

SMETHWICK AREA ACTION PLAN

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

**A DEVELOPMENT PLAN
DOCUMENT**

SANDWELL M.B.C

OCTOBER 2007



CONTENTS

1.	Non Technical Summary	4
2.	Background	7
	Purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the SA Report	7
	The Sustainability Appraisal Process	8
	The Strategic Environmental Assessment Process	9
3.	Area Action Plan Objectives and Content	11
4.	Context, Baseline and Sustainability Objectives	13
	Links to other Policies, Plans and Programmes	13
	Baseline Information	20
	Main Environmental, Social and Economic Issues and Problems Identified	24
	SA Framework	25
	Testing the AAP Objectives against the SA Framework	27
5.	Developing the Plan Options	28
	Early Involvement	28
	Option Development	30
	First Stage - how social, environmental and economic issues were considered in choosing the preferred strategy	30
	Second Stage - how social, environmental and economic issues were considered in choosing the preferred options	32
6.	Option Assessment	37
	Predicting and Evaluating the Significant Social, Environmental and Economic Effects of the Preferred Options	37
	Potential Mitigation Measures	44
7.	Monitoring	46
	Plan 1 - The Area Action Plan Boundary	47

This Sustainability Appraisal Report is part of the Smethwick Area Action Plan Submission Document.

This Area Action Plan has now been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. There is a statutory period of six weeks for representations on the soundness of the document, ending **12 December 2007**.

If there are any further representations which include proposals for alternative site allocations then these must be advertised for a further six weeks, but the Council will not propose any changes at that stage. Any such representations will be put forward to the Examination along with the Council's proposals.

The independent Examination will consider if the Area Action Plan, and any other representations, are sound, and the Inspector will issue a decision, which is final. The Inspector may require further changes to the document.

The Area Action Plan may then be adopted by the Council.

In order to assist you in making your response, there is a representation form, which can be returned to the Council via the freepost address:

**Sandwell MBC,
Development House,
FREEPOST BM1389,
P.O. Box 42,
West Bromwich
B70 8BR.**

Please note that the deadline for making comments on the Smethwick Area Action Plan - Submission Document Sustainability Appraisal is **Wednesday 12 December 2007**.

Any comments received after this date may not be considered by the Council. The representation form is available on the website if you do not have a copy.

Further information is available from this address,

**Planning Policy Section,
Directorate of Planning and
Transportation,
Sandwell MBC,
Development House,
Lombard Street,
West Bromwich,
West Midlands B70 8RU.**

Or by telephone: **0121 569 4254**
Or at www.sandwell.gov.uk

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 Under section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, it is a requirement for all Local Planning Authorities to carry out an assessment of the likely sustainability effects of each Local Development Document (LDD) they prepare, and to show the findings in a report.
- 1.2 This document comprises the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council's Smethwick Area Action Plan (AAP). A non-technical summary of the report accompanies this section.
- 1.3 The Sustainability Appraisal for the Smethwick AAP also includes the separate but related process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (as required by European Directive 2001/42/EC).
- 1.4 The area covered by this Plan concentrates on land to the immediate north and south of the Birmingham Canal within Smethwick, around Lewisham Road and Rolfe Street. The boundary stretches to the east incorporating the industrial areas of Rabone Lane and Foundry Lane. The most eastern boundary of the site adjoins the City Of Birmingham.
- 1.5 The AAP area also incorporates industrial land to the south including Cranford Street and Grove Lane as far as Dudley Road. To the west the area encompasses Cape Hill Town Centre and the residential area to the north around Windmill Lane and Smethwick High Street District Centre. Plan 1 shows the Area Action Plan Boundary.

- 1.6 The AAP puts forward the following preferred options for the various sites;
 - Sme1 - North Smethwick Canalside - primarily residential with commercial, light industrial and limited retail.
 - Sme2- Rabone Lane - Mixed Use - residential and commercial
 - Sme3 - Windmill Lane - residential
 - Sme4 - Grove Lane- Employment - Primarily Hospital/B1/Residential
 - Sme5 - Cranford Street - mixed use - residential/business (B1)
 - Sme6 - Black Patch Park - open space
 - Sme7 - Foundry Lane - employment (light industrial/offices)
 - Sme8 - Soho Foundry - mixed use (industrial/community/leisure/ educational)
- 1.7 The purpose of the Smethwick Area Action Plan is to set a framework for the future development and aid the regeneration of the North Smethwick Area in line with the Government's agenda for creating sustainable communities. It seeks to allocate sites for specific uses which will provide a range of housing, close to local services and facilities, as well as safeguarding appropriate land for employment uses, aiding movement through the area by a choice of means of transport and protection of the heritage assets.
- 1.8 The AAP will incorporate work already undertaken by partner agencies where these fit in with the overall agenda to meet local, regional and national aspirations. This work, together with additional evidence base information will inform the preferred options contained within this AAP which aims to provide a transformational change in the future land uses for this area.

- 1.9 During the preparation of this Sustainability Appraisal, reference has been made to a number of other plans and programmes. At the national level, Planning Policy Guidance and Statements provide assistance on a number of related issues including housing, employment and open space. The contents of these statements must be taken into account. At the Regional level, there is the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Black Country Study which is the first stage of revision of the RSS. At the local level, the Sandwell Plan, which is the Community Plan for Sandwell, and the Unitary Development Plan, which provides the planning policy context, provide the steer for future development. Other related plans and strategies have also been taken into account regarding housing, employment, education and open space.
- 1.10 A key principle underpinning the appraisal process relates to comparing what the plan is trying to achieve (the 'Plan Objectives') against a range of factors, which seek to ensure that all plans contribute towards sustainable development (the 'Sustainability Objectives'). The Council has used 20 sustainability objectives, derived from the West Midlands Regional Sustainable Development Framework.
- 1.11 As part of the process, the Council also needed to consider a number of options as to how sustainable development would best be achieved on the site. The next stage was to evaluate the likely significant effects of the plan against the 20 sustainability objectives identified.
- 1.12 The Council considers that there are a number of effects that are likely to be significant in negative terms. These relate to issues regarding potential impact on existing features, natural resources, transport, and waste. In response, the Council has identified a number of mitigation measures that are intended to prevent, reduce and offset these effects.
- 1.13 A number of positive effects have also been identified, including the likely benefit to the local residential environment through changing land uses in the area, and meeting local housing needs across tenures. The result will be, it is hoped, a transformed environment that will be an attractive place to live for existing and future households in the area, with a range of facilities and services and which will provide employment opportunities.
- 1.14 Reasonable and realistic options for achieving the Plan's objectives were developed through the preparation of the AAP and on the consultation on the Issues and Options Paper. The first stage of development being the consideration of the broader strategies within the AAP area by assessing available options against the sustainability objectives. This resulted in a strategy of allocating various sites for residential development and the consolidation of employment land to specific sites, protecting enhancing and incorporating the canal network within developments and allocating particular sites for social infrastructure.
- 1.15 The second stage considered how these sites could contribute to the strategy by amending the various sites in the Issues and Options Paper as part of the appraisal process. The social, environmental and economic effects of each option and the alternatives were considered in light of responses received to the Issues and Options Paper. This resulted in the Preferred Options being developed as part of the Smethwick AAP.
- 1.16 There was difficulty in obtaining all of the baseline information for this specific area of Smethwick as much of the data is held at Borough or Town level or is not as up to date as required, therefore, leaving gaps in some of the information resulting in a certain degree of uncertainty in the appraisal process. There may also be uncertainties in the assessment in the effects of the alternatives, although much of this process is judgemental and therefore there may be difference of opinions.

- 1.17 The preferred options and alternatives were assessed for their social, environmental and economic impacts on the area. In relation to the proposed development sites, these had either a positive or neutral impact on the environment. They were also assessed against the secondary, permanent or temporary effects of the impacts.
- 1.17 Mitigation measures have been considered to prevent, reduce, or offset possible adverse effects of the proposals. Some of the proposals result in the loss of employment sites which could lead to loss of some jobs. However, much of the land transferred to alternative uses is marginal employment land and its rationalisation and consolidation onto specific sites is thought to be more beneficial. The development of more housing will require more social infrastructure to be put in place which will be mitigated through developer contributions and a public realm strategy.
- 1.18 Sandwell's monitoring process through the Annual Monitoring Report will monitor the key outputs relevant to the Smethwick AAP, including housing trajectories, completions, housing and employment land availability.

