

5.3 Planning Policy

The Planning Policy Team is responsible for preparing, explaining and monitoring the statutory planning policies, contained in a series of documents that together comprise Walsall's 'development plan'. This sets out a vision for the Borough and policies to promote, accommodate and guide new development whilst protecting and enhancing the environment. The council is required by law to take account of the policies in the development plan when making decisions on planning applications. A key part of planning is putting new development in the right location so that it is accessible and sustainable.

The development plan for Walsall currently comprises:

- Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) 2011
- Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2005 – 'saved' policies
- UDP Proposals Map and Town and District Centre Inset Maps

Walsall Council is presently producing two key documents: Walsall Site Allocation Document (SAD) and Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP). They build on the successful adoption of the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) by setting out the specific locations for development in Walsall and will shape the future of the Borough. They will encourage major investment in the Borough to provide growth for Walsall's housing supply, local employment opportunities and town and district centre businesses.

Walsall Site Allocation Document (SAD) - This document once adopted will identify the sites where housing, employment and other land uses such as community and leisure facilities or public open spaces should be provided throughout the whole of the Borough. It will also ensure growth happens in a sustainable manner and balances the need to protect and enhance the environment. The Site Allocation Document will be fundamental in determining what development happens, where and when, ensuring that we meet all future needs in Walsall.

Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) - This document will focus on Walsall Town Centre. As the economic and social hub of the Borough it's vitally important that the future economic success of Walsall is driven forward by a vibrant and prosperous centre. The AAP

will allocate sites for new shops, leisure facilities, and offices, as well as setting out strategies for improvements to other aspects including transport, design and the environment

These documents are in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, which is the overarching guidance for local authority planners in making plans and assessing development proposals. This requires planners to promote healthy communities, use evidence to assess health and wellbeing needs, and work with public health leads and organisations. The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development; the three aspects of this – environmental, social and economic development – all have significant health components and implications. There is a growing body of material available on the vital role played by planning for health, including guidance produced by the Town and Country Planning Association.