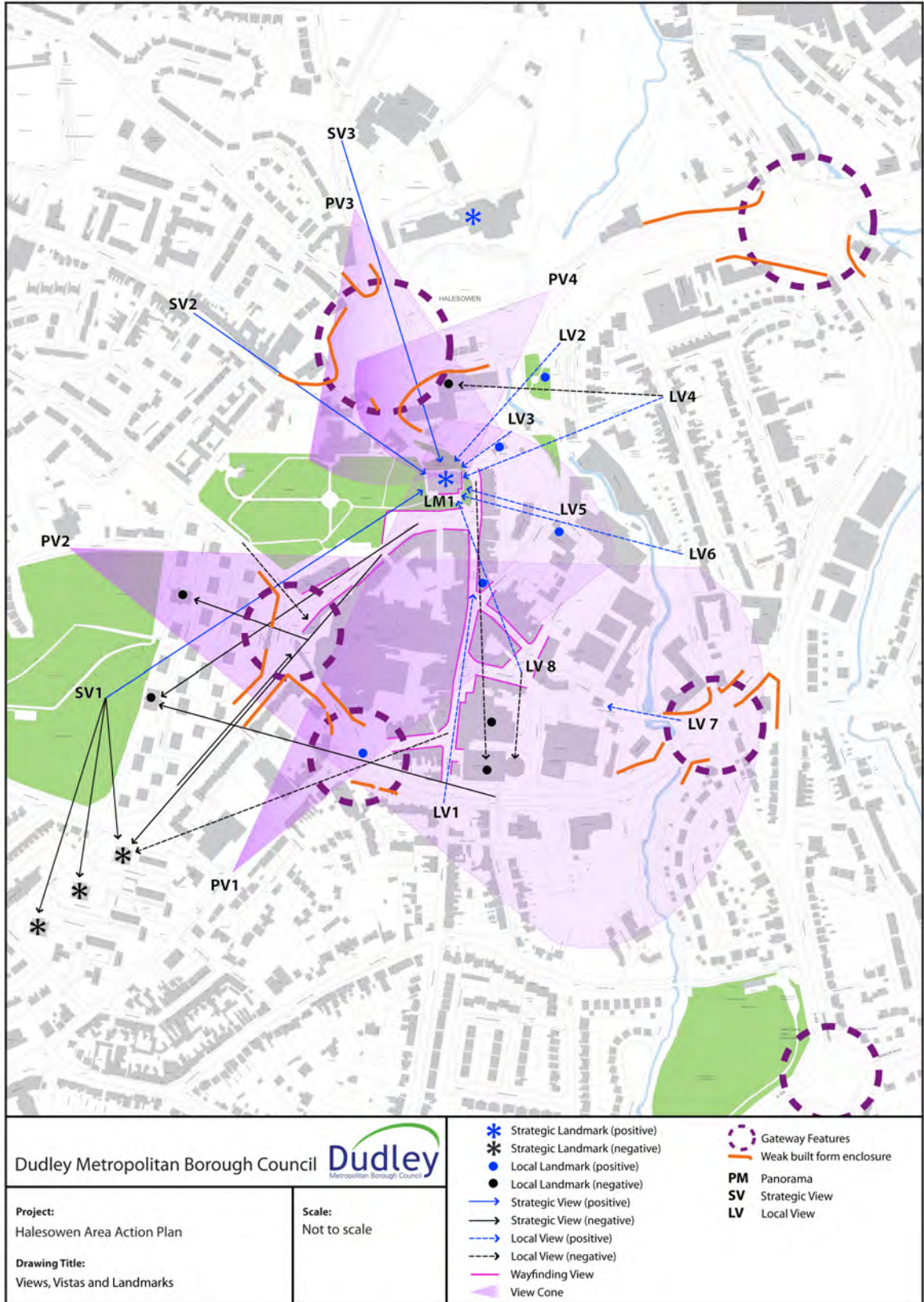
Do you support the above suggested monitoring indicators? Is there anything else you could additionally suggest?



