

Wolverhampton Local Plan

Summary Leaflet

Issues & Preferred Options Consultation

26 February – 10 April 2024



We are preparing the Wolverhampton Local Plan and would like to hear your views

Introduction

City of Wolverhampton Council is consulting on a new Plan for Wolverhampton. This Plan is designed to support the growth and regeneration of the City and to protect and enhance the characteristics that make Wolverhampton a special place to live, work and visit.

To do this, the Plan will set out where new housing and employment development and infrastructure investment will take place up to 2042, areas of the City where development will be restricted, and areas of environmental and historic importance which will be priorities for conservation and enhancement. The Plan will also include a set of 'policies' – the rules which are used to determine planning applications for a wide range of development proposals.

This leaflet summarises the main proposals in the "Issues and Preferred Options (Regulation 18)" consultation for the Wolverhampton Local Plan. More information is available at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/localplan and at Wolverhampton Civic Centre and all of Wolverhampton's libraries – please turn to the final pages of this leaflet for further details.

What is a Local Plan?

All Councils are legally required to write and consult on a Local Plan that decides where the new development that is needed for the next 15 years will be located, how development will be designed and managed and which areas will be protected from development.

The Plan must consider the amount of land required to support future jobs and provide new housing, and where any other development is needed. The Plan also details where any extra infrastructure is needed to support development, such as schools, green space,

health services, public transport, cycle routes and highway improvements.

The Plan will go through two stages of consultation. This Issues & Preferred Options consultation is the first stage and the second stage is called the Publication Plan. It is then submitted to the Government and an independent Planning Inspector is appointed to carry out a public examination of the Plan. If the Planning Inspector concludes that the Plan has been correctly prepared, then it can be adopted by the Council. When adopted, the Plan is used to help decide planning applications, alongside a range of national policy and guidance.

Do we have a Local Plan in place now?

Yes, Wolverhampton has a Local Plan which is made up of a number of documents:

- The Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) (2011)
- Area Action Plans (AAPs) (2014-16) for the main regeneration areas in the City
- Parts of the Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (2006)

These Plans together provided the framework to allocate development to meet Wolverhampton's needs up to 2026. These allocations were made through the Bilston Corridor, Stafford Road Corridor and Wolverhampton City Centre AAPs.

In addition to the Wolverhampton Local Plan, two Neighbourhood Plans were prepared by local community groups covering Tettenhall and Heathfield Park. These Neighbourhood Plans can only be updated by the local community and are not part of the Wolverhampton Local Plan work.

Why are we preparing the Wolverhampton Local Plan?

The Local Plan for Wolverhampton is now over five years old. The Government requires Councils to have Local Plans that are less than five years old and based on up-to-date information. We need to prepare the Wolverhampton Local Plan now to ensure that we can plan for new homes and jobs in the right places.

When did we start preparing the Wolverhampton Local Plan?

Between 2017 and 2022 City of Wolverhampton Council worked with Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall Councils to prepare a Black Country Plan which would replace the Black Country Core Strategy. This work included an Issues and Options consultation, invitations for developers and landowners to submit potential development sites, and consultation took place in summer 2021 on a Draft Black Country Plan supported by a comprehensive range of evidence. There were a large number of responses to this consultation.

In October 2022, work ceased on the Black Country Plan and the four Councils decided to prepare separate Local Plans. Wolverhampton Council decided to prepare a Wolverhampton Local Plan (WLP) which builds on the significant work and consultation which has already taken place on the Black Country Plan.

The WLP Issues and Preferred Options consultation takes full account of the planning issues raised in the Draft Black Country Plan consultation responses (where these relate to Wolverhampton) and draws on the most up-to-date evidence and national policy.

What does the Wolverhampton Local Plan need to plan for?

The WLP will guide and manage development in Wolverhampton up to 2042. The Plan will decide where larger housing and employment developments will be located across Wolverhampton.

