

Solihull Local Development Framework

Annual Monitoring Report

April 2004 - March 2005

Monitoring the implementation of
the Council's Local Development
(Planning) Documents



Foreword

At his decision session of 13th December 2005, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration approved the 'Solihull Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2004 – 2005' for publication.

This is the first annual monitoring report to be published under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004. The Annual Monitoring Report is a process document of the Council's Local Development Framework (a folder of the Council's planning policies and proposals). The Annual Monitoring Report measures the success of the Council's main Local Development Framework policies and proposals, highlighting any action the Council intends to take to reflect the findings of the report, including the need to review any part of the Local Development Framework.

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Executive Summary

Overview

The AMR demonstrates that the UDPR is beginning to achieve its policy objectives. There is no evidence to suggest that there is any need to delete or urgently review any of the policies or proposals ahead of the preparation of the Core Strategy (the main policy document of the Local Development Framework due to commence in autumn 2006). The main findings of the report, by topic are:

Housing

The overall level of housing provision accords with both the UDPR and the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The range of housing being provided, in respect of type, size, affordability and density, is beginning to meet the aspirations of the UDPR. The report however recommends three key matters for further action:

- That the Council pursue the inclusion of measures to more sharply focus development to areas of the borough in need of regeneration and, conversely, to restrict development in those parts of the Borough where environmental quality is at risk through pressures for intensive development through the RSS partial review.
- That the Regional Assembly be advised that the borough cannot reach its RSS target for the proportion of new development on previously developed land, principally because of a number of previously designated greenfield sites, such as Dickens Heath, that are still being built out.
- That the Secretary of State be advised that it is not possible for the West Midlands local authorities to provide an analysis of net additional dwelling requirements because the RSS does not set net, but gross housing land provision targets. The underlying assumptions that would allow this analysis are not published.

Employment and Prosperity

The Borough's two regional investment sites (RISs) have successfully attracted appropriate development that will support diversification of the Regional economy and the development of cluster priorities as required by the RSS. Additional RIS land identified in the UDPR will enable continuity of RIS land supply. The supply of land for general business purposes is adequate to the end of the UDPR period and contributes to the portfolio of business land required by the RSS. The employment land is accessible and located close to concentrations of economically active population. Progress has been made over the last four years to enable residents of the East Birmingham and North Solihull Regeneration Zone to access employment. Matters for further action include:

- Encouraging a clearer definition of 'high quality' development through the RSS partial review.
- Reviewing the Solihull employment land study (March 2004).
- Developing a monitoring framework for the North Solihull Strategic Framework that will enable full assessment of Regeneration Zone employment objectives.

Transport

The location of new residential development is generally indicative of progress towards a more integrated and sustainable transport strategy that enables relative ease of access to important facilities by public transport. The quality of public transport is being improved on important routes. Progress is being made towards increasing public transport use for peak hour journeys in line with local transport plan targets. Increasing cycle use in line with targets is proving difficult despite a strong commitment to cycle training. Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 vehicle parking standards that seek to encourage access by greener modes of travel have been successfully applied to both residential and non-residential development over the four years to April 2005.

However development of framework for policy development and the monitoring of the location of residential development relative to commonly used services and access by public transport, walking and cycling is however required.

Cycling strategies need review to improve performance against targets.

The Environment

Targets are being achieved or are close to achievement. However, the management of important nature conservation sites, where a review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation is increasing the stock of important sites that require treatment, requires attention.

Improvements to data gathering to address current gaps is also required.

Countryside

In accordance with the UDPR target no green belt land has been lost to development. However further action is needed to refine this target and the methods used to capture data.

No parish plans or village appraisals/design statements have been submitted to, or adopted, by the Council as formal supplementary planning documents but it is suggested that this indicator ought to be reviewed in light of the more rigorous requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which are likely to deter local community groups from producing such documents.

Retailing and Centres

The UDPR provides an appropriate policy framework to strengthen and enhance the role of the Borough's main centres which have successfully attracted investment in retailing and other town centre uses. The UDPR provides an appropriate policy framework, in line with current national guidance, to consider out of centre retail proposals. However there is a need to assess the amount of B1 business floorspace in the Borough's two district centres with a view being better able to meet the requirements of central government's core indicators.

Sport, Recreation, Leisure and the Arts

The targets set for the protection and provision of parks, playing fields and open space are being met and in some instances exceeded, although the report suggests further action is taken to refine the target and methods of data capture in relation to the loss of playing fields. However, effective progress has been made on moving toward adopting local standards for open space through the preparation of the Council's Green Space Strategy and on and securing planning obligations for public art.

Waste Management

The Council has made good progress in managing municipal waste further up the waste hierarchy.

However the increase in the amount of waste arising has led to an increase in the amount of waste going to landfill since 2001.

The need for more waste management facilities to enable waste to be handled where it arises has yet to be reflected in applications or permissions for new proposals.

Up to date data on industrial and commercial waste arising in the Borough is needed from the Environment Agency.

Minerals

Sand and gravel sales from the Borough are close to the sub-regional apportionment figures.

However continued efforts are required to maximise the amount of recycled and secondary materials, if the assumptions in the National Guidelines are to be met.

Improved and disaggregated data on the use of secondary and recycled materials is required.

Local Development Scheme

A programme for the production of a supplementary planning document on light pollution is to be incorporated into a future review of the LDS in accordance with Policy C9 of the UDPR.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Context

1.1 The Government introduced a new system for developing and adopting planning policies and proposals in September 2004 as part of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Under the new system, each Council will have a local development framework (LDF) which is a folder of planning documents.

1.2 The annual monitoring report is one of the Council's LDF planning process documents. Its purpose is to monitor the success of the main LDF policies and proposals and to ensure that the Council is progressing the production of LDF documents.

Content

1.3 This is the first Solihull LDF annual monitoring report to be produced. Its focus is on monitoring the 'Solihull Unitary Development Plan First Review' and the 'Solihull Local Development Scheme'.

1.4 Until such time as new planning documents for Solihull are prepared under the new planning system documents prepared under the previous system can be saved for around three years, as long as they remain relevant. Currently, the main saved planning document is the Solihull Unitary Development Plan 1997 (UDP). The Council is currently reviewing the UDP and rolling forward its targets to 2011. A public local inquiry into objections to the Solihull Unitary Development Plan Review (UDPR) during the summer of 2004 and the Inspectors report of the inquiry was published in May 2005. Proposed modifications to the UDPR were placed on deposit during August and September 2005 and it is anticipated that the Solihull Unitary Development Plan First Review (UDPR) will be adopted in February 2006, at which point it will become the main saved planning document for Solihull. Because the UDPR is nearing adoption and now carries significant weight, it is the main focus for monitoring planning policies and proposals in this report.

1.5 The report follows the structure of the UDPR, monitoring each chapter in turn. Each chapter includes:

- An introduction to the national, regional and local policy background to the chapter, highlighting any changes that have occurred throughout the year.
- A summary of the key policy objectives of each chapter
- An analysis of the UDPRs progress towards achieving each of the key policy objectives. The analysis incorporates the UDPRs monitoring targets and indicators (see Appendix 1 of the UDPR) and the Government's core output Indicators (see Table 4.4 of the 'Local Development Framework Monitoring' good practice guide and update 1/2005). It also reports on any policy changes which may be necessary as a result of changes in national, regional or local policy.
- The key conclusions drawn from monitoring each policy objective.
- A summary of further action to be taken, including any necessary review of planning documents, matters the Council will bring to the attention of others and any required changes to the Council's monitoring systems to enable better analysis in the future.

1.6 The 'Solihull Local Development Scheme' is the Council's work programme for the production of LDF documents. The annual monitoring report ensures that an up to date local development scheme remains in effect and that it remains relevant to current national, regional and local planning issues, highlighting any need for review.

Timeframe

1.7 Principally, the report monitors performance and success over the previous monitoring period of 1st April 2004 – 31st March 2005. However, some of the UDPR policy objectives relate to the whole plan period (1st April 2001 – 31st March 2011) and so the report, in these instances, addresses that period. The Housing Chapter also includes the use of trajectories up until 31st March 2011 to provide an estimate of housing supply over the whole plan period.

Future Annual Monitoring Reports

1.8 As the Council progresses the production of new planning documents under the new planning system, its approach to monitoring planning policies and proposals will become more structured because monitoring frameworks will be developed alongside document production.

Background Documents

1.9 Copies of the Solihull Unitary Development Plan First Review and the Solihull Local Development Scheme can be obtained from the Forward Planning Team or on-line from www.solihull.gov.uk

Chapter 2 Housing

2.1 Background

National

National planning policy guidance for housing is principally provided in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3). PPG3 set the Government's new approach to planning for housing, aimed at providing everyone with the opportunity of a decent home and at using land efficiently to reduce the pressure on greenfields, creating well-designed sustainable communities of sufficient density to support public transport and social infrastructure.

In 2003, the Government commissioned economist Kate Barker to carry out a review of issues underlying the lack of supply and responsiveness of housing supply in the UK. The Barker review of housing supply, "Delivering stability: Securing our future housing needs", published in March 2004, made a number of recommendations relevant to the planning system, in particular that it should deliver sufficient land, in the right places, to meet need and in a way that is more responsive to demand. Worsening affordability is recognised as a key challenge to the planning system and a consequence of long-term under-supply of housing.

Since the Barker Review PPG3 has been updated, including the promotion of the re-use of unneeded employment land for housing, and the Government have issued a number of consultation papers concerning planning for housing provision.

It is anticipated that PPG3 and Circular 06/98 will be replaced by a new planning policy statement.

Regional

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS, formerly RPG11) seeks to ensure that there is adequate housing to support the economic prosperity of the region whilst encouraging more development on previously developed land within major urban areas, promoting a mix of sizes and types of development and accounting for affordable housing needs. At the same time, the RSS aims to retain the Green Belt, allowing boundary adjustments only where necessary to support urban regeneration and to make the MUAs increasingly attractive places to live, ensuring no added pressure on urban open space, playing fields and green space and retaining urban area boundaries by resisting urban extensions.

The West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy – Putting Our House in Order recognises four key issues:

- the need for housing strategy development to join with regional planning and economic policies
- problems of affordability, Solihull having one of the most severe
- urban renaissance, including stemming net out migration from the older urban areas
- the importance of providing pathways of housing choice.

A new regional housing strategy has been submitted to Ministers and any planning policy implications for Solihull will be addressed in next years' annual monitoring report.

Local

The community strategy for Solihull aims to make Solihull "a place that's good to live in for everyone". Three of the aims over the first three years (2003-2006) are to:

- improve the quality and range of housing
- provide more affordable housing
- preserve the existing Green Belt and maintain a balance between open green space and urban land in the Borough.

Taking into account all of the above strategies, policy and guidance, the strategy of the UDPR is to promote sustainable housing development, through maximising the use of previously developed land within the urban area, whilst preserving and enhancing environmental quality.

Solihull Unitary Development Plan Review Housing Policy Objectives

The key policy objectives addressed by the Housing Chapter of the Solihull Unitary Development Plan Review (UDPR), and the subject of this chapter of the report, are:

- **The Provision of Land for Housing** – ensuring sufficient housing land supply to meet the borough’s minimum housing land requirement, focusing new housing development on previously developed land within the major urban area.
- **The Provision of Safeguarded Land** – to meet long-term housing needs and to contribute to the continued protection of the Green Belt.
- **Providing a Mix of House Types** – providing a range of housing in accordance with national, regional and local planning policy guidance.
- **Affordable and Special Needs Housing** – maximising the provision of housing for those unable to compete on the open housing market.
- **Density, Design and Quality** – encouraging development densities in line with Government policy aimed at promoting sustainable patterns of development whilst promoting high quality design in all new housing developments.

2.2 The Provision of Land for Housing

2.2.1 Overall Housing Land Supply

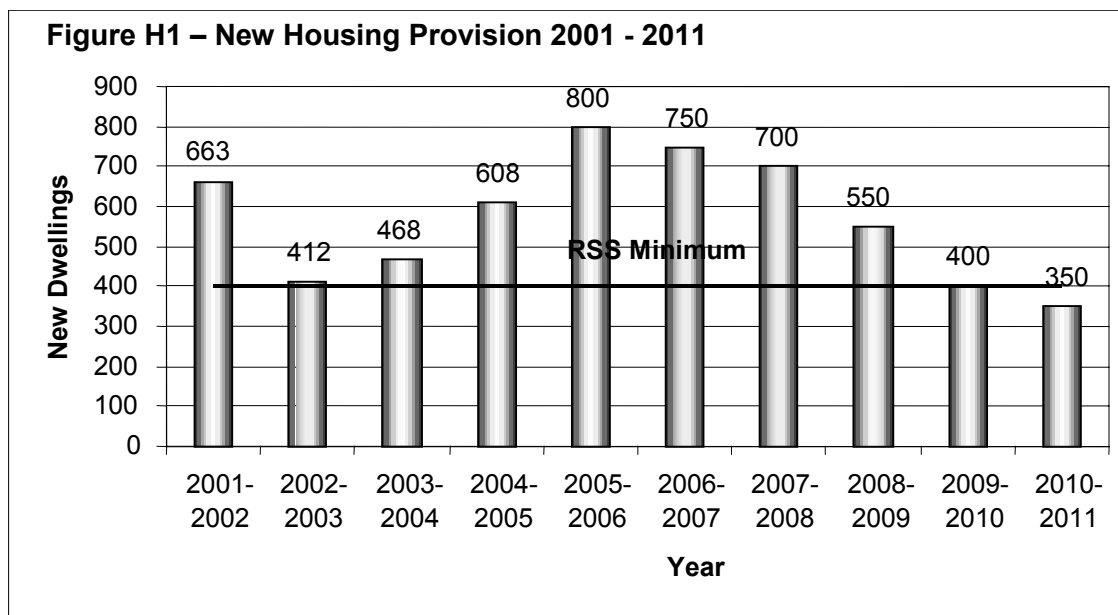
Indicator

The provision of housing land in accordance with the requirement of the RSS.

Target

Minimum of 400 new dwellings per year 2001-2011 (RSS Policy C3 and UDPR Policy H1).

Key Data



Commentary

Figure H1 shows actual and projected housing provision for the UDPR period (2001 – 2011). The RSS minimum housing land provision target has been consistently exceeded over the first four years of the RSS period (2001-2005), with new housing provision averaging 538 new dwellings per year.

Provision of land for 1,849 new dwellings (an average of 308 per year) is now required to meet the minimum RSS target to 2011 and the UDPR makes this provision. Based on the evidence of current planning permissions (totalling 2,689 dwellings), the remaining designated housing sites and the rate at which windfall sites are emerging, the minimum RSS target is likely to be exceeded by around 1,700 dwellings. This accords with RSS Policy CF3 which sets a minimum housing land provision requirement for the borough.

2.2.2 Windfall Housing Development

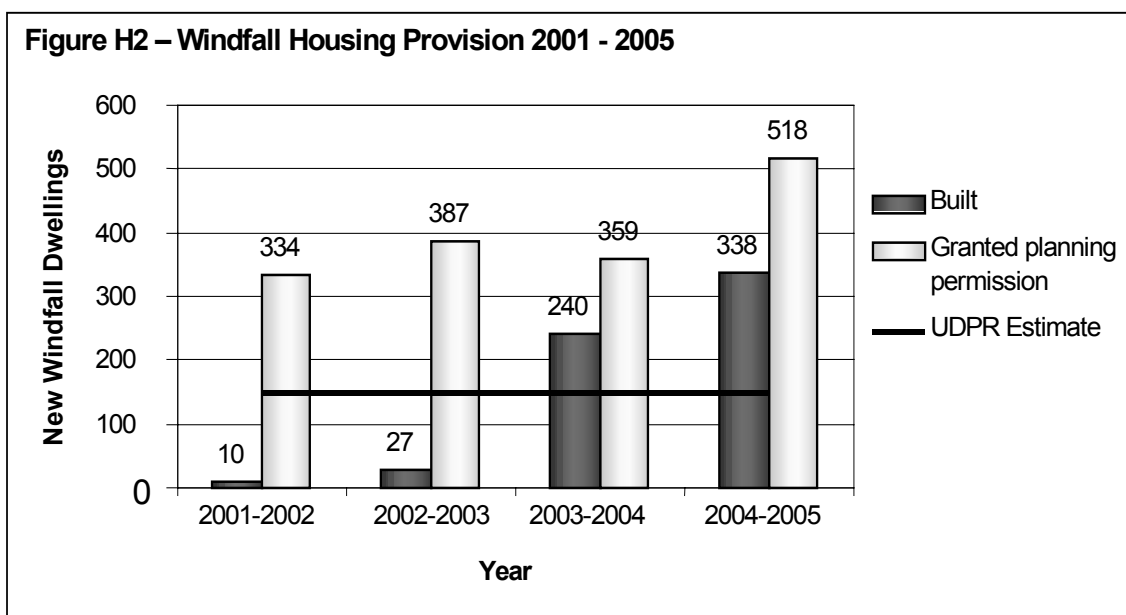
Indicator

Dwellings provided on windfall sites.

Target

Annual average target 150 (UDPR Policy H1 and Appendix 1).

Key Data

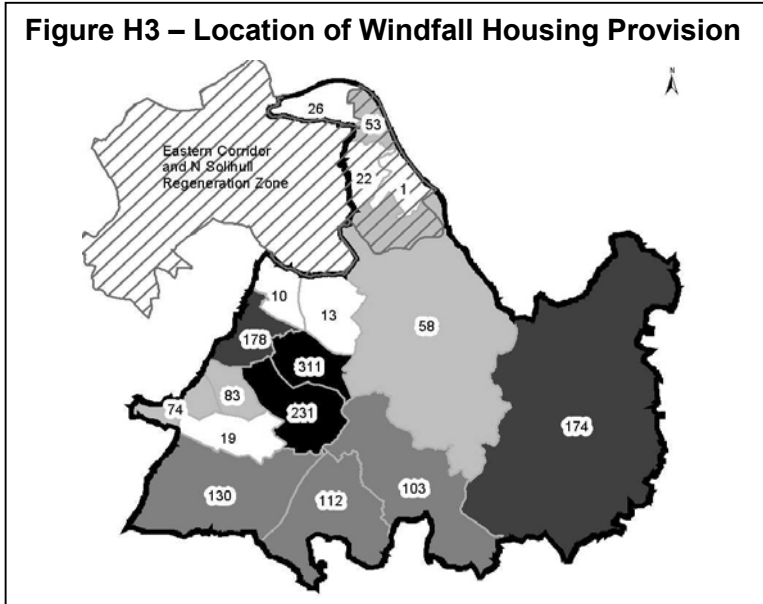


Commentary

In assessing how much new land needed to be designated for housing land provision to meet the RSS target (Policy CF3), Policy H1 of the UDPR assumed that, on average, 150 new dwellings per year would be built on windfall sites (sites that did not have planning permission in 2001).