2. BACKGROUND

Purpose of the SA and SA Report

- 2.1 Sustainability Appraisal is now a required part of the new Local Development Framework system, and must be prepared for all new planning documents, including supplementary planning documents (Planning Policy Statement 12, paragraph 3.14-3.18).
- 2.2 The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development by integrating social, environmental and economic considerations into the planning process. Sustainable Development can be defined as development that “enables all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life for future generations”.
- 2.3 The Sustainability Appraisal Report of the Smethwick AAP will provide an assessment of the plan in terms of its effect on sustainability. It identifies a number of options that will be tested against a set of agreed sustainability objectives, in order to establish the extent to which it will deliver sustainable development in this part of Sandwell.
- 2.4 The *Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004* requires all local planning authorities to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on land use and spatial plans that set the framework future consents for development.
- 2.5 However, there are exceptions to this requirement, for example where plans seek to determine the use of a small area at the local level, and which seek minor modifications, where the Council has determined that the plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.
- 2.6 To determine whether an SEA does need to be undertaken, the Council is required to prepare a Screening Statement, which basically assesses the AAP against a set of standard criteria. The Council is then required to consult the four Statutory Bodies, consisting of the Environment Agency, English Nature, English Heritage, and the Countryside Agency, prior to issuing the formal determination.
- 2.7 Sandwell MBC carried out this process, including the necessary consultation. Following this process, the Council has determined that an SEA is required as part of the SA process. Consequently, the Council has decided to incorporate the requirements of the SEA Directive into the SA report itself. This will reduce the amount of documentation produced and will allow the two processes to be fully integrated.
- 2.8 To this end, the SA report will signpost the various SEA stages where relevant in order to demonstrate that the SEA requirements have been met.
- 2.9 This SA was carried out by Sandwell Local Planning Authority in order that the plan making and SA process are fully integrated. The framework and objectives have been derived from previous work carried out by the planning authority in preparing an environmental assessment of the Unitary Development Plan, and the outcomes of the Scoping Report carried out for the Black Country Study. The SA objectives for the Black Country Study were themselves derived from the West Midlands Sustainable Development Framework.
- 2.10 In January 2006, the council consulted the four main statutory consultees on the Screening Statement for the Smethwick AAP, and concluded from their responses that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) would also be required in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC. Reference within this report to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) denotes Sustainability Appraisal incorporating requirements of the SEA Directive.

- 2.11 In July 2006, the Local Authority then consulted those with relevant environmental responsibility on the Scoping Report for the AAP. The Scoping Report was sent to the four consultative bodies (the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency). The responses received were taken into account in preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
- 2.12 The SA Report has been sent to the four statutory consultees and also to local Councillors, Smethwick Town Team, Birmingham City Council, Regional Planning Body, Advantage West Midlands, Sandwell Partnership, Sandwell Community Empowerment Network and the Black Country Chamber as well as those organisations within the Smethwick area who may have an interest.

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Process

- 2.13 The different stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process are shown below, with an indication of where the stages are addressed within the SA Report. The table is adapted from "Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents".

SA Stage	Where covered in SA Report
A1: Identifying relevant plans, policies, and programmes, and sustainability objectives	4.2 & 4.10
A2: Collecting baseline information	4.4
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems	4.6
A4: Developing the SA Framework	4.8 - 4.10
A5: consulting on the scope of the SA	2.11

B1: Testing the AAP objectives against the SA Framework	4.11
B2: Developing the AAP Options	Chapter 5
B3: Predicting the effects of the AAP	Chapter 6
B4: Evaluating the effects of the AAP	Chapter 6
B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximizing beneficial effects	Chapter 6
B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the AAP	Chapter 7
C1: Preparing the SA Report	Whole Document
D1: Public participation on the Preferred Options of the AAP and the SA Report	March/April 2007
D2: (i) Appraising significant changes	After May 2007
D2 (ii) Appraising significant changes resulting from representations (post examination)	Later stage
D3: Making decisions and providing information	Later stage
E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring	Later stage
E2: Responding to adverse effects	Later stage

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Process

2.14 The table below identifies the components of the SA Report that make up the Environmental Report for the purposes of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC. The table is adapted from "Sustainability Appraisals of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents" Appendix 1.

SEA Directive Requirements for the Environmental Report (from Article 5 and Annex I):	Where they are covered in the SA Report
a. an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Chapter 3 & 4.2
b. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	4.4
c. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	3.5 - 3.8
d. Any existing environmental problems that are relevant to the plan	4.6
e. the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	4.8 - 4.11
f. the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme	6.1 - 6.3
g. "...the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme	6.19 - 6.19
h. an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with	Chapter 5
i. a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	Chapter 7
j. a non-technical summary of the information provided	Chapter 1

3. AREA ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT

- 3.1 The Smethwick Area Action Plan has identified a number of objectives which have been derived from the visions set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Sandwell UDP:
1. Encouraging the provision of a range of new, high quality homes to meet local and future needs, including affordable housing.
 2. Identifying new employment sites or appropriate relocation sites which will aid local employment opportunities.
 3. Evaluate, protect and enhance existing open spaces and green spaces and provide new facilities where there is an identified need.
 4. Improving accessibility for all modes of transport through and within the plan area.
 5. Ensuring that the social infrastructure, such as education, health and community facilities, is appropriate to serve the existing and proposed communities within the plan area.
 6. Protecting and enhancing the heritage assets of the Smethwick Area.

Outline and Contents of the Smethwick AAP

- 3.2 The area covered by this Plan concentrates on land to the immediate north and south of the Birmingham Canal within Smethwick, around Lewisham Road and Rolfe Street. The boundary stretches to the east incorporating the industrial areas of Rabone Lane and Foundry Lane. The most eastern boundary of the site adjoins the City Of Birmingham.

- 3.3 The AAP area also incorporates industrial land to the south including Cranford Street and Grove Lane as far as Dudley Road. To the west the area encompasses Cape Hill Town Centre and the residential area to the north around Windmill Lane and Smethwick High Street District Centre.
- 3.4 The Brindley II site which currently consists of vacant land and industrial uses already possesses an allocation for residential/mixed use within the Adopted Unitary Development Plan which is being retained and is the subject of a detailed Supplementary Planning Document to bring forward its delivery. Whilst contained within the Smethwick AAP to provide a context to the wider area, this site does not form part of the proposals within the AAP and will not, therefore, be subject to consultation.
- 3.5 The Rolfe Street area however, is currently predominantly industrial, consisting of a range of uses which occupy premises of mixed type, age and condition. One of the assets of this particular area is the Birmingham Canal which runs east-west through the Smethwick area and which is also part of the Smethwick Summit Conservation Area, containing listed structures, buildings of local interest and areas for conservation of wildlife.
- 3.6 To the east, adjoining Birmingham City Council boundary is the area referred to in this AAP as Soho Park. This area contains a mixture of uses, dominated by industrial processes including bad neighbour uses such as scrapyards and with a large portion of the area taken up by Avery Weigh Tronix. This area also includes Soho Foundry, a Grade II* Listed Building which is currently the subject of a study for its future protection and potential reuse. The rest of the area is occupied by Black Patch Park, which includes football pitches, a brook and a community hall which is currently closed. There are also vacant sites opposite the park which were once occupied by maisonettes, demolished over the last couple of years. There still remains an enclave of semi-detached properties owned by Focus and a Hostel off Foundry Lane.

- The most eastern point of the AAP boundary is taken up by allotments which are very popular and well used.
- 3.7 Grove Lane and Cranford Street areas are exclusively industrial with a range of properties of varying qualities. Cranford Street is a main route through from Smethwick into Birmingham with large, under-occupied premises flanking the road. Grove Lane contains larger, older industrial buildings, some of poor quality or vacant/derelect. Many of the premises are being used for storage or warehouse purposes apart from premises on Abberley Street, occupied by BG Plating.
- 3.8 The Windmill Lane area is predominantly residential in nature, being a mixture of public and private sector housing together with retail and community uses. The area is covered by Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder and is one of the main project areas. Two centres are included within this area, Cape Hill Town Centre and Smethwick High Street (Lower) Local centre.
- 3.9 The purpose of the Smethwick Area Action Plan is to set a framework for the future development and aid the regeneration of the North Smethwick Area in line with the Government's agenda for creating sustainable communities. It seeks to allocate sites for specific uses which will provide a range of housing, close to local services and facilities, as well as safeguarding appropriate land for employment uses, aiding movement through the area by a choice of means of transport and protection of the heritage assets.
- 3.10 The AAP will incorporate work already undertaken by partner agencies where these fit in with the overall agenda to meet local, regional and national aspirations. This work, together with additional evidence base information will inform the preferred options contained within this AAP which aims to provide a transformational change in the future land uses for this area.
- 3.11 The Council is currently working in partnership with Regenco, the Urban Regeneration Company, to provide a planning framework which will enable this regeneration to be pursued and delivered. For Smethwick, the key focus is on the North Smethwick Canalside where opportunities exist to radically change the make-up of the area from industrial to a residential-led mixed use area, concentrating on promoting the canal as an exciting and attractive place to live.
- 3.12 In addition to this, Sandwell are working closely with Urban Living, the Sandwell/Birmingham Pathfinder which was established to tackle areas where the housing market was failing. The Pathfinder area runs from West Bromwich, through Smethwick and into the Aston area of Birmingham and has recently been awarded around £45 million to bring forward projects with the aim of producing better neighbourhoods and improving the housing choice to meet the needs of the area.
- 3.13 The Local Authority are also committed to working in partnership with other agencies, stakeholders and authorities within the area. In particular, Sandwell has been working with the NHS and Birmingham City Council in identifying an appropriate site for a new hospital and community hospitals which will serve the needs of both Sandwell and Birmingham residents and which will bring regenerative benefits to both areas. The NHS Trust is a key stakeholder in Sandwell and a close working relationship has proved invaluable in the preparation of the Smethwick Area Action Plan.