The WLP will also provide new planning policies for Wolverhampton covering a range of planning issues, such as climate change, environment, design, centres, transport and waste. When the WLP has been adopted it will replace the BCCS and parts of the AAPs, for the purposes of planning in Wolverhampton.

The WLP will make some key decisions about the future development of Wolverhampton, to address these **big issues**:

- **Climate Change** – How can we help reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change?
- **A growing and changing population** – How do we meet the needs of a diverse and ageing population that is expected to grow by 10% by 2042? How much housing is needed, of what type and where should it go?
- **Health and wellbeing** – How can we create healthy and safe places?
- **Economic recovery and growth** – Where does employment land need protection? How much new employment land is needed and where should it go?
- **Town Centres and Shopping** – How can we ensure town centres are vibrant and attractive?
- **Transport and connectivity** – How do we strengthen the transport network and promote active travel and public transport?
- **Natural and built environment** – How will our heritage and wildlife be protected and improved? How can we provide the most sustainable and beautiful development possible served by high quality green spaces?
- **Supporting infrastructure** – What improvements to infrastructure such as digital networks will be needed to support new development?

Question A:

Do you agree with the “big issues” identified for the Wolverhampton Local Plan to address?

The WLP needs to identify enough land to meet our future employment needs and provide sufficient homes for new households. Evidence shows that we need 116 hectares (ha) of additional employment land to provide enough jobs to meet the growth needs of our existing and future businesses.

Legislation requires us to use Government housing targets when preparing our Local Plan. The Government predicts there will be 16,100 extra households by 2042. In order to provide

each of these new households with a new home and also provide an extra 35% (because we are one of the 25 largest towns and cities in England) the Government target is to provide enough land to build 21,700 homes by 2042. This would require a 55% increase in the number of homes built each year in Wolverhampton (from 700 to 1,085 homes). There is not enough developable land in Wolverhampton to physically provide this much housing.

What is the Wolverhampton Local Plan “Preferred Option” that we are consulting on?

The City has high housing and employment growth needs. However, Wolverhampton is a very constrained and densely developed urban area with valuable pockets of green belt. We have considered a number of different options for the Plan.

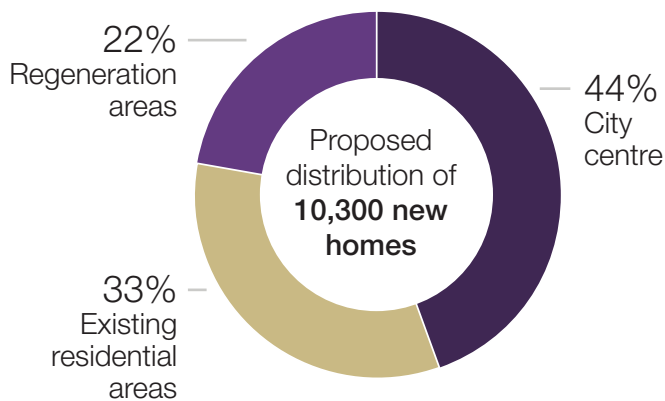
In order to meet our legal requirements, deliver a balanced amount of sustainable development and protect areas of environmental value, our Preferred Option will:

- Protect and retain all of our valuable Green Belt
- Protect and enhance our natural and historic environment
- Deliver 10,300 new homes by 2042 on 190 hectares (ha) of land (the equivalent of 285 football pitches), which will continue current rates of housing delivery across the City to meet local needs. Most of this land already has planning permission or is allocated in existing Plans.
- Make most efficient use of land and boost regeneration by locating 44% of new homes in Wolverhampton City Centre and 97% on brownfield land, and building at a high average density of 55 homes per ha (compared to 40 homes per ha on a normal housing estate).
- Support the recovery and growth of the economy, particularly in high quality manufacturing, and identify 63 ha of land (equivalent to 95 football pitches) for the employment development that Wolverhampton needs.
- In light of the challenges facing our high streets, particularly vacant properties, help to rejuvenate and diversify our centres as places to live, work, shop and visit.
- Minimise the amount of waste generated across all sectors and increase the re-use, recycling, and recovery rates of waste material.
- Ensure enough physical, social and environmental infrastructure (such as transport and green space) is delivered to meet identified needs and support growth.