However, in Solihull, the rate at which windfall housing sites have emerged has increased dramatically over the past four years. Between 2001 and 2005, 615 (154 per year on average) new windfall dwellings have been built. Although this is only slightly above the UDPR estimate, planning permissions have been granted at an average rate of 400 per year, so it is inevitable that the UDP estimate will be significantly exceeded. In principle, the increased level of windfall housing provision accords with Policy CF3 of the RSS which sets a minimum housing land provision requirement for Solihull.

However, the RSS looks for the majority of new housing provision to be within the MUA to assist in urban renaissance and reverse the trend towards decentralisation which has contributed to the loss of investment, abandonment and environmental degradation. In Solihull where there is a strong reliance on windfall housing provision, new housing investment is almost exclusively focusing in the prosperous southern area of the borough and not in the regeneration zone, see Figure H3. The partial review of the RSS provides the opportunity to introduce mechanisms to ensure that new development is more sharply focused towards the areas of the borough in need of regeneration, such as North Solihull.



2.2.3 New Housing Provision within the MUA

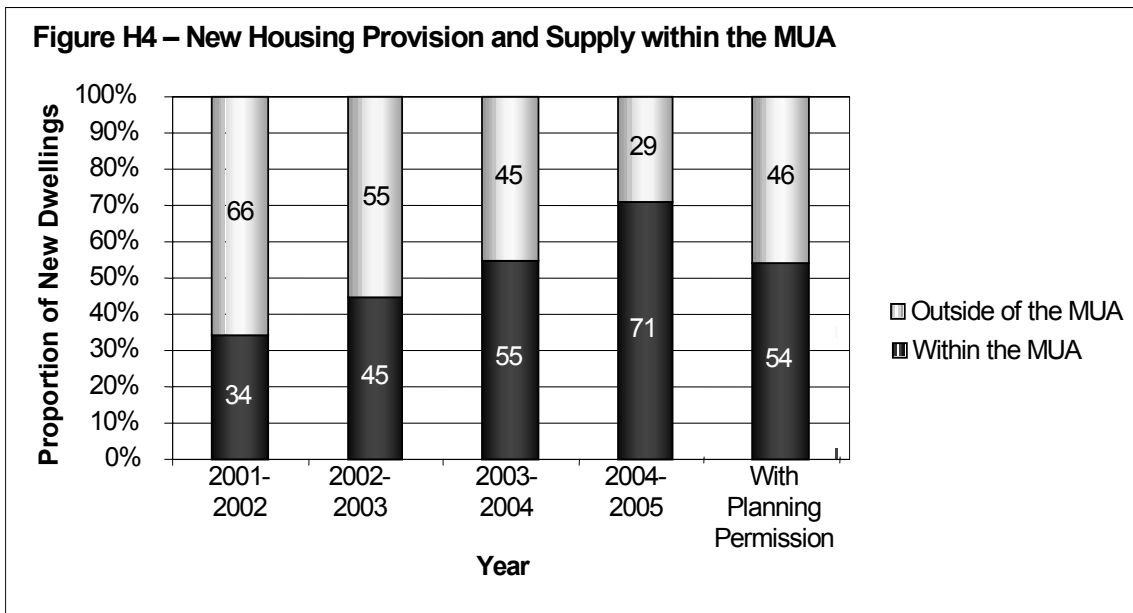
Indicator

A significant redistribution of housing provision, focusing on previously developed land within the major urban area (MUA).

Target

An increasing proportion of housing to be provided within the major urban area (RSS Policy CF3).

Key Data



Commentary

The MUA is defined by the RSS diagram and includes Solihull's main urban area. The RSS recognises that its policy is a step-change and it will take some time to begin to affect the pattern of new development Figure H2 demonstrates that the policy is beginning to take effect with the proportion of new housing provided within the MUA

increasing. The proportion of new dwellings within the MUA with planning permission is likely to increase as the supply is continuously topped up with windfall sites. However, in Solihull, the step-change is particularly hindered by a number of previously designated sites that are still being built out. Of particular note are:

- **Dickens Heath** - a new settlement on a greenfield site outside of the major urban area, where development started in 1997. Dickens Heath accounts for 67% of all new dwellings built outside of the MUA between 2001 and 2005 and for 82% of sites outside the MUA with planning permission.
- **Land off Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common** – development started in 1999, the site accounts for 21% of all new dwellings built on sites outside the MUA, 2001 - 2004.
- **Land off Chelmsley Lane/Berwicks Lane, Marston Green** – development started in 1999. The site accounts for 77% of all new dwellings built on sites within the MUA between 2001 and 2005 and for 14% of greenfield sites within the MUA with planning permission.

All of the sites designated by the UDPR are within the MUA.

2.2.4 New Housing Provision on Previously Developed Land

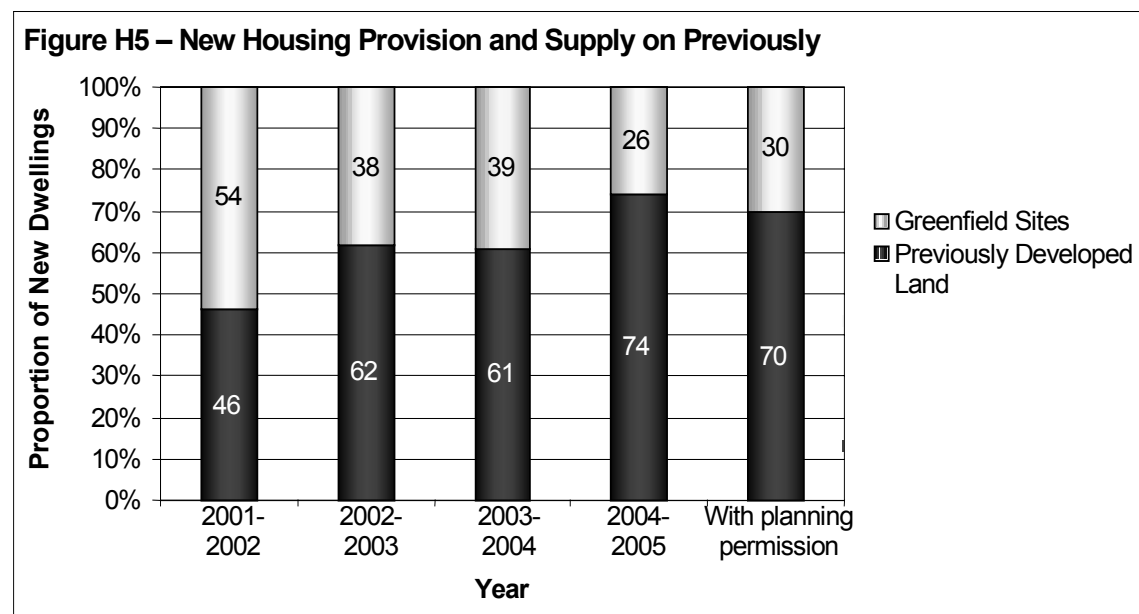
Indicator

Proportion of new housing provided on previously developed land.

Target

74% over the period 2001-2011 (RSS Policy CF3, UDPR Appendix 1).

Key Data



Commentary

Figure H3 shows that the RSS and the UDPR target has been met for the first time this year. However, evidence submitted to the public local inquiry into the UDPR demonstrated that this target is unlikely to be met, given the number of previously designated greenfield sites that are still being built out. Policy H1 of the UDPR estimates that 63-68% of all new housing will be on previously developed land. All sites designated by the UDPR are on previously developed land.

The proportion of new housing provided on previously developed land to date is 60% and the proportion of new dwellings that are likely to be built on identified sites is 70%.

Assuming that the majority (90%) of windfall sites yet to emerge and projected to be developed throughout the remainder of the development plan period will be on previously developed land, it is currently estimated that 69% of all new dwellings are likely to be built on previously developed land throughout the development plan period (2001-2011).

2.2.5 Monitoring Net Housing Provision

The Government requires local authorities to include analysis of new housing provision net of losses through demolition and conversion in the annual monitoring report. The required data is included within the appendix to this chapter, but it is not possible to analyse the data at local authority level in this region. This is because the RSS only sets gross housing provision targets and does not provide the assumptions relating to other changes in land supply, such as conversions and changes in vacancy rates, which underlie the RSS targets.

However, this data is supplied to the West Midlands Regional Assembly, where such changes in land supply are monitored, analysed and reported on regionally in the annual "Plan, Monitor, Manage" Provision of Housing in the West Midlands' report.

The Provision of Housing Land

Key Conclusions

- The minimum annual average RSS housing land provision target for the borough is currently being exceeded by 34% and is likely to be exceeded by around 1,700 dwellings (43%) over the UDPR period (2001 – 2011).
- The rate at which windfall housing sites are emerging has increased significantly and the UDP assumption is likely to be exceeded. The RSS aims to focus development to contribute towards urban renaissance and reversing the trend towards decentralisation away from the MUA. However, through the market, windfall development is focusing on the more prosperous southern areas of the borough, where decentralisation is not an issue, and not in the regeneration zone.
- There is a trend towards new development focusing on the MUA, but a significant proportion of new development is still being provided outside of the MUA which is principally due to a number of previously designated sites that are still being built out.
- The RSS target for the proportion of new housing built on previously developed land in the borough (74%, 2001-2011) is unlikely to be met, due to a number of previously designated sites still being built out. It is likely that 69% of all new dwellings (2001-2011) will be built on previously developed land.
- The Government requires local authorities to report on net housing provision and to use this data to analyse net additional housing requirements. West Midlands local authorities provide net housing data to the Regional Assembly to analyse in monitoring the RSS, but it is not possible for West Midlands local authorities to analyse net additional housing requirements because the RSS does not set net, but gross, housing land provision targets, and the underlying net assumptions are not published.

Further Action

- The Regional Assembly be advised that the borough cannot reach its target for the proportion of new development on previously developed land due to a number of previously designated greenfield sites that are still being built out.

- Through the RSS partial review, the Council pursue the inclusion of measures to more sharply focus development towards areas of the borough in need of regeneration.
- The Secretary of State be advised that it is not possible for West Midlands Local Authorities to analyse net additional dwelling requirements because the RSS does not set net, but gross housing land provision targets and underlying assumptions, as conversion and vacancy rate assumptions, are not published. The Secretary of State can however be advised that this analysis is available through the RSS monitoring report “Plan Monitor, Manage”, Provision of Housing in the West Midlands’.

2.3 The Provision of Safeguarded Land

Solihull’s Green Belt boundaries are tightly drawn around the urban area and were, in some places altered to meet housing needs and in others established as recently as 1997 through the UDP (1997). To ensure the Green Belt would endure beyond the UDP (1997) period and would not need to be altered at the end of it (i.e. after 2001), the Council considered it necessary to safeguard a number of sites to meet long-term housing needs.

Twelve sites were safeguarded through the UDP (1997), but it has not been necessary to release any of them for development through the UDPR. The twelve sites were therefore carried forward into Policy H2 of the UDPR. Objections to the safeguarded sites were recently considered through the UDPR public local inquiry, some seeking their release for housing development, others seeking their inclusion within the green belt. The Inspector concluded that the principle of safeguarded land remains soundly based, but that most of the sites do not fit well with the RSS, which resists urban extensions to the MUA. He therefore recommended that, in reviewing the UDPR, the Council should give priority to assessing the suitability of the safeguarded land.

Such a review would also need to take account of any revisions to PPG3 that are expected to emerge during the coming year.

The Provision of Safeguarded Land

Key Conclusions

- The Inspector reporting on the UDPR concluded that most of the safeguarded sites do not fit well with the RSS.

Further Action

- Safeguarded land will be reviewed as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. The Council will also seek clarification and guidance on this issue through the forthcoming review of the RSS.

2.4 Providing a Mix of House Types

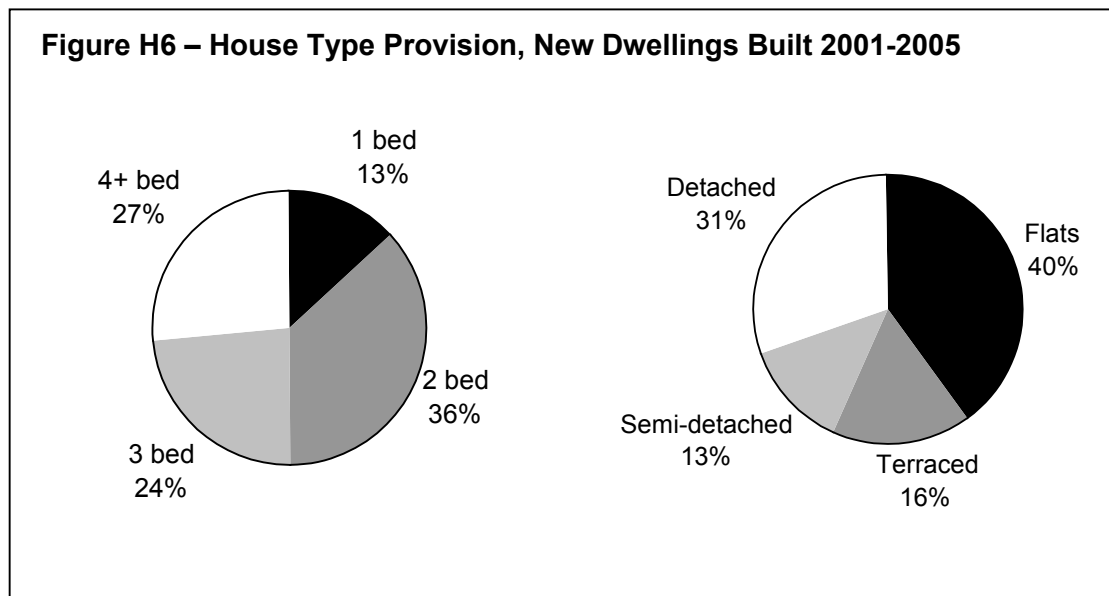
Indicator

A range of sizes and types of new dwellings

Target

Provision of a range of sizes and types of dwellings, having particular regard to one-person households.

Key Data



Commentary

The UDP (1997) expressed concern about the disproportionate number of larger houses being built in the borough despite demographic trends suggesting that future growth of households will be single-person. Policy H3 of the UDPR requires developers submitting planning applications for housing development to make provision for a range of sizes and types of dwellings, having particular regard to one-person households. A high percentage of one and two-bedroom accommodation is therefore encouraged.

The UDP (1997) states that during the previous ten years (1991-2001), 65% of all new dwellings built were three bedroom or larger. Figure H5 shows that 50% of all dwellings built during the UDPR period are one or two bedroom and that a mix of house types has been provided.

House Type Provision

Key Conclusions

- A mix of house types is being provided, with an emphasis on smaller dwellings in accordance with Policy H3 of the UDPR.

Further Action

- None, although specific targets for the proportion of size and types of dwellings will be developed through the core strategy.

2.5 Affordable Housing

2.5.1 Affordable Housing Obligations

Indicator

Percentage of affordable housing on suitable sites

Target

40% over the Plan period

Key Data

Figure H7 – Affordable Housing Provision – Committed contributions from all suitable sites with planning applications submitted after 1st April 2001 and approved before 1st April 2005

| Site | Planning Application Submission Date | Planning Application Approval Date | Affordable Housing Contribution |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| British Gas Works Site, Wharf Lane Solihull | 25/01/2001 | 26/05/2003 | 30% - Planning application submitted before the adoption of the affordable housing SPG |
| Land at Vulcan Road Solihull | 27/11/2001 | 13/05/2003 | 30% - Planning application submitted before the adoption of the affordable housing SPG |
| Land at 20-28 New Road Solihull | 08/02/2002 | 18/12/2002 | 17% - Planning application submitted before the adoption of the affordable housing SPG |
| Junction of Church Hill Road/Whitefields Road Solihull | 09/03/2002 | 30/01/2002 | 0% - Decision upheld on appeal, the Inspector concluded that an adopted affordable housing policy was required |
| 745 Warwick Road Solihull | 07/04/2003 | 14/05/2003 | 18% - Planning application submitted before the adoption of the affordable housing SPG |
| 465 Stratford Road Shirley | 10/04/2003 | 20/01/2004 | 30% - Planning application submitted before the adoption of the affordable housing SPG |
| Solihull College, Chelmsley Campus | 06/08/2003 | 06/02/2004 | 25% - Exceptional case, economically the provision of 40% affordable housing would prejudice the realisation of other planning objectives |
| Golden Arrow, Warwick Road Olton | 09/10/2003 | 28/01/2004 | 40% of the additional units approved by this planning permission |
| 548-550 Kenilworth Road Balsall Common | 12/02/2004 | 15/09/2004 | Commuted sum, equivalent of 40% of a standard market scheme |
| 29-47 Union Road Shirley | 09/05/2004 | 02/02/2005 | Commuted sum, equivalent of 40% |
| 1266/1288 Warwick Road Solihull | 26/06/2004 | 29/11/2004 | 40% of the additional units approved by this planning permission |

Commentary

The target of 40% affordable housing provision on suitable sites throughout the Plan period was met for the first time in January 2004. The target had not been met before because it had not been formally adopted by the Council until May 2003 when it was

adopted as supplementary planning guidance to Policy H5 of the adopted UDP. Solihull College, Chelmsley Campus is the only site where the target has not been achieved since the adoption of the SPG. This decision was made in accordance with Policy H4, criteria (v) of the UDPR, as the target provision would prejudice the realisation of other planning objectives, in this case the provision of the new college. In two cases a commuted sum in lieu of on-site provision has been accepted in accordance with the SPG, both cases are Category II sheltered housing schemes where on-site provision was considered unsuitable because of the management costs associated with the provision of on-site communal facilities.