Map 12 Key Issues

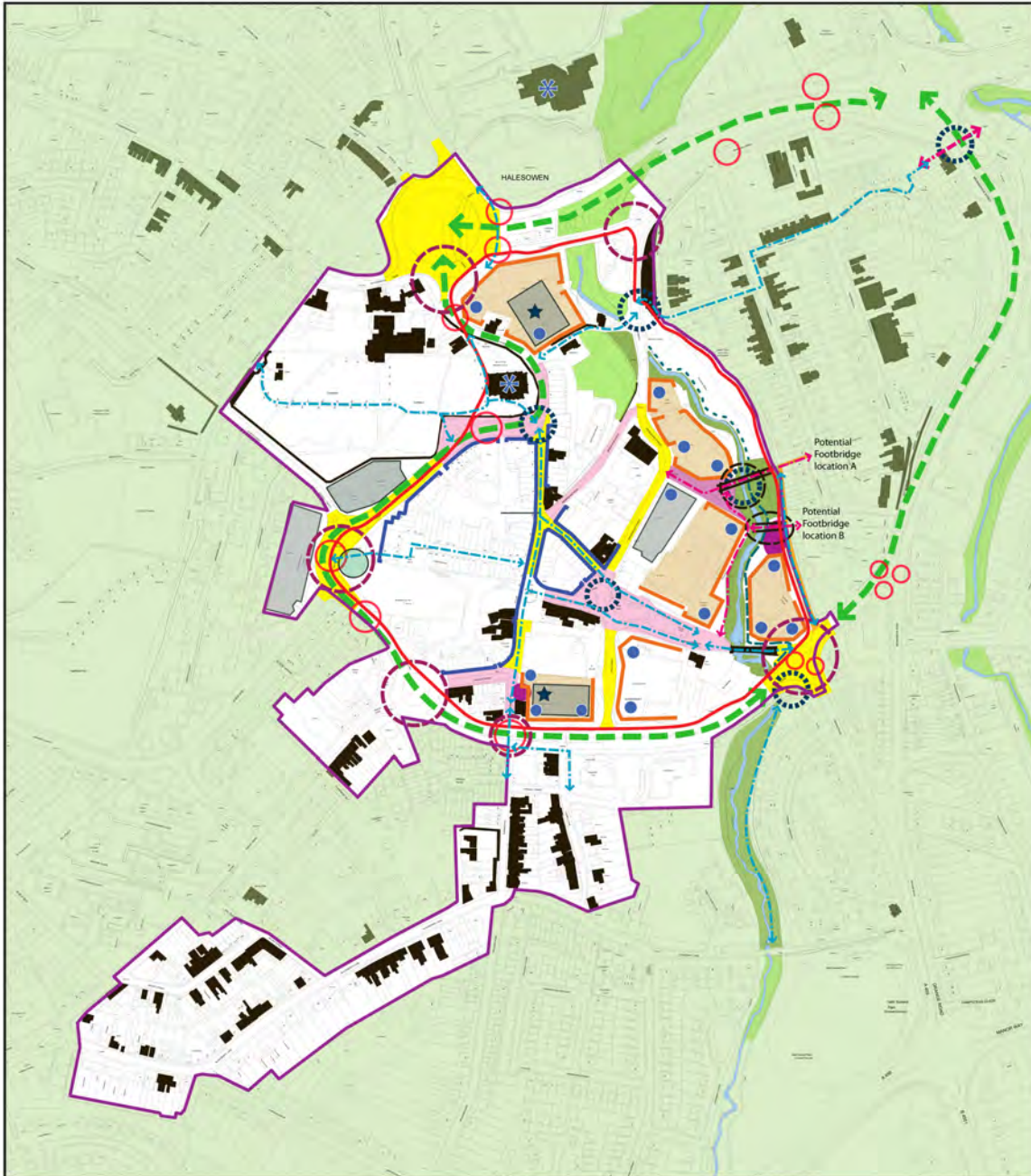


Map 13 Character Areas



Map 14 Views, vistas and landmarks





<p>Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council <b>Dudley</b> Metropolitan Borough Council</p>			
<p><b>Project:</b> Halesowen area Action Plan</p> <p><b>Drawing Title:</b> Development Framework</p>	<p><b>Scale:</b> Not to scale</p>		
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Map 15 Development framework



## 11 Delivery

- 11.1** The role of this Area Action Plan is to set out how Halesowen Town Centre will grow and change in order to deliver our vision for the area by 2026. The strategy needs to be realistic and deliverable.
- 11.2** To ensure the strategy is robust, the Council have been and continue to gather evidence on each proposal in this Area Action Plan to ensure that the sites and infrastructure identified are physically able to be developed, that relevant stakeholders are engaged and supportive, and that the schemes are likely to be financially viable. A draft delivery plan is available to view as Appendix 2 of this document ('implementation framework').
- 11.3** The feedback to this consultation will help to support this evidence and identify any proposals which are not realistic and should therefore be removed from this Area Action Plan.
- 11.4** The policies set out in this Area Action Plan will be implemented by numerous mechanisms. It is expected that these will necessarily change and evolve over time. Indeed, delivery of these proposals will in many cases demand a multi-faceted approach and the commitment of a wide range of different organisations.
- 11.5** Investment will be required, primarily from the private sector into the identified Development Opportunity Sites. However, public sector investment can play an important complementary role, for example, through housing renewal activity or by enhancing the public realm and making the Town Centre more attractive to investors.