4. CONTEXT, BASELINE AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

Context: Links to other Policies, Plans and Programmes

- 4.1 Other relevant plans, policies and programmes need to be identified in order that external social, economic and environmental issues can be taken into account in the preparation of the AAP and the SA.
- 4.2 The wider background includes plans, policies and programmes at international and national level. As the AAP is a very local document, it is not considered necessary to go in to great detail concerning the international or national context, as there are regional and local plans and programmes which identify the issues of most relevance to this sustainability appraisal.

Plan or Programme	Relevant Objectives, Targets or Indicators	Implications for Smethwick Area Action Plan
<p>West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) 2004. Seeks to reverse the trend in out-migration of people and investment from major urban areas (MUA) into the surrounding settlements and beyond. The approach taken in the RSS supports the Government's own agenda for change in both urban and rural areas, set out in Sustainable Communities: building the future 2003.</p>	<p>Policy CF1 promotes housing within major urban areas, whilst Policy CF3 addresses the level and distribution of new housing. In addition, Policy QE3 promotes the creation of a high quality built environment for all, Policy QE4 deals with the protection and enhancement of green spaces in urban areas, whilst Policy QE5 covers issues relating to the historic environment.</p>	<p>Need to ensure that the plan contributes to housing targets and considers employment land within the hierarchy. Also need to ensure that the historic environment, consisting of historic buildings and structures, archaeological remains and historic landscapes and townscapes is protected and enhanced.</p>

<p>Phase One Revision of the RSS (the Black Country Strategy) 2005</p> <p>A transformational agenda based on reversing out-migration, raising income levels, changing the socio economic mix, and transforming the environment.</p>		<p>Need to ensure that the plan addresses the transformational agenda identified.</p>
<p>West Midlands Sustainable Development Framework 2005</p> <p>A framework based on nine sustainability principles and four key objectives for the West Midlands.</p>		<p>Need to ensure the policy requirements are reflected in the SA framework objectives.</p>
<p>Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.</p>		<p>Consider how the plan can contribute to mixed developments, promoting inclusive communities and creating links between people and places. Need to achieve sustainable development including the historic environment.</p>
<p>Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS 3). PPS3 has recently been issued as a replacement to the previous advice on this subject, Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (2001). In general terms, the key objective for Government is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home, which they can afford.</p>	<p>More specifically, Local Development Documents such as the Smethwick AAP should seek to ensure that a wide range of housing, by tenure and price is available, to meet all housing needs. Furthermore, plans should seek a better balance between housing supply and demand and improve affordability, where necessary, with new developments located with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure</p>	<p>Ensure the plan addresses housing requirements of the whole community, including affordable housing and seeks a mix of type and tenure.</p>

PPS4 (Industrial, Commercial development and small firms),		Ensure that the employment opportunities are provided.
PPG13(Transport)		Need to promote development which will lead to less journeys being undertaken by car and promote sustainable methods of transport.
PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment).		Need to ensure the historic fabric of the area is not compromised by developments within the plan.
PPG16 (Archaeology and Planning)		Need to ensure the archaeological assets of the area are not compromised by developments within the plan.
PPG17 (Sport & Recreation)	Local authorities should set local standards based upon as assessment of need and audit of existing facilities.	Need to assess level of provision within the area and enhance where appropriate.
PPS23 Pollution Control		
West Midlands Local Transport Plan 2006 A framework setting out strategies and proposals for prioritising major transport investment in the region by reducing congestion, improving accessibility, reducing pollution and making transport safer for all.		Need to take account of committed schemes and transport proposals in the LTP.

<p>Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan 2000</p> <p>The Plan focuses on aspects of local ecology which are in need of protection or conservation, and sets targets and methods for ensuring the continued presence of wildlife in Birmingham and the Black Country in a series of habitat and species action plans.</p>		<p>Plan to protect and enhance local habitat and species</p>
<p>Sandwell Plan (the Sandwell Community Plan) 2004</p> <p>The purpose of the Sandwell Plan is to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Borough. "The Sandwell of 2020 will be a thriving, sustainable, optimistic and forward-looking community"</p>	<p>The main challenges are identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reverse the trend of people moving away from Sandwell; Raise income levels; Attract and retain more people with higher levels of skills; Strengthen existing businesses and diversify the economy; Transform the environment, to protect and enhance it, and to create a safe, attractive and healthy place to live and work, with a particular need to improve housing quality and choice; Make Sandwell an enjoyable place to live, which is safe and known for its quality services and facilities. 	<p>Need to ensure that the plan's objective and allocations address the main challenges for Sandwell.</p>

<p>Sandwell Unitary Development Plan 2004</p> <p>The UDP sets the appropriate land use framework for Sandwell in order to help develop future initiatives that will contribute to the regeneration of the Borough.</p>	<p>The Plan covers Strategic Objectives, Housing, Economy & Employment, Transport, Shopping and the Role of Centres, Open Space, Nature Conservation, Urban Design, Community Services, Physical Constraints on Development, Waste Management, Telecommunications, Conservation and Heritage, Minerals, Development Control Policies, and Insets for particular geographic areas. There is also Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for Community Safety, Residential Design Guidance, and Cycling, and Adopted Supplementary Planning Document for Affordable Housing.</p>	<p>The policies and proposals contained in the AAP need to be in conformity with those in the UDP where relevant.</p>
<p>Air Quality Action Plan</p>	<p>The whole of Sandwell is an Air Quality Management Area for annual average nitrogen dioxide levels. A co-ordinated boroughwide action plan will be produced to address the causes of pollution and to adopt effective control measures.</p>	<p>Plan should take account of the effects on air quality in the area.</p>
<p>Sandwell Economic Development Strategy</p> <p>This document seeks to provide clear direction for the future economic development of Sandwell to support delivery of the Borough's Community Strategy and specific strategic objectives of partners.</p>		<p>Plan should support the economic strategy for the Borough.</p>

<p>Smethwick Housing Strategy 2003 (being updated 2006)</p> <p>The Smethwick Housing Strategy 2003 outlines a number of challenges for the Town</p>	<p>Challenges identified include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a surplus of social housing, mainly 1 and 2 bedroomed flats a need for more affordable housing suitable for families a need for more family housing to attract people to or retain them in Smethwick. the need for supported housing for elderly people action to improve unpopular estates more housing suitable for ethnic minority families. 	<p>Plan must ensure that the key objectives of the Housing Strategy are met through the identification of appropriate sites and provision of affordable housing.</p>
<p>Housing Market Renewal Area Pathfinder 2004-2019</p>	<p>Strategic objectives set out in the Scheme Update (2006/08) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To repopulate the Urban Living area and develop mixed income communities; To reduce crime through housing market intervention; To ensure that household growth is accommodated through market and non-market based solutions; To reverse the decline of unsustainable neighbourhoods and stabilise neighbourhoods vulnerable to decline. 	<p>The plan will aid the objectives of the HMRA in promoting good quality housing to improve the housing market.</p>
<p>Towards 2010</p> <p>A plan to invest in local health and social care services and buildings in Sandwell</p>	<p>Aims to provide services which are more accessible and local, provide services which meet the needs of the people, promote more jobs and create a better environment and help people become healthier.</p>	<p>Look at ways of how the plan can provide the necessary facilities in easily accessible and appropriate locations.</p>

Sandwell School Organisation Plan 2004/2009	Policies and principles for education provision set out.	Ensure plan takes account of the need for more provision arising out of residential development.
Sandwell MBC Sustainable Development Strategy	Draws together the Council's strategies and action plans in order to integrate sustainability issues into all Council policies and activities.	Sustainability Appraisal to consider the contribution the plan makes to sustainability objectives.
The Arc of Opportunity (Dudley Sandwell Birmingham)	A programme of funding designed to stimulate enterprise in business, develop a skilled workforce, and enable the renaissance of priority centres.	Identify whether funding is available to support plan objectives or proposals.
Sandwell Parks and Green Spaces Strategy 2001	The strategy aims to provide high profile parks and green spaces with a wide range of facilities in partnership with local groups.	The Plan will need to address the policies and proposals within the green space strategy.
British Waterways	Seeks to conserve, improve, and promote inland waterways, including as a catalyst for regeneration.	Identify the relevant issues to be addressed through the plan proposals.