2.5.2 Affordable Housing Provision and Supply

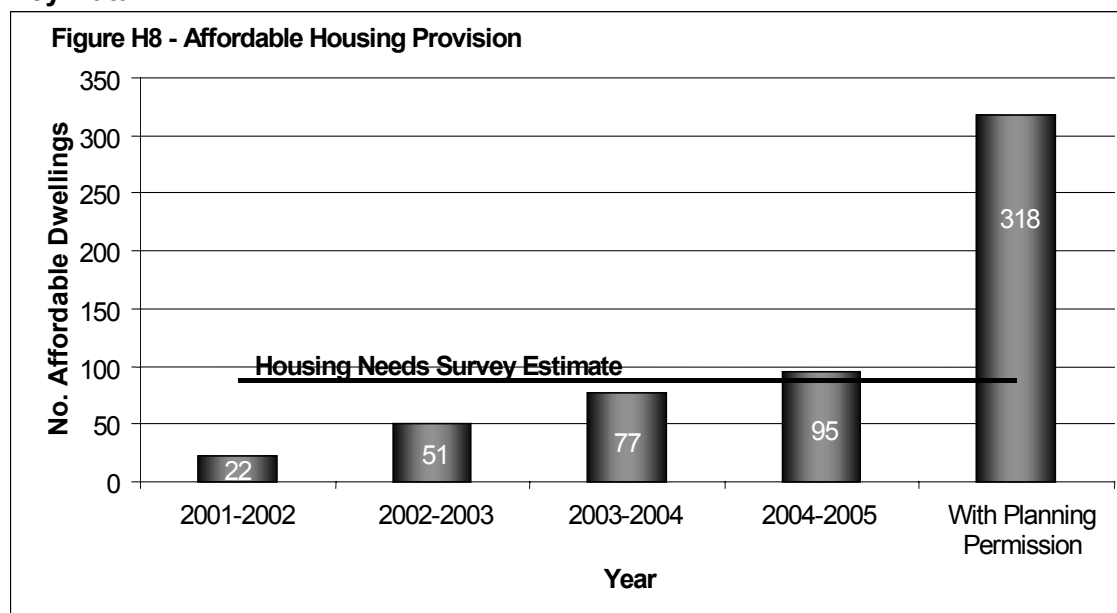
Indicator

The overall provision of affordable housing.

Target

886 affordable dwellings over the Plan period (estimate of the Housing Needs Survey, 2003).

Key Data



NB: The Council has also received the two commuted sums provided in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision detailed above and expects to receive a third commuted sum required by a legal agreement made before April 2001. All of these monies are to be used towards the provision of additional affordable housing.

Commentary

Figure H8 shows that, on average affordable housing provision over the first four years of the UDPR period is lower than anticipated. However, as mentioned above, the new site size threshold was not adopted until into the last monitoring year. Figure H8 shows a trend towards an increased provision of affordable housing and that there is a significant supply of new affordable dwellings in the planning permissions pipeline.

The Council is however concerned that windfall housing sites are not providing as much affordable housing as anticipated by the housing needs survey and there is evidence to suggest that provision is avoided through the development of schemes just below the threshold. This is an issue to be addressed through Core Strategy when the affordable housing policy will be reviewed.

2.5.3 Changes in National Planning Policy Guidance on Affordable Housing

'Planning for Sustainable Communities in Rural Areas' (January 2005) updates PPG3 and states that local planning authorities should make sufficient land available either within or adjoining existing rural communities to provide adequate affordable housing provision and to meet the needs of local people. The Inspector reporting on the UDPR public local inquiry recommended that the affordable housing policy in rural settlements be reviewed through the next review of the UDPR as a result of these amendments to PPG3.

Affordable Housing

Key Conclusions

- Affordable housing has been provided in accordance with Policy H4 of the UDPR since the adoption of the affordable housing supplementary planning guidance in May 2003. However, windfall sites are not providing as much affordable housing as anticipated and this is likely to be because many windfall planning applications are submitted just below the affordable housing requirement threshold.
- There have been amendments to national planning policy on affordable housing in rural areas which state that local planning authorities should make sufficient land available either within or adjoining existing rural communities to provide adequate affordable housing provision and to meet the needs of local people.

Further Action

- The affordable housing policy is to be reviewed to address the issues of affordable housing supply from windfall sites and changes in national planning policy guidance on affordable housing provision in rural settlements.

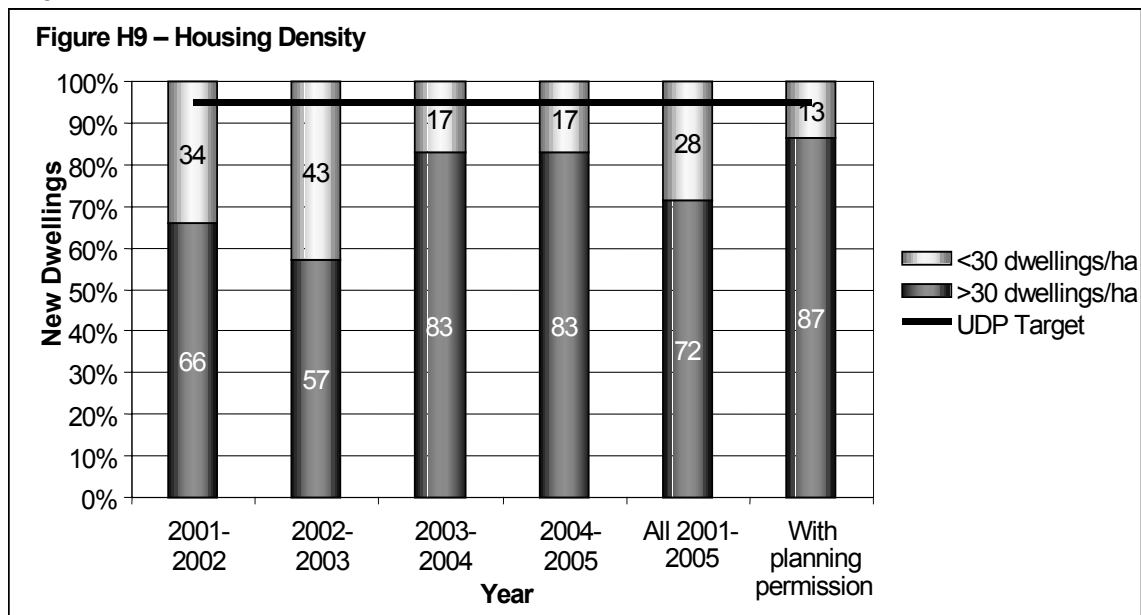
2.6 Density, Design and Quality

Indicator

Density of new housing development.

Target

Minimum 30 dwellings per hectare on 95% of developments.

Key Data**Commentary**

To ensure better and more sustainable use of land, PPG3 seeks densities of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare and densities of over 50 dwellings per hectare at places with good public transport accessibility. This policy is carried forward into Policy H5 of the UDPR. Figure H9 shows the number of dwellings provided at densities of above and below 30 dwellings per hectare and indicates that, although the UDPR target has not yet been met, there is a trend towards higher density development. Recent developments of a density of less than 30 dwellings/ha tend to be smaller developments, such as the replacement of one dwelling for another where it is not possible to achieve densities of over 30 dwellings per hectare. To ensure high quality residential development, supplementary planning guidance (SPG), “New Housing in Context” was adopted in November 2003. The SPG sets out a process which developers must follow to demonstrate how their proposals respect local character and distinctiveness and provides examples of how higher densities can be achieved in a way that is sensitive to local context. Explicit criteria which govern consideration of impacts on neighbours are also clearly set out.

This SPG has underpinned a number of high profile successes in the dismissal of appeals against the refusal of planning permission for high density developments, for example at Station Road Dorridge; St. Bernards Road Olton and Streetsbrook Road Solihull.

Density, Design and Quality**Key Conclusions**

- Although the UDPR target has not yet been met, the overall density of new residential development is increasing.
- The application of the ‘New Housing in Context’ SPG is proving successful in achieving quality design.

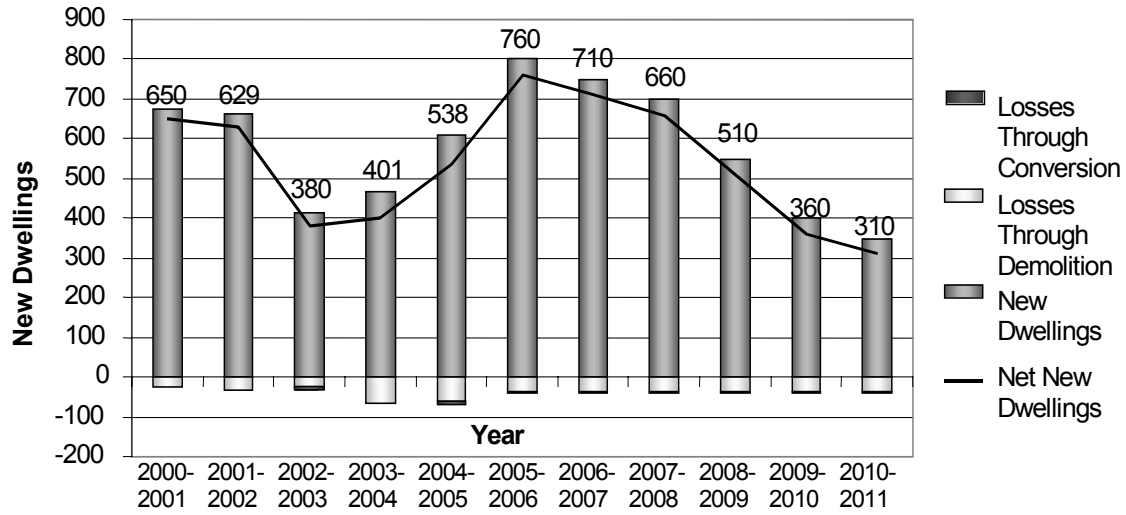
Further Action

- None.

Appendix to Chapter 2 - Housing

Net Housing Provision 2000 - 2011

Figure H10 - Net Housing Provision



Chapter 3 Employment and Prosperity

3.1 Background

National

PPG4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms - November 1992) - requires provision, in development plans, for a variety of units to meet differing needs for different types of industrial/commercial development. Policies should serve the needs of small businesses. Other PPGs also contain relevant advice on employment policies. PPG13 Transport, March 2001 – seeks to ensure employment land is located where accessible, particularly by ‘greener’ travel modes.

Regional

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) - June 2004. The RSS aims to encourage a step change in performance in the Region’s economy by promoting high value added businesses and attracting inward investment. A portfolio of employment sites is required, in sustainable locations, attractive to developers and occupiers and appropriate to market needs. The portfolio includes Regional Investment Sites, Major Investment Sites and Regional Logistics Sites (first tier sites) and ‘Sub Regional’, ‘Good Quality’ and ‘Other’ sites (second tier sites). Local authorities should provide a range of employment sites (classes B1, B2, B8) that contribute to the portfolio but not necessarily the whole portfolio.

New economic activity is to be focused on serving identified Regeneration Zones (RZ) and High Technology Corridors (HTC), particularly at identified key nodes. A network of strategic town centres are to be the focus of appropriate social, cultural, economic, commercial and regeneration activity. Provision is required for a series of high-quality employment sites across the Region to support the diversification and modernisation of the economy and to further the development of clusters.

The Regional Economic Strategy (Creating Advantage) – 1999. The strategy is concerned with developing a diverse and dynamic business base, promoting a learning and skilful Region, creating conditions for growth and regenerating communities in the Region.

Local

Economic Strategy for Solihull 2003-2006. The current strategy for 2003 - 2006 focuses on a number of key challenges for Solihull:

- Translating potential into success by maximising growth opportunities for the benefit of the whole Borough and wider region.
- Addressing North-South inequalities within the Borough.
- Sustainability - recognising the value of Solihull’s high quality environment in attracting investment.
- Engaging the wider business community in the regeneration and economic development agenda
- Responding to Solihull’s role in the regional economy.

The Community Strategy for Solihull - 2003 to 2013. The Strategy acknowledges Solihull’s thriving economy but that there are areas of deprivation in the north of the Borough. Aspirations set out in the document include Improving economic opportunities in

the Borough, Delivering physical, economic, and social regeneration to support the north of the Borough and developing a diversity of employment opportunities.

Solihull UDP Review Business Land Objectives

The main policy objectives of the UDP Review, having regard to this wider policy context and the ability of Solihull to contribute to the regional and sub-regional economy, are as follows:

- **Regional Investment Sites (RIS)** – Make limited provision for further RIS development to support the Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire High Technology Corridor (HTC) and east Birmingham/North Solihull Regeneration Zone (RZ).
- **Provision of general employment land** – Make limited provision for general employment land development (classes B1, B2, B8) to provide a portfolio of accessible sites to serve local needs.
- **Retention of business land in business use** – Protect existing employment sites from alternative development except where no longer necessary.
- **Employment opportunities for North Solihull** – Improve access to jobs for those living in the RZ.
- **Airport, NEC and Land Rover** – Enable these to meet their development needs.

3.2 Regional Investment Sites (RIS)

Solihull has 2 Regional Investment Sites. These are Birmingham Business Park (60 hectares) and Blythe Valley Business Park (40 hectares), each granted planning permission by the Secretary of State (SOS) in 1986 and 1995 respectively (both granted as premium employment sites). The UDP Review re-allocates these sites as RIS in line with the current RSS. These are the only RIS currently being developed in the Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire (CSW) HTC. Both sites are in greenfield locations near the edge of the urban area and at 'key nodes' in the HTC identified in the RSS.

3.2.1 Supply of RIS land

Indicators

Amount of floorspace developed on RIS sites in total, over the 4 years to April 2005 and over the monitoring year to April 2005.

Target

Contribute to continuity of supply of RIS land in accordance with the RSS

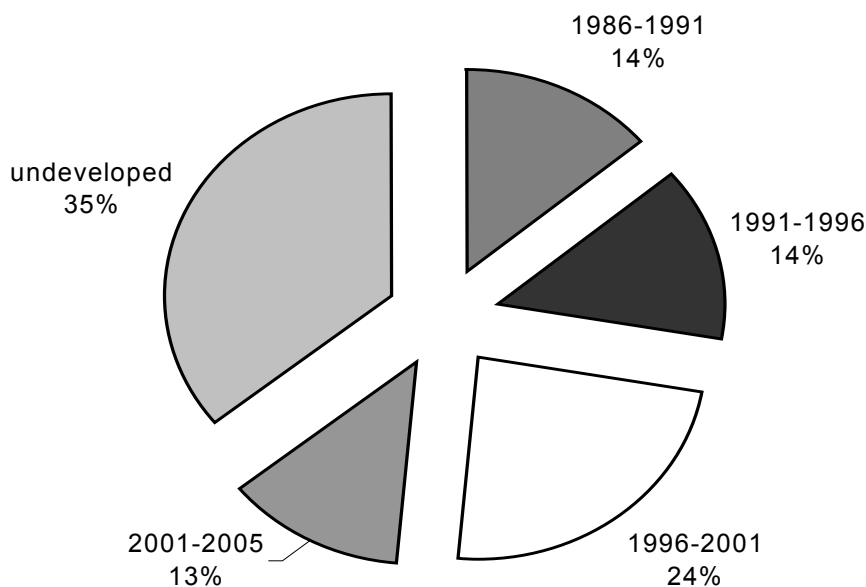
Key Data

Figure E1 – SMBC monitoring of implementation of applications for development on RIS sites.

| Birmingham Business Park | Developed | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| | Ha | Sqm |
| At April 2005 | 39 | 136,287 |
| Over 4 yrs to April 2005 | 5.7 | 24,086 |
| Over monitoring year to April 2005 | 1.7 | 8,552 |
| Remaining | 14.5 | 86,673 |
| Total developable land | 53.5 | 222,960 |

| Blythe Valley Business Park | | |
|--|------|---------|
| At April 2005 | 15.0 | 56,511 |
| Over 4 yrs to April 2005 | 3.2 | 11,627 |
| Over monitoring year to April 2005 | 1.3 | 5,480 |
| Remaining | 17.0 | 55,089 |
| Total developable land | 32.0 | 111,600 |
| Blythe Valley Business Park Extension | | |
| Estimated total developable land | 17 | 74,300 |
| UDP Review allocation – no planning permission granted at April 2005 | | |

Figure E2 – Development on Premium/RIS Sites (excl BVP ext)



Commentary

The progress of development on each of these greenfield sites is such that both are likely to be fully committed to development late in the plan period. To ensure continuity of supply of RIS land the Review makes provision for the extension, by 21 hectares (17ha developable), of Blythe Valley Business Park. This could provide up to about 74,300sqm of building floorspace.

At April 2005 about 54 hectares (192,798sqm of buildings floorspace) of RIS land was developed (including 1.3 hectares under construction, 5,480sqm). At Birmingham Business Park about 38.5 hectares (136,287sqm floorspace) is developed and at Blythe Valley Business Park about 15 hectares (56,511sqm floorspace) is developed. This equates to an average development rate of RIS land of just over 2.4 hectares per annum at Birmingham Business Park and just over 3.6 hectares per annum at Blythe Valley Business Park. The only new RIS development that commenced during the monitoring year to April 2005 was on a 1.3-hectare site at Blythe Valley Business Park.

In terms of looking at the development of RIS the 4 year period to April 2005 is too short to provide a useful picture. The above chart at Figure E2 therefore looks at development in 5 year blocks starting from the grant of consent of the first site of this nature,

Birmingham Business Park, in 1986 (planning permission was granted for Blythe Valley Business Park in 1995). Steady, consistent progress has been made in the development of RIS land, interrupted over the 1996 to 2001 period which shows a significantly larger amount of development.

3.2.2 The Use of Regional Investment Sites

Indicator

Amount of RIS development that satisfies the high-quality criterion.

Target

100%

Key data

Monitoring of occupiers through local SMBC survey and monitoring of planning consents carrying a condition restricting proposals to high quality (or ‘top quality’) development.