### Planning Obligations

- 11.6** The Council will seek planning obligations from developers and landowners to fund the infrastructure, services and public facilities that are needed to cope with the additional demands brought on by the new development and mitigate any harmful effects. Planning obligations will be sought in accordance with Dudley Council's [Planning Obligations SPD](#).
- 11.7** This Area Action Plan identifies the specific infrastructure projects that development in Halesowen will need to fund. This 'shopping list', set out in Appendix 2, forms the basis of an effective infrastructure planning and delivery regime (the table identified as 'Infrastructure Projects/Requirements' refers).

### Monitoring

- 11.8** The proposed monitoring framework is set out below. This will measure delivery of the proposals against specified timescales and will assess the effectiveness of the policies against specified targets. The results from this monitoring will be presented in Dudley Council's Annual Monitoring Report which is available on the website at [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://www.dudley.gov.uk).

Policy/Topic	Indicator	Target	Implementation/ Delivery Agency	Data Source
Policy X ...	Percentage of A1 retail uses in the protected frontage	Greater than X% A1 (2011 baseline X%)	Landowners/ Developers/ Dudley Council	Dudley Council
Policy X ...	Amount of additional comparison retail development completed in the Primary Shopping Area and outside the Primary Shopping Area but within Halesowen Town Centre	6068m <sup>2</sup> by 2026 in the Primary Shopping Area	Developers/ Retailers	Dudley Council
Policy X ...	Amount of additional convenience retail development completed in the Primary Shopping Area and outside the Primary Shopping Area but within Halesowen Town Centre		Developers/ Retailers	Dudley Council
Policy X ...	Number of gross and net additional dwellings	35 net dwellings by 2026	Landowners/ Developers/ Registered Social Landlords	Dudley Council

Policy/Topic	Indicator	Target	Implementation/ Delivery Agency	Data Source
	completed per year within the AAP area			
Policy X ...	Percentage of completed affordable housing on qualifying S106 sites	25%	Landowners/ Developers/ Registered Social Landlords	Dudley Council
Policies X ...	Delivery of development opportunity sites	All sites delivered by 2026	Landowners/ Developers/ Dudley Council	Dudley Council
Policies X ...	Delivery of infrastructure projects	In accordance with the Implementation Framework (Appendix 2)	Developers/ Dudley Council	Dudley Council
Policy X ...	Percentage of planning approvals in the Green Network which create/retain appropriate green links for people and wildlife	100%	Developers & Dudley Council - Conditions on planning applications	Dudley Council
Policy X ...	Percentage of planning approvals meeting the green infrastructure design requirements	100%	Developers & Dudley Council - Conditions on planning applications	Dudley Council
Policy X ...	Percentage of planning approvals which	100%	Developers & Dudley Council - Conditions on	Dudley Council

Policy/Topic	Indicator	Target	Implementation/ Delivery Agency	Data Source
	protect SSSI, LNR, SINC and SLINC designations		planning applications	
Policy X ...	Percentage of planning approvals within Linear Open Space which protect and positively benefit the wildlife corridor and public access functions.	100%	Developers & Dudley Council - Conditions on planning applications	Dudley Council
Policy X ...	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Historic Environment Officer recommendation	0	Dudley Council	Dudley Council
Policy X ...	Number of planning permissions granted without an archaeological desk based assessment/ evaluation when requested to be supplied by the Historic Environment Officer	0	Dudley Council	Dudley Council
Urban Design	Number of burglary dwelling crimes per	Improvement from baseline of XXX per 1000	Dudley Council/ Developers/ Police	West Midlands Police/

Policy/Topic	Indicator	Target	Implementation/ Delivery Agency	Data Source
	thousand households (Home Office Codes 28 & 29)	households between 01/04/10 to 31/03/11		Revenues Dudley Council
Urban Design	Percentage of proposals that accord with the local views viewing corridors (see views, vistas and landmarks map)	100%	Developers	Dudley Council Urban Design Team

**Table 1 Monitoring Framework**

### Question 29

Do you support our proposed delivery approach as set out in this chapter? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?