Baseline Information

- 4.3 “Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring effects, and helps to identify problems and alternative ways of dealing with them. Baseline information consists mainly of indicators, although both quantitative and qualitative information can be used” (ODPM).
- 4.4 The baseline information which relates to the social, environmental and economic issues for the Smethwick AAP is contained within the following table;

Social Issues	Baseline Indicator(s)	Comments
Population of the Plan area	Plan area 1991 to 2001	Population of the plan area decreased by 6.3% between 1991-2001.
Population of Smethwick Town	Smethwick Town Area	Population of the Town has decreased by -3.4% since 1991 (allowing for boundary changes which have occurred)
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004	% of Towns SOAs within the worst 20% nationally, and in Sandwell .	In IMD 2004, Smethwick has a higher proportion of its SOAs within the most deprived categories than Sandwell overall. 29 out of 32 of its SOAs are within the worst 40% nationally and it fairs worst out of all the Sandwell Towns on the Health Deprivation & Disability, Crime and Disorder and Living Environment Deprivation. It performs fair for Education, Skills and Training Domain.
	IMD Income	Sandwell is one of the most deprived districts in England (1998 - 7th most deprived). North Smethwick suffers from higher deprivation within Smethwick Town.

	IMD Employment	St Pauls Ward has a higher unemployment rate than the Borough average at 9.7% compared to 6.7% (Nov 05)
	Standardised ratio of Limiting Long-term Illness	National average is 100; any higher score is worst than average. Smethwick Town (138.9) is worse than the Sandwell average of 121.1. North Smethwick Neighbourhood has a score of 141.3, Windmill Lane is 159.5 and Black Patch is 129.7.
	IMD Education Skills & Training	Smethwick has higher educational attainment than the Borough average. North Smethwick fairs better than the Borough average.
	IMD Barriers to Housing and Services	Smethwick fairs very well compared to the other Towns in terms of Barriers to Housing & Services. None of the SOAs within the Town fall within the worst 40% nationally, compared with 90.9% in Sandwell overall.
	Total Recorded Crimes per 1000 population	North Smethwick neighbourhood 46.2, compared to 98.2 for Sandwell and 113.3 nationally. However, Windmill Lane records 97.6/ 100 population and Black Patch 86.8.
	Cases of Anti Social Behaviour per 1000 households	North Smethwick has 33.6 cases which is lower than the Borough average of 43.7. However, Black Patch records 158.9 and Windmill Lane has 160.6, therefore a significant problem in these areas.

Environmental Issues	Baseline Indicator(s)	Comments
Local nature conservation designations	Number and status of designations, non designated sites and archaeological remains.	The Birmingham Canal is designated as a Wildlife Corridor.
Cultural heritage importance and condition	Number and status of designations	There are a number of Listed structures within the Plan area including Scheduled Ancient Monuments and those on the Sites and Monuments Register. Part of the area is within a Conservation Area.
Dereliction/contamination/ground conditions	No figures available	Due to past and current operations within this area, there is bound to be issues relating to ground conditions and contamination.
Flood Zones	Flood Zones	This area has a high probability of flooding. The chance of flooding each year is greater than 1.0% (1 in 100).
Water Quality		The Birmingham Canal runs adjacent to this site and is of poor quality.
Air Quality	Inclusion in AQMA	All of Sandwell is in an Air Quality Management Area; no part of the plan area is designated a "hotspot"
Noise Pollution	Statutory nuisances	There are industrial processes operating within the site.

Economic Issues	Baseline Indicator(s)	Comment
Strength of the local economy	Jobs in the Sandwell economy	1998-2001: number of full-time jobs fell by 5.1% (UK= 3.1%)
	Number of economically active	1999-2001: Sandwell fell from 75.9% to 75.3% (UK 78.7% to 78.6%). North Smethwick is lower at 57.1% to Sandwell of 73.0% (2004), Black Patch is 55.5% and Windmill Eye is 60%.
Economic Performance	Average annual gross earnings for full-time employees	1999-2002: Sandwell score fell from 90.6% of UK level to 86.6%. Reflects high dependence on low value manufacturing.
	Gross Value Added per hour worked	West Midlands has the lowest GCVA per hour of any UK region.
Link with Living standards	GDP per head of population	2004: Sandwell and Dudley together produce only 82.85% of gross value per head for UK.
Employment sector make-up	Manufacturing/service sector employment ratio	1991-2001: number of manufacturing jobs in Sandwell declined by 22.7%
Investment	Share of foreign direct investment	West Midlands received 12.4% in 2000/1 - highest outside London/SE
	Total number of VAT registered businesses per 10,000 population	2004: 220.92 (UK 307.96) - an increase from 210.32 in 2001.

Main Environmental, Social and Economic Issues and Problems Identified

- 4.5 There are a number of main social, environmental and economic issues which have been identified from a number of different sources in the baseline information. These are listed below;
- 4.6 The issues have been identified by analysing the baseline information, as well as through reference to relevant plans and programmes, and from past consultation on other studies undertaken in this area.
- Population in this particular area has decreased by -3.4% since 1991.
 - There is a higher number of children present in this area than Sandwell as a whole, and more adults between 30-44 age range
 - Higher percentage of ethnic minorities
 - Higher proportion of properties in owner occupation
 - The existing and emerging households in Smethwick Town demand more affordable homes than privately owned properties.
 - More than double the amount of incoming households require private housing as opposed to affordable housing
 - Just over half of households are owner occupiers, owning outright or with a mortgage
 - Over one third of properties are rented from either the Council or Housing Association.
 - The Housing Needs Survey 2003 identified a need for 2 bed and 4 bed properties in the future.
 - There are higher levels of Income Deprivation within the neighbourhood compared to Sandwell.
 - Unemployment is very high in this area compared to the Borough

- This area ranks higher in terms of Limiting Long-term illness than the Borough and Smethwick Town

- Air quality is an issue across Sandwell, though no AQMAs cover the site specifically;

- The area generally has good access to a range of local services and facilities;

- Issues relating to accessibility to leisure services, which is currently poor;

- Very high level of incidents of crime and disorder in parts of the Plan area

- The area has a rich historic environment which needs to be protected and enhanced, especially in relation to the Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and setting of the Conservation Area. Other non-designated sites should also be considered.

- 4.7 These are some of the topics highlighted by the baseline information which show the inter-relationship between social, environmental, and economic issues which affect quality of life. The Area Action Plan will set out to address these issues, where this is possible. The Sustainability Appraisal Framework, based on clear and robust SA objectives, can assist in judging whether the AAP will, or indeed can, address them.

The SA Framework

- 4.8 The sustainability objectives are different to the objectives of the AAP. They need to be appropriate to the scope and coverage of the level of the plan, in this case, an Area Action Plan.
- 4.9 The proposed sustainability objectives for the Smethwick AAP are derived from those contained in the West Midlands Regional Sustainable Development Framework 2005. There are 5 West Midlands RSDF Key Objectives, each with a set of specific objectives. These have already undergone an SA process themselves. They have been adapted to apply to Sandwell in the first instance and are suitable to apply to the AAP, though certain objectives may be more relevant than others.
- 4.10 The testing of SA objectives against the plan objectives is intended to show where there may be possible conflicts between them, and to identify whether any of the objectives could be improved. A simple matrix has been prepared to illustrate where objectives are compatible, in conflict, or neutral.

Sustainability Objectives for Sandwell	
Develop Thriving Sustainable Communities	
1	Increase the opportunities for all communities and stakeholders to participate in and contribute to decisions which affect their quality of life within Sandwell
2	Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
3	Improve health and reduce inequalities in access to health and social care
4	Reduce poverty and disadvantage, taking into account the particular difficulties of those facing multiple disadvantage
5	Improve access to education and lifelong learning for all
6	Improve access to services for all
7	Increase cultural and recreational activity for all communities
8	Provide decent homes for all

Enhance and Protect the Environment	
9	Value, enhance and protect built environment assets
10	Value, enhance and protect important natural assets including biodiversity
11	Encourage high quality, attractive and safe built and natural environments
12	Improve air, water and soil quality
13	Reduce contributions to climate change through energy efficiency and use of renewable energy
Ensure Prudent and Efficient use of Natural Resources	
14	Conserve natural resources
15	Increase transport choice and reduce the need to travel
16	Minimise growth in waste and encourage re-use, recycling and recovery
Develop a Flourishing, Diverse and Stable Economy	
17	Improve and regenerate the economy to provide jobs for all
18	Increase high quality employment opportunities whilst recognising the contribution of unpaid work
19	Ensure everyone has the skills they need to access the job they want
20	Increase the development of new businesses by making Sandwell an attractive location to start, expand or relocate a business

Testing the AAP Objectives against the SA Framework

- 4.11 The matrix overleaf shows the testing of the Plan objectives against the Sustainability objectives where the following results have arisen.