Commentary

In accordance with the RSS the development of the sites is restricted to high-quality development within Class B1 of the current Use Classes Order. The RSS defines RIS as ‘high quality, regionally identified sites of 25–50 hectares attractive to external investment designed to support the diversification and modernisation of the regional economy especially in relation to the region’s cluster priorities.’ The RSS does not however, define ‘high quality development’.

Birmingham Business Park has generally targeted smaller regional occupiers requiring units between about 186sqm and 2,787sqm with many buildings being in multi-occupancy. Currently it has in excess of 90 occupiers. There are many important leading brand name firms on the site carrying out activities that fall into the B1 use class. Blythe Valley Business Park mainly provides accommodation between 2,787sqm and 9,290sqm let to single occupiers wishing to establish a major presence in the area within a headquarters setting. Consequently, Blythe Valley has fewer occupiers.

Both sites have successfully attracted, and remain attractive to, occupiers that enable them to meet the stated purpose of RISs. Both sites have ‘park centres’ set aside for facilities that are ancillary or complementary to their use and for this reason they are ignored for the purposes of monitoring high quality development (ie park centres are an accepted part of the concept of this type of modern business park). Conditions are imposed by the Council on applications for development on both business parks to restrict developments in line with the RSS. The character of development on each is of a high quality modern nature. In this respect the target of 100% satisfying the criterion can be said to be met.

Regional Investment Sites

Key Conclusions

- The Rate of development at Birmingham Business Park and Blythe Valley Business Parks is likely to exhaust provision for RIS late in the Review period. The UDP Review’s proposed RIS extension at Blythe Valley Business Park will enable continuity of RIS land supply.
- Both RIS in Solihull remain attractive to the type of high quality development that will support the diversification of the Region’s economy and the development of the Regions cluster priorities. There is no indication that development at Birmingham Business Park and Blythe Valley Business Park is not high quality.

Further Action

- Encourage a firmer definition of 'high quality development' through the RSS Review.

3.3 Provision of General Employment Land (excludes RIS land)

Provision for ordinary business land in the UDP Review (i.e. B1, B2, B8 but excluding RIS B1) has been undertaken with caution to avoid undermining urban regeneration policies, particularly in nearby Birmingham. Any new Greenfield sites would encroach into the green belt. There is potentially an on-going supply of 'previously developed' business sites in Birmingham but the Regional Industrial Land Study (RILS) has shown that the choice of sites within the Conurbation is generally poor. Although unemployment in Solihull is low (2.4% of the economically active population at April 2005) parts of the north of the Borough have persistently high rates of unemployment (in 4 wards it was above 5% at April 2005 and in one ward it was 6%). Tables in this section that refer to office development exclude offices in the Borough's 3 main retail centres. Information in this regard can be found in the section on retailing.

3.3.1 General Business Land Supply**Indicator**

Floorspace developed for employment by type

Target

To provide a range of employment sites in accordance with the RSS.

Key data

SMBC monitoring of implementation of applications for business developments in the B1, B2, B8 use class (all developments 500 sqm+).

Figure E3 – Floorspace developed for employment by type

| | Over 4 yrs to April 2005 | Over monitoring year to April 2005 |
|----------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Offices | 51,000sqm (11.5ha) | 4,930sqm (1.2ha) |
| Other B1 | 0 | 0 |
| B2 | 6,524sqm (1.7ha) | 0 |
| B8 | 13,647sqm (3.6ha) | 0 |

Commentary

The Review makes provision for general business land as follows:

- Land at Highlands Rd (Solar/Solihull Business Parks - about 18ha) Monkspath.
- Birmingham International Park (17ha), Bickenhill.
- Land North of Clock Interchange (8ha – including 5ha Trinity Park), Bickenhill.
- TRW Dog Kennel Lane Shirley (28ha - potentially 12ha could come forward).

These are sub-regional sites in terms of the RSS's identified portfolio and collectively provide about 66 hectares of land. Currently about 40 hectares are developed. 25 hectares is located north of the A45 near the Airport and NEC. The remainder is located near the A34 at Monkspath where about 10 hectares are developed and a further 20 hectares remain to be developed at the Highlands Road and TRW sites.

In addition to these allocated sites the Borough has a number of older industrial estates. These include:

- Cranmore Industrial Estate (47ha) Shirley
- Elmdon Trading Estate (17ha) Bickenhill
- Lode Lane Industrial Estate (5ha) Solihull

Over the past 4 years, to April 2005, 71,172sqm of business floorspace has been developed (17ha). This equates to an approximate average take up rate of about 4.25 hectares per annum. Over the year to April 2005 business development amounts to 4,930sqm (1.2ha).

3.3.2 Business Development on Previously Developed Land

Indicator

Amount of business floorspace, by business class, developed on previously developed land

Target

Increase the proportion of business development that takes place on previously developed land.

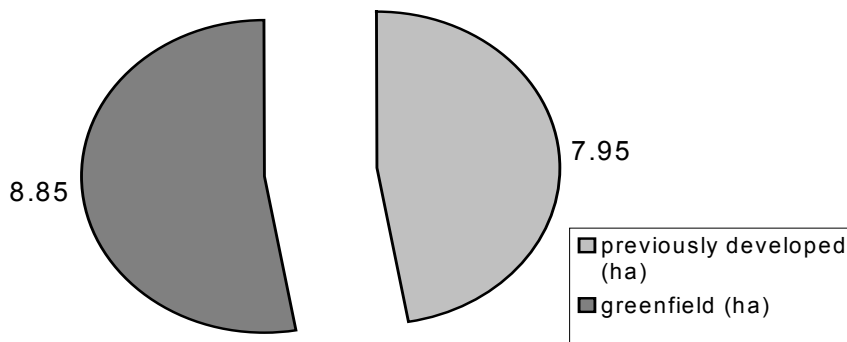
Key data

SMBC monitoring of implementation of applications for business developments in the B1, B2, B8 use class (all developments 500sqm+).

Figure E4 – Floorspace developed on previously developed land

| | Over 4 years to April 2005 | Over monitoring year to April 2005 |
|----------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Offices | 28,776sqm (6.25ha) | 0 |
| Other B1 | 0 | 0 |
| B2 | 6,524sqm (1.7ha) | 0 |
| B8 | 0 | 0 |

Figure E5 – General employment land development over 4 years



Commentary

The amount of business floorspace that has been developed for business purposes on previously developed land over the past 4 years is 35,300sqm (8ha). Over the monitoring year to April 2005, no significant business development has taken place on previously

developed land. The corresponding figure for the development of greenfield land for business purposes is 4,930sqm (i.e during the monitoring year a 1.2ha greenfield site was developed. This was an office development at Solihull Business Park).

3.3.3 Available Business Land

Indicator

Employment land availability by type

Target

Provide an adequate supply of general business land that accords with the RSS

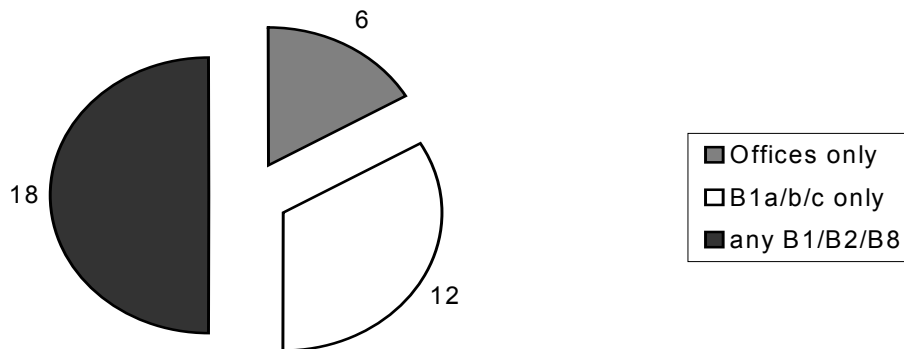
Key data

Data from the Solihull Employment Land Study (March 2004).

Figure E6 – Employment land available by type at April 2005

| Type of development (grouped by most suitable uses) | Hectares |
|---|----------|
| Offices only | 6 |
| B1a/b/c | 12 |
| B1/B2/B8 | 18 |

Figure E7 – Employment land by type at 1 April 2005 (hectares)



Commentary

Available business land (B1, B2, B8) at April 2005 totalled 36 hectares. 29 hectares is located close to the A34 in the south of the Borough. The remainder is located on sites at Bickenhill in the north of the Borough. A further 6 hectares of land can be identified as potential supply and although not readily available it is likely to become available during the Review period. Some of the available land, because of locational characteristics, would be best suited to offices; other land would be more generally suited to business development.

An employment land study for Solihull dated March 2004 assessed the Borough’s employment land needs (excluding RIS land) based on a survey of available employment land and premises and an analysis of the local economic profile. In summary the main findings of the study are as follows:

- The supply of general business land and need are in balance to the end of the Review period (2011).

- Special efforts should be made to recycle land in the north of the Borough for small business use.
- The supply of business land is in locations that meet the locational requirements of business and is accessible from the main densities of economically active population.
- To maintain the supply of business land it is necessary to retain existing business land/premises in business use.

The above tables support the conclusions of the study. Solihull is clearly attractive to business development. Most of the business development is however, located south of the A45 away from the areas of greatest employment need in the north of the Borough. The supply of business land is adequate to the end of the review period (the study looked at take-up over 10 years and established a take up rate of about 5 hectares per annum).

Provision of Employment Land

Key Conclusions

- The supply of employment land for general business purposes is adequate to the end of the plan period.
- The Borough is attractive to business development and makes a valuable contribution to the portfolio of sites required by the RSS, particularly in the provision of good quality sub-regional sites.
- The Borough's employment land is located near the main densities of economically active population.

Further Action

- Review the Solihull Employment Land Study (March 2004) to ensure that it remains up to date and in-line with current planning policy.

3.4 Retention of business land in business use

Recent national policy guidance favours the reuse of redundant business land for residential development. Because of the limited supply of general business land available it is important to retain the limited diversity of businesses that the Borough currently possesses. This is one of the important policy aims of the Review. However, in line with current government guidance, alternative development is allowed where the land is genuinely redundant, there is no longer a need to retain business development and the new development will support sustainable development principles.

3.4.1 Losses of employment land

Indicator

Losses of employment land to alternative development both in Solihull and North Solihull (within the RZ) with particular reference to losses to residential development.

Target

Retention of 85% of business land in business use (UDP Review target).

Key data

SMBC monitoring data for losses of business land to alternative types of development.

Figure E8 – Loss of business land to alternative development.

| Location | Over 4 years to April 2005 | Over year to April 2005 |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Within Solihull | 13 | 10 |
| Within a Regeneration Zone | 0 | 0 |

Commentary

Over the 4 years to April 2005 about 13 hectares of business land have been lost to alternative uses. About 10 hectares of this is the result of the loss of one large site, to residential development, that had been vacated by its single occupier. The nature of the business was mainly an outmoded office use that was not protected by the development plan at the time of loss (the adopted UDP does not protect office developments outside allocated sites). The Review policy now protects the full spectrum of business development (B1, B2, B8). A further 2.3 hectares of land were lost as a result of the lifting of its business site allocation in the development plan (to reflect its loss in 1996 to leisure development). None of the business land lost was located in a RZ.

It is too early to say, through monitoring, whether the Review policy to protect business land will successfully retain business land in business use but the UDP Review policy is in-line with national guidance on this issue and is supported by a recent employment land study. During the current monitoring year the Council successfully resisted the loss of a significant business site to residential development.

Retention of Business Land in Business Use**Key Conclusions**

- It is likely that the UDP Review policy to generally retain business land in business use will be robust enough meet this objective but further monitoring is needed to assess the effectiveness of the policy over time. In accordance with current national policy guidance alternative development is enabled in particular circumstances.

Further Action

- None

3.5 Employment opportunities for North Solihull

Part of the north of the Borough is located in the East Birmingham & North Solihull Regeneration Zone. No substantial new business development has taken place over the past 4 years in the Solihull part of the Regeneration Zone. The aim of the review to protect employment land from alternative development should help retain jobs in the RZ. The UDP Review acknowledges that the availability of land for job creation is very limited and that the aim is to help the available workforce in the RZ to access jobs elsewhere.

Indicators, Targets, Key Data

The Strategic Framework for North Solihull (February 2005) carries an undertaking to carry out regular monitoring so that the effectiveness of the strategy is kept under review. The Strategic Framework contains monitoring proposals that the regeneration company intend to adopt for the monitoring of a wide range of objectives relating to employment. This includes a list of objectives, indicators, baseline position and targets.

Commentary

In February 2005 the North Solihull Strategic Framework was published by the regeneration company (as SPG). This sets out a vision and regeneration objectives for North Solihull (within the RZ) and a comprehensive plan for development and change in the area. A number of objectives relating to employment are set out. These, in summary, include:

- Increasing the business base and creation of a more diverse local economy with more industry in key growth areas.
- Attracting new business investment into the area.
- Providing more commercial space, including incubator units.
- Provide training and development through the refurbishment and construction programme.
- Support local people in setting up their own businesses as an employment option.

The Strategy acknowledges that the area is characterised by persistently high unemployment and that the strategies for employment, education and training are strongly inter-linked and mutually dependent. Principles are identified that will underpin further employment initiatives. These include:

- Protect and increase employment space
- Improve accessibility to employment opportunities
- Provide an integrated approach to education and community strategies

There has already been some progress on improving access to jobs for RZ residents. The UDP Review will provide for a new general business land allocation (approximately 4 hectares) at Bickenhill and accessible from the RZ. Public transport links between Blythe Valley Business Park (RIS) and the RZ have been improved by the introduction of a bus service sponsored by the park operators and by targeting jobs on the Park to RZ occupiers. At July 2004 18% of those employed at the business park were resident in the RZ. Birmingham Business Park (RIS) is located immediately adjacent the RZ boundary and took 22% of its workforce from the RZ. Further information on provision of public transport links between the RZ and business sites is included in the transport section.

Employment opportunities for North Solihull

Key Conclusions

- Whilst no significant new employment opportunities have been created in the RZ over the past 4 years, including the monitoring year, progress has been made in providing access to jobs outside the RZ and in enabling RZ residents to acquire the skills/training needed to access the jobs market.
- The north Solihull Strategic Framework potentially provides a means of addressing and resolving employment issues in the RZ and progress in this regard is to be monitored.

Further Action

- Develop the monitoring framework set out in the North Solihull Strategic Framework to enable full assessment of RZ employment related objectives.

3.5.1 Small employment sites.

The Borough has a scattering of small employment sites, generally less than 0.5 ha. Most business site development takes place on larger strategic sites and few new employment developments come forward away from these large sites. Those that do come forward should be appropriately located from a sustainable development perspective.

Indicator

Proportion of new business development on non-strategic sites that is easily accessible by public transport.

Target

100%

Key Data

SMBC monitoring of implementation of planning applications for business developments in the B1, B2, B8 Use class (all developments 500sqm+)

Commentary

Over the 4 years to April 2005 only 1.6 hectares of business development has occurred on small, non-strategic sites (the figure for the monitoring year to April 2005 is none). 1 hectare of this development is located on a site near the RZ in the north of the Borough. The site is accessible by public transport from Chelmsley Wood District Retail Centre located within the RZ. The remaining land is a business development on a previously developed site in Hampton in Arden Village, near its railway station on the West Coast Main Line. The site is also accessible by bus services between Coventry and Solihull that operate through villages on route.

Small employment sites**Key Conclusions**

- Relatively little business development has occurred over the past 4 years on non strategic sites. That which has occurred is easily accessible by public transport

Further Action

- None

3.6 Airport, NEC and Land Rover

The Airport and NEC are not included in the definition of employment land in the RSS or the LDF core output indicators. However, together with Land Rover, they are major employers locally and across the Region. All 3 are of major significance to the Region's economy. Land Rover is estimated to support about 50,000 jobs across the Region and The Airport and NEC collectively support about 25,900 jobs. The Policy aim of the UDP Review is to enable them to provide for their development needs within their defined boundaries subject to environment safeguards.

Indicators

There are no specific published indicators for these developments but floorspace of major developments within their boundaries is monitored as is passenger throughput at the Airport.

Targets

There are no specific published targets for these sites but the aim of the UDP Review is to enable them to meet their aspirations for the UDP Review period within their defined boundaries.

Key Data

Solihull MBC monitoring of business sites, including the Airport and NEC

Figure E9 – Birmingham International Airport Passenger Throughput

| Year | Passenger throughput (Million Passengers per annum) |
|------------------|--|
| 1981 | 1.5 |
| 1991 | 3.4 |
| 2001 | 7.8 |
| 2005 | 8.9 |
| Forecast: | |
| 2011 | 14.3 |

Commentary

At April 2005 the Airport Master Plan was under review. It is likely to embrace the major expansion of the Airport having regard to the recent Airports white paper. This is however, not a matter for the current UDP Review. Since 1991 passenger throughput has increased considerably. In 1991 throughput was 3.4M. At 2011 it is forecast to be 14.3M. Plans to cater for increased throughput, originally granted planning consent in 1996 are being put in place.

The NEC is focused on modernising its facilities within its boundaries, including provision for developments to enhance visitor expectations. Total exhibition floorspace is currently about 200,000sqm. Proposals that come forward over the UDP Review plan period are likely to be for development and redevelopment within the NEC defined boundary.

Land Rover is similarly focused on modernisation and restructuring within its 129-hectare site. The Company produces about 170,000 vehicles per year. About 3 years ago the Company proposed to build a rail link between the Factory and the West Coast Main Line. This would have significantly changed the operation of the factory and would have facilitated the movement of components and finished vehicles by rail. The UDP Review supports the principle of the link.

Airport, NEC and Land Rover**Key Conclusions**

- The Review does not provide any new land for the expansion of the Airport, NEC or Land Rover, but the policy framework enables these important uses to meet their currently known aspirations over the Review period.

Further Action

- Include specific indicators and targets for the monitoring of these important regional sites through the LDF process.

Chapter 4 Transport

4.1 Background

National

The White Paper – A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone - July 1998. The White Paper acknowledges a decline in bus and rail services in the last 20 years and that traffic growth has created more congestion and pollution. Traffic growth is damaging towns, harming countryside and may be adding to global warming. The White Paper aims to extend choice in transport and achieve access in ways that support sustainable development through integration of transport policy.