## Appendix 1 Urban Design Considerations on the Opportunity Sites

The following section provides an urban design overview of the opportunity sites within the Area Action Plan and the issues that should be taken into consideration in any development proposals.

The sites present the opportunity for new development and for the redevelopment of existing buildings. They also present opportunities for improvement in other ways, for example, the enhancement of streets and spaces to provide a better quality environment for residents and visitors alike. The Framework Plan identifies the opportunity sites within the boundary of the AAP area.

It is anticipated that further advice on the urban design issues and recommendations for these sites will be provided in a forthcoming 'Halesowen Urban Design Regeneration and Public Realm Implementation Guide'.

For all sites, the palette of materials for key areas and transitions areas/streets needs to have a formalised approach and all materials should be durable and maintainable.

### **Proposed Development Opportunity Site 1: Pool Road Car Park**

Access and movement:

- A minimum of 80 long stay car parking spaces are required to be retained in this location in addition to any new parking requirements generated by the development proposals.
- Development proposals could opt to retain the connection from Hagley Street to Pool Road for pedestrians and cyclists. The route could be made for all modes. An alternative could be to close off access from Hagley Road to Pool Road to provide more develop-able land and create a more secure development form.
- New development should overlook public thoroughfares to improve the current environment. Key streets are: High Street, Queensway and Pool Road.
- Access, car parking and servicing for this site should continue to be provided from Pool Road. There is the potential to have a shared servicing area for new and existing development.
- Service yards should be located inside the perimeter block and be suitably screened with active frontages and good quality landscaping to reduce the negative impact on the street and make these areas more secure.
- Development should seek to close the existing subway from Laurel Lane and regrade levels to raise the footway along Queensway. Improvements will need to be made to the existing crossing facility and ramped access at the junction of the Queensway and Summer Hill to ensure ease of movement for pedestrians of all abilities.
- Improvements to on street parking could be made to Hagley Road in the form of echelon parking that would increase the number of available spaces. Also

Pool Road could offer a small amount of on street parking by reclaiming some of the road but still maintaining a sufficient width of carriageway (see the Landscape and Public Realm section for concurring information).

## Layout and Urban Form

- A retail anchor can be accommodated on the ground floor frontage adjacent to the existing Wilkinsons to extend the town's retail core.
- New active frontages to Pool Road, Queensway, and Hagley Street/Hagley Road should be provided wherever possible to increase activity and provide good surveillance of the public realm.
- Built form frontages should be well integrated with public realm improvements, the street edge and adjacent existing building lines to ensure continuity and quality of the street scene.
- Landmark features (architectural accents & distinctive corner treatment) should be provided at the corners of the site and at gateways (Hagley Street/Hagley Road, Pool Road/Queensway).
- Larger units should be accommodated within a perimeter block with exposed facades having public frontages and active edges, with other development forms wrapping around this perimeter block where possible.
- Architectural design detailing of any larger development facades should be subdivided to create the appearance of smaller built elements to reduce the scale and massing. This will ensure the development respects the historical context of the town.
- The redevelopment of the Pool Road Car Park should offer the opportunity to improve access and the sense of arrival to the Cornbow Hall from Hagley Road. The entrance should provide an attractive architectural access that terminates the vista along Hagley Road.

## Scale and massing

- Scale and massing of new development along Hagley Road/Summer Hill, Queensway and Pool Road should offer variety and visual interest by creating a variation in roofscape and built frontage that responds to the need to provide landmark quality development in key locations.
- New development should respect and integrate well with the context and should respond to existing buildings along Bull Ring, Summer Hill and Hagley Street that have high townscape value (buildings are up to 3 storeys high).
- Upper levels of a development should recede so that it is not visually intrusive to local and strategic views. New development needs to ensure the following views are not compromised (see Views, Vista and Landmarks map) - Local view LV1 and panoramic view PV2.

## Character and Appearance

- Development should seek to preserve and enhance established frontages.

- Treatment of building line, proportions, scale and architectural treatment will be a strong consideration as this opportunity site borders development of high townscape value.
- The design of any scheme will need to consider the retention of 1 Summer Hill. Positive design solutions will be needed to address this key piece of townscape whilst balancing modern day requirements for retail frontages.