Where will the growth take place?

Our Preferred Spatial Option – Urban and Brownfield First

The Preferred Option will deliver 10,300 new homes in the urban area - making best use of brownfield sites, vacant properties and poor quality industrial land, and building at high densities whilst protecting local character and providing a mix of house types to meet local needs. Infrastructure (e.g. transport, education, health and public open space) will be strengthened where needed to serve new residents.



New housing will be broadly distributed across the City as set out below:

- **44% in Wolverhampton City Centre** – encouraging City Centre living by significantly increasing the creation of new homes
- **22% in regeneration areas around town centres and along transport corridors** – including surplus, poor quality industrial land
- **33% in existing residential areas** – assuming that small sites (such as building conversions and garage sites) will keep coming forward at current rates

The Preferred Option will also deliver 63ha of new employment development, 100% of which would be in regeneration areas around town centres and along transport corridors. The map overleaf shows the Preferred Spatial Option, which will deliver Balanced and Sustainable Growth.

Question B:

Do you agree with the Preferred Spatial Option for the Wolverhampton Local Plan?

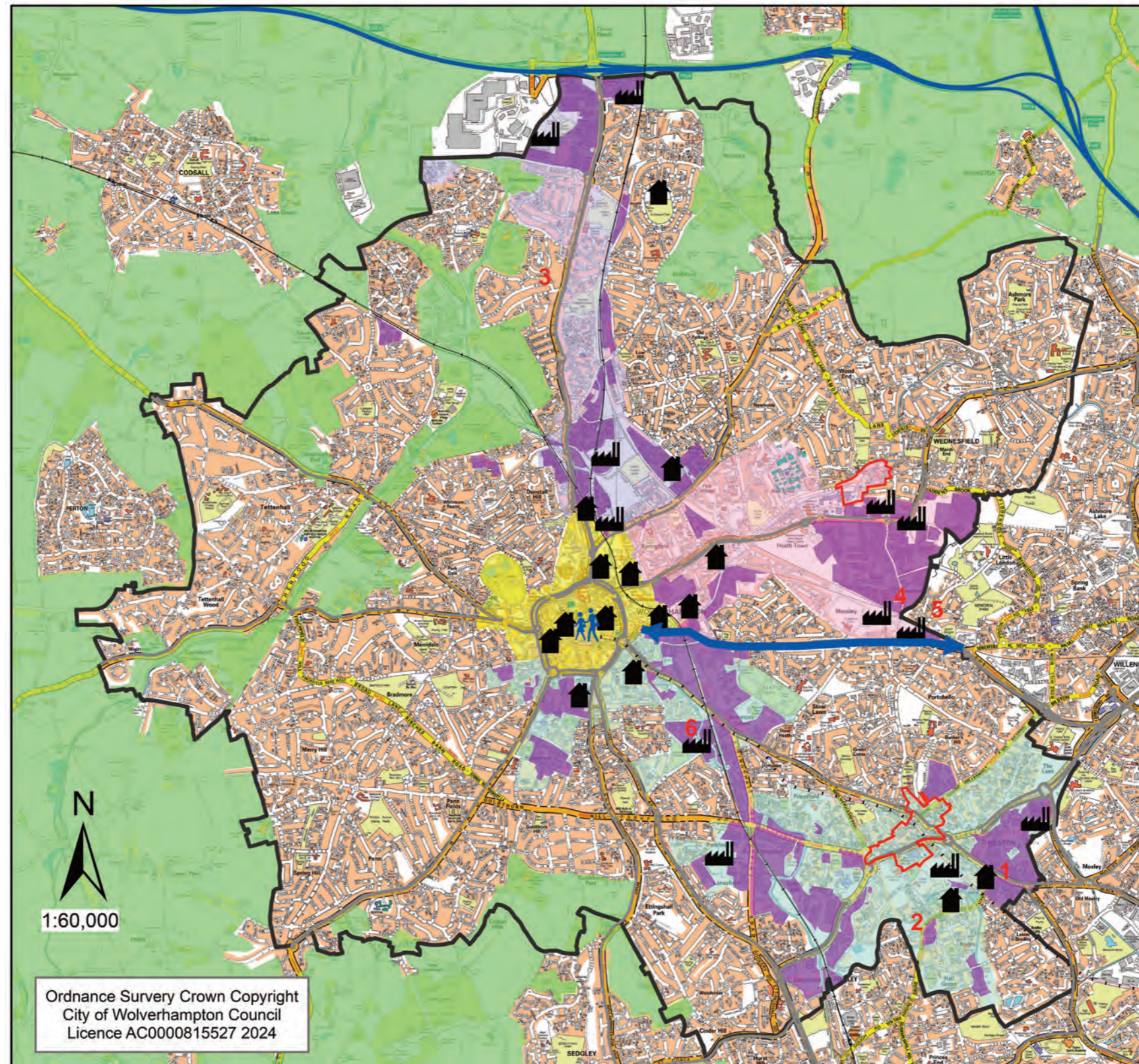
Which sites will be developed?