Transport 2010 – The 10 Year Plan. The aim of the Plan is to set out a long-term view of the level of investment needed to achieve the Governments vision for transport and deliver the White Paper objectives. The intention is to make more money available for transport including investment in light rail.

PPG13 – Transport – March 2001. The objectives of the Guidance are to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional and local level in order to:

- Promote sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight.
- Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling.
- Reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

The Guidance sets out the circumstances for changing the emphasis and priorities in provision between different transport modes. It also sets out maximum standards for vehicle parking for broad classes of development.

Regional

Multi-Modal Studies. A number of multi-modal studies were announced following the 1998 White Paper. One of the first was the West Midlands Area Multi-Modal Study (WMAMMS) which was commissioned by the Government Office for the West Midlands in 1999. WMAMMS was centred on the West Midlands conurbation and extended outwards to include many towns in the journey to work area. It included the whole of Solihull, but did not extend into the City of Coventry. The final WMAMMS report was published in October 2001. Its recommendations on the need to widen M42 to 5 lanes in each direction by 2031 are particularly relevant to Solihull.

The study defined a strategy that would require the implementation of behavioural change, changes in the cost of transport and the construction of new infrastructure. Other studies that were undertaken were:

- Midlands/Manchester Study that looked at the M6 corridor between the West Midlands and Manchester.
- The Coventry Area Network Study that looked at the potential contribution of public transport to addressing the transport issues of Coventry. The study recommendations included that there should be joint working between Coventry, Solihull, Warwickshire and Centro in regard to public transport provision and that some enhancement should be made over 80km of bus routes along 15 corridors.
- West Midlands to East Midlands Study that included the northern section of the M42.

West Midlands Local Transport Plan, 2003. The first full LTP for the West Midlands was submitted in July 2000 and was intended to be a 5 years programme for the development of transport. The LTP review focuses on the potential to increase public transport use and on traffic congestion that costs the economy of the region about £2.3bn per year. The plan is designed to cover the 7 year period up to 2011 and includes a number of initiatives that originate from WMAMMS. These include:

- An expanded metro network building on Line One to create a network of routes.
- Funding for road maintenance
- A programme of area based bus improvement measures and an expanded programme of bus showcase routes.
- Measures to reduce congestion and make more efficient use of the existing road network.
- Encouragement of walking, cycling and park and ride.

Regional Planning Guidance June 2004 (RSS). An important objective of the RSS strategy is to improve the Region's transport systems to a quality comparable to those of competitor regions. The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) sets out the necessary transport and investment policies to achieve this over the time frame of the RSS (to 2021). The RTS also aims to provide a strategic framework for regional and local transport planning in the West Midlands by:

- Ensuring better integration between transport policies and priorities and the wider spatial strategy.
- Bringing together the outcomes of the multi-modal studies affecting the Region
- Steering the development of the Region's local transport plans, the key planning and funding mechanism for local transport.

At the heart of the strategy is the importance of improving accessibility and the performance of the transport system whilst not perpetuating the past trends in car traffic and trip length growth.

The Future of Air Transport in the UK – Consultation 2002 (and subsequent White Paper). During the course of 2002 the government held consultations on 'The Future of Air Transport in the United Kingdom'. The result of the consultation was the release of the government White Paper 'The Future of Air Transport' at the end of 2003 that favours the construction of a second runway at Birmingham International Airport. The White Paper will be addressed through regional guidance and subsequently through the Local Development Framework process.

Local

Community Strategy for Solihull – 2003 to 2013. The Strategy considers good transport links to be essential to well-being and growth. It acknowledges that public transport needs to be affordable, and easy to access. Key areas of development are improved bus and rail services, improved disability services and better links between voluntary and community transport.

Solihull Cycling Strategy 1999. The document aspires to promote cycling as a mainstream travel mode for short journeys.

Solihull Walking Strategy 2001. The document aims to promote walking for making local journeys.

Solihull Public Transport Strategy 2002. The aim of the strategy is to promote improved quality in public transport in order to encourage its use as an alternative to the private car.

Solihull UDP Review Transport Objectives

The main policy objectives of the UDP Review, having regard to this wider policy context are as follows:

- **An integrated and sustainable transport strategy** – Create sustainable patterns of development by integrating land use and transport policies.
- **Public Transport, Cycling and Walking** – Promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking for their importance to sustainable development principles, reducing traffic congestion and providing access for all.
- **Parking** – Encourage less car use and enable increases in the density of developments through the implementation of appropriate car parking standards in line with national guidance.

4.2 An integrated and sustainable transport strategy

An integrated approach to transport and land use policies can help to contribute to more sustainable patterns of development by ensuring that new development is directed to appropriate locations that reduce the need to travel and encourage 'greener' travel modes. Development that relies mainly on the private car will not lead to a sustainable future. For this reason it is important to encourage development that is accessible by a variety of transport modes. Integration will also help to create a transport network that is accessible to a wider range of people and that contributes to social inclusion. Encouraging alternative travel modes to the car will provide economic and environment benefits by reducing traffic congestion and reducing business costs.

4.2.1 Accessibility of community and other important facilities by public transport

Indicators

Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary school, secondary school, employment area and a major retail centre.

Target

Locate residential development where there is relative ease of access to community and other facilities by public transport

Key Data

One means of assessing progress towards this objective is to assess ease of access of new residential development relative to the location of important destinations that residents may require access to. Detailed information of this nature is not as yet available at Solihull but may be provided for the next AMR. Information is however, available on the location of new housing developments relative to bus services and some community and other facilities. For these facilities the attached Plans show the location of completed housing developments larger than 5 dwellings over the past 4 years and over the monitoring year to April 2005.

Since April 2001 52% of new residential development has occurred in the main urban area of Solihull. The corresponding figure for the monitoring year to April 2005 is 54%. This is not indicative of a major change on location of housing development but is reflective of sites beyond the main urban area allocated for housing in the adopted UDP, still being developed.

Those sites located within the main urban area would generally be within 30 minutes public transport travel time of major destination facilities.

Key Conclusions

- There is a trend (identified in the housing chapter) towards the location of new residential development on brownfield land in the Major Urban Area (MUA), but a significant proportion of new residential development is on Greenfield land outside the MUA. Sites that have been developed within the main urban area in Solihull are generally within 30 minutes public transport travel time of a wide array of destination facilities

Further Action

- Develop a framework for policy development and monitoring of the location of residential development relative to commonly used services and the accessibility of those services by public transport.

4.3 Public Transport, Cycling and Walking

The West Midlands Metropolitan Area has one of the highest levels of bus use per person, partly because of the policy of free travel for pensioners and others. Bus use has, however, declined. A significant influence has been increasing numbers of people driving well into retirement and not taking up concessionary travel on buses. Generally, the quality of services needs to be improved in order to reduce decline in patronage.

4.3.1 Public transport use**Indicator**

Improved public transport services, bus and rail.

Target

Increase public transport use in line with LTP targets

Key data

Local Transport Plan annual monitoring report

Figure T1 – Public Transport Trips into Solihull

| a.m. peak | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Local Indicator in LTP | Target | % increase over 16% 1997 baseline | | | | |
| | | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2011 |
| Public transport | Increase a.m. | 16.8 | 16.8 | 19.3 | 19.3 | On target |
| Trips into Solihull | peak to 21% | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 21 |
| all-day share | | | | | | |
| Local Indicator in LTP | Target | % increase over 16% 1997 baseline | | | | |
| | | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2011 |
| Public transport | Maintain | 18.6 | 18.6 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 19 |
| Trips into Solihull | All-day share | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |

NB: Figures in bold are actual increase (lower line is the trajectory data)

Commentary

A number of major schemes are coming forward that will help to improve quality of service and access to major trip generating areas. These include The Birmingham Airport/National Exhibition Centre Public Transport Access (Annexe E) Submission that is focused on improving access to this major employment area. Recently introduced bus services include the 966 Erdington to Solihull Station via Birmingham Airport that provides access to and from the RZ to a number of the Borough's major employment generators. The 166 service provides access between Blythe Valley Business Park (M42 junction 4) and Solihull Station. This provides access between the Business Park and central Solihull, picking up major trip and employment generators on the way. Together these routes link north and south Solihull.

The UDP Review supports the creation of the following bus showcase routes:

- Birmingham to Chelmsley Wood. Necessary infrastructure, including shelters and stops, is in place for the Solihull part of the route. Work on the Birmingham part of the route is awaited (no dates for completion)
- Stratford Road, linking Birmingham, Shirley, Blythe Valley and Solihull. Work to upgrade shelters and stops on the main A34 Stratford road is completed. Similar work on Blossomfield Road (B4102) is partly implemented, to be completed during 2006.
- North/South route linking Blythe Valley, Solihull, Airport, NEC, Chelmsley Wood & Castle Bromwich. Funding has been secured for shelters and stops upgrades to showcase standards on Lode Lane (B425). Business funding has been secured for the 966 and 166 services. These services are currently operative, providing the north-south link, as described above, but not as yet to showcase standard.
- Warwick Road route – linking Birmingham Olton & Solihull. During 2006 investigations will begin to decide upon showcase proposals for the 37 route in conjunction with Birmingham City Council and Centro.

The LTP has a target to increase public transport patronage into Solihull Centre, both peak time and daytime, as one of the RSS 25 network centres and acknowledged by the RSS as significant for employment and regeneration. For peak times the baseline figure for public transport patronage is 16% at 1997. The target is to increase this to 21% by 2011. The above table taken from the LTP annual progress report 2005 shows this to be on target. The table for daytime share shows a baseline figure for patronage of 17%. The target is to maintain all day share. The above table shows this to be on track achieving 19.3% for each of the past 2 years.

4.3.2 Cycle Use

Indicator

Increase cycle use

Target

Increase to 10% of all trips by 2031 (In-line with LTP target) and 3% by 2006

Key data

LTP annual monitoring report provides information on cycle training.

Figure T2 – Children Cycle Training within the West Midlands

| Authority | No of Trainers | Primary Children trained to level 2 equivalent in 2004/5 (% of year group) | |
|---------------------|----------------|--|--------------|
| Walsall | 10 | 800 | (20%) |
| Solihull MBC | 25 | 2,000 | (80%) |
| Sandwell | 0 | 1,000 | (30%) |
| Dudley | 18 | 895 | (30%) |
| Birmingham | 2 | 627 | (5%) |
| Wolverhampton | 12 | 1,500 | (30%) |
| Coventry | 12 | 530 | (12%) |

Commentary

The LTP has a target to increase levels of cycling to 10% of all trips by 2031 (3% by 2006 – this is a national core indicator). Throughout the metropolitan area, this is proving to be difficult. LTP spending on cycling facilities was significantly below forecast for 2004/5 and renewed efforts are needed on this issue. Progress and positive approach has been recognised by the English Regions' Cycling and Development Team that gave all metropolitan districts a favourable assessment in terms of progress on cycling issues and infrastructure as part of a national review.

A principal aim is to create a pro-cycling culture. One particular area of activity is to focus on training, particularly of primary school children. This is revenue funded and supports a range of other initiatives such as school travel planning that is seeking to develop a culture of safe cycling. This part of the LTPs long-term effort in support of capital expenditure to increase cycling levels. The above table shows the number of trainers provided per metropolitan authority and the level of training provided (percentage figures are of the year group). The table demonstrates a high level of commitment to cycle training in Solihull.

Monitoring of cycling is in need of improvement. The LTPs baseline figure of 0.8 % of all trips was generated from household questionnaires undertaken as part of the 2001 West Midlands Transport Surveys. It has not been possible to update this figure on a similar basis. The LTP is looking at developing a databases for a number of different aspects of cycling that can be combined to create and index of cycling and produce consistent annual output. More data is needed disaggregated to the district level.

4.3.3 Walking

Information on walking as a means of access is not well developed. A monitoring framework is needed to assess objectives related to walking.

Public Transport, Cycling and Walking**Key Conclusions**

- Targets in the Local Transport Plan to increase peak hour public transport use and maintain all day share, for trips into Solihull Town Centre are being met.
- Progress is being made towards Improvements to the quality of important bus routes through Solihull through bus showcase.

- Improvements have been made to access employment areas by public transport.
- Targets in the LTP for increasing cycle use are proving difficult to meet across the metropolitan area, but the Borough has a strong commitment to cycle training.

Further Action

- More information is needed specific to Solihull on public transport access to an array of main trip generators.
- In regard to walking and cycling these strategies need to be reviewed to improve performance against targets.

4.4 Parking

Car parking standards can assist in achieving government land use planning objectives that seek to:

- Reduce the need to travel and promote greener travel modes providing access to all for a range of facilities.
- Facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive design and the efficient use of resources.

Level of Compliance with standards

Indicator

Amount of non-residential development within use classes A, B and D complying with standards set out in the Development Plan.

Target

Secure compliance with above standards (to be within PPG13 standards).

Key data

Monitoring of planning applications for development and PPG13 annexe D.

Figure T3 – Non-residential development in conformity with PPG13 parking standards

| Class | 4 yrs to 4/05 Sqm | % PPG13 compliant | 1yr to 4/05 Sqm | % PPG13 compliant |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Retail A classes | 55,672 | 100 | 1,672 | 100 |
| Business B1 | 94,586 | 75 | 14,032 | 39 |
| Non-residential Institutions | Not Known | | | |
| Assembly and leisure | 6,500 | 100 | 0 | NA |

NB: Figures for business use include RIS
Developments are those with a floorspace of 500sqm+ (gross)

Commentary

The UDP Review acknowledges that standards set must reflect those contained in national guidance. The Review proposes that these be published through a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that will reflect the requirements of PPG13 – Transport, March 2001. The process of producing the SPD is subject to a sustainability appraisal (SA). The SA scoping report has been forwarded to the relevant organisations for consultation purposes as part of the SPD production process during the next few months.

Since publication of PPG13 new proposals for residential development have been required to progress on the basis of the maximum standard of 1.5 spaces per dwelling (average). Similarly PPG13 standards and principles have been adopted for other main trip generating development as indicated in the above table.

The development of the Touchwood shopping mall (954,000sqm) in Solihull Town Centre in 2001 accounts for nearly all of the retail development completed in the Borough over the past 4 years to April 2005. Touchwood also accounts for the 6,500sqm of leisure identified in the table, mainly through the inclusion of a multi-screen cinema in the scheme. The planning application for Touchwood pre-dated the current PPG13 (March 2001) but was accompanied by an extensive Transport Assessment that met the following important transport objectives:

- Provision for choice of access for all users, to a high standard
- Recognition of opportunities and constraints of national and local policy on transport sustainability and town centres.
- Provision of a development that will be integral to the Council’s long-term investment plans for the town centre.

Proposals included better access to the town centre by public transport, walking and cycling and reduced dependence on car travel and shared parking for the whole town centre. These principles are included in the current PPG13.

More recently, an out of centre non-food retail store (1,672sqm) has been developed over the monitoring year, in the Shirley area, compliant with PPG13 maximum standard of 1 space per 20sqm.

Business development (B1) in the table shows a poorer performance against PPG13, particularly for the monitoring year. This is reflective of the completion of a large development (8,552sqm) at Birmingham Business Park that is subject to a pre-PPG13 parking standard imposed by the Secretary of State in granting consent for the business park (and in subsequent renewals of consent). Elsewhere, PPG13 standards are required.

Parking

Key Conclusions

- Locally set car parking standards for Solihull will be developed through a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The standards adopted will closely follow principles set out in national guidance.
- Over the past 4 years standards set out in PPG13- Transport March 2001, have been successfully applied to significant new developments.

Further Action

- Publish local car parking standards through SPD.

Traffic Growth

Increases in road traffic tend to lead to traffic congestion. This can impact on quality of life and can result in economic costs. Traffic is growing in the Region but at a rate in line with the LTP trajectory target.

Indicator

Level of road traffic.

Target

Restrict traffic growth in the metropolitan area from 1996 to 2011 to below 8%.

Key Data

LTP Annual progress report 2005.

Figure T4 – Restrict Road Traffic growth from 1996 - 2011 to below 8%

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2011 |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Traffic growth index 1996 | 101 | 102.2 | 104.4 | 104.6 | On target |
| 100: | 102.9 | 103.4 | 104 | 104.6 | 108 |

NB: Figures in bold are actual increase (lower line is the trajectory data)

Commentary

The above table is based on actual and projected increases in vehicle-km travelled between 2001 and 2011. The target for traffic growth takes into consideration regeneration aspirations and committed major schemes. Key actions will be to continue to encourage modal shift through behavioural change and initiatives such as the operation of green travel plans (currently about 25% of Solihull's employees work for an organisation with a travel plan). Achievement of the target is on track.

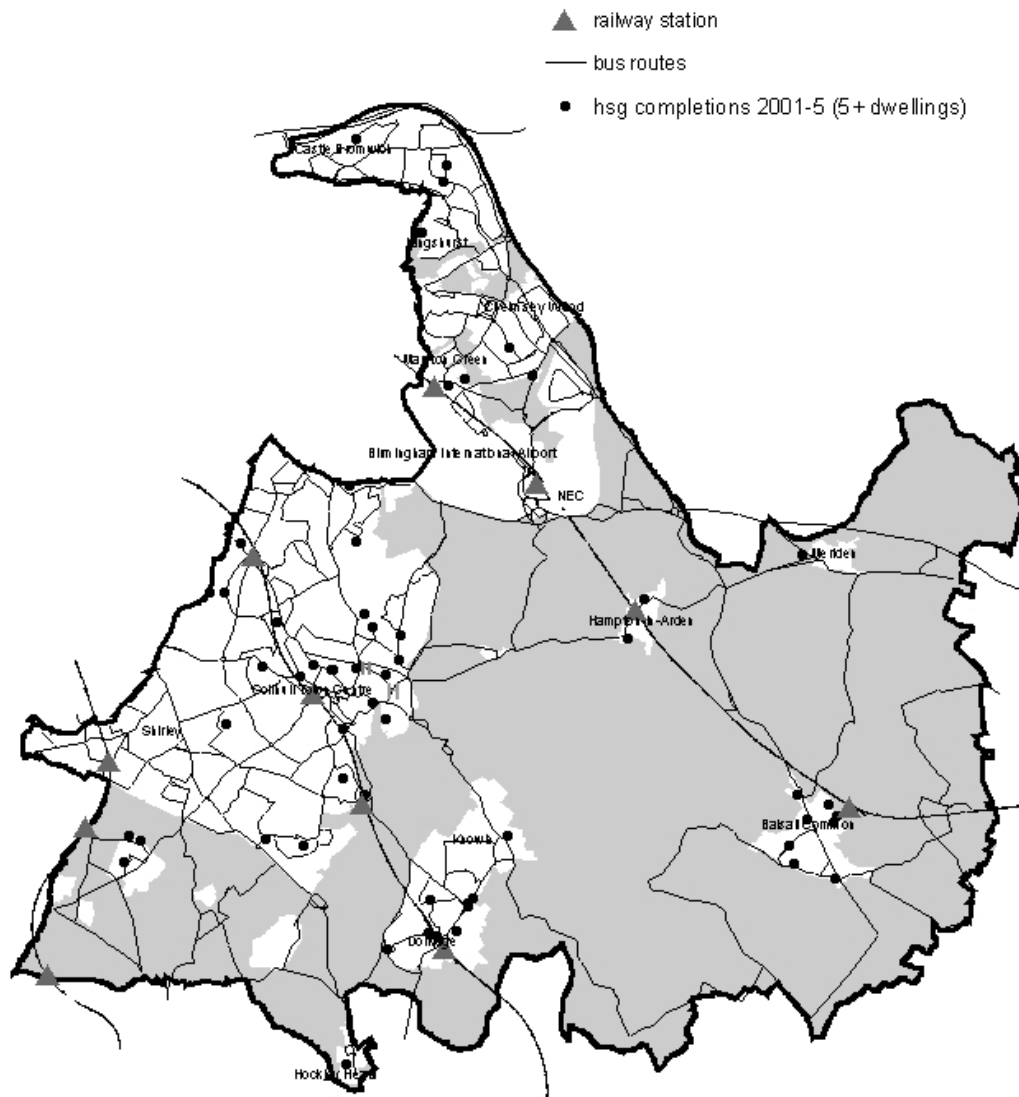
Restrict road traffic growth**Key conclusions**

- Reducing road traffic is important in reducing traffic congestion and encouraging modal shift from car to 'greener' forms of travel. LTP targets for slowing traffic growth are on target to 2011.

Further action

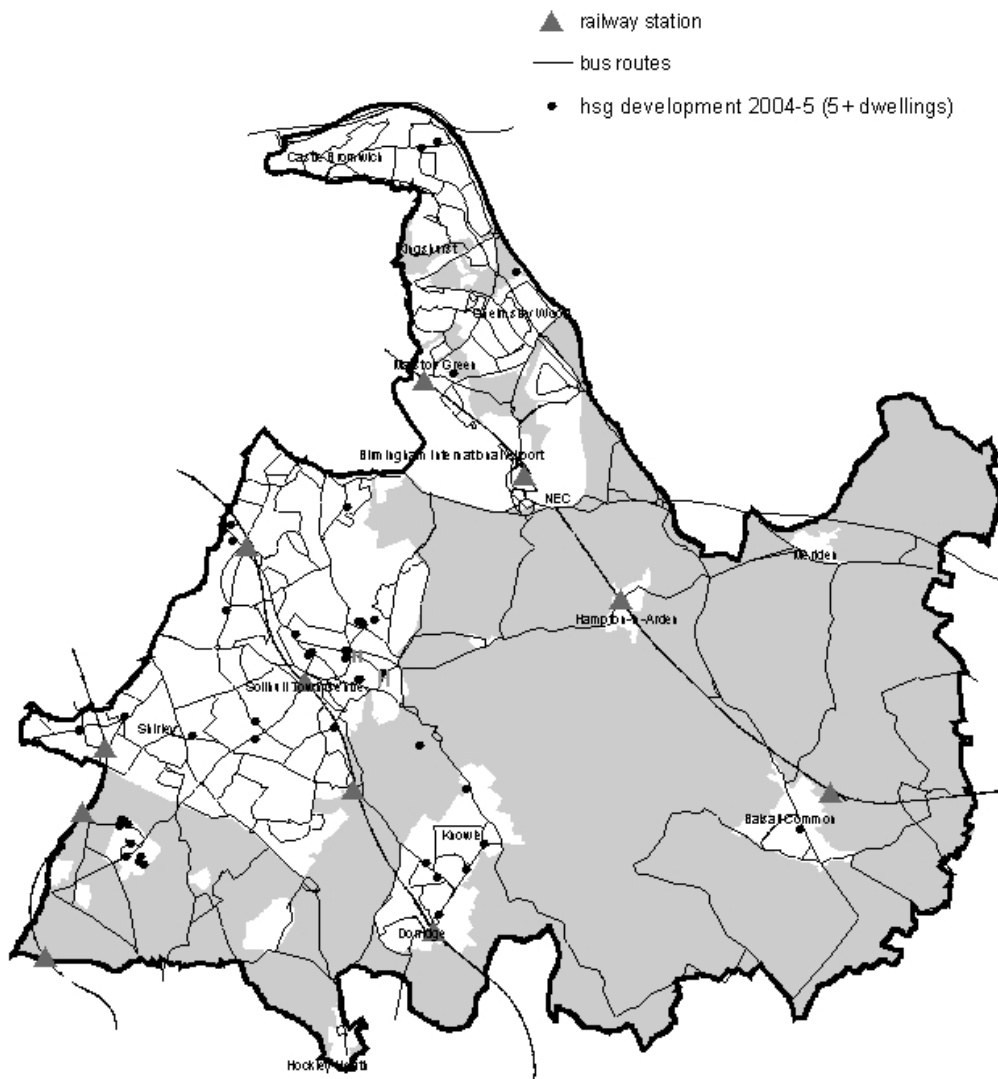
- More information is needed specific to Solihull.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 4 - TRANSPORT
Housing Completions 2001 - 2005 (5+ dwellings)



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APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 4 - TRANSPORT
Housing Development 2004 - 2005 (5+ dwellings)



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Chapter 5 The Environment

5.1 Background

National

National policy on the environment has been updated in the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy: Securing the Future, 2005. The Strategy seeks to ensure that the nation lives within its environmental limits, whilst improving the quality of the environment and ensuring that natural resources are available both now and in the future. The Government has identified four priorities for national action:

- Sustainable consumption and production
- Climate change and energy
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- Sustainable communities.

The Government's objectives for the planning system are set out in new guidance published during the monitoring period in PPS1. These objectives include the protection and enhancement of the environment, high quality development through good design, and the efficient use of resources. Guidance on planning for renewable energy and pollution control was also published, along with draft guidance on biodiversity and geological conservation, which has now been finalised.

Regional

The Regional Spatial Strategy includes an objective to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment of all parts of the region, together with policies covering a range of environmental assets.

Local

The Community Strategy for Solihull aims to make the Borough a place that's good to live in for everyone, and identifies conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, and improving air quality as priorities for 2003-06. The Solihull UDP Review includes policies in four areas, aimed at:

- protecting and improving the built environment;
- nature conservation and enhancement;
- pollution control; and
- conserving water and energy resources.

5.2 Protection and Improvement of the Built Environment

Indicator

Proportion of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments protected.

Target

100% of buildings protected.

Key data

Listed Buildings (Grades I and II*) and Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Structures) At Risk 2004-05 : None

Source: English Heritage

Commentary

English Heritage monitors listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments at risk of neglect or decay. This data covers the 36 Grade I and II* listed buildings and 15 scheduled ancient monuments in the Borough only. No buildings or structures were identified as being at risk in the Borough in 2004-05. However, 90% of the Borough's 366 listed buildings are Grade II and are not currently assessed by English Heritage. The Council is aware of two Grade II listed buildings that were at risk, but have subsequently changed ownership and are the subject of improvement works.

5.3 Nature Conservation and Enhancement**Indicators**

Proportion of important nature conservation sites managed for nature.

Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance.

Target

52% of total area managed by 2011.

Key data**Figure ENV1 – Proportion of important nature conservation sites managed for nature (hectares)**

| | 1999 | 2005 |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Nature conservation sites | 642 | 815 |
| Area managed for nature | 169 (26.3%) | 192 (23.5%) |

NB. The Council is in the process of reviewing Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the Borough, which accounts for the change in overall area.

Source: SMBC

Commentary

The area of nature conservation sites managed for the benefit of nature has increased, reflecting an expansion of the Council's woodland management programme and the declaration of new Local Nature Reserves. However, the Habitat Biodiversity Audit and the review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, which has yet to be completed, has resulted in a substantial increase in the number and area of important nature conservation sites in the Borough. This means that the proportion of the total area being managed has fallen, moving away from the target in the UDP Review. It may be necessary to reassess the target, if the large increase in area of important sites remains when the review has been completed.

The majority of Sites of Importance of Nature Conservation, which make up the bulk of the area of important sites are privately owned. The Council is seeking to encourage landowners to manage their land to conserve nature. It is a partner in the Blythe, Anker and Tame project, which aims to encourage farmers to apply for the Government's

Environmental Stewardship schemes, which support ecologically friendly management practices.

No data is available on changes in the populations of species.

5.4 Pollution Control

Indicator

Proportion of rivers of good or fair water quality.

Target

100% of rivers of good or fair water quality.

Key data

Figure ENV2 – General Quality Assessment grades for Rivers Blythe, Cole and Tributaries

| | 1997 | 2003 | 2004 |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| River Blythe (6 stretches) | Fairly good | Fairly good | Fairly good |
| Cuttle Brook | Good | Fairly good | Fairly good |
| Eastcote Brook | Poor | Poor | Poor |
| Horn Brook | Good | Fairly good | Fairly good |
| Temple Balsall Brook | Good | Good | Good |
| River Cole (2 stretches) | Fair | Fair | Fairly good |
| Hatchford/Kingshurst Brook | Poor | Fair | Fair |

NB. Changes of a single grade may not be significant due to the variable nature of environmental measurements.

Source: Environment Agency

Commentary

The Environment Agency monitors the chemical quality of the rivers in the Borough, and assigns a grade for each stretch based on samples taken over a three year period. Over 96% of the total length of the rivers monitored was assigned to the fair, fairly good or good grades in 2004. The poor quality of the water in Eastcote Brook may result from the discharge of sewage effluent from Barston Sewage Treatment Works.

5.5 Conservation of Water and Energy Resources

Indicators

Planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice.

Renewable energy capacity by type.

Key data

Planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice, 2004-05: None

Source: Environment Agency

Commentary

The Environment Agency provides advice on flood risk, including comments on relevant planning applications in the Borough. A total of seven objections were made by the Environment Agency on flood risk grounds to planning applications in the Borough. None of the applications were granted planning permission.

No new renewable energy capacity was provided in the Borough in 2004-05. The revised national guidance in PPS22, and the new renewable energy policy in the Solihull UDP Review should help to encourage proposals for new capacity in the future. However, a policy requiring new development to incorporate measures to generate a proportion of their energy needs from renewable sources would ensure delivery of some capacity and help to cut carbon emissions, a major source of global warming.

Key Conclusions

- 100% of the Borough's listed buildings and scheduled ancient monument structures of greatest importance are protected, although this represents the top 10% of buildings only.
- Despite an increase in the area of important sites managed for nature conservation, the Borough is moving away from the target.
- More than 96% of the total length of rivers in the Borough are of fair, fairly good or good water quality.
- No developments granted contrary to Environment Agency advice.

Further Action

- A regular assessment of the condition of Grade II listed buildings in the Borough needs to be undertaken, to meet the indicator.
- The target for the area of important nature conservation sites managed for nature may need to be reassessed following the completion of the review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the Borough.
- Data sources for identifying change in the populations of species need to be investigated, to meet the indicator.
- A new monitoring tool for capturing data on planning applications subject to objection from the Environment Agency needs to be established.
- Develop a new policy requiring new developments to generate a proportion of their energy needs from renewable sources.
- A new monitoring tool for capturing data on renewable energy developments needs to be established.

Chapter 6 Countryside

6.1 Background

National

National planning guidance relating to the Borough's countryside is contained principally in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 2: Green Belts and Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. PPG2 confirms that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. This can help shape sustainable patterns of urban development by preventing neighbouring towns from merging, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and promoting urban regeneration, by encouraging recycling of derelict and other urban land.

PPS7 issued in 2004, sets out the government's objectives for rural areas. These include raising the quality of life and the environment; promoting more sustainable patterns of development; by improving economic performance and promoting a sustainable, diverse and adaptable agricultural sector.

Regional

The aim of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), in relation to the countryside, is to secure the regeneration of the rural areas of the region; retain the Green Belt, but to allow an adjustment of boundaries where this is necessary to support urban regeneration; and to ensure that the quality of the environment is conserved and enhanced.

In relation to rural areas, which are subject to strong influence from Major Urban Area's (MUA's), such as the rural areas of Solihull, the RSS confirms that the main priority will be to manage the rate and nature of future development to that required to meet local needs, whilst ensuring local character is protected and enhanced.

Local

The Community Strategy for Solihull "A Place for People 2003-2013" aims to make Solihull "a place that's good to live in for everyone". With reference to the Countryside, the strategy includes as part of its aspirations for the first 3 years (2003-2006) to:

"Preserve the existing green belt and maintain a balance between open green space and urban land in the borough".

Building on this strategy, the principal objectives of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review 2001-2011 are to promote sustainable development, by maximising the use of previously developed land before further greenfield land is released, meeting the needs of local people whilst preserving and enhancing environmental quality. The Solihull UDP Review includes policies relating to the Countryside in four areas, aimed at:

- The designation and protection of the Green Belt;
- Assisting the management of a diverse and prosperous rural economy;
- Preserving and enhancing the landscape character of the Borough's countryside; and
- Recognising the countryside's potential for recreation

Set out below is the progress made in these areas for the period April 2004-March 2005.

6.2 Green Belt

The aim of the UDP is to designate and control development within the Green Belt, this includes defining a hierarchy of settlements within the rural areas of the Borough where new housing, limited infill or no further development is appropriate.

In relation to the Green Belt, the UDP seeks to monitor the % of Green Belt land lost to development, to assess the success of the policies seeking to protect the Green Belt from further erosion. It is of note that there are no national or regional targets or indicators relevant to the Green Belt.

Indicator

The percentage of Green Belt land that is lost to development.

Target

In line with the national, regional and local policies, is 0%.

Key Data

Some 11,930 hectares almost two-thirds of the Borough is Countryside all of it Green Belt. During the period April 2004-March 2005, no significant planning applications leading to loss of Green Belt land have been granted planning permission. However, development has commenced at the former campus of Solihull College in Chelmsley Wood. An application for a development of 166 units on the 4.23ha site was approved in February 2004. Development commenced on site in June 2004 and approximately half of the dwellings are either complete or under construction.

Whilst the development of the 4.23ha former Solihull College (Chelmsley Campus) affects 0.03% of the Borough's Green Belt, the permitted housing development only increases the built footprint of the site by some 0.08ha and therefore has resulted in a 0.0008% of additional land being lost to development. The site however remains within the Green Belt.

Source: SMBC register of planning applications

Commentary

The development of the Chelmsley Wood Campus, which accounts for the minimal development of Green Belt land during the 2004/2005 period, was, in line with the guidance in Annex C to PPG2, allocated for housing in the UDP Review. The development met the requirements of Annex C as it has less impact on the purposes on including land within the Green Belt, particularly openness and visual amenity than the previous complex of college buildings.

6.3 Rural Economy

The aim of the UDP is to support a diverse and prosperous rural economy around the Borough by protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land, supporting, where appropriate, farm-based diversification and carefully assessing all applications relating to farm-workers accommodation.

In relation to the rural economy the UDP seeks to monitor the number of Village Appraisals/Village Design Statements adopted by the Council as SPD. It is of note that there are no national or regional targets or indicators relevant to the rural economy.

Indicator

The number of Village Appraisals/Village Design Statements adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Target

None set

Key Data

The UDP Review seeks to support and encourage those communities who wish to prepare Parish Plans, Village Appraisals and Village Design Statements in recognition of the role that rural communities can play in influencing and shaping the future development of their villages.

The UDP further states that the Council will consider the adoption of such documents as SPG. Currently the Council is in receipt of one such document, the Hampton in Arden Village Design Statement (2003) although this does not have formal SPG status. No village plans/appraisals have been received during the period covered by this report.

Commentary

The adoption of Parish Plans, Village Appraisals and Village Design Statements as formal SPG under the old development plan system, governed by the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and paragraph 3.16 of PPG12, was relatively straightforward. To be recognised as SPG documents needed to accord with national, regional and local policy, supplement a policy in the UDP (C7 in this instance) and be the subject of public consultation.

The introduction of the more rigorous requirements for the production of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, including the carrying out of a Sustainability Appraisal, means that the preparation of such documents to the required standard is now much more challenging for local communities. As such the Council has not received or adopted any village appraisals or design statements as SPD during the qualifying period.

6.4 Landscape Quality

The aim of the UDP is to safeguard the landscape quality of the Borough's countryside by protecting it from development that would detract from its landscape and historic interest and character. To this end the Council adopted its strategy 'Solihull's Countryside' in 2000. The implementation and review of this document is included as a proposal as part of the UDP Review.

The UDP review also supports the use of the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines for Arden in its development control decision making. These guidelines, which were adopted in 1993, are currently the subject of a review.

One of the aims of the 'Solihull's Countryside' is to include in the review of the UDP a policy relating to the protection of the Countryside from light pollution. Policy C9 of the Review Plan seeks to protect those parts of the countryside in the Borough that retain a dark sky from the impacts of lighting schemes. The supporting text to the policy also provides for the production of further guidance on avoiding light pollution. The Inspector in his report on the UDP Review supported the policy and therefore the production of necessary guidance now needs to be added into the Council's Local Development Scheme upon review.