## Landscape and Public Realm

- Level changes between Summer Hill / Hagley Road and Pool Road must be carefully thought out to ensure activity can spill out at grade.
- Any extensive redevelopment should explore creating a new public space as a focus for the new development and a new entrance to the Cornbow Hall. Such a space should reinforce the southern pedestrian gateway and create a place for positive social interaction.
- All streets bordering the site are indicated for public realm enhancement that may include the provision of appropriate street furniture, bins and lighting.
- Hagley Road short stay parking could be redesigned to create wider pavements (allows extension of street market and other festivals). Improved/alternative parking arrangements should be considered such as an echelon parking arrangement to increase the number of parking spaces. There is potential for this street to adopt the shared space concept.
- Street tree planting should be provided to enhance the streetscene in this area.
- Semi mature tree planting should be provided to Queensway to create a boulevard style environment.
- It is important to enhance Pool Road as this street will form the approach to the public realm improvements in the Great/Little Cornbow/Bull Ring area.

## **Proposed Development Opportunity Site 2: Trinity Point and High Street Car Park**

### Access and movement

- The existing access to the site from High Street and off New Road should be maintained for servicing and parking.
- In terms of the High Street Car Park, a minimum of 31 short stay stay car parking spaces are required to be retained in this location in addition to any new parking requirements generated by the development proposals.
- Should a comprehensive development scheme be promoted that includes redevelopment of High Street Car Park then a combination of underground and multi deck parking wrapped with single aspect development would be encouraged. Service yards should also be located inside the perimeter block. This will ensure that active ground floor frontages to key bordering streets can be created (Church Lane, High Street and New Road).
- The potential to open up a route from New Road to High Street and create a new vista framing the church and a new connection into the town should be

explored. However, creating these connections may reduce the site's development potential.

- Pavement widths need to be sufficient to accommodate pedestrian flows and allow the opportunity for activity to spill onto the public realm.

## Layout and Urban form

- The site could accommodate a range of development types. Larger built forms must have public frontage and an active edge that is wrapped by other development to minimise its impact on existing built forms.
- Development should present strong ground floor active frontages to existing and any new public realm. Boundary edges to be improved are High Street, Church Lane and New Road (topographical challenges along Church Lane should be noted).

## Scale and Massing

- Architectural design detailing of larger development facades should be subdivided to create the appearance of smaller built elements to reduce its scale and massing.
- New development should provide landmark features (architectural accents & distinctive corner treatment) at the corners of the site and at gateways. This site forms part of the northern gateway into the town therefore a landmark feature should not obscure views to the Church. Key locations include the corner of High Street/Church Lane.
- New development should be a maximum 3 storeys high where views to the church are protected/particularly sensitive (critical protected local and panoramic views LV2 & LV3, PV3 & PV4 – please see the Views, Vistas and Landmarks map).
- Development needs to integrate well in terms of scale and massing with the existing two storey building (Ivy House) within the opportunity site boundary and the 2 storey timber framed buildings in Church Lane.
- Variation of the roofscape of new development in this location is essential to ensure views to the church are not impeded but are greatly improved.

## Character and Appearance

- Development types such as residential and smaller scale retail would be better suited in some parts of this site if we are to improve the character of this area and especially the desire to extend the High Street in a retail function. However the site is significant enough to accommodate a larger development. Any 'big box' development should be accommodated within the perimeter block and design and detail must seek to break up it's massing and scale.
- New development anywhere on this site must respect the importance of St. John the Baptist's Church and Church Lane and their setting.
- New development must respect existing building lines and create good street enclosure that enhances the overall character of the area.

### Landscape and Appearance

- Greening of the High Street and Queensway at this location to create a green edge gateway is a key objective of the Halesowen Area Action Plan. Queensway could be tree planted to create a boulevard style street that will help to define edges of the town.
- This opportunity site borders the principle northern gateway where public realm enhancements should be made to the traffic island and the highway approach to the town centre.
- Potential new routes should be clear connecting links that are visually attractive, combining hard and soft treatments as a part of the developed whole.
- Tree planting and soft landscape features should be introduced to support wildlife corridors and links to other spaces within the town centre. Landscape improvements will aid migration and foraging activity across St John the Baptist's Church Yard to Highfields Park from the River Stour corridor.

### Proposed Development Opportunity Site 3: Link House and Pioneer House

#### Access and movement

- Access to these sites is difficult due to the nature of the topography. Access to Link House will most likely be in the same position due to the size and constraints of the site. Pioneer House currently has an access point to the rear of the site with a mix of frontage and rear parking. However potential changes in the layout could provide alternative access to the rear of the site and maybe a combination of the two.
- A key ambition is to improve east - west connections by providing pedestrian and cyclist connection from Birmingham Street over the River Stour to the Tenterfields residential area. Opening up access to and along the river will provide an opportunity to create public spaces in this location. Therefore, new development proposals should contribute to achieving this objective by accommodating new public access connections.