Plan Objective 1 (new housing) vs SA Objective 9 (protect built environment assets)

Possible conflict because new housing may result in demolition or alteration of buildings or structures of local value. Listed buildings will be protected, and conflict reduced by sensitive design which incorporates buildings within development.

Plan Objective 1 (new housing) vs SA Objective 14 (Conserve natural resources)

Possible conflict because new housing development will require use of natural resources. New housing will need to comply with the need to promote sustainable travel, achieve energy efficiency and minimise waste.

Plan Objective 2 (New employment) vs SA Objective 14 (conserve natural resources)

Possible conflict because new development will require use of natural resources. New development will need to comply with the need to promote sustainable travel, achieve energy efficiency and minimise waste.

Plan Objective 4 (improve accessibility) vs SA objective 12 (Improve air/soil/ water quality)

Possible conflict because promoting new road building will encourage more usage of car. Promote more sustainable methods of transport and consider new developments next to transport nodes.

Plan Objective 4 (improve accessibility) vs SA objective 14 (conserve natural resources)

Possible conflict because the building of new roads will need to use natural resources. Will need to promote more sustainable modes of transport.

5. DEVELOPING THE AREA ACTION PLAN OPTIONS

Early Involvement

- 5.1 In April 2004, the statutory land use plan for Sandwell was adopted, which set out the policies and proposals for the Borough up to 2011. The policies and proposals contained within the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) were reflective of the Borough at that time. However, during the lengthy process of preparing and adopting the UDP, new Government initiatives were introduced, which meant that this particular area of the Borough required more detailed assessment.
- 5.2 Further work was undertaken, commissioned by Smethwick Regeneration Partnership (SRP), which looked specifically at the North Smethwick Canalside. At the same time, the Planning Division was preparing Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Unitary Development Plan which provided a more detailed look at parts of the Smethwick Town area, identifying sites which could lead to a transformational change in the land uses and which mirrored the studies undertaken on behalf of SRP.
- 5.3 These allocations were incorporated into the Smethwick Town Plan, adopted in May 2004. Whilst many of the allocations reflected those of the UDP, land was identified for uses which did not conform to those of the Statutory Plan and therefore could not be treated as Supplementary Planning Guidance. However, it was considered that the identification of these sites for alternative uses, provided a vision for a transformational change in this area and were therefore treated as Council Policy and could be used as a material factor should comprehensive schemes be submitted.
- 5.4 The Smethwick Town Plan acts as an interim document, setting Council Policy on which to base the Smethwick Area Action Plan. With the introduction of Local Development Frameworks, it has become possible to review the allocations and policies of the UDP and to highlight where those proposals require change in order to meet the needs and requirements of the residents and businesses within the Smethwick area.
- 5.5 Whilst the Smethwick Regeneration Partnership programme has come to the end of its life, responsibility for addressing the investment required to attract regeneration in Smethwick has transferred to Regenco, the Urban Regeneration Company for Sandwell which covers West Bromwich and Smethwick. The Council is currently working in partnership with Regenco to provide a planning framework which will enable this regeneration to be pursued and delivered. For Smethwick, the key focus is on the North Smethwick Canalside where opportunities exist to radically change the make-up of the area from industrial to a residential-led mixed use area, concentrating on promoting the canal as an exciting and attractive place to live.
- 5.6 In addition to this, Sandwell was identified as a Pathfinder Scheme for Housing Market Renewal, which was established to tackle areas where the housing market was failing. Whilst Sandwell's housing market had not deteriorated as much as other Pathfinder areas, the Government felt that there was a danger this may happen unless there was a significant level of investment made in improving the housing choice. The Pathfinder area runs from West Bromwich, through Smethwick and into the Aston area of Birmingham and has recently been awarded around £45 million to bring forward projects with the aim of producing better neighbourhoods and improving the housing choice to meet the needs of the area.

- 5.7 The Local Authority are also committed to working in partnership with other agencies, stakeholders and authorities within the area. In particular, Sandwell has been working with the NHS and Birmingham City Council in identifying an appropriate site for a new hospital and community hospitals which will serve the needs of both Sandwell and Birmingham residents and which will bring regenerative benefits to both areas. The NHS Trust is a key stakeholder in Sandwell and a close working relationship has proved invaluable in the preparation of the Smethwick Area Action Plan.
- 5.8 Consultation during the preparation of the AAP has involved briefing the Town Team and Councillors on the issues and options which were being considered to develop this transformational agenda. The early consultation as part of the Smethwick Regeneration Partnership laid down some of the principles which were later incorporated within the Smethwick Town Plan, and subsequently incorporated within the Issues and Options Paper. The Town Plan, as an interim document between the UDP and the development of the Local Development Scheme, highlighted major land use changes to the area which would deliver a change in not only the housing market, but also have an effect on the employment land and transportation network.
- 5.9 There had also been previous working on a Strategy for the Windmill Eye which identified a phased clearance and development programme which would deliver an improved housing market, appropriate social infrastructure and an improve environmental quality. This strategy needs to be developed further with additional evidence to support this approach and therefore, the AAP suggests a way forward, subject to the results of this additional research. The allocations within the Plan have been put forward through partnership working.
- 5.10 An Issues and Options Paper was prepared in May 2006 and published for public consultation. It was distributed to a number of statutory and non-statutory consultees, interested groups, stakeholders and the various partner agencies. A copy was also placed on the council's website for wider public viewing.
- 5.11 The issues raised included the need to provide for a range of housing types and tenures to meet the demands and the needs of the residents currently living in the area as well as those wishing to move in to Smethwick. There was also a need to look at the usage of the employment land within the area, which was further supported by an Employment Land Study identifying those areas where the quality of the land or buildings were poor, or under utilised and which could be reallocated for other uses. The Issues and Options Paper also highlighted the need to protect and enhance the borough's historic fabric, in the form of the listed buildings and canal network and to promote these areas as places for recreation and leisure, as well as a place in which to live.
- 5.12 The main areas identified for major change were Rolfe Street, along the canalside where the current industrial premises could be reallocated for residential and commercial purposes. Grove Lane was identified as an area which could accommodate a new acute hospital to fit the Towards 2010 agenda being promoted by the NHS. It was recognised that the Windmill Eye, which was subject of funding from Urban Living programme, required a longer term strategy which would deliver the housing required, clear the unfit dwellings but retain the services and facilities which were required to support a sustainable living area. It was also acknowledged that there were problems within the Soho Park area which needed to be dealt with before investment would be forthcoming, although some projects could be delivered within the timescale of the Plan.

Option Development

- 5.13 The Statutory Plan for Sandwell is the Unitary Development Plan from which policies have been referred to in developing the AAP. However, it has been recognised that whilst the UDP provides the basis for development within the area, the Smethwick AAP addresses a need for a transformational change which cannot be accommodated by the land uses laid out in the UDP, but which needs to address the partnership working with agencies and regeneration initiatives in place for this area which meet the aims and objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 5.14 In developing the options, alternative ways were considered which met the plan objectives. Option development underwent a process of two stages. The first stage was to identify reasonable and realistic options for the various areas within the Plan Area which met the aims of the UDP and RSS at the local level and provided a strategy for a transformational change. The second stage developed allocations for sites which could support this strategy, assessing them against the Strategic Objectives.

First Stage - how social, environmental and economic issues were considered in choosing the preferred strategy

- 5.15 The first stage of developing options which considered social, environmental and economic issues.
1. Encouraging the provision of a range of new, high quality homes to meet local and future needs, including affordable housing.
 - a. Develop on marginal employment land sites
 - b. Utilise existing sites allocated for housing only
 - c. Build housing on low value open space

2. Identifying new employment sites or appropriate relocation sites which will aid local employment opportunities.
 - a. Protect existing employment sites to retain local employment
 - b. Rationalise employment land onto specific sites
 - c. Allocate land for mixed uses to allow flexibility
3. Evaluate, protect and enhance existing open spaces and green spaces and provide new facilities where there is an identified need.
 - a. Ensure new developments include accessible quality open space
 - b. Exploit usage of the canal network to promote recreation and leisure
 - c. Allocate all resources to all areas of open space in the area.
4. Improving accessibility for all modes of transport through and within the plan area.
 - a. Promote usage of sustainable modes of transport
 - b. Retain existing road network without change
 - c. Adopt a strategy for improvements to ease traffic movement
5. Ensuring that the social infrastructure, such as education, health and community facilities, is appropriate to serve the existing and proposed communities within the plan area.
 - a. Require developer contributions from all residential developments to sustain social infrastructure
 - c. Work with appropriate agencies to identify appropriate sites for facilities
 - d. Require developer contributions from large developments only.