Green Belt / Rural Economy

Key Conclusions

- The development of Solihull College (Chelmsley Campus), which was designated for housing through the UDP process as an Annex C site, has resulted in a 0.0008% of additional land at the site being developed. The site however remains within the Green Belt.
- No Village Appraisals or Design Statements have been either submitted to or adopted by the Council between April 2004-March 2005.

Further Action

- The only data currently collected at a local level regarding development in the Green Belt is that data collected for regional monitoring returns. This data concentrates on new developments and changes of use comprising 5 or more dwellings (residential) or 500m² or more of floorspace (non-residential).
- Whilst this data is likely to highlight all major development permitted and therefore indicate any permitted loss of Green Belt this will not catch all the data required to accurately report on the loss of Green Belt in accordance with the target set. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this initial report only those permissions leading to a loss of Green Belt land, i.e. not conversions or dwellings replaced on a one for one basis, that have been implemented during the period April 2004-March 2005 are included.
- To inform a more accurate account of any loss of Green Belt land for the 2005/2006 period will require a fuller definition of the indicator, including whether it relates to implementation of permissions alone or the granting of permission in itself, to be developed alongside the introduction of new monitoring tools for capturing data.
- There is a need to review the appropriateness of the indicator relating to the number of Village Appraisals/Village Design Statements adopted by the Council as SPG in light of the more rigorous requirements for the production of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Chapter 7 Retailing & Centres

7.1 Background

National

PPS6 - Town Centres and Retail Developments 2005 – The Guidance seeks to promote sustainable development consistent with the Government's sustainable development strategy. UDPs should set out the hierarchy of centres and the strategy for the location of main trip generators. Local authorities are encouraged to:

- Support the importance of accessible town centres as locations for retail and other appropriate trip-generating development. Encourage mixed-use development within or near town centres.
- Safeguard and strengthen local centres in their role of providing a range of everyday community, shopping and employment opportunities.

Regional

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), June 2004 – The RSS supports the promotion of town centres as the appropriate focus for retail and other development that generates substantial numbers of trips. The guidance is concerned that out-of-centre retailing should not undermine the role of the Region's main centres, including Solihull Town Centre. Main elements of the Guidance relevant to Solihull are as follows:

- The network of 25 town and city centres in the Region is to be the focus for major retail, leisure and office development. Solihull Town Centre is one of 10 centres acknowledged as having a key role in 'Urban Renaissance'.
- The requirement for any large-scale (10,000+sqm) out-of-centre retail developments, or extensions to existing developments is not envisaged.

Local

Economic Strategy for Solihull 2003-2006 – The current strategy for 2003 -2006 focuses on a number of key challenges for Solihull:

- Translating potential into success by maximising growth opportunities for the benefit of the whole Borough and wider.
- Addressing North-South inequalities within the Borough.
- Sustainability - recognising the value of Solihull's high quality environment in attracting investment.
- Engaging the wider business community in the regeneration and economic development agenda
- Responding to Solihull's role in the regional economy.

Community Strategy for Solihull 2003-2013 – the strategy aims to enhance the quality of life of the Borough's residents through action to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the Borough. A wide variety of actions are needed to meet this aim. One of the aspirations of the document is to develop a diversity of employment opportunities including manufacturing, ICT, recreation/ leisure/tourism, business services and retailing. Vibrant centres have an important role in meeting this aspiration.

Solihull UDP Review Retail Development Objectives

The main policy objectives of the UDP Review, having regard to this wider policy context are as follows:

- **Main retail centres** - Protect and strengthen the role of the Borough's main accessible retail centres namely, Solihull Town centre and Shirley and Chelmsley Wood district centres.
- **Out-of-centre retailing**, leisure and office developments - Carefully control these developments to ensure that they do not harm established accessible centres and only occur in locations that are accessible by a variety of transport modes.

7.2 Main Retail Centres

The Borough has 3 main shopping centres, Solihull Town Centre, Shirley and Chelmsley Wood Shopping Centres. The past 15 years has seen substantial out-of-centre retail developments that have challenged the role of these centres at a time when they were in need of improvement. Over this period Solihull Town Centre, a main network centre identified in the RSS, has seen the development of major retail and leisure facilities and office developments. The rejuvenation of Shirley Centre is well under way as are plans for the refurbishment and expansion of Chelmsley Wood District centre that is the main centre for the north of the Borough.

7.2.1 Development in Town Centres

Indicators

Amount of completed retail, leisure and office development in town centres.

Target

Focus retailing, leisure and offices in main centres.

Key data

The size of each centre in terms of gross retail floorspace, A1 retail, A2 banks and building societies and leisure at April 2005 (SMBC local surveys and monitoring of planning applications) and office floorspace.

Figure S1 – Completed retail, leisure and office developments in Town Centres

| | Class A1 Sqm | Class A2 Sqm | Class D2 Sqm | Offices Sqm |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Solihull Town Centre | 110,710 | 13,504 | 6,500 | 113,443 |
| Shirley District Centre | 19,506 | 9,282 | 1,000 | Not known |
| Chelmsley Wood District Centre | 18,829 | 669 | 823 | Not known |

Commentary

During the 4 years to April 2005 Solihull Town Centre has been expanded through the development of the Touchwood retail mall that has added 54,000sqm of additional retail floorspace and 6,500sqm of leisure (new cinema). Touchwood was completed in September 2001. Since that time no new retail or leisure developments have been completed. During the 4 year period 14,743sqm of offices were completed but none in the current monitoring year.

Shirley and Chelmsley Wood have seen no significant new developments over the 4-year period in the A1, A2, D2 or B1 offices use classes. However, In Shirley Centre improvements within the Highway (A34) have enabled more space and a safer environment for shoppers and a reduction in traffic conflict. Dedicated cycleways have

been established and more landscaping and modern street furniture has been put in. Proposals are also emerging for a major mixed-use development within the centre to provide a major foodstore (about 6,500sqm gross) and modern non-food units (collectively about another 6,500sqm gross) capable of attracting important High Street retailers that will enhance quality and choice. However no planning application has yet been made.

Proposals to refurbish and extend Chelmsley Wood District Centre include the addition of a major foodstore (7,243sqm gross) and a large non-food retail unit (3,058sqm gross). Planning permission has been granted and work is due to start in the New Year. The centre is the main retailing centre for the north of the Borough and is located within the RZ. It is therefore of significant importance for access to jobs, goods and services for residents of the RZ.

The number of vacant retail (A1) units within each of the centres remains relatively low. At April 2005 Solihull Centre had only 1% of its A1 units vacant. The corresponding figures for Shirley and Chelmsley Wood District Centres were 4% and 7% respectively.

The RSS seeks to make the network of 25 main centres in the Region, including Solihull Town Centre, the focus for office developments (5000sqm+). The UDP Review seeks to encourage office development in its 3 main centres but enables offices elsewhere subject to a number of criteria, including that such developments are easily accessible by public transport.

Solihull Town Centre has over 113,000sqm of offices. Substantial new office developments occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s (between April 1988 and April 1992 about 27,000sqm of offices were developed within the centre) that contribute to this figure. The Town Centre has limited opportunities remaining for new office development at present as evidenced by the scale of outstanding planning permissions.

7.2.2 Protection of Primary Retail Frontages

Indicators

Extent of encroachment of non-retail development into primary retail frontages.

Target

Retain a high proportion of primary frontages in retail use, particularly the A1 use class

Key data

SMBC local surveys of shopping centres and monitoring of planning applications for new developments in town centres.

Figure S2 – Proportion of primary frontages retained in retail use Class A1 (April 2005)

| Solihull Town Centre (Primary frontages) | No. of units | % of frontage |
|--|--------------|---------------|
| High Street | 59 | 75 |
| Poplar Way | 10 | 100 |
| Mill Lane | 29 | 100 |
| Mell Square | 14 | 93 |
| Drury Lane (inc. 700 Warwick Rd) | 37 | 100 |
| Touchwood | 93 | 80 |

| Shirley District Centre (Primary frontages) | No. of units | % of frontage |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|
| Stratford Road (odd numbers) | 55 | 65 |
| Stratford Road (even numbers) | 54 | 63 |

Commentary

Solihull Town Centre and Shirley Centre have defined primary retail frontages where a high proportion of retail uses, particularly those in the A1 use class will be retained. The aim is to protect main frontages from encroachment of non-retail uses that could harm their character and function. In this way primary frontages can help to support the vibrancy of main centres.

Primary retail frontages for these centres were first defined in the adopted UDP (1997). In the case of Solihull Town Centre the frontages have been extended to include the Touchwood Mall. The lowest score for a primary frontage in the centre is 75%. This would represent a high proportion retained in retail class A1. For Shirley Centre the primary frontages are unchanged since inclusion in the adopted UDP. The lowest score for the defined frontages is 63%. It is the Council's intention to produce an SPD on the subject of primary retail frontages to provide guidance on how the policy should operate).

Retail Centres

Key Conclusions

- The policies of the adopted UDP, perpetuated in the UDP Review, that seek to strengthen and enhance the role of the Borough's main centres have successfully enabled development that can potentially achieve this policy objective.
- Primary retail frontages defined for Solihull Town Centre and Shirley District Centre have successfully retained a high proportion of units in the A1 use class and have protected these frontages from uses that could harm their role and function.

Further Action

- Assess the amount of business floorspace in Shirley and Chelmsley Wood District Centres.
- Assess the length of time retail units remain vacant and the amount of floorspace that vacant units represent.
- Publish SPD on primary retail frontages.

7.3 Out-of-centre retailing, leisure and office developments

Out-of-centre retailing established in the Borough at a time when government guidance wished to encourage new and diverse forms of retailing. Through the 1990s there has been a progressive shift in policy towards supporting existing accessible retail centres because of their strategic importance in helping to create development patterns that are sustainable. Out-of-centre retailing is not precluded by the UDP Review but it will only be accepted where it meets the requirements of current national guidance on retailing. The UDP Review Policy departs from that of the adopted UDP that was more permissive of out-of-centre retailing. Main centres are intended to be the focus for office developments but the Review does not preclude out-of-centre office development in accessible locations.

7.3.1 Developments Out Of Centre

Indicators

Amount of completed retail, leisure and office development out of centre

Targets

- Only allow out of centre retailing (and active leisure uses appropriate to town centres) where there are no suitable in-centre sites available and the requirements of national policy on retailing relating to need, sequential test, impact and accessibility are met.
- Only allow significant office developments out of centre where they are easily accessible by public transport.

Key data

Figure S3 – SMBC monitoring of retail and office developments within the Borough (500+ Sqm)

| Location | Developed Currently | | Developed 4yrs to April 05 | | Developed Monit.1yr | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------|----------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | Sqm Gross | Sqm Net | Sqm Gross | Sqm Net | Sqm Gross | Sqm Net |
| Solihull Retail Park | 17,506 | 14,879 | | | | |
| Sears Retail Park | 17,455 | 14,950 | 1,162 | 1,100 | | |
| Freestanding convenience | 20,750 | 13,430 | | | | |
| Freestanding non-food | 2,610 | 1,742 | 1,672 | 1,422 | 1,672 | 1,422 |

NB: Mezzanine floorspace on the retail park is not included in the above.

Commentary

At April 2005 the Borough had about 38,000sqm of retail floorspace on 2 retail parks that were completed in 1989 and 1994. Since construction, 2 additional retail stores have been added, one in 1997 (1,254sqm gross) and another in 2001(1,162sqm gross). Freestanding non-food retail stores provide 2,610sqm of retail development and 3 freestanding, major foodstores collectively provide 20,750sqm of floorspace.

Over the past 4 years to April 2005 only one freestanding out-of-centre retail store has commenced construction (1,672sqm non-food, commenced construction January 2005 the type of goods sold is heavily restricted to minimise impact on centres). This redeveloped the site of a redundant restaurant. All of these developments are relatively accessible by a variety of transport modes, being located close to the main A34 within the main urban area.

In terms of development that meets the requirements of the UDP Review policy on out-of-centre retailing, only one development has taken place over the monitoring year to test the policy. This was supported by evidence that generally met the requirements of the policy. Other proposals have recently come forward (not commenced) that are similarly supported by required evidence or where changes that would have been enabled by the former Use Classes Order (pre-April 2005) were a material consideration. It is too early to say through monitoring whether the policy aim relating to out-of-centre retailing is successful but, the UDP Review policy on this issue is closely aligned with national policy guidance on retailing and it is likely therefore that it will prove suitably robust.

As can be seen from the Employment chapter of this report, substantial out-of-centre general office development has taken place over the past 4 years to April 2005. This

amounts to 51,000sqm of building floorspace on about 11 hectares of land. The office development has taken place mainly as a result of recycling of land on the Cranmore Widney Industrial Estate where older outmoded parts of the estate have been replaced with modern industrial units and office developments (about 23,000sqm of offices in the past 4 years). About a further 15,000sqm of offices has over the same period taken place on sites allocated for business purposes in the development plan. Most of the remainder is the result of redevelopment of a redundant hospital, mainly for housing, but with some business development, in a location near to and accessible from the East Birmingham and North Solihull RZ and other small sites.

Out-of-centre retailing, leisure and office developments

Key Conclusions

- Substantial out-of-centre retail developments occurred in Solihull at a time when national and local policies were more permissive of development of this nature. Since the more recent changes in national policy towards out-of-centre retailing, now reflected in the UDP Review, little out-of-centre development has occurred.
- More recent out-of-centre proposals for out-of-centre retailing have been accompanied by evidence that deals with the requirements of national and local policy.
- Substantial office developments have taken place out of centre over the past 4 years. The UDP Review seeks to ensure that these only occur in accessible locations.

Further Action

- Assess the amount of mezzanine floorspace in large out-of-centre non-food retail developments to provide more accurate data on overall floorspace.
- Develop a more robust framework for monitoring leisure development within the Borough.

Chapter 8 Sport, Recreation, Leisure And The Arts

8.1 Background

National

Sport, Recreation, Leisure and the Arts all underpin people's quality of life. Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation sets out that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are therefore fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, including urban renaissance, rural renewal and sustainable development. The RSS also recognises that recreational resources are an important component in the overall quality of life of the Region.

Regional

PPG17, supported by the RSS, sets out a requirement for local authorities to undertake assessments of local need/audits of provision relating to open space, sport and recreation and develop appropriate local standards to ensure existing facilities are maintained protected and enhanced and the need for additional facilities are identified.

Local

The Community Strategy for Solihull "A Place for People 2003-2013" aims to make Solihull "a place that's good to live in for everyone". The strategy includes as part of its aspirations for the first 3 years (2003-2006) to:

"Provide leisure facilities that are easy to access and available to people at the right time and the right price and to improve access to information, learning, leisure and cultural opportunities in local communities through new technologies."

Building on this strategy, one of the principal objectives of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review 2001-2011 is to promote the maintenance and development of opportunities for sport, recreation, leisure and the arts in accessible locations, in order to meet both the needs of local communities and the overall population of the Borough. The Solihull UDP Review includes policies aimed at:

- Supporting the provision of sport and recreation facilities;
- Protecting parks, playing fields and open space;
- Promoting and exploiting the recreational potential of waterways and rights of way; and
- Supporting the provision of leisure, arts and entertainment facilities and promoting the benefits of public art.

Set out below is the progress made in these areas for the period April 2004-March 2005.

8.2 Sport and Recreation Facilities

The UDP Review supports the provision of sports and recreation facilities in appropriate locations around the Borough and sets out proposals for new and improved facilities at the two main sports centres in the Borough, Tudor Grange and North Solihull. The UDP also includes proposals to undertake an assessment of local need to enable the development of policies to further support the protection and provision of sport and recreational facilities.

During the period 2004/2005 significant progress has been made toward achieving the aims of both of these proposals. During the 2004/2005 period work commenced on a draft Green Space Strategy (GSS), an audit of existing facilities within the Borough and an assessment of local need. This document once adopted (likely to be early 2006) will be used to develop further policies through the Local Development Framework relating to local standards for provision of facilities.

In addition, in September 2005 planning permission was granted for a replacement sports centre including a swimming pool, sports hall, exercise studio and fitness suite, crèche and café bar at the existing Tudor Grange site.

8.3 Parks, Playing Fields and Open Spaces

The UDP Review recognises the value of parks, playing field and open space for their formal and informal recreation opportunities, their urban quality, visual amenity and nature conservation purposes and as a community resource.

Once adopted, the GSS will be used to develop further policies through the Local Development Framework relating to local standards for provision of facilities. Until such time as local standards are in place the UDP advocates the use of the National Playing Field Association (NPFA) standards to assess the provision of new and improved open space.

The following indicators have been developed to assess existing provision, the success of UDP policies in protecting playing fields and the quality of available open space within the Borough.

Indicator

Area of Public Open Space per 1,000 population

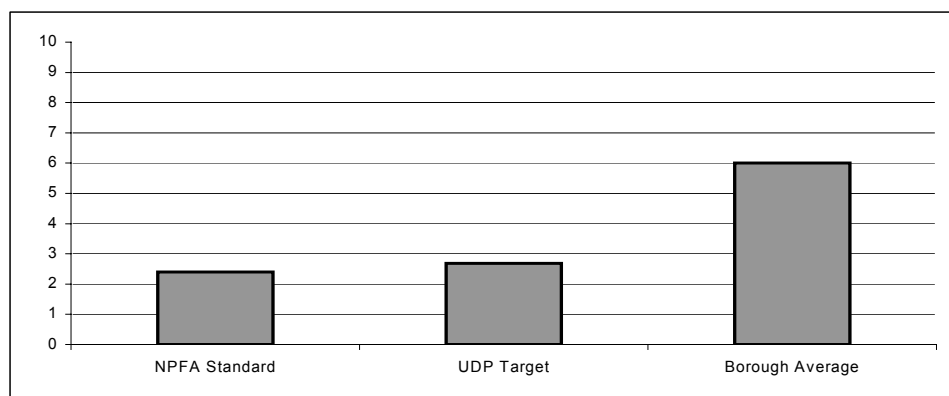
Target

2.68 hectares (UDP)

Key Data

The draft Green Space Strategy (GSS), the data for which was collated during the relevant period, confirms that there is an average of 6 hectares of accessible green space for every 1,000 people across the Borough.

Figure R1 – Hectares of Green Space per 1,000 population



Source: SMBC – Draft Green Space Strategy

Commentary

The draft GSS outlines that on average the Borough has just over double the UDP target and National Playing Field standard (2.4ha) of accessible green space per 1,000 population. However, this average masks significant differences between wards across the Borough, ranging from some wards having about 3 hectares to wards with about 12 hectares per 1,000 population. Once adopted the GSS will be used to develop standards for the provision and protection of open space around the Borough.

Indicator

Area of Playing Fields lost to development

Target

0 hectares

Key Data

No playing fields whether located at schools, parks or other locations have been lost to development during the period April 2004-March 2005.

Source: SMBC – Environmental Maintenance Team / Register of Planning Applications

Commentary

No data is formally collected at a local level to assess whether any playing fields have been lost to development. This year's data has been collected from records held by the Council's Environmental Maintenance team alongside an assessment of the planning applications received over the relevant period. Whilst this assessment is likely to catch all development permitted/implemented and therefore indicate any permitted loss of playing fields it is considered that there may be more effective data capture tools that should be investigated to aid reporting next year's figures.

Indicator

% of eligible open managed to Green Flag award standards

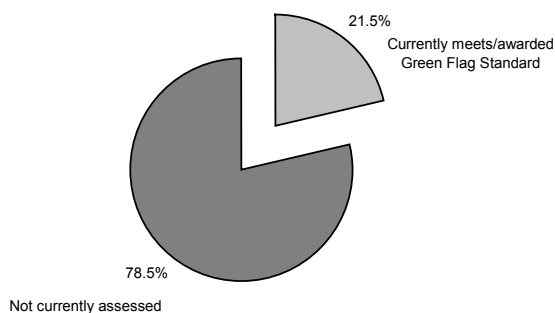
Target

None set

Key Data

There is some 648 hectares (1,600 acres) of public open space in the Borough. Currently 139.7 hectares (345 acres) of the Borough's public open space meets the Green Flag standard. This equates to some 21.5% of eligible open space managed to Green Flag award standards.

Figure R2 – % of POS managed to/meeting Green Flag standards



Source: SMBC

Commentary

The 21.5% of open space within the Borough that meets, and has been awarded, Green Flag status is made up of just 3 parks: Malvern & Brueton Parks in central Solihull, Elmdon Park and Shirley Park. The remainder of the open space within the Borough is not currently formally assessed against Green Flag standards. The overall figure of eligible open space meeting Green Flag standards may therefore actually be higher than that which is currently recorded.

In relation to parks, playing fields and open space the UDP also includes proposals relating to the provision of new open space around the Borough, most of which is related to either housing or employment designations. During the period April 2004-March 2005 work has commenced on the implementation of the public open space designation at Dickens Heath. More recently planning permission has also been granted for a replacement recreation ground at Meriden. The new facility will comprise a new playing field to be used for football and cricket, 2 tennis courts, play area and equipment alongside a pavilion building housing changing facilities, showers, toilets, officials room, office store, kitchen and function room and 31 car parking spaces (planning application 2005/1188 refers).

8.4 Leisure and the Arts

The UDP encourages arts, entertainment and leisure facilities in centres and other appropriate locations, and the promotion of public art. The UDP recognises that public art improves the quality of urban area and also encourages developers to include an element of public art in their developments in line with the UK Percent for Art scheme. During the period April 2004-March 2005 contributions to public art have been secured by way of legal agreement as part of the redevelopment of the former TRW site, Stratford Road, Shirley.

Key Conclusions

- The above indicators confirm that the Council is meeting or exceeding its targets, where set, in relation to parks, playing fields and open space and seeking, where appropriate, to promote sport and recreation and to seek contributions for public art. The adoption of the GSS and the development of local standards will further aid the Council in developing standards to aid the protection of existing open space and playing fields and in justifying requirements for new and improved open space.

Further Action

- To inform a more accurate account of any loss of playing fields for the 2005/2006 period requires a fuller definition of the indicator, including whether it relates to implementation of permissions alone or the granting of permission in itself. This needs to be developed alongside the introduction of new monitoring tools for capturing data.

Chapter 9 Waste Management

9.1 Background

National

National policy on waste is set out in the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy: Securing the Future, 2005, and aims to protect human health and the environment by minimising waste and using it as a resource. The Government is seeking to move the management of waste up the waste hierarchy:

- Reduction
- Re-use
- Recycling and composting
- Waste as a source of energy
- Disposal as a last resort only.

The National Waste Strategy sets targets for increasing the recovery and recycling of municipal and household waste, and for reducing landfill of industrial and commercial wastes. The EU Landfill Directive established targets for reducing landfill of biodegradable municipal waste to 75% of 1995 levels (27,803 tonnes) by 2010. Household waste recycling and composting targets for Solihull have been set under the Best Value regime.

Draft revised guidance on planning for sustainable waste management in PPS10 was issued during the monitoring period, and has subsequently been published in its final form.

The National targets are reflected in the Regional Spatial Strategy:

- To recover value from at least 40% of municipal waste by 2005 and 45% by 2010
- To recycle or compost at least 25% of household waste by 2005 and 30% by 2010
- To reduce the proportion of industrial and commercial waste disposed to landfill to at most 85% of 1998 levels by 2005.

Local

The Council agreed a number of Step Change Improvement Priorities in 2002, including meeting Government targets on recycling. The Community Strategy for Solihull aims to reduce waste and increase the amount recycled and composted. The national and local aims and targets are reflected in the Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Solihull 2004-29.

The Solihull UDP Review:

- sets out the strategy for managing the Borough's municipal and other waste streams;
- encourages reuse, recycling and composting, and recovery of energy from waste; and
- enables the safe disposal of any waste not managed further up the waste hierarchy.

9.2 Municipal Waste

Indicators

Amount of municipal waste arising, and managed by management type.

Proportion of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill.

Key data

Figure WM1 – Municipal Waste Arising and Managed by Management Type

| | 2001-02 | 2004-05 |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Waste arising (tonnes) | 86,456 | 102,915 |
| Waste managed (tonnes and %): | | |
| Waste to energy incineration | 59,714 (69.1%) | 57,694 (56.06%) |
| Landfill | 21,109 (24.4%) | 23,022 (22.37%) |
| Recycled and Composted | 5,633 (6.5%) | 22,200 (21.57%) |

Source: SMBC

Commentary

The Council has exceeded its Best Value targets of 10% for 2003-04 and 18% for 2005-06 for recycling and composting, and the national and regional target for recovering value from at least 40% of municipal waste for 2005. It is close to meeting the national and regional target of 25% for recycling and composting. It is also on course to meet the target to reduce landfill of biodegradable waste to 75% of the 1995 level (20,852 tonnes), and the aggregated allocation for 2005-06 (28,979 tonnes).

The significant increase in the recycling rate reflects the priority and funding given to meeting Government targets on recycling, and the composting initiative established with SITA at Packington Landfill in 2003. However, the benefits of the increased recycling have been offset by the overall increase in the amount of waste arising in the Borough. The Council has set a target to establish zero growth in waste by 2010, and to reverse the trend beyond that date.

9.3 Industrial and Commercial Waste

Indicator

Proportion of industrial and commercial waste to landfill.

Key data

Estimate of Industrial and Commercial Waste Arising

1998-99 190,000 tonnes

NB. Data on industrial and commercial arisings for 2002-03 is only available at the regional level, and is included in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Annual Monitoring Report.

Source: Environment Agency

Commentary

Industrial and commercial waste represents a significantly larger proportion of the overall waste arising in the Borough than municipal waste. However, up to date and disaggregated data is not available.

9.4 Waste Management Facilities

Indicator

Capacity of new waste management facilities by type.

Key data

Applications or Permissions for New Waste Management Facilities 2004-05: None

Source: SMBC

Commentary

There were no applications or permissions for significant new waste management facilities in the Borough in 2004-05. However, pressure for new facilities is likely to grow in future years. The Government has set an objective to enable communities to take more responsibility for their own waste (PPS10). The revision of the waste management policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy will include the apportioning of the tonnages of waste requiring management to waste planning authorities or sub-regions.

Key Conclusions

- The Council has made good progress in managing municipal waste further up the waste hierarchy, but the increase in the amount of waste arising has led to a rise in the amount of waste going to landfill since 2001.
- The need for more waste management facilities to enable waste to be handled where it arises has yet to be reflected in applications or permissions for new proposals.

Further Action

- Seek up to date data on industrial and commercial waste arising in the Borough from the Environment Agency.
- A new monitoring tool for capturing data on new waste management facilities needs to be established.

Chapter 10 Minerals

10.1 Background

National

National minerals planning policy is set out in MPG1. It aims to meet the nation's requirements for minerals in the most sustainable way, by an appropriate balance between social, environmental and economic considerations, and the prudent use of natural resources.

The Government has set regional figures for land won aggregates provision in the National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England, 2001-16. The Guidelines assume the use of alternative materials for part of the overall requirement. The regional figures have been apportioned between sub-regions by the West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party on behalf of the Regional Assembly. This is reflected in the minerals policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Draft revised guidance on planning and minerals was issued during the monitoring period, but does not affect the regional figures for aggregate provision.

Local

The Borough has significant deposits of sand and gravel aggregates. The Community Strategy for Solihull aims to improve the quality and range of housing, to provide more affordable housing and to improve and maintain the Borough's roads, buildings, homes and public areas, whilst reducing waste. These aims, together with major projects such as the regeneration of North Solihull, will generate significant requirements for aggregates.

The Solihull UDP Review:

- enables the search for new minerals;
- protects the sand and gravel resources in the Borough;
- makes provision for sand and gravel working to meet the sub-regional apportionment; and
- seeks to ensure that the environment is protected and enhanced through appropriate extraction, restoration and after-care.

10.2 Provision for Sand and Gravel Extraction

Indicator

Production of primary land won aggregates.

Key data

Figure M1 – Sand and Gravel Sales for Aggregates Purposes (Million Tonnes)

| | Annual Apportionment | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| West Midlands County | 0.506 | 0.536 | 0.512 | 0.499 |

NB. Figures are latest published and include both Solihull and Walsall. Figures for Solihull only not available because of confidentiality of data. Solihull provided 91% of sand and gravel for the West Midlands County in 2001.

Source: West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party Annual Report 2003

Commentary

Sand and gravel sales from workings in the West Midlands County have declined slightly since 2001, reflecting the sub-regional apportionment agreed in 2003.

10.3 Alternative Materials**Indicator**

Production of secondary/recycled aggregates.

Key data**Figure M2 – Road Planings Arisings in 2002 (Tonnes)**

| | Arisings | Recycled/Reused |
|----------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Solihull | 16,308 | 6,982 (42.8%) |

NB. Data on recycled and secondary aggregates is only available at the regional level, and is included in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Annual Monitoring Report. Road planings returns for 2003 not available.

Source: West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party Annual Report 2002 and 2003

Commentary

Regional data shows an increase in the recycling of construction, demolition and excavation waste, which is probably reflected in Solihull. There has also been an increase in the recycling of road planings in recent years, with the proportion recycled in Solihull slightly above that for the region. The assumptions about the level of use of alternative materials contained in the Government guidelines remain challenging, and will require continued efforts to maximise opportunities for recycling and reuse of aggregate material.

Key Conclusions

- Sand and gravel sales from the Borough are close to the sub-regional apportionment figures, which should encourage recycling and reuse of aggregate material.
- Continued efforts are required to maximise the amount of recycled and secondary materials, if the assumptions in the National Guidelines are to be met.

Further Action

- Improved and disaggregated data on the use of secondary and recycled materials is required, and is being investigated by the Regional Aggregates Working Party.

Chapter 11: Local Development Scheme

1.1 The Government requires local authorities to report on the implementation of their local development scheme targets and milestones. For this monitoring period the only target was to submit the scheme to the Secretary of State by 28th March 2005. This target was met by the Council, the scheme was submitted to the Secretary of State on 16th March 2005 and was subsequently brought into effect on 14th April 2005, following the receipt of a letter of non-intervention from the Secretary of State.

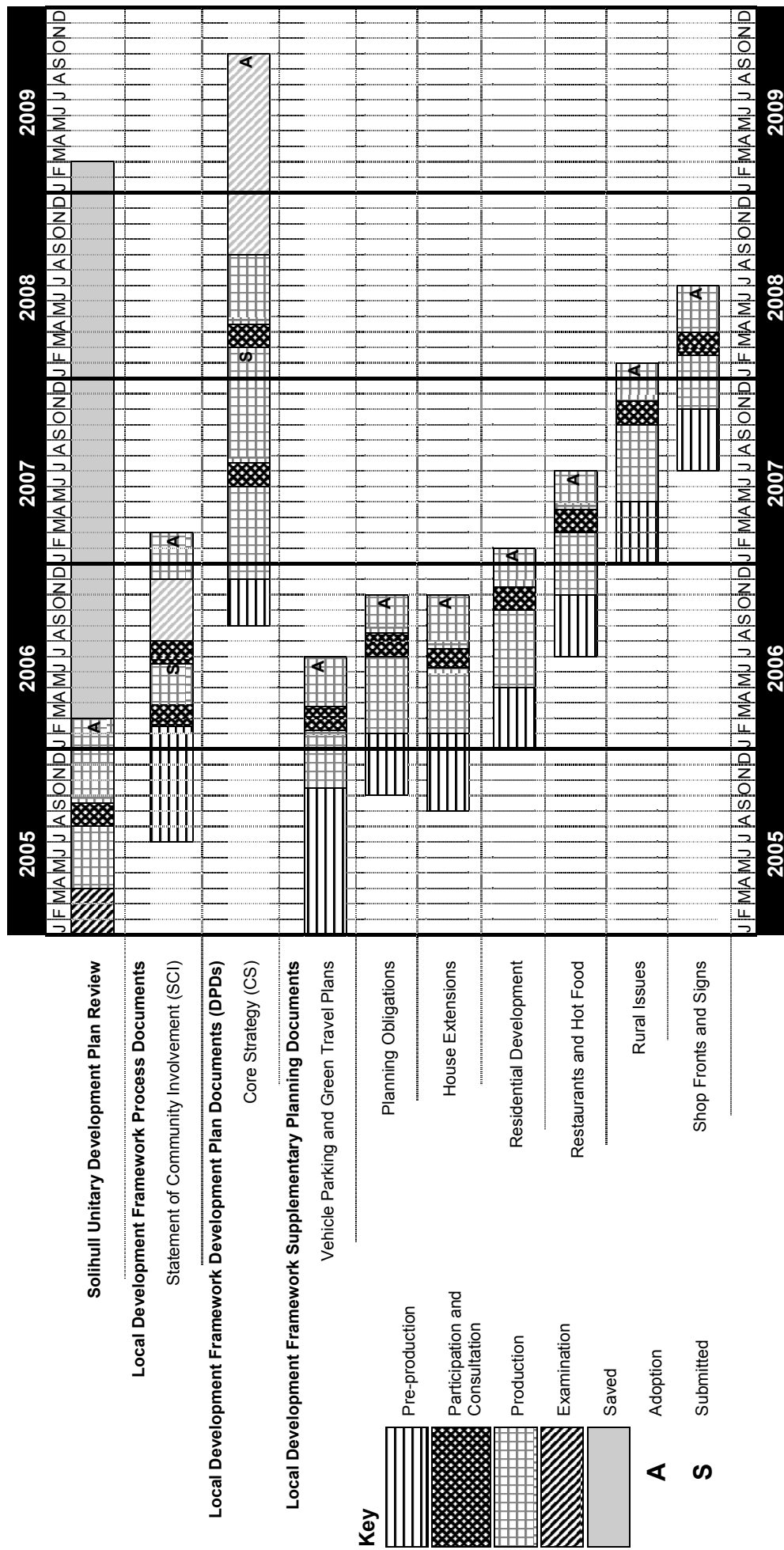
1.2 It has since been necessary to revise the scheme to include changes in programming, together with other consequential changes. Table LDS1 provides full details of the programming revisions and their reasons and Table LDS2 provides a summary of the revised programme. The only change required as a result of the findings of this report is the incorporation of a programme for the production supplementary planning guidance on light pollution, but this matter can be addressed through a future review of the LDS.

1.3 Next year's annual monitoring report (2005-2006) will assess the Council's performance against the key targets and milestones set out in the local development scheme.

Figure LDS1 – Solihull Local Development Scheme Revisions

| Document | Proposed Revision | Reason |
|---|---|--|
| Solihull UDP First Review | Adoption brought forward by 2 months | Resources diverted towards progressing the UDPR to adoption following early receipt of the Inspector's report |
| Statement of Community Involvement | Start delayed by 3 months. Pre-production stage extended by 6 months. Period for the preparation of a submission statement extended by 1 month. | Resources diverted towards progressing the UDPR to adoption. The ODPM template allows insufficient time to prepare scoping consultation material, for key political processes and to prepare a pre-submission draft. |
| Vehicle Parking and Green Travel Plans SPD | Adoption delayed by 4 months | Drafts have been completed, but resources have been diverted towards progressing the UDPR to adoption and developing a sustainability framework. |
| House Extensions SPD | Adoption delayed by 6 months | Programming consultation to avoid the Christmas period has added further delay. |
| Planning Obligations SPD | Start and adoption delayed by 6 months | Following publication of the 'Planning Obligations' circular, July 2005 |
| Protection of Primary Retail Frontages | Deleted | Deferred pending the findings of a town centre appraisal. |
| Restaurants and Hot Food SPD | Adoption brought forward by 1 month | To reflect Cabinet and Committee cycles |
| Shop Fronts and Signs SPD | | |

Figure LDS2 – Local Development Framework Production Programme



Solihull Local Development Scheme

Key Conclusions

- The first Solihull Local Development Scheme was adopted on 16th March 2005 and met the Government's target of 28th March 2005.
- It has been necessary to revise the scheme because of the early receipt of the Inspectors' report into the UDPR and because the first LDS was based on ODPM project planning templates, which have proved to be overly ambitious, in particular, they allow insufficient time for fundamental political processes.
- A programme for the production of a supplementary planning document on light pollution is to be incorporated into a future review of the LDS.

Further Action

- The ODPM be advised that the project planning template for the production of LDF development plan documents included in PPS12 are overly ambitious and, in particular, allow insufficient time for fundamental political processes



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