

West Midlands Combined Authority – Assessment of the Potential for Additional Brownfield Land Development Capacity Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Response
What is the Black Country Plan?	<p>The Black Country Plan (BCP) is a new long-term plan for the whole of the Black Country, covering Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Once the Plan is completed it will identify the types of new development needed in the Black Country between now and 2039, how much development we need, when it is expected to be built and where it will go.</p> <p>The new Plan will replace the existing Black Country Core Strategy, which was formally approved, or 'adopted' in February 2011. The existing Black Country Core Strategy is published on the Black Country Plan website.</p>
Why do we need a new Black Country Plan?	<p>The government expects local plans to be kept up-to-date, and planning authorities are required to review their existing plans every five years. The existing Black Country Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 so a review of the plan started in 2016. We consulted the public on the 'Issues and Options' for the new plan between July and September 2017. Further information about this can be found on the Black Country Plan website. The evidence we have gathered since then clearly shows that the new Plan needs to plan for a lot more housing, employment and other development than the existing one. This means it will have to go into more detail about how and where this development will be provided. As well as including policies to guide the new development, the new Plan is expected to identify specific development sites, or 'site allocations.' It will also have to plan for the infrastructure needed to support this.</p>
Why was the study produced?	<p>The Study was commissioned by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and produced by Chilmark Consulting. The aim of the Study was to prepare an independent assessment of the brownfield land capacity/development land capacity for housing in the Black Country. The final Report was submitted by WMCA to the Black Country local authorities to inform the preparation of the subsequent stages of the Black Country Plan.</p>
Why do you need to produce an 'evidence base' to prepare the Black Country Plan?	<p>Government policy requires every planning authority to ensure that its local plans are based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence. To help us prepare the Black Country Plan, we need to gather evidence on how much housing, employment, retail and leisure development we need over the next 20 years. We also need to consider the effects that meeting our development</p>

	<p>needs could have on the environment and infrastructure (for example, utilities, transport, education, healthcare, minerals and waste management facilities)</p> <p>It is important to note that the evidence gathered to support the preparation of the plan does not itself allocate land for development or alter any of the policies or land use designations in the existing Black Country Core Strategy or the Site Allocation Documents, Area Action Plans and Neighbourhood Plans prepared / made by Dudley MBC, Sandwell MBC, Walsall Council and Wolverhampton City Council. They will only change once the Black Country Plan is formally approved or 'adopted' (expected to be in 2024) and where the new plan replaces them.</p> <p>However, the evidence we have gathered will help the Black Country Authorities make informed decisions about the policies to include in the Black Country Plan, and the sites that should be identified or 'allocated' for new development to meet our needs up to 2039.</p>
<p>Why is this evidence being made available now?</p>	<p>The Black Country Authorities are publishing the evidence that has been completed to date (as of June 2022). This is because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing our evidence as and when it is completed shows the public how the Black Country Authorities are progressing the Black Country Plan and the range of issues the new plan will need to take into account; • The evidence provides an important starting point for our discussions with the other organisations we are required to work with on plan preparation, including other planning authorities whose areas could be affected by the Black Country Plan; and • The government encourages planning authorities to publish the evidence used to prepare a local plan, so that people can clearly see and understand the reasoning behind the policies and site allocations, and all the issues that the Council has had to take into account.
<p>Who has produced the study?</p>	<p>The Study was commissioned by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and produced by an independent consultancy firm called Chilmark Consulting.</p>
<p>What will the findings be used for?</p>	<p>The Study will be used as an important piece of evidence to inform the technical evidence and policies of the Black Country Plan.</p>
<p>Where can I see a copy of the study?</p>	<p>A copy of the Study can be viewed on the Black Country Plan website https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/t2/p4/</p>
<p>Where can I see a summary of the main findings for the study?</p>	<p>A summary of the main findings from the Study is available on the Black Country Plan website https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/t2/p4/</p>

<p>Can I comment on the findings of the study?</p>	<p>Not at this stage. As the work will be used to update the evidence which provides the justification for the policies and site allocations in the Black Country Plan, it will be formally consulted on alongside the next stage of the Plan which is the Publication (Regulation 19) Plan. This will be published for public consultation in Autumn 2022.</p>
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