- 6. Protecting and enhancing the heritage assets of the Smethwick Area.
 - a. Oppose development on all protected sites
 - b. Allow development which does not have an adverse effect but protects and enhances the historic environment
 - c. Enhance designated conservation area.

5.19 The Sustainability Appraisal concludes that the following strategy should be used;

1a - Developing on marginal employment sites would provide more housing and improve the environmental quality of the area by removing some older industrial uses.

2b - Rationalisation of employment sites onto specific sites would improve the quality of the area and get rid of vacant and derelict sites and make use of employment land more efficiently.

3c - Utilising the canal network would be a sustainable way of introducing more open space within developments and scores higher in the sustainability appraisal than the other two methods which would achieve the objective partly.

4c - Adopting a transport strategy which enables all modes of transport to move through the area and promotes more sustainable methods of transport will improve living environments.

5a - the extent of potential development will provide the necessary funding for new social infrastructure.

6b - Allowing the historic environment to be sympathetically designed into developments will ensure their retention and future maintenance and consider archaeological remains.

- 5.16 Following Sustainability Appraisal of the alternatives, a strategy for the AAP was developed based on the following;
- 1a. Develop on marginal employment land sites
 - 2b. Rationalise employment land onto specific sites
 - 3c. Exploit usage of the canal network to promote recreation and leisure
 - 4c. Adopt a strategy for improvements to ease traffic movement
 - 5a. Require developer contributions from all residential developments to sustain social infrastructure
 - 6b. Allow sympathetic development on sites of historic or archaeological importance.

Methodology

- 5.17 For the Smethwick AAP area, it was decided to use a simplified matrix approach to ascertain the sustainability of the alternative strategies and the alternative options against the Sustainability Objectives. This would assist in identifying the sustainability effects of each alternative, which would not in itself lead to a preferred option being chosen, but would identify where there could be problems in choosing the preferred option over an alternative. Other information on the preferred option would support why it was chosen over one appearing to be more sustainable.
- 5.18 The matrix used a method of scoring each alternative against the sustainability objective. A numerical value was assigned to the level of impact thus;
 + = 1, ++ = 2, - = -1, -- = -2, 0 = 0.

5.20 A summary of the Sustainability Appraisal is shown in the following table;

1a: +5	1b: + 7	1c: -1
2a: -7	2b: +9	2c: +9
3a: +7	3b: +11	3c: +6
4a: +6	4b: -9	4c: +9
5a: +7	5b: +9	5c: +6
6a: +3	6b: +10	6c: +7

Second Stage - how social, environmental and economic issues were considered in choosing the preferred options

5.21 The second stage of option development considered the different option sites which supported the Plan strategy, and the different allocations against the Sustainability objectives. The areas of potential change were shown in the Issues and Options Paper published in May 2006 and distributed for comments. A number of responses were received which showed support for residential led mixed uses along the north Smethwick canalside at Rolfe Street, and the retention of the open space at Soho Park. Other comments received individual support for a strategy which reduced the number of scrapyards in the area and the promotion of a site for a new hospital development.

5.22 No sites were removed from the plan resulting from this process although following consultation, one site was added to the AAP. The site at Cranford Street was included within the plan which currently accommodates a scrapyard, an office building which has been vacant for some time and other industrial or bad neighbour uses. The inclusion of this site for alternative uses would remove one scrapyard from the area and improve the environmental quality as well as using the land more efficiently.

5.23 The option sites were then appraised using the scoring method as in the first stage, but for the alternative uses proposed against the sustainability objectives. Summaries of the appraisals of the option sites is set out below, with justification as to why the preferred option was finally chosen.

5.24 *Summaries of the Options Appraisals*

Sme1 - North Smethwick Canalside

This area lies to the south of the Birmingham Canal, straddling Rolfe Street. The area at present contains a number of businesses ranging from light to general industrial and some office uses, within premises of varying quality. This area also includes the Smethwick Enterprise Centre which contains a number of smaller workshop type businesses. Adjacent to the Enterprise Centre is the former Fire Station building which is now owned and run by Focus Housing Association. The Council owned site of the former Rolfe Street Baths is located in a prime site next to Rolfe Street Station.

Options considered for developing the proposal site

1. Retain existing allocations from the UDP including Business Zone allocation.
2. Redevelop for a residential led mixed use scheme
3. Redevelop the Rolfe Street area for predominantly commercial uses

The preferred option is that of redeveloping for a residential led mixed use scheme. Whilst the Enterprise Centre and some of the other properties are of good quality, much of the land and premises is of poor quality and contributes nothing to the adjoining canalside location and Conservation Area. Redevelopment for residential will provide a number of houses within this attractive location, close to Smethwick High Street centre and within easy reach of public transport. The support from the regeneration agencies working within this area through the consultation process has further strengthened this view that the gain in good quality housing outweighs the loss of poor quality employment sites.

This option is the most sustainable of the three considered. Retaining the business zone allocation from the UDP was considered to have a major negative effect in sustainability terms.

Sme2- Rabone Lane

Land to the north of the canal, currently occupied by Bridge Street Industrial Estate and Rabone Park, is currently allocated as a Business Zone in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan. This allocation will remain for the future of the Smethwick Area Action Plan, and will, therefore, be safeguarded for industrial uses within the classes of B1, B2, and B8.

Land to the south of the canal is currently used for a number of uses including manufacturing and engineering. There are also two small areas of housing, vacant sites and residential moorings alongside the canal within this area.

Options considered for developing the proposal site

1. Retain existing allocations from the UDP including Business Zone allocation.
2. Redevelop for a residential led mixed use scheme
3. Redevelop the Rolfe Street area for predominantly commercial uses

As with Sme1, the preferred option for this site is for residential led mixed use development which will provide a number of residential units as well as commercial premises to cater for the smaller businesses wishing to set up in Smethwick. The canalside location will provide an attractive setting for houses, apartments and business premises and promote canalside living and strengthening the attraction of the canal network. Loss of employment sites could be accommodated on specific sites allocated for industrial purposes, thereby rationalising employment land and using it more efficiently. This showed to be the most sustainable option from those considered.

Sme3 - Windmill Lane

A large area comprising mainly residential and associated community facilities. The residential is a mixture of public and private sector stock which varies in age and quality. Some of the area contains vacant sites and there are proposals through Housing Market renewal to clear more sites.

Options considered for developing the proposal site

1. Retain existing allocations from the UDP including minor housing sites
2. Prepare a phased clearance and development plan for primarily residential development
3. Promote the area for mixed use development including residential, employment, community and social infrastructure.

The preferred option for this site was to develop a phased clearance and development plan for the whole of the site, focussed on providing good quality housing with associated services to provide for sustainable communities. This will be further strengthened with the results of a Housing Product Study which will identify areas in most need of clearance and development and the types of housing required to meet demand. Retaining the allocations as in the UDP proved to be sustainable, however, options 2 and 3 were shown to have a major positive effect. Option 3 has been chosen as the need for good quality, affordable housing is a major priority which could be accommodated within this established residential area of the Borough and which already has a vast array of community facilities and social infrastructure in place to support it.

Sme4 - Grove Lane

This area contains a number of industrial buildings of varying size and quality. There are areas of underused land and premises as well as some newer properties which are fully occupied. Due to the cheaper rents of the older premises, many of the units are being utilised for storage and distribution.

Options considered for developing the proposal site

1. Retain the allocations in the Smethwick Town plan promoting B1 and mixed use development
2. Extend the allocation for mixed uses with the potential for the introduction of residential B1 and employment uses

The preferred option for this site has been developed from merging the two options above following consultation and partnership working. The Local Authority and NHS consider this area to be the prime location for an acute hospital to meet the Towards 2010 agenda. Whilst not all the site will be required by the hospital, the remainder is allocated for B1 uses which can accommodate light industrial uses, or research and development associated with the health theme. There may be scope to include residential within part of the site which would be appropriate for key worker accommodation. The promotion of the site for health facility will outweigh the loss of poor employment land with a good quality, well designed employment generator, raising the environmental appearance and attractiveness of the area.

Both options proved to be equally as sustainable, but it is considered that the merging of both options could support the uses envisaged for this part of the plan which could support the plan strategy.

Sme5 - Cranford Street

This site lies to the north of Cranford Street and to the south of the rail line and comprises a number of uses including scrap metal premises, small industrial workshops, coach parking storage and vacant office buildings. The Canal arm bisects the site north to south. The general appearance of this area is poor in environmental and visual terms. The office building has been vacant for some time and Atlas Metals and other industrial uses in the vicinity has attracted little, if any, investment in recent years.

Options considered for developing the proposal site

1. Retain the allocations in the Smethwick Town plan and UDP retaining industrial development and the Business Zone.
2. Extend the allocation for mixed uses with the potential for the introduction of residential

This site has come forward as a consequence of consultation on the issues and options paper and its preferred use is that of residential, with B1 Light industrial uses if appropriate to act as a buffer to existing industrial uses adjacent. The change of use to residential will benefit the environment in removing a bad neighbour use and vacant sites from this particular area of Smethwick, improving the environmental quality of the area and reduction in air and noise pollution. The option of retaining the allocation within the Town Plan and UDP for industrial purposes proved to be unsustainable following appraisal. The option to extend the allocation to include residential uses was found to have a major positive effect when assessed against the sustainability objectives and which would complement uses proposed in the near vicinity.

Sme6 - Black Patch Park

This site is the northern and eastern part of the original Black Patch Park which has Foundry Lane to the south and west and Woodburn Road to the north. The area north of Kitchener Street once accommodated Merry Hill Infant School and terraced housing, both of which were demolished many years ago. The area is surrounded by trees and other vegetation, and Hockley Brook runs through the park dissecting it into three parts. To the east are Merry Hill Allotments, which are popular, especially with the Birmingham residents just over the border. Avery Weigh Tronix occupy a large site to the west of the Park, which also includes the Listed Soho Foundry, as well as a number of other Listed structures.

Options considered for developing the proposal site

1. Continue with the existing allocations in the UDP and Smethwick Town Plan for employment use
2. Allocate sites for a broader range of employment uses retaining most of the Open Space
3. Retain the open space uses

The preferred use for this site is to retain its open space use and find alternative sites on which to base employment uses. There has been great support to remove the sites industrial allocation as set in the UDP, and reallocate for open space use which has been further justified by the undertaking of an Employment Land Study which has confirmed that there is no need for further employment land in this location at this time. There are no certainties, based on past experience and current negotiations, that a deliverable scheme will be forthcoming. However, the site is currently being used for recreational and leisure purposes and a Friends of the Park group have plans to develop the park facilities further. This was found to be the most sustainable option with the first option to have a major negative effect.

Sme7 - Foundry Lane

This is an area of cleared land which once contained Local Authority Maisonettes, leased by Focus Housing. They were demolished during 2005 as they were considered sub-standard, and the residents relocated to various addresses throughout Smethwick and Birmingham. The site also contains an enclave of houses and a hostel, currently owned by Focus, which were also due to be part of this clearance programme. However, funding from the Housing Market Renewal Programme ceased to be available and therefore the houses remain for the foreseeable future. In addition this site includes the cleared land flanking Kitchener Street which was previously terraced housing

The site adjoins Avery Weigh Tronix and lie opposite Black Patch Park. Uses to the south of the site include a number of industrial units, a Social Club and a business which crushes brick. There is also a small area of woodland which helps to provide a buffer from these bad neighbour uses.

Options considered for developing the proposal site

1. Continue with the existing allocations in the UDP and Smethwick Town Plan for employment use
2. Allocate sites for a broader range of employment uses retaining most of the Open Space
3. Totally review the land uses to bring forward wholesale land use change including residential

The preferred use for this site is for the allocation of the site for a wider range of uses, retaining the open space, although it has been considered that to limit environmental impact, the uses should be limited to B1 only. This will prevent further bad neighbour uses locating within this area, and will contribute to ensuring this area improves its environmental image in order to attract future investment on adjoining sites. This option was found to be the most sustainable option out of the three considered.

Sme8 - Soho Foundry

This is the site of Avery Weigh Tronix which contains the historic Soho Foundry. The Foundry is in a poor state of repair. Funding has been applied for in order to make the Foundry weather-tight whilst an appropriate re-use is found for this heritage building. The Local Authority is requesting Heritage Lottery Funding for feasibility studies to find a sustainable future for Soho Foundry, bringing it back into a viable use, and help regenerate the whole of the Soho Park area. Avery Weigh Tronix operates from the remainder of this site. It may be possible that in the future, relocation of part or all of this operation will release some of the land for redevelopment. It is essential that the site be dealt with as a whole to ensure that any short term development can be sustained, as well as considering the longer term vision that a more comprehensive scheme can achieve. One of the main disadvantages to this site is its close proximity to Dunn's scrapyards, an established business which has recently expanded further. The presence of this operation immediately adjacent to this site conveys a poor image for the area, is visually unattractive and prevents private investment for the rest of the area being forthcoming.

Options considered for developing the proposal site

1. Continue with the existing allocations in the UDP and Smethwick Town Plan for employment use
2. Allocate sites for a broader range of mixed uses.

The preferred option for this site, and the one which proved to be most sustainable was to review the land use and allocate the site for mixed uses. This would allow the historic foundry building to be incorporated within a wider regeneration scheme which could benefit the built and natural heritage of the area and provide for a range of uses which could improve the environmental quality of the area and attract investment. The first option was found to have a major negative effect.

6. OPTION ASSESSMENT

Predicting and Evaluating the Significant Social, Environmental and Economic Effects of the Preferred Options.

- 6.1 This stage considered the effects of the preferred options and their alternatives. The three tasks involved include predicting the effects, evaluating the effects and considering mitigation measures of the adverse effects.
- 6.2 This process has been undertaken in predicting what kind of effect will the proposal have on the social, environmental and economic objectives over the short, medium and long term. The assessment of the effect has been based on the following system;
- ++ = major positive impact
 - + = positive impact
 - o = neutral
 - = negative impact
 - = major negative impact
 - ? = unclear
- 6.3 If the effect is negative, assessment has considered whether the effect can be mitigated, modified or deleted, or whether it can be further enhanced if the effect is neutral or positive.

A summary of the option assessments are shown on the following tables;

Sme1 - Rolfe Street

	Environmental	Social	Economic
<p>Preferred Option: Redevelop for a residential led mixed use scheme</p> <p>Mitigation:</p>	<p>Removes older buildings (++) Removes noise pollution (++) Improves canal environment (+) Achieves quality development (+) effect on canal wildlife and historic environment (--)</p> <p>Ensure wildlife protection measures are introduced.</p>	<p>Provision of affordable housing (++) 25% Affordable hsg Improved environmental image (+) Improved safety (+)</p>	<p>Loss of employment land (-) Planning gain contributions (+) Loss of jobs (-)</p>
<p>Alternative :Retain Business Zone and industrial allocation</p>	<p>Impact on canal and historic environment(-) -) No improved environment (-)</p>	<p>No new housing (--) No affordable housing (--) Impact on education and skills (+)</p>	<p>Retain employment sites (++) Retain jobs (-)</p>
<p>Alternative: Redevelop for commercial led uses</p>	<p>Removes older buildings (+) Improves environmental quality (+) Effect on canal wildlife and historic environment (--)</p>	<p>No new housing (--) No affordable housing (--) Impact on education and skills (+)</p>	<p>Provide new opportunities for employment (++)</p>

Sme2 - Rabone Lane

	Environmental	Social	Economic
<p>Preferred Option: Redevelop for a residential led mixed use scheme</p> <p>Mitigation:</p>	<p>Removes older buildings (++) Removes noise pollution (++) Improves canal environment (+) Achieves quality development (+) effect on canal wildlife (--)</p> <p>Ensure wildlife protection measures are introduced.</p>	<p>Provision of affordable housing (++) 25% Affordable hsg Improved environmental image (+) Improved safety (+)</p>	<p>Loss of employment land (-) Planning gain contributions (+) Loss of jobs (-)</p>
<p>Alternative :Retain Business Zone and industrial allocation</p>	<p>Impact on canal (--) No improved environment (-)</p>	<p>No new housing (--) No affordable housing (--) Impact on education and skills (+)</p>	<p>Retain employment sites (++) Retain jobs (-)</p>
<p>Alternative: Redevelop for commercial led uses</p>	<p>Removes older buildings (+) Improves environmental quality (+) Effect on canal wildlife (--)</p>	<p>No new housing (--) No affordable housing (--) Impact on education and skills (+)</p>	<p>Provide new opportunities for employment (++)</p>

Sme3 - Windmill Eye

	Environmental	Social	Economic
<p>Preferred Option: Phased clearance and redevelopment for residential</p> <p>Mitigation:</p>	<p>Removes older housing (++) Improved environment (+) Achieves quality development (++)</p> <p>Good quality design guidance required</p>	<p>Provision of affordable housing (++) 25% Affordable hsg Improved environmental image (+) Improved safety (+)</p>	<p>Impact on community (-)</p>
<p>Alternative : Retain existing UDP allocations only</p>	<p>Removes vacant sites (+) Limited change to Environmental quality (-)</p>	<p>Limited new housing (-) Limited affordable housing (-)</p>	
<p>Alternative: Redevelop for residential/ employment/ community</p>	<p>Removes older housing (++) Improved environment (+) Achieves quality development (++)</p>	<p>Provision of affordable housing (+) 25% Affordable hsg Improved environmental image (+) Improved safety (+)</p>	<p>Impact on community (--)</p>

Sme4 - Grove Lane

	Environmental	Social	Economic
<p>Preferred Option: Redevelop for mixed uses with potential for hospital/B1/residential</p> <p>Mitigation:</p>	<p>Removes older buildings (++) Removes noise pollution (++) Improves air quality (+) Achieves quality development (+) Removes hazardous premises</p> <p>Insist on good quality urban design</p>	<p>Provision of affordable housing (++) 25% Affordable hsg Improved environmental image (+) Improved safety (+) Improved access to health facilities (+)</p>	<p>Loss of employment land (-) Adopt relocation strategy Increase in jobs (+)</p>
<p>Alternative :Retain Business Zone allocation</p>	<p>Poor environment and image (-) Hazardouse premises remain (--)</p>	<p>No new housing (--) No affordable housing (--)</p>	<p>Retain employment sites (+) Retain jobs (+)</p>

Sme5 - Cranford Street

	Environmental	Social	Economic
<p>Preferred Option: Redevelop for Residential/B1</p> <p>Mitigation:</p>	<p>Removes older buildings (++) Removes noise pollution (++) Improves air quality (+) Achieves quality development (++)</p>	<p>Provision of affordable housing (++) 25% Affordable hsg Improved environmental image (+) Improved safety (+)</p>	<p>Loss of employment land (-) Adopt relocation strategy Loss of jobs (o)</p>
<p>Alternative :Retain Business Zone allocation</p>	<p>Poor environment and image (-) Bad neighbour uses remain (--)</p>	<p>No new housing (--) No affordable housing (--)</p>	<p>Retain employment sites (+) Retain jobs (+)</p>

Sme6 - Black Patch Park

	Environmental	Social	Economic
Preferred Option: Allocate for Open Space	Improved environment (++)	Improved safety (+)	No new jobs (-)
Alternative : Retain existing UDP allocations only	Loss of open space (-) Poor environmental environment (-) Quality development (+)		New employment opportunities (+)
Alternative: Redevelop for business and open space	Improved environment (+) Achieves quality development (+)	Improved environmental image (+) Improved safety (+)	Limited jobs (+)

Sme7 - Foundry Lane

	Environmental	Social	Economic
Preferred Option: Redevelop for Business B1 with Open Space	Removes vacant sites (+) Achieves quality development (+) Improves environmental quality (+)	Improved environmental image (+) Improved safety (+)	More Employment land (+) More jobs (+)
Alternative :Retain Industrial allocation	Poor environment and image (-) Bad neighbour uses remain (--)		Retain employment sites (+)
Alternative: Review land uses including residential	Poor surrounding environment exists (-)	More housing (+)	More jobs (?)

Sme8 - Soho Foundry

	Environmental	Social	Economic
Preferred Option: Redevelop for <Mixed uses	Removes vacant sites (+) Achieves quality development (+) Improves environmental quality (+) Reuses historic building (++)	Improved environmental image (+) Improved safety (+)	More Employment land (+) More jobs (+) Better skills (+)
Alternative :Retain Industrial allocation	Poor environment and image (-) Bad neighbour uses remain (--)		Retain employment sites (+)

Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects.

- 6.4 Any secondary, cumulative or synergistic also need to be assessed. Secondary effects are those which are indirect and not as a direct result of the Plan. Cumulative effects arise where several individual effects or developments have a combined effect. Synergistic effects can occur when a series of effects combine to reach a critical threshold.
- 6.5 Within the AAP area, secondary effects can include where more residential will provide funding for improvements to the canal network. This will make them more attractive which in turn will lead to more visitors. This may have benefits for the businesses within or adjacent to the Plan area with the increase in custom from these visitors, or investors who have chose this area in which to invest.
- 6.6 The cumulative effects include the residential development and commercial development which will have significant effects in the need for additional social infrastructure for schools, health facilities and open space. A new hospital development will have major effect on the transport infrastructure within the Grove Lane area in particular, combined with the major residential proposals already underway at the Cape Brewery site and those planned for the Windmill Eye.

- 6.7 Synergistic effects may occur with the combined amount of residential development, accessibility to canals and new commercial opportunities which will create a new sustainable community. This will contribute to the vitality and viability of the nearby centres and provide a local source of employment.
- 6.8 New residential development and commercial development will contribute funding via planning gain contributions to improve the public realm, canal works and open space, thereby improving the environmental quality of the area.
- 6.9 Improvement to the canal area by removing the older and under utilised premises in a more rationalized approach will contribute to the perception of the area and attract further investment.
- 6.10 It is also necessary to consider the short, medium and long term effects, and the permanent or temporary effects.
- 6.11 It is envisaged that many of the effects will be short term in respect of disruption to communities through construction of new housing and commercial premises within the Plan area. There may be medium term effects in the proposals for the Soho Park developments dependent upon the removal of bad neighbour uses which occupy this area and make the area unattractive in investment terms. The existing housing within this area will have long term effects due to the uncertainty of their relocation.
- 6.12 The long term effects will be the development of a safer, stronger environment which provides enhanced housing and employment opportunities which is accessible to a range of facilities and services.
- 6.14 The positive or negative effects of the proposals have been identified during the preparation of this Sustainability Appraisal and through consultation on the Issues and Options. The negative effects have been identified as having significant effect on the loss of employment land and in turn, jobs, due to the reallocation of industrial land for alternative uses, mainly residential. Other effects identified are the impacts on the social infrastructure with the potential large scale residential developments proposed and the need to address affordable housing for people on low incomes which is relevant to this particular part of the Borough.
- 6.15 In respect of the loss of employment land, this is considered to be in the main, low quality and underused as identified in an Employment Land Study undertaken during 2006. In balancing the need for housing, especially good quality and affordable housing, and in improving the quality of the area adjacent to a canal, it was decided that the need for housing outweighed the loss of poor quality land which attracted low intensity uses. The promotion of employment land to specific areas which could accommodate better quality premises with appropriate mitigate the loss of employment land.
- 6.16 The loss of jobs, again, can be mitigated through locating employment sites in specific areas as mentioned above. Since many of the sites are under used, the scale of job losses is not as great as the average number which could be accommodated on this area of land. In developing employment sites elsewhere, and through the allocation of sites for mixed uses, the loss of jobs could be mitigated.
- 6.17 The aims of the AAP seek to identify suitable sites which could accommodate residential development and provide a range of type and tenure, especially to meet the demands for affordable housing. In providing sites along the canal, there may be problems with the wildlife habitats which are present in these areas. There will be a need for any development schemes to consider the effects on the wildlife and to ensure that they are protected during construction and retained thereafter.

Potential Mitigation Measures

- 6.13 It is necessary to identify measures that may prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects on the environment resulting from the implementation of the policies or proposals of this Plan. Mitigation can include changes to plans, policies and programmes to be applied during implementation.

- 6.18 The amount of development envisaged for this area, both for residential and for employment uses, could have an effect on the transport infrastructure. The Plan aims to ensure that all modes of transport can move easily throughout the Plan area. The identified strategy is for the implementation of a strategy to ease traffic movement, which has already been undertaken in part of the area. Mitigation measures will need to address this strategy through new development opportunities and also to ensure that other sustainable methods of transport are promoted.
- 6.19 New residential development will need to address the requirement for good quality housing, and affordable housing. This can be met by implementing the Affordable Housing Policy for 25% of developments to meet affordable standards. There will also be an issue regarding the requirement for other social infrastructure and open space to sustain these new developments. The need for additional educational provision and open space can be met by Planning Gain contributions.

7. MONITORING

- 7.1 The Local Authority is now required, under Section 48 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations, to monitor the effects of planning policies on an annual basis. These include the Policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan, as well as those within the emerging Area Action Plans as part of the Local Development Scheme.
- 7.2 The policies will be monitored against 27 core output indicators which have been set nationally and cover Housing, Transport, Local Services, Minerals, Waste, Flood Protection, Biodiversity and Renewable Energy. It is anticipated that these will be reviewed from time to time, and that Sandwell will also devise their own output indicators in the future.
- 7.3 The outputs will monitor many of the issues covered by the Smethwick Area Action Plan, especially with regard to amount of housing land available, demolitions, completions and affordable housing, the amount of employment land available and the amount of development for retail, office and leisure development close to local services. Monitoring of the other indicators will rely upon obtaining the information from the relevant agencies or departments dealing with these direct, or from other sections within the local authority.
- 7.4 Monitoring of the above issues as part of the AAP process will ensure that the anticipated outputs are achieved, and if necessary, reviewed and altered. It will also enable the risk factors to be assessed and the timescales or milestones altered arising from new information received on the development of the various projects.