This map shows where the larger proposed housing and employment development sites are located. Detailed boundaries and guidance on the individual sites are contained in Table 4 of the Main Document and the Interactive Map available from: www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/localplandocs

We have worked hard to identify more brownfield land for housing and employment development in the urban area, pushing up densities and maximising housing capacity in the City Centre, town centres and regeneration areas.

Wolverhampton Local Plan Preferred Spatial Option

- Wolverhampton City Boundary
- Railway
- Metro
- Motorway
- Strategic Transport Investment – A454 City East Gateway
- Strategic Transport Investment – City Centre Public Realm & Cycling
- Green Belt
- Existing Employment Areas
- Town Centres
- Wolverhampton City Centre
- Bilston Regeneration Area
- Stafford Road Regeneration Area
- Wednesfield Regeneration Area
- Significant Housing Development (100+ homes)
- Significant Employment Development (>1 hectare)



Most of the identified sites have already been granted planning permission or are allocated in other Plans. New sites are proposed on surplus Council and industrial land at:

- 1. Former Loxdale Primary School, Chapel Street, Bradley**
(100 homes)
- 2. Factory site at Lane Street / Highfields Road, Bradley**
(72 homes)
- 3. Former Probert Court/ Health Centre, Probert Road**
(35 homes)
- 4. Land at Neachells Lane off Willenhall Road**
(6.7 ha employment land)
- 5. Land at Neachells Lane off Noose Lane**
(1.2 ha employment land)
- 6. Former MEB site, Major Street / Dixon Street**
(2.5 ha employment land)

The location of these sites are identified on the map by red site numbers 1 – 6.

It should be noted that it is never possible to identify every piece of brownfield land which may come forward for housing over a 15 year period – the job of the Plan is to identify the larger sites and to make an estimate of how much housing is likely to come forward on smaller sites.

What has changed since the Draft Black Country Plan consultation?

Our Preferred Option is to completely protect the whole of Wolverhampton's Green Belt. This means we are **not** proposing to develop any Green Belt sites, which includes:

- Land at Bushbury
- Land at Fallings Park
- Former Wolverhampton Environment Centre (WEC), Westacre Crescent
- The 'Seven Cornfields' (land at Penwood Farm)

We have listened carefully to planning issues raised during consultation on the Draft Black Country Plan in 2021 and looked at new evidence. As a result, we are **not** proposing to develop these greenfield sites in the urban area:

- Grapes Pool (Moseley Road Open Space)
- Former St Luke's Junior School, Goldthorn Road
- Open Space at Wrenbury Drive, The Lunt (Alexander Metals)

Question C:

Do you agree with the proposed site allocations for the Wolverhampton Local Plan?