#### Layout and urban form

- Development should continue to provide active frontages to Rumbow, Birmingham Street, the River Stour, public spaces and the new connection to Tenterfields area. This will increase activity and assist good supervision of the public realm. Topography is more challenging but slab levels should be staggered to ensure active ground floors and that entrances align directly onto the street.
- Any redevelopment of Pioneer House needs to make better use of the changes in levels and create development frontage to Birmingham Street and the River Stour.
- Undercroft parking that greatly reduces the active frontage will not be acceptable.

#### Scale and Massing

- Any redevelopment of the Link House site should seek to fit in with its surroundings. Currently development is 5 storeys, however surrounding structures are 3 storeys high so new development needs to keep within this range.
- New development should offer variation in roofscape which responds to the need to respect local and panoramic views (see the Views, Vistas and Landmarks map - Panoramic view PV1).
- Pioneer House sits on the highest part of the site therefore storey heights of built form should be up to 3 storeys.
- New development should provide landmark features (architectural accents & distinctive corner treatment) at the corners of the site, junctions and views to aide visual interest and legibility. Key locations include the bend of Birmingham Street, junction of Birmingham Street/Birmingham Road and corner location adjacent to the new bridge connection and any new public space.

## Landscape and Appearance

- The potential new route from the Tenterfields area to Birmingham Street should be clear and visually attractive through an integrated landscape strategy which combines hard and soft treatments as part of the developed whole.
- Tree planting and soft landscape features in existing streets, new connections and facades of buildings will help to support and improve wildlife corridors.
- Future public spaces should visually link other green spaces on the other side of the River. Tree planting should compliment the space and it's activities by providing a sufficient amount of shade, reinforcing routes and framing key views. New landscaping needs to provide a soft transitional edge to the River Stour. Public art should be provided at entrance points and gateways to enhance the character and identity of routes and public spaces.

## Proposed Development Opportunity Site 4: Little Cornbow

### Access and movement

- Servicing and parking must be provided inside the perimeter block to ensure frontages are not parking dominated. Some frontage parking may be acceptable but it must be balanced out by a high quality landscape scheme.
- Extensive redevelopment may provide an opportunity to increase permeability across the area and to the River.
- Redevelopment should provide the opportunity for a new route along the River Stour from Great Cornbow to the proposed new river crossing bridge that increases the permeability of this location.
- Pavement widths must be sufficient to accommodate pedestrian flows and allow the opportunity for activity to spill onto the public realm.
- It is essential to improve pedestrian crossing points between Little Cornbow and Peckingham Street and the Bull Ring.

### Layout and Urban form

- New development should provide a stronger building line with active edges to the new connection from the Tenterfields area to Birmingham Street, Little Cornbow and the River Stour in order to increase activity and provide good surveillance.
- Larger development forms or any expansion of existing built form will need to be accommodated within a perimeter block with other development forms wrapping around it.

## Scale and Massing

- Architectural design detailing of larger development facades should be subdivided to create the appearance of smaller built elements to reduce the scale and massing.
- Landmark features (architectural accents & distinctive corner treatment) should be provided at the corners of the site and at gateways. This site forms part of the eastern gateway into the town therefore a landmark feature should reinforce this key route into the town. Heights of new landmark features should not obscure views to St John the Baptist's Church. The built form should reinforce enclosure of the street to enhance local view LV7 (see Landmarks, Views and Vistas map).
- New development should keep within an acceptable height range and at key locations 3 storeys high maximum will help to protect views to the Church (critical protected local and panoramic view LV7– see Landmarks, Views and Vistas map).
- Development needs to integrate well in terms of scale and massing with the existing two storey buildings within and adjacent to the opportunity site boundary.
- Variation of the roofscape of new development in this location is essential to ensure views to the Church are not impeded but are greatly improved.

## Character and Appearance

- The site is very sensitive as it is located within key historically significant areas (Little Cornbow, Great Cornbow and close to the Bull Ring) and therefore: any 'big box' development should be accommodated within the perimeter block and design and detail must seek to break up its massing and scale; new development must respect existing building lines and create good street enclosure that enhances the overall character of the area; and responding to the River Stour will provide opportunities to develop an identity for this area where built form can work harmoniously with the natural environment and new landscaping can unlock the nature conservation potential.

## Landscape and Appearance

- New tree planting should be used to reinforce the route to the town from the eastern gateway along Great Cornbow and Little Cornbow.
- Potential new routes should be clear and visually attractive connecting links, delivered through an integrated landscape strategy which combines hard and soft treatments as a part of the developed whole.

- Increased tree planting and soft landscape features will support the wildlife corridors and help to create links to other spaces within the town centre.
- It is essential to provide public art at entrance points and to enhance the areas identity e.g. at the Great Cornbow/Queensway gateway and at the Bull Ring. Smaller pedestrian gateway features from Little Cornbow to Peckingham Street will assist navigation of the town.

## Proposed Development Opportunity Site 5: Fountain House

### Access and movement

- The site has two vehicular access points, one from Great Cornbow and the other off Centre Lane. Maintaining these two admittance points will offer flexibility and permeability for all modes of movement and optimise the opportunity to create better access to the riverside and the town centre.
- Parking and servicing arrangements should be contained on site within the perimeter block to reduce their impact on the setting of the riverside.
- Any new development proposal needs to offer a strip of land along the river to achieve a key ambition to create a publicly accessible riverside walk.
- The route along the River Stour, Great Cornbow and Centre Lane will require development to provide good levels of active and passive surveillance.
- The opportunity site is set in a dip and ground level is approximately 1 to 2 storeys lower than that of surrounding streets. Therefore undercroft parking is acceptable but design solutions must not reduce the active frontage onto public thoroughfares.
- The pedestrian route from Great/Little Cornbow to Queensway and Bromsgrove Road should be improved to respond to desire lines.
- The junction of Queensway and Grange Road should be improved to create more pedestrian friendly crossing facilities within the gateway location, in particular to reduce barriers to movement and improve access to the southern stretch of the River Stour and the green belt.

### Layout and Urban form

- Perimeter block development could be achieved on this site e.g. with smaller scale development such as residential. Alternatively the development form must be dual aspect.
- New development should provide better enclosure of the street with stronger building lines with active edges. This will provide active and passive surveillance of Centre Lane, Great Cornbow, the River and Queensway.
- Site ground level is lower than street level on two sides; even so development must ensure active frontages are well integrated with the public realm.
- The existing perimeter wall from the corner of Queensway down Centre Lane would be better reduced in height or replaced so that inter-visibility between the building and the street is optimised.



## Scale and Massing

- The current built form consists of five storeys with a maximum of seven storeys. Future redevelopment should seek to reduce the impact of such storey heights so that it fits in better with its surroundings.
- Monolithic development form is not acceptable therefore new development should offer variation in roofscape which responds to the need to respect local and panoramic views (see Views, Vistas and Landmarks map – Local View LV7 and Panoramic View PV2).
- This site forms part of the south eastern gateway into the town, therefore new development should provide high quality landmark features (architectural accents & distinctive corner treatment) at the corners of the site, junctions and views that will aid visual interest and legibility. Key locations on this site include the corner of Centre Lane and Vine Lane/Queensway, and the corner of Great Cornbow and Centre Lane.
- Architectural design detailing of larger development facades should be subdivided to create the appearance of smaller built elements to reduce the scale and massing.
- Public art should feature at the heart of the gateway to provide a sense of legibility and to announce the approach to the south eastern edge of the town centre.

## Character and Appearance

- The site is very sensitive in terms of its proximity to the Cornbow Bridge, therefore new development needs to respond by improving the setting around the bridge.
- New development should create better enclosure of the street along Queensway, Centre Lane and Great Cornbow.
- Historic built form references in this location are less prominent, therefore new built form should look to enhance the character of the River Stour and surrounding streets.
- Historically, this site was and still is a significant gateway site. The built form had landmark quality close to the back of the pavement of what is now the junction of Queensway and Centre Lane. This design approach is still relevant today.
- This site will contribute significantly to developing the River Stour character area. It is an ideal location to create contemporary development that uses sustainable design solutions. It should be a feature development demonstrating green roof and green wall construction, grey water recycling, use of sustainable materials etc.

## Landscape and Appearance

- The site borders the River Stour and has the advantage of being at grade with the river compared to the Zion Christian Centre on the opposite bank. The ambition of the Halesowen AAP is to create a publicly accessible riverside walk. This route is proposed to link to the future bridge link and the wider movement

network. Potentially the riverside walk will add to the already established 'Shenstone Way' countryside walk and provide a much needed leisure health route. Ideally the Riverside walk should extend up to Rumbow as and when redevelopment opportunities come forward, however this is a longer term ambition.

- The riverside edge should be less formal and be designed to provide improved wildlife habitats along the river.
- Mature shrubs and trees may need to be retained (subject to tree surveys to ascertain their condition and value), balanced against securing active and passive surveillance along Centre Lane. The retention of specimen trees may impact on future form and layout of this site.
- New development will not be permitted to encroach into the tree canopies, which may prevent the desired built form street enclosure.

### Question 30

Do you support the development opportunity site urban design considerations as set out in this appendix? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?

## Appendix 2 Implementation Framework

Project	Lead Authority	Land Assembly	Deliverability	Funding	Timescale	Viability	Risk
Site 1: Pool Road Car Park	Private developer led with active engagement from Dudley MBC related to its landholdings	The car park is owned and managed by Dudley Council. The freehold of the adjacent properties is owned by the Council but leased to the private sector	This is the most attractive location for the market for new retail development. At present there is no identified developer for the site but this is considered a consequence of the current economic climate and that this position will change over time	Private sector funded	2016-2026	Viability is dependant on releasing some surplus public parking capacity to enable redevelopment of the car park to accommodate retail development at least on the ground floor (with some car parking being re-provided within the redevelopment scheme)	Suitable retail tenant needs to be secured and viability dependant on loss of some parking
Site 2: Trinity Point & High Street Car Park	Private developer led with active engagement from Dudley MBC related	Trinity Point is privately owned and the adjacent High Street Car Park is owned and	A prospective developer has supported this site's allocation indicating that it is a viable and deliverable redevelopment	Private sector funded	2016-2026	Viability is dependant on a suitable land use & occupier being secured and potentially on the release of some	Current landowner has not engaged in the AAP process so uncertainties exist on the

Project	Lead Authority	Land Assembly	Deliverability	Funding	Timescale	Viability	Risk
	to its landholdings	managed by Dudley MBC	opportunity subject to co-operation from the current landowner of Trinity Point			surplus public parking capacity	likelihood of redevelopment
Site 3: Link House & Pioneer House	Private developer led	Privately owned site	The allocation has been supported from the site owners indicating willingness to secure a change of use or redevelopment scheme. Identified as a development opportunity in Dudley's Adopted 2005 Unitary Development Plan (UDP)	Private sector funded	2013-2021	Current low demand for offices means that a higher value end use can be secured with timing dependant on the economic climate	Low risk but dependant on national economic climate making redevelopment schemes viable
Site 4: Little Cornbow	Private developer led	Privately owned site	Site owners actively support the allocation and are pursuing development opportunities. Identified as a development opportunity in Dudley's Adopted 2005 Unitary	Private sector funded	2016-2021	Higher value land uses can be secured so current concerns with viability relate to national economic climate	Low risk as site owners are actively investigating development opportunities

Project	Lead Authority	Land Assembly	Deliverability	Funding	Timescale	Viability	Risk
Site 5: Fountain House	Private developer led	Privately owned site	Site owners actively support the allocation and are pursuing development opportunities	Private sector funded	2013-2021	Higher value land uses can be secured so current concerns with viability relate to the national economic climate	Low risk as site owners are actively supportive of securing an alternative use of the site but a suitable use and occupier needs to be secured

Table 2 Site Allocations

Project	Lead Authority	Land Assembly	Deliverability	Funding	Timescale	Viability	Risk
Public thoroughfare along River Stour	Private developer led	Privately owned sites	Through development on sites 2, 3, 4 and 6.	Private sector funded	2013-2026	Dependant on viability for each site allocation	If one development site does not provide its part of the setback and thoroughfare

Project	Lead Authority	Land Assembly	Deliverability	Funding	Timescale	Viability	Risk
Pocket park on River Stour?							the route will not work
East-west access from Tenterfields	Private developer led	Privately owned sites	Through development on sites X. However, completion of the link depends on securing the route through the Rumbow Works site or alternative as future opportunities arise	Private sector funded			
Affordable housing	Developer led	As per Table 1 for each site allocation	Contributions to affordable housing required on qualifying sites in line with the Black Country Core Strategy	Private sector funded	2013-2026	Marginal development schemes may argue to provide a lesser amount of affordable housing	Dependant on risks of each block

Project	Lead Authority	Land Assembly	Deliverability	Funding	Timescale	Viability	Risk
Improvements to the Green Network			Through X contributions from development as set out in the Planning Obligations SPD				

**Table 3 Infrastructure Projects/Requirements**

**Question 31**

Do you support the implementation framework as set out in this appendix? Are there any parts that you would disagree with? Is there anything else you think should be included?