Are we able to build all the housing and employment development that we need in Wolverhampton?

No. We need to find enough land to build 21,700 homes and 116ha of employment land to meet the Government's target but the preferred option would deliver only 10,300 homes, leaving a shortfall of 11,400 homes, and 63ha of employment land, leaving a shortfall of 53ha. In this situation we are legally required to ask neighbouring Councils, such as South Staffordshire, Lichfield and Shropshire, to provide more housing and employment land in their area to help meet the Wolverhampton shortfalls and such discussions are ongoing.

What changes will we make to planning policies?

The Preferred Option will strengthen some of our existing policies to address the Climate Crisis, improve the environment and tackle local health issues:

- promotion of sustainable and active transport
- higher renewable energy, energy efficiency and water efficiency standards for development
- protection of existing trees and providing new trees through development
- addressing the health impacts of development, including hot food takeaways, betting shops and shisha bars
- protection of water quality and air quality
- making sure new homes have enough internal space

Question D:

Do you agree with the preferred approach to policies in the Wolverhampton Local Plan?

Question E:

Do you have any other comments to make about the Wolverhampton Local Plan?

Have your say – we welcome your views

Please visit the website: www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/localplan

On the website you will find this leaflet, the Issues & Preferred Options main document, and other information including evidence documents and an interactive map.



We would encourage you to use the short online survey www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/localplan-respond that is designed to be quick and easy to complete, where you can answer the questions in this leaflet and make any other comments about the Wolverhampton Local Plan. A longer response form about the more detailed Issues & Preferred Options main document is also available from the link.

Paper copies of this leaflet, response forms and the main documents (for reference) are available at:

- Wolverhampton Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SH (at the business reception by the rear entrance)
- All of Wolverhampton's libraries www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/find-library



Drop-in

You can view the consultation documents and speak to Planning Officers at the following drop-in sessions:

Wednesday 6 March, 9am – 5pm	Wolverhampton Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SH
Thursday 7 March, 3pm – 7pm and Saturday 9 March, 10am – 2pm	Wolverhampton Central Library, Snow Hill, Wolverhampton, WV1 3AX
Tuesday 12 March, 10am - 1pm	Wednesfield Library, 2 Well Lane, Wednesfield, WV11 1XT
Wednesday 13 March, 4pm - 7pm	Bilston Library, Mount Pleasant, Bilston, WV14 7LU
Thursday 14 March, 2pm – 5pm	Tettenhall Library, St Michael's Parish Centre, Upper Street, Tettenhall, WV6 8QF

If you need help understanding the documents, completing the response form, or would like to discuss with Planning Officers, please contact the Wolverhampton Local Plan Team:

Email: localplan@wolverhampton.gov.uk or Tel: **01902 551155**

Please send completed paper responses to:

Wolverhampton Local Plan

City Planning
City of Wolverhampton Council
Civic Centre
St Peter's Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1RP

Or hand them in at Wolverhampton Civic Centre

What is the deadline for responses?

The consultation will end at **5pm** on **Wednesday 10 April 2024**

Please provide your response to us by this date.

How will my response be used?

We will use your response to inform the preparation of the next stage of the Plan, which is called the Publication Wolverhampton Local Plan. Please note that responses will be made public – for more information see the privacy notice at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/localplan

Thank you for your interest in the Wolverhampton Local Plan

Wolverhampton Local Plan Timetable

Issues and Preferred Options Consultation	26 February – 10 April 2024
Publication Consultation	December 2024 – January 2025
Submission to Government	June 2025
Independent Examination by Planning Inspector	June 2025 – Spring 2026
Adoption by City of Wolverhampton Council	Mid 2026

You can get this information in large print, braille, audio or in another language by calling 01902 551155 or emailing translations@wolverhampton.gov.uk

wolverhampton.gov.uk 01902 551155

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City of Wolverhampton Council, Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH