ANNEX B:

POLICY AND INVESTMENT CONTEXT

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This section presents a summary analysis of the key policy and investment context to the proposed Black Country Telford Housing Market Renewal Area - at the regional, sub-regional and local authority level as follows:

- At the regional level: the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Regional Housing Strategy, the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Transport Strategy;

- At the sub-regional level: the Black Country Study and emerging Spatial Development Framework; the Wolverhampton-Telford High Technology Corridor; the two Regeneration Zones which incorporate the north and south Black Country; and the Birmingham-Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder ('Urban Living'); and

- At the local level - for each of the five local authorities: their Housing Strategies, Housing Investment Programmes (HIP); ALMO Delivery Plans or Stock Transfer RSL investment plans; neighbourhood renewal activity; housing land supply, economic development strategy, urban form and transport

1.0 Regional Policy Context

1.1 Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 11)

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy set out in Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG 11) seeks a 'fundamental change of direction' in order to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development in the region. Central to this is the concentration of development on the region's Major Urban Areas - with a shift away from recent market trends of peripheral development and decentralisation.

1.1.1 The Black Country

The Regional Spatial Strategy identifies a vision for the Black Country (and other Major Urban Areas in the region) to develop an enhanced economic and social role in the region through:

- Concentration of new housing development in the Black Country/Birmingham conurbation
- market renewal of areas of low housing demand - including Sandwell.
- improvements to the quality of the urban environment,
- creation of employment opportunities
- creation of a balanced network of vibrant and vital town centres as the strategic focus for major retail, leisure and office developments
- improvements to transport networks

The Black Country (and other Major Urban Areas in the region) is expected to generate a range of housing types and sizes that are attractive to economically independent households - including high density, high quality developments. RPG offers a framework for integrating housing policy objectives with other non-housing objectives to:

- restructure land use and transport networks to create employment growth, create new residential environments and improve environmental quality, integrate transport plans and join up centres
- deliver environmental improvements
- maximise the use of the existing housing and business stock where economically and socially viable
- raise the quality of urban design
- rejuvenate urban centres
- increase accessibility

These policies highlight the key challenges that the Black Country will face in delivering the urban renaissance envisaged in the Regional Spatial Strategy including:

- weak housing markets
- poor quality housing sites
- poor quality and lack of choice in affordable housing
- the quality of the urban environment
- poor transport accessibility
- the poor image of the Black Country as a place to live, work and invest
- the quality of local centres and their ability to attract investment
- the quality of employment offer and levels of employment

The central issue for delivering housing market renewal in the Black Country will therefore be the capacity to balance multiple policy objectives relating to housing, employment, accessibility urban quality and local services and facilities. A concerted effort will be required to manage land use and deliver regeneration - involving a significant change in the level of investment in the sub-region.

1.1.2 Telford

The Spatial Strategy supports the continued development of Telford as a sub-regional focus for development - including housing development - on the basis of its potential to attract new investment and that new development meets locally generated needs (including the needs of surrounding rural areas) and is at a level to support balanced, sustainable communities.

However, RPG targets for new housing development in Telford beyond 2011 are reduced by 50% - in parallel with a 44% increase in target for housing development in the Black Country.

Telford’s development is to form part of a balanced network of town and city centres amongst the major shire towns and cities in the region - as a strategic focus for major retail, leisure and office developments. Although RPG does not go so far as to clearly define the function and role of Telford in the region - an area of clarification required according to the Telford Urban Regeneration Company (Telford First).

RPG policies for Telford (and other centres outside the Major Urban Areas) are focused on maintaining and enhancing the town’s regional function and role through policy intervention to:

- maintain and enhance the pattern of centres
- development of strategies to enhance their role in servicing their local communities

- promoting a sense of identity
- creating opportunities for the development of economic opportunities and other services
- encouraging people to live in or close to centres
- ensuring high standards of design
- enhancing centres as the primary nodes of the public transport network

1.1.3 Housing

As regards housing provision, West Midlands Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 11) policy objectives require the creation of a variety and choice of good quality housing based on:

- enhanced renovation of the existing stock
- increased rates of redevelopment of the existing stock
- an increase in the scale and range of new housing development opportunities in appropriate locations (with high replacement ratios for cleared housing stock and a significant increase in overall housing densities)
- the creation of attractive urban communities and living environments by mixing housing types, tenures and densities
- provision of affordable social and low-cost market housing

RPG targets for new housing development[1] represent a major redistribution of new housing development to the Major Urban Areas from the major shire towns and cities outside the Major Urban Areas - from 2011 (see Table B.1) and set targets for new housing development on brownfield land to restrict new housing development on peripheral sites (see Table B.2).

From 2011, annual targets for new housing development in Telford are reduced by nearly 50% and targets for the Black Country are increased by 44% (see Table B.1).

The greatest increase in targets in the Black Country relates to the outer Boroughs (Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall) - to create a greater balance with Sandwell's targets which are currently higher. Dudley has the highest increase in targets at more than 50% of the current targets.

Table B.1: Annual Average Rate of Housing Provision (no. dwellings)

	To 2007	*2007-2011*	*2011-2021*
Dudley	600	700	975
Sandwell	900	900	975
Walsall	500	500	825
Wolverhampton	500	500	825
Black Country Total	**2,500**	**2,600**	**3,600**
Telford & Wrekin	1330	1330	700
Total	**3,830**	**3,930**	**4,300**

Source: RPG 11

[1] Based on assumptions regarding vacancy and clearance rates

Table B.2: % Housing Development on Previously Developed Land

	2001-2011
Dudley	98
Sandwell	100
Telford & Wrekin	53
Walsall	79
Wolverhampton	99

Source: RPG 11

It should be noted that the redistribution of housing land provision towards the Black Country and other Major Urban Areas from other settlements such as Telford will take place gradually - with the main redistribution occurring beyond 2011. Furthermore, a time-lag is likely before current housing land supply with planning permissions moves through the system and the redistribution of provision takes effect.

Wolverhampton, Walsall and Dudley's UDPs identify sufficient housing land supply to meet RPG requirements to 2011 (Table B.3). Sandwell identifies a shortfall of land supply of 823. However, the West Midlands RPG Panel (October 2002) set out concerns about the ability of the Black Country to meet RPG targets. (51% of the housing land supply is on unidentified sites - the majority of which are windfall sites. The Panel identified that insufficient information is available to offer precise figures for a reduction in targets post 2011 and the need to produce a more site-specific urban capacity study. This study is being undertaken as part of a wider housing study as part of the Black Country study.

Telford & Wrekin has identified sufficient land supply to meet its RPG target to 2011 - with a shortfall for 400 homes identified in the 1995 Annual Land Statement to be partly met in Telford (160 homes) in the 'East Ketley' comprehensive regeneration area in the northern part of the Telford (a 34-hectare redevelopment scheme). This regeneration area is located in an identified 'corridor of concentrated demand' for public transport in northern Telford.

Table B.3: Housing Land Supply

Housing Land Supply	**Black Country**					**Telford & Wrekin**
	Wolverhampton	*Walsall*	*Sandwell 1998-2011*	*Dudley*	*Total*	*1989-2006*
RPG11 Allocation (1991-2011)	11,695	10,673	23,720	12,950	59,038	17,752
Supply 1991-2003	8,395	5,969	6,285	6,398	27,047	6,138
Remaining Requirement 2002-2011	3,300	4,131	17,435	6,552	31,418	11,614
Supply (Current Plan)						
Identified sites						
Housing Allocations	1,573	1,706	9,574	1,400	14,253	9,909
Renewal Sites	234	1,128			1,362	
Unidentified Sites					0	
Renewal Sites	887	250			1,137	
Windfalls	945	1,350	6,683	2,792	11,770	1,705
Other	319	270	355	3,047	3,991	
					16,898	
Total Supply 2003-2011	3,958	4,704	16,612	7,239	32,513	11,614
Difference with requirement	658	573	-823	-687	-279	0

Source: Local Authority data provided

1.1.4 *Location of Housing Land Supply*

RPG seeks to restrict housing development on peripheral sites. This is reflected in the emerging vision for the Black Country being developed through the Black Country Study which envisages high quality, high density residential areas located around public transport nodes and the urban centres in the Black Country. The Black Country authorities UDP policies also largely support this vision of central housing development.

Wolverhampton and Dudley's land allocations for housing can be seen to be concentrated around the Borough's town centres - with a quarter of total housing capacity in Wolverhampton's housing capacity located in/around the City Centre. Dudley has also identified phased housing land release which is targeted on the Borough's town centres and other brownfield sites.

Sandwell's housing sites are more scattered with some concentrations around Tipton, Wednesbury, Smethwick/Cape Hill and the metro corridor. A key issue for the Borough is the condition of housing sites and the quality of environment considering the conflicting land uses in the Borough.

However, Walsall's housing land supply includes greenfield sites - three of which are additional to the 1995 plan (Clayhanger, Berryfields, Aldridge and Rushall).

Telford is the focus for new housing development in Telford & Wrekin and offers a large number of housing sites in and around the town. A significant proportion of additional housing land capacity identified is located within an identified 'corridor of concentrated demand' in northern Telford - including the East Ketley regeneration area.

1.2 Regional Housing Strategy

The overall aim of the Regional Housing Strategy is to develop a pattern of housing investment that meets the needs and aspirations of the region's population, at the same time as supporting the delivery of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. The Strategy therefore aims to develop patterns of housing provision that stem patterns of out-migration from the older urban centres, contribute to urban and rural renaissance, protect and enhance the environment, and support economic development.

Eight priority investment themes are identified for the region:

1. Urban renaissance
2. Rural renaissance
3. Low demand and restructuring of housing markets
4. affordability
5. poor house condition issues
6. community cohesion and meeting black and ethnic minority housing needs
7. the supporting people agenda
8. issues relating to asylum seekers and refugees

Investment targets are also identify for priority investment areas - particularly the Central housing markets (centred on the Black Country, Birmingham and Coventry), the North Staffordshire housing markets - and also former coalfields' communities and remoter rural parts of the region. Housing Investment Plans are to be developed for each of these priority investment areas.

The proposed Black Country Telford Housing Market Renewal Area would form part of the 'Central' housing market area - which centres on the Black Country, Birmingham and Coventry and the areas most directly influenced by these markets running west and east (including the high price commuter belt and adjacent rural areas). Telford is identified as a priority within the rural areas to the west and south of the Black Country where priorities are to meet the needs of low income households (through social housing provision) and address poor housing conditions. Key issue identified for the Black Country are to deliver an urban renaissance, respond to low demand, raising the quality of affordable housing, housing market renewal and meeting the needs of BME communities, asylum seekers and refugees.

Further research and strategy development is to be undertaken in key issues areas relating to housing provision in the region (e.g. the potential impact of the Milton Keynes growth area). There is also an identified need to develop the evidence base on the region's housing markets and how they can be influenced to deliver sustainable communities. Priority areas identified are: regional and sub-regional patterns; links between housing, labour markets and economic policy; migration patterns; asylum seekers; house price change; Section 106 agreements; the impact of the Right to Buy; the impact of other regions' developments; private stock; and a joined up approaches to housing needs studies.

1.2.1 Regional Housing Board Allocations

The Regional Housing Board's allocations for housing capital resources through the new single regional housing pot (SRHP) for the HMA authorities for 2004/05 and 2005/06 are presented in Table B.4. This includes a comparison with allocations in 2003/04.

Table B.4: Capital Housing Allocations by HMA Authority (2003/04-2005/06)

	2003-04			2004-5			2005-6			
	Housing Annual Capital Guideline	Transitional Private Sector Renewal	Total	Housing SCE(R)	Transitional Private Sector Renewal	Total	Housing SCE(R)	Housing Capital Grant[1]	Transitional Private Sector Renewal	Total
Dudley	2,383	-	2,383	3,165	-	3,165	3,212	0	0	3,212
Sandwell	6,563	117	6,680	6,628	252	6,880	6,866	1,951	20	8,837
Telford & Wrekin	943	-	943	1,076	-	1,076	1,067	0	0	1,067
Walsall	4,060	-	4,060	3,714	-	3,714	3,671	0	0	3,671
Wolverhampton	4,788	-	4,788	6,806	-	6,806	7,473	0	0	7,473
Total	**18,737**	**117**	**18,854**	**21,389**	**252**	**21,641**	**22,289**	**1,951**	**20**	**24,260**

Source: West Midlands Regional Housing Board

1.3 Regional Economic Strategy

The West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy provides a strategic framework for policy intervention in five areas:

1. the development of a diverse and dynamic business base for the region - particularly in ten target business clusters
2. the promotion of a learning and skilful region
3. creation of the conditions for growth
4. community regeneration
5. provision of a powerful voice for the region

The three mechanisms identified for the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy are:

1. The West Midlands Cluster Action Plan
2. The Wolverhampton-Telford Technology Corridor
3. The West Midlands Regeneration Zones

The West Midlands 'Cluster Action Plan' provides a framework for investment of £Xm of RDA Single Pot resources plus West Midlands Objective 2 Priority 1 resources (ERDF and ESF) in activities to support the development of ten priority economic clusters in the region:

- Transport technologies;
- Building technologies;
- Food and drink;
- Tourism and leisure;
- High-Value Consumer Products;
- Specialist business and professional services;
- ICT;
- Environmental technologies;
- Education and Entertainment Interactive Media; and
- Medical technologies.

The 'Diversification and Modernisation Strategy' developed for the Black Country (SQW) identifies that the Black Country should be focusing on developing economic activity in:

- ICT
- Transport Technologies
- Medical Technologies
- Environmental Technologies

This is in addition to development of economic activity in the specific sectors of:

- Advanced engineering
- Polymers and plastics
- Logistics

Telford's Economic Development Strategy establishes an economic vision for 2020 based on an economy diversified into certain knowledge sector industries - including in particular value-added manufacturing and certain services.

1.4 Regional Transport Strategy

The Regional Transport Strategy set out in RPG aims to improve access within and across the region in support of the RPG spatial strategy. Key policy priorities identified within the Regional Transport Strategy and the 'West Midlands Local Transport Plan' are:

- Improvements to accessibility and mobility in Major Urban Areas - with measures identified including:

- development of an integrated and improved public transport network - including a comprehensive bus network, improvements to the local rail network, metro line extensions, investment in transport interchanges (including park and ride provision)
- traffic restraint/demand management measures including management of parking provision in local centres
- changing travel behaviour - including encouraging alternative forms of movement (walking and cycling)
- reducing the need to travel with high density developments located close to public transport nodes
- location of employment sites close to freight routes and improvement of strategic links to external markets through improvement of national road and rail networks

- Transport investment to support economic regeneration including:

  - Improvement of national road and rail networks and link routes to ensure strategic links to external markets
  - Transport links to economic regeneration frameworks such as the Technology Corridors (e.g. M54 link to M6 for the Wolves-Telford corridor)
  - Measures to improve the accessibility of town and city centres (metro, showcase and red routes, pedestrian routes, car parking)
  - Location of living areas close to employment areas and improve public transport connections

Key measures proposed of significance to the HMA identified to date include:

1. recent and proposed investments in the **national road and rail network** including:

   - the Birmingham Relief Road (M6 Toll)
   - the Black Country Relief Road
   - investments in the West Coast mainline (with proposed development of Wolverhampton Station)
   - proposals for a link road between the M54 and M6
   - proposed western bypass to the Black Country

   The implications of these investments for the economic development and urban renaissance of the Black Country need to be further explored. Potential effects include:

   - increased attractiveness of industrial development sites in the Black Country - particularly those located close to the national road network - including both sites within the conurbation and in peripheral locations (e.g. insert).

   - increased attractiveness of industrial development sites in Telford and other locations away from the Black Country/Birmingham conurbation if a proposed M54-M6 link road were realised

   - improved commuting links between the conurbation and surrounding areas

2. proposals for **separation of freight and passenger rail routes** in the Black Country - particularly the development of a Walsall-Stourbridge freight line.

3. proposed **developments to the public transport networks** including:

   - proposed additional metro lines including: 5 Ws route linking Wolverhampton and Wednesbury via Wednesfield, Willenhall and Walsall, and a metro line extension Brierley Hill

   - the provisions of the West Midlands bus strategy to develop the conurbation's bus network

   The potential impact of these proposals needs to be further explored in the light of more detailed proposals and the evidenced impact of the current metro provisions. The proposals demonstrate potential to improve public transport access within the conurbation - with the potential to improve local people's access to jobs and services. Potential tensions between transport proposals and development plans will need to be resolved (e.g. between the proposed extension to Brierley Hill and development plans for local centres).

4. **parking proposals** including:

   - investments in strategic park and ride facilities on the edge of the conurbation with a site proposed at Brinsford, Wolverhampton

   - a proposed strategic approach to car parking provision between different local centres - in order to restrict long-term parking opportunities for commuters whilst facilitating short-term parking opportunities for shoppers

   Potential positive impacts of these proposals are improved access and reduced congestion within the conurbation with potential benefits for business and the quality of life of the environment. Proposed peripheral park and ride facilities have the potential to deliver both positive and negative impacts resulting from improved access into the conurbation (e.g. increased numbers of shoppers and knowledge economy workers versus support for the trend for in-commuting rather than living in the conurbation).

2.0 Sub-Regional Policy and Investment Context

2.1 Black Country Study

The Black Country Sub-Regional Study responds to a need to further develop the Regional Spatial Strategy as regards the Black Country - as identified by the Secretary of State and acknowledged by the Regional Planning Body in Summer 2002.

The Study is lead by the Black Country Consortium - working with a Strategic Management Steering Group representing sub-regional and regional interests providing interface with the Regional Assembly, GOWM and AWM to provide synergy with the RSS, Central policy and the RES. The specific aims of the Study include:

1. to set radical new aspirations leading to the renaissance of the Black Country over the next 30 years

2. draft a Spatial Framework to guide the future development of the Black Country towards the 30 Year Vision including a transformed land use and transport structure

3. provide advice to the Regional Planning Body to inform the review of RPG 11 on:

   - Regeneration priorities
   - The strategic role of town centres and Merry Hill
   - Urban capacity
   - Identification of employment land
   - Scope for environmental and town centre improvements and
   - Ways of improving access to regeneration sites - particularly on the eastern side of the Black Country

4. to set regeneration priorities for the Black Country to inform the preparation of key Delivery and Business Plans

5. to provide the strategic framework for preparation of future Community Plans and Local Development Frameworks

The target date for completion of the Study is Summer 2005.

2.1.1 The Black Country Vision

The 30-year vision developed for the Black Country *'Looking Forward: The Black Country in 2033'* (May 2003) identifies the aspirations of key stakeholders in the sub-region. The vision is of

"..a Polycentric City made up of four thriving and distinct retail and commercial 'City' centres - each one playing a unique role: West Bromwich home to C/PLEX (THE PUBLIC), Walsall known for its culture, Wolverhampton for its Universities and R&D base and Brierley Hill for its shopping. In addition the traditional centre of Dudley will have been transformed into a national icon for urban living with its strong family focus and its recreational and leisure facilities."

Other key elements of the Vision are: a technology-based economy with tourism the primary sector; a strong educational and learning base; strong housing markets with sufficient affordable housing; a sustainable environment including a new public transport system and urban park network; and healthy, safe and cohesive communities - with high levels of youth engagement.

The accompanying strategic framework focuses on achieving significant sectoral and occupational change towards higher value (knowledge economy) activities and workers - underpinned by a step-change in skills levels including, in particular, the number of graduates in the labour market.

The strategic framework identifies as key requirements for the achievement of this major economic restructuring towards knowledge economy sectors as being:

- Major land-use restructuring to deliver quality land and premises
- Delivery of the quality urban environments and design required to attract and retain knowledge businesses and workers
- Development of the role of local centres in the Black Country
- Delivery of improvements in residential choice, education and training to attract knowledge economy workers, higher skills and to raise income levels

In summary, the developing vision for the renaissance of the Black Country is predicated on achieving, in parallel, improved residential environments, job creation and workforce retraining.

2.1.2 Black Country Spatial Framework

The key output from the Black Country Study will be a Spatial Framework for the sub-region - to guide other activities, strategies and policies. The Spatial Framework will translate the aspirations set out in the Black Country Vision into a preferred land use and transportation structure for the next 30 years (to 2033) - to inform the revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy and a development plan for the Black Country.

Key objectives for the Spatial Framework are to reverse out-migration, raise income levels and change the socio-economic mix of the Black Country. The preparation of the Framework therefore involves the development and testing of different spatial scenarios (particularly the land use/transport implications) relating to different levels of economic growth, household growth and socio-economic mix - applying the principles of the Spatial Strategy beyond the time period of RPG (up to 2021) to 2033. Spatial options (or 'illustrations') are being developed in terms of give potential key drivers for change:

– Economy;
– Centres;
– Housing;
– Park/environment/culture; and
– Transport.

The key elements of the Spatial Framework will be:

– An optimal economic strategy for the Black Country and its spatial implications
– Definition of the Strategic Centres for the Black Country including options as to their future roles and complementary centres (including Merry Hill)
– Principles for managing change in other local centres
– Proposals for a preferred sustainable transport system
– Housing requirements for maintaining or increasing the Black Country population - taking into account future demographics and lifestyle choices
– Key components for the enhancement of the physical/visual form of the Black Country
– An optimal balance between economic growth, housing development and environmental improvement

- Spatial implications and standards for other key aspirations of the Black Country Vision regarding cultural diversity, urban design, sustainable living, education, health, young people, facilities and services

The options ('illustrations') are being developed for three time periods to reflect the RSS time periods (to 2011, 2011 to 2021 and 2021 to 2031). The options will be developed for consultation and testing against:

- Vision objectives (set out in the RSS Project Plan)
- RPG 11 - the Regional Spatial Strategy
- Sustainability/Environmental appraisal
- Potential for long-term growth
- Capacity (e.g. housing/employment land and transport)
- Balancing housing growth, employment growth and environmental change
- Marketability
- Community and stakeholder views

The transport implications of different spatial options (for the period 2011 to 2021) are being tested for:

- A multi-centred Black Country - focused on the equal expansion of four strategic centres with housing growth extending radially outwards from those Centres ('Centres' - Illustration 1)
- Focus on growing Wolverhampton Centre supported by growth in six off-centre business parks and other three strategic centres ('Spreading Growth' - Illustration 2)
- Centres and nodes on corridors between, but with emphasis on growing Wolverhampton and Brierley Hill (Corridors - Illustration 3)

The housing reference case identified for the Black Country identifies:

- Weakening housing market renewal in central core, with threat of 'hollowing out'
- Some new residential environments in core associated with existing Market Renewal and planned urban villages (including some aspirational housing)
- Some new 'urban living' in strategic centres
- Suburbs left to market, with limited environmental protection via planning control
- Windfalls from infilling and manufacturing decline.

2.1.3 Economic Strategy

The long-term economic strategy developed for the Black Country to 2033[2] aims to raise incomes in the Black Country to the national average outside London by achieving:

- sectoral change towards higher value added activities and with more employment in the finance/business services, arts and leisure and logistics sectors;
- a revision of the occupational structures - with higher proportions of managers and professionals;
- Workforce development - through a non-conventional strategy focused on major upskilling

[2] GHK (2004) The Black Country in 2003: A Long Term Economic Strategy

This will be in addition to activity to reverse population decline - with a target of 200,000 additional people by 2030 half of whom are of working age - and activity to encourage innovation and productivity.

However, the Black Country tends to continue to reflect low levels of GVA with dependency on low level manufacturing and under representation of high technology manufacturing and market services. Reflected by low industrial land values, the Black Country has a portfolio of poor quality employment sites lacking suitable access.

A major challenge for the Black Country - identified through the Black Country Study[3] -is to deliver sites of sufficient quality and accessibility required for industrial restructuring - given the complex urban form that has developed around the traditional industrial base offering “widespread but piecemeal development opportunities, hampered by the continuing legacy of soil pollution and land ownership patterns”.

The strategy therefore identifies an action plan focused on five areas - including (in addition to business engagement, development of knowledge economy infrastructure, and development of leisure and arts facilities and events):

- land assembly to deliver sites of high environmental quality with central sites for office development and off-centre sites for manufacturing and logistics;

- complete renewal of the environment with 3,000 hectares and 12m sq.m. of modern floorspace developed every 15 years, development of an urban park, delivery of quality urban design (spaces and buildings), management of environmental impacts and development of environmental goods and services

Accessibility of sites - with reasonable access to major roads and motorways is also identified as a priority.

The strategy also proposes the creation of separate logistics zones to enable the Black Country to maximise the potential from its locational advantage to create the scale of logistics and distribution activity required to achieve higher employment and income benefits. (The provisions of the West Midlands Transport Plan to improve freight access routes within the conurbation also offer potential for ameliorating the potentially negative impact of increased logistics and distribution activity in the Black Country on accessibility and environmental quality).

The Black Country Study provides an indication of the scale of development implied by the Economic Strategy (Table B.5). Research has recently been commissioned to identify the capacity for delivery of employment land.

[3] GHK (2004) ‘Spatial Development Implications of the Preferred Economic Development Strategy and Pathway’

Table B.5: Scale of Development associated with the Black County Economic Strategy

Sector	Size (ha)	Floorspace (m2)	Total No.
Manufacturing			
Centre-based industry park	5	30,000	16
Off-centre industry park	10	50,000	16
Logistic and distribution zones	40	120,000	52
Office development			
City centre	1	50,000	40
Off-centre	10	30,000	15

Source: GHK (2004)

2.1.4 Role of Local Centres

The Black Country's urban centres are accorded a central role in the delivery of the Black Country Vision, the regeneration of the conurbation and the diversification and modernisation of its economy towards knowledge economy and service sectors. For example, the Black Country Study identifies that whilst some office provision will be accommodated in off-centre business parks along public transport corridors, the majority of jobs are expected to be located in urban centres.

The Vision envisages a polycentric City made up of four strategic thriving and distinctive retail and commercial city centres each playing a unique role:

- West Bromwich home to THE PUBLIC
- Walsall known for its culture
- Wolverhampton known for its universities and R&D base
- Brierley Hill known for its shopping

- (plus Dudley transformed into a national icon for urban living)

This would represent a concentration of future development and employment in and around these strategic centres (whereas current employment is more dispersed amongst the larger number of district centres in the Black Country).

This focus on strategic centres has been identified as a key area for testing through the Black Country Study. In particular testing will focus on existing centres and corridors between centres, and the potential for growth in all four centres (West Bromwich, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Brierley Hill) - particularly building on a strong Wolverhampton and the retail and office potential of Brierley Hill.

The intention is to expand the retail offer of each centre as well as establishing a USP (Unique Selling Point) for each centre. Residential development close to centres is identified as a priority to support their development. Strategic centres are also identified by the Black Country Study as the key locations for office development in the Black Country - particularly strategic centres to take advantage of the scope for agglomeration economies and public transport investments. Potential is therefore identified for mixed-use development in strategic centres.

The Black Country Study identifies support for concentration of initial developments in one or two strategic centres initially as a trigger for wider transformation - with the majority of developers consulted preferring Wolverhampton. Investments in Wolverhampton City Centre would complement recent investment in the creative industries and science park plus further investment in the university as recommended by the Black Country Study.

A key challenge for achieving the Black Country vision will be the development of a shared strategy for town centre development to ensure their co-ordinated development and that their potential contribution to the economic regeneration of the conurbation is maximised - particularly in the face of competition from Bullring Birmingham. A key issue will be how Brierley Hill is developed - particularly with the proposed metro extension - and how the impact of its further development on the other key centres in the conurbation can be managed. The planning aspirations for Brierley Hill are currently being decided.

2.1.5 Housing Strategy

The Black Country Vision and strategic framework accord an important role for the delivery of high quality residential environments to attract the knowledge economy workers required to support the economic and urban renaissance of the Black Country.

Emerging strategic priorities for housing are to change the socio-economic mix of the Black Country by creating locations for aspirational housing in parallel with:

- addressing issues of low demand and social polarisation
- delivering RPG housebuilding/clearance rates and test population/household growth beyond 2021
- working up radical options for residential change based on bolder strategies than currently planned

In particular the Vision envisages:

- High quality, high density family residential areas located around public transport nodes - including centres and integrated within the setting of the new Black Country landscape

- High quality, high density living environments within the four key centres and sub-centres with a strong canal and/or heritage asset

- Quality mixed tenure housing throughout the Black Country with access to services - housing market renewal and housing market enhancement

The Black Country Study aims to develop a housing strategy to:

- create high quality residential environments for knowledge workers
- address issues of emerging low demand and social polarisation
- balance retention of affluent households with a strong social housing market and providing for key workers
- deliver RPG housebuilding and clearance rates to 2011 and deliver or exceed rates from 2011 to 2021

- test population/household growth scenarios beyond 2021
- work up radical options for residential change based on bolder replacement strategies than currently planned. Based on:

– prioritisation of identification of locations providing the best opportunities for quality residential locations (e.g. adjacent to canals, landscape features, existing residential areas, in centres and at nodes served by transport corridors)
– Establishment of a rolling programme of residential site allocations and land assembly to deliver sites of sufficient size and quality.
– Delivery of transformational demonstration projects which engage the private sector.
– Establishment of a Black Country Group to define principles of quality design and to monitor design standards
– Pursuance of RPG house building rates on the basis of existing land allocations
– Evaluation of options for delivering and exceeding minimum housebuilding rates set out in RPG

- Encourage greater public transport connectivity.

To inform the development of this strategy a Housing Study is being undertaken - including the Urban Capacity study already identified. The work requirement identified for the Housing Study is an analysis of housing markets in the Black Country - including strategic implications, opportunities for change and lifestyle perspectives - and definition and testing of alternative strategies. The Study is also required to establish the housing requirements for maintaining or increasing the Black Country population taking into account future demographics and lifestyle choices for all incomes - including:

- the numbers of replacement and additional dwellings;
- the types of residential environment needed (including high quality new residential environments of first choice);
- density and capacity, including opportunities for new living choices (e.g. town centre living, lifestyle complexes and retirement villages), impact on schools investment, learning, leisure and health facilities and their spatial implications;

The Study will also develop spatial options based on:

- the identification of locations that provide for opportunities for change to create new residential environments - particularly quality residential locations for residents in knowledge-based work – such as adjacent to canals, landscape features, existing residential areas, in centres and on nodes served by transport corridors

- the spatial implications for achieving the decent homes standard and renewal of areas of housing stress.

2.2 Wolverhampton-Telford High Technology Corridor

The Wolverhampton-Telford High Technology Corridor offers a strategic framework for investment of RDA Single Pot resources to attract high technology and high-value-added businesses in the M54 corridor area. The current Action Plan for the three year period 2005-2008 Action identifies a programme of investment of some £41.5m. Some of the key actions identified are:

- Investment to support the development of target economic clusters:

- An advanced engineering cluster in Wolverhampton - including investment in an Integrated Engineering Support Facility
- A polymer engineering cluster in Telford - including investment in a polymer incubation/innovation centre

- Investment in physical infrastructure including:

  - Wolverhampton Science Park Phase 3 (Creative Industries Centre) to support creative industries investment and particularly spin-outs from the University of Wolverhampton's activities in Performance, Art and Design and Humanities;
  - a new ICT development centre at Priorslee in Telford to support incubation and development activities for e-business, e-learning and e-innovation;
  - conceptual development of major investment sites in Telford - the proposed 'Lakeside' Technology Park and !54 Technology Park.

- Investment in an Integrated Innovation Initiative for University of Wolverhampton students.

AWM has requested that the strategy for the Wolverhampton Telford Technology Corridor is integrated into the new economic development strategy for Telford.

The region's Cluster Action Plan and the High Technology Corridor for Wolverhampton-Telford represent significant investment capacity to support the development of knowledge economy industries in the area of the HMA. Key issues to explore further are:

- The capacity of each of the HMA local authorities (Black Country and Telford) to offer the employment sites and urban environment demanded by knowledge economy investment

- The economic relationship between Telford and the Black Country and any issues surrounding the *relative* competitiveness of the Black Country and Telford to attract knowledge economy investment

- The capacity of the Black Country, in particular, to link knowledge economy investment with the wider regeneration of the Black Country - for example, by upskilling the local labour force and attracting knowledge economy workers to live in the Black Country

2.3 Regeneration Zones

The six West Midlands Regeneration Zones are intended to offer a strategic framework to achieve this linkage between bringing forward economic development opportunity and linking this to areas of need. The South Black Country, West Birmingham Zone encompasses Sandwell and Dudley, whilst the North Black Country South Staffordshire Zone encompasses Wolverhampton and Walsall.

In terms of their policy intent, the Zones covering the Black Country offer a framework for additional investment to support the integrated regeneration of the Black Country focused on:

1. *Enhanced business support* for indigenous businesses plus new-starts - including the provision of appropriate premises and support to attract knowledge economy investment;
2. *Workforce skills development* - both basic skills training and vocational training for target growth sectors (e.g. high value added engineering, construction, public sector and retail);
3. *Strategic/priority investment sites and areas* are identified in Table B.6.

Table B.6: Regeneration Zone strategic/priority investment sites and areas

North Black Country Regeneration Zone - 'Future Foundations'	
Wolverhampton • Wolverhampton City Centre • Bilston Urban Village • !54	**Walsall** • The UDC area - including Darlaston Strategic Development Area
South Black Country Regeneration Zone - 'Arc of Opportunity'	
Dudley • Castle Hill • Dudley Town Centre • Brierley Hill	**Sandwell** • Hill Top • West Bromwich Town Centre • Junction 9 M6 • North Smethwick Canalside • Smethwick Town Centre

Source: Regeneration Zone Implementation Plans (2004/05)

4. *Economic inclusion* of those disadvantaged in the labour market - through training interventions and associated support (including voluntary and community sector activity)

There are a number of significant challenges to the Zones' capacity to deliver the integrated regeneration of the Black Country - not least:

- The limited level of resources available to the Zones to deliver a broad agenda - for example the current allocations for physical regeneration investment for 2005-08 are £12.4m for the North Black Country Zone (including the 'South Staffordshire' area of the Zone) and £30.7m for the South Black Country Zone (including the 'West Birmingham' area of the Zone);

- The capacity of the two Zones to influence strategic, integrated investment at the sub-regional level - beyond their role as a mechanism for delivery of Zone-funded interventions;

- A wide range of challenges within the sub-regional governance, policy, market, funding and physical context.

The emerging strategic framework for the Black Country should offer a valuable framework for the Zones which they should incorporate into the development of their strategies and delivery plans.

2.4 Birmingham-Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (Urban Living)

Urban Living is the Birmingham-Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder - a partnership between Sandwell MBC, Birmingham City Council, other public agencies, local registered social landlords and the two local strategic partnerships. Governance is through the Urban Living Partnership Forum with Sandwell MBC acting as accountable body.

The Urban Living Housing Market Renewal Area is located two miles north west of Birmingham City Centre and extends a further three miles west to West Bromwich in the Borough of Sandwell. The area includes Handsworth, Aston, Lozells, Winson Green, Smethwick, Langley and West Bromwich.

Unlike some of the other Pathfinders the Urban Living area is not one of abandonment or low demand in the housing market. Unlike some of the Pathfinders it is proximate to areas of current and projected economic growth (the City Centre) which could help to sustain further jobs and homes in the Pathfinder area. It does though have a complex series of housing market issues coupled with low median income levels, very high levels of multiple deprivation and the highest (in % terms) Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population of all nine Pathfinders, by some margin.

The original strategy in the Urban Living Prospectus had the following aspirations:

- The creation of a diverse, cohesive and flourishing multi-cultural neighbourhoods with their own attractions and characteristics that make people want to live, work, invest and spend their leisure time in the area
- Achieving design excellence
- Adopting a holistic approach
- Encouraging cultural diversity
- Encouraging social integration
- Achieving sustainability
- Engaging the community

The measures to meet those broad objectives included the re-rejuvenation of town centres in the area, building new affordable homes, enhancing accessibility to transport, jobs and facilities, building on economic links, and improving the strategic location of the Pathfinder area. The programme is currently providing assistance to what will probably be the last large scale clearance programme for a number of years as much of the surplus and obsolete stock will have been removed by 2005/06. The emphasis then is likely to swing towards rebuilding the market and ensuring a new and varies supply is re-introduced into the HMRA.

3.0 Local Policy and Investment Context

3.1 Wolverhampton

3.1.1 Housing Strategy

Wolverhampton's Housing Strategy 04/05-06/07 (October 2004 version) identifies the following strategic priorities:

1. *to make all neighbourhoods safe, popular and desirable*

2. *to ensure an adequate supply of housing which meets needs and aspirations* with key issues identified as:

- increased need/demand for social housing alongside a reduction in the City's social housing stock - reflected in growing council housing waiting lists (17.9% in 03/04) and increasing homelessness (15.7% increase since 01/02)

- increased need/demand for subsidised housing with house price inflation 02-04 of 60.4%

- increased demand for single person housing

3. *to ensure that people with special needs or who are vulnerable have appropriate housing and support* - with a high proportion of people with special needs in the City (with limiting long-term illness (31% of households include someone with a disability) and a growing older population - with a third of households pensioner households

4. *to ensure that the stock is in good condition* with issues of:

- approx. 52% of homes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard in 2004 and almost all properties within the stock classified as potentially non-decent by 2010 - and a number of failing or unsuccessful council estates. The Council has a major demolition programme to renew much of the failing social housing stock to be replaced with multi-tenure provision. Improving the Council's CPA service is also a priority with a CPA score in 2003 of 1 out of 4.

- poor conditions in parts of the private sector (which makes up 67% of the housing stock - of which 12% are unfit or have been vacant for more than six months (HIP return 2003)) - including the private rented sector (which makes up 6.6% of the stock) (private stock condition survey to be commissioned in 04/05) - with some housing markets dysfunctional and having the potential for failure

The Housing Strategy identifies six housing areas on the basis of grouped neighbourhoods - defined according to housing price, property type and tenure - to assist in the planning of interventions. These are identified in Table B.7.

Table B.7: Wolverhampton Housing Areas

Housing Area	Location	Housing Character
West		more affluent area with some poor council blocks
Central	St Peters, Blakenhall, Graiseley, Heath Town	area of low quality private sector pre 1919 terraces) and poor condition Council blocks
Bilston	North and East	area with low average house prices, poor condition older stock and unpopular council blocks
Wednesfield & Fallings Park	north east of City Centre	some pockets of poor private rented and poor environment and housing). Wednesfield South PFI
South East	East Park, Ettingshall, Spring Vale	lower average house prices and poor condition local authority stock in East Park
North	Oxley, Bushbury, Low Hill	high level of deprivation in low hill and vacant properties

Source: Wolverhampton City Council Housing Strategy 04/05-06/07

Eight *Urban Regeneration Areas (URAs)* have been identified in which redevelopment is underway and where options for future investment/tenure/employment and development of sustainable communities is being progressed:

- Low Hill
- Bushbury Triangle
- East Park
- Portobello
- Villiers Estate/Bilston
- Ettingshall
- Blakenhall Gardens
- Graisely

BME Issues - The strategy highlights the need to understand and address the experience of BME communities in neighbourhoods in relation to any work undertaken. The BME population is prevalent in poor quality private sector housing and less popular council estates. Area based initiatives (Neighbourhood Management and New Deal for Communities) are identified a the key interventions to address BME housing concerns - in addition to action to mainstream equality identified in the Housing Services Improvement Plan (2003). A BME housing strategy is to be produced in 2004/05.

3.1.2 Housing Investment Programme

The HRA Business Plan 2002 stated that several estates, mostly being flatted estates, had no demand as follows:

1. Large parts of Heath Town
2. Blakenhall Gardens
3. The Mayfields
4. Portobello high-rise
5. Lower Low Hill/Busbury Triangle/Three Tuns
6. Ettingshall
7. Bradley

Plans were in place to rehouse residents and demolish most to the surplus accommodation identified and for a rate of 200 demolitions per year to be sustained over 2003 – 08. It is working with RSLs and private developers to generally replace unviable stock with sustainable developments. At this stage [2002] it said that much work needed to be done to understand the housing market and the implications of decommissioning Council stock.

The financial analysis carried out as part of Wolverhampton's option appraisal showed that £150m needed to be spent by 2012 to meet the DHS and 'the aspirational standard of the City Council and its residents'. The authority has subsequently pursued the ALMO route in order to secure additional resources.

3.1.3 ALMO Delivery Plan

Wolverhampton Homes has an additional allocation of £288m (conditional on achieving a 2* rating) to be spent on reaching the DHS by 2010 from 2006/07 - with the remaining finance required to meet a total investment requirement of £400m (£112m) coming from the annual capital investment programme. During the period of renewal, it anticipates that sales will reduce the Council stock by approximately 500 per year and demolitions by around 100 per year. The ALMO plans to spend at least £60m per year in this period, with a peak of £86-87m in 2007/08 – 2008/9. The bulk of the programme is internal works with £16m for environmental works, £17m allocated for "sustainability" and £25m for "other".

The Council state that the ALMO will have a significant impact in delivering regeneration, contributing to sustainable neighbourhoods, community safety and environment, job creation, employment and increased training opportunities. The ALMO bid document states that the ALMO Delivery Plan will inform the second stage of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. It says that "the ALMO has a real opportunity to both influence and deliver neighbourhood renewal, and the potential to promote and deliver some more innovative approaches piloted through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. It also envisages that there will be local training and job opportunities and local sourcing of materials having a "major impact on the local economy.

The Council retains responsibility for housing strategy, by providing information on the work of the ALMO, demand trends and other information needed for strategic decisions. It will develop an HRA Business Plan that links repairs and capital improvements to a comprehensive programme and develop partnering arrangements for delivery of the programme. It reports that further work has been undertaken to strengthen the strategic function "through the Council's Regeneration and Transportation cluster, which maximises the regeneration opportunity that housing investment can bring".

3.1.4 Neighbourhood Renewal Activity

Neighbourhood Management is identified as the major intervention for disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the key strategic tool for delivery of the City's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. There are seven neighbourhood management pilot areas in operation in the City - plus the All Saints and Blakenhall New Deal for Communities area (ABCD) will become a Neighbourhood Management pilot. The pilots deliver actions in the national neighbourhood renewal 'floor target' areas (housing and environment, crime and community safety, health, employment, and education) plus access to services.

Wolverhampton's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocation for 2005/06 is £5.928m which - assuming an equal split of funding between the seven pilot areas, would mean just over £0.847m per area.

There is recognition of need for comprehensive strategies for neighbourhood renewal which address wider economic, social and physical problems as well as housing issues. The Council proposes a variety of mechanisms to achieve housing renewal where there are areas of unpopular or unsustainable housing - with strategies prepared to guide neighbourhood renewal based on principles of:

– Maintaining and reusing existing land and buildings were possible

- Working in partnership with local community and private and public agencies to identify, target and promote renewal initiatives and co-ordinate action
- Ensuring high quality of design through development briefs etc
- Achieving high densities on suitably located sites whilst ensuring sufficient recreational open space and other important community facilities
- Achieving a sustainable mix of market, affordable and special needs housing

Sites where housing renewal is currently taking place or is programmed are:

- The Mayfield, Willenhall Road, Old Heath
- Bushbury Triangle
- Portobello Flats, New Street & South Street

Areas identified as likely to give rise to a significant amount of housing renewal - with large-scale demolition programmes already underway (focused on Blakenhall Gardens and Fourth and Fifth Avenues) are:

- All Saints and Blakenhall Community Development New Deal Area (master plan produced identifying key levers for change and priority areas for action including Blakenhall Gardens and the All Saints residential area)

- Low Hill Action Plan area (an action plan and development brief being prepared to guide the redevelopment of the area)

Further areas are expected to be added to the housing renewal programme over the life of the plan.

All Saints and Blakenhall New Deal for Communities (ABCD)

The 'All Saints and Blakenhall' New Deal for Communities programme has been allocated £53.5 million for a ten-year integrated programme (2001-2011) to address crime, unemployment, housing conditions, educational attainment and health levels. The area has 970 council owned properties - 80% of which are classed as non-decent due to heating and window problems. However, the condition of private sector housing is the biggest challenge for the ABCD area - representing market failure. Over 50% of the area's residents are from BME groups.

Strategic priorities identified in the original delivery plan are:

1- Regeneration of Private Sector Housing
2- Blakenhall Gardens Redevelopment
3- Fuel Poverty Action Plan programme
4- Addressing specific needs of BME communities
5- Waste Management and sustainable environment

Table B.8 presents the strategic priorities for the programme and priority actions as identified from the Housing Strategy 04/05-06/07.

Table B.8: All Saints and Blakenhall New Deal for Communities Programme (2001-20011)

Strategic Objectives	Key Issues	Priority Actions	Resources
SO1: Regeneration of Private Sector Housing (Particularly in All Saints)	No. of unfit, derelict, empty and unimproved properties in the private sector – believed to be much higher than the City average	Significant redevelopment plus refurbishment proposed (neighbourhood renewal assessment being undertaken) Introduction of private rented sector support services	Resources to be identified
SO2: Blakenhall Gardens Redevelopment	Low demand in public sector housing – high turnover rates [37.8%] compared to 15.6% City average. Unpopular multi-storey tower blocks.	Development of an action plan for the area including demolition of 5 council-owned tower blocks	£298,000 – NDC Project approval [Feb 2003]
SO3: Fuel Poverty Action Programme	Poor heating and insulation in all housing [20-25%] thought to be below minimum SAP rating - 60	Cross tenure programme	£1.37m - NDC Project approval [Feb 2003 – Mar 05]
SO4: Addressing the Specific Needs of BME communities	BME representation in various sectors of housing with concentration in poorer quality housing particularly private sector	Racial Equality Strategy Prepared	To be identified
SO5: Waste Management and Sustainable Environments	Lower satisfaction ratings by residents with area appearance compared with England average [65% compared with 85%]	Review existing and establish new contract for waste management /environmental services	To be identified

Source: NDC Delivery Plan

3.1.5 Housing Land Supply

Key factors relating to housing land supply in Wolverhampton are as follows:

- RPG11 (1998) identified a requirement for Wolverhampton of 10,100 new dwellings for the period 1991-2011.

- The RPG requirement plus 1,170 additional dwellings required to replace anticipated demolitions in urban regeneration areas, give a total annual requirement of 740 additional dwellings.
- The current Revised Deposit UDP identifies sufficient housing land supply to meet the RPG targets for the period 2003-2011 (Table B.9).
- More than half of the supply is on unidentified sites reflecting the fact that a significant proportion of the sites will be on windfall sites that come available on former employment land as businesses close or relocate.
- The Council has also adopted a policy of unrestricted release of previously developed sites on the basis that a restrictive policy could potentially create an under-supply of housing land following 2011 when a more challenging target of land supply for 825 dwellings p.a. comes into play.
- More than 90% of completions are expected to be on previously-developed land (the RPG target is 99%).
- More than a quarter of total housing capacity is located in Wolverhampton City Centre - on mixed use and single use housing sites. There is evidence of a strong housing market in the City Centre with 103 dwelling completions 2003-2004, 227 dwellings under construction as of April 2004, 500 dwellings with outstanding planning permissions and 153 will full permission.
- Urban Villages are also being developed that will change the provision of housing in Wolverhampton:

  - St. John's Urban Village is a mixed use development including 500 new units of accommodation of which 20% will be affordable. This programme is progressing.

  - Bilston Urban Village is a major mixed use development to include 1,300 new homes. Any development is unlikely before 2009.

- RPG11 estimated that Wolverhampton's affordable housing need to be in the region of 4,400 dwellings over the period 1991 to 2011 - representing 46% of the housing allocation.
- On the basis of the housing needs survey, the Council has identified a need for 415 additional units of affordable housing each year over the period 2002-2007 (total 2,075) to meet an increasing need for affordable housing amongst first time buyers, single people, the elderly and other local income households. In addition, the Council has identified a need for a 30 unsubsidised, small "starter market units" per annum.
- This need will be met through negotiation of affordable housing on all suitable private sector housing developments larger than one hectare or comprising 25 dwellings with:
  - 20% of units on sites within the City Centre inset area
  - 25% on sites outside the City Centre inset area; and
  - 30% on housing renewal sites

3.1.6 Economic Development

Wolverhampton's Economic Strategy is being updated.

Recent research into the economic prospects for Wolverhampton published in 2001[4] identified:

[4] Prism Research (2001) Wolverhampton Economic Prospects: a report to Wolverhampton Task Force

- an expectation of growth in business output of 18% by 2011 (substantially below regional and national projections) and a decline in total employment of 3,900 jobs.
- That the Borough is under-performing on the main economic indicators at typically around 10% behind the UK. This is attributed to the Borough's bias towards sectors of employment decline, weak performance by existing businesses, a poorly developed entrepreneurial culture, a lack of innovation and investment and a lack of impact achieved from inward investment
- concerns about the regional priority sectors selected for targeting by Black Country partners and recommended the targeting of sectors which are more 'job rich' (e.g. food and drink, retail, education and health)
- that the fruition of the regeneration plans for the City Centre are identified as having the potential to contribute significantly to retail development in the Borough. The central importance of the University to the City's economy is also highlighted
- gross in-commuting figure to the Borough of nearly 43,000 - with a population catchment of 30m within a two-hour drive-time and good road and railway connections
- a need to increase the number of jobs filled by local residents - with educational attainment amongst the workforce behind regional and national averages
- a potential "hollowing out" of the workforce resulting from demographic trends and potential loss of skills and experience from older age groups.
- a substantial property supply for economic uses, but that assessment is required of the quality and availability of the land supply as regards the property requirements of growth sector businesses. A predominance of brownfield and contaminated land and the bias towards industrial space are identified as key issues.

A study into the employment land capacity in the Borough (GVA Grimley, 1997) identified:

- that due to the City's tightly drawn administrative boundary and green belt restrictions, the provision of a balanced portfolio of employment land will increasingly rely on sites outside the City boundary
- the importance of land to the north of Wolverhampton in meeting the premium quality employment land needs of the north Black Country (at Wobaston Road and Hilton Main in South Staffordshire). The South Staffordshire Local Plan and Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan are identified as providing up to 100 ha of high quality employment land to the north of Wolverhampton - of which 50ha is a Major Investment Site and 50ha a Regional Investment Site.

Key locations for employment development are identified as follows:

A449 Stafford Road Corridor

The UDP identifies that employment growth will be promoted principally at key nodal points located on three of four the strategic regeneration corridors identified in the Area Development Framework for the Borough:

- The A449 Stafford Road corridor to the north of the City Centre along the line of the West Coast Main Line corridor out towards the northern periphery of the conurbation and regionally important investment sites: Wolverhampton Business Park, Wobaston Road and Hilton Cross.

The Wolverhampton-Telford Technology Corridor and its proposed investments in Wolverhampton Science Park is likely to further strengthen the role of this corridor

- The Bilston corridor to the south east of the Borough and the Bilston strategic regeneration area

- The Wednesfield corridor from the City Centre along the A4124 into Wednesfield and then into Walsall - passing the site of the major New Cross Hospital Development and an industrial zone to the south

The Stafford Road corridor is identified as being of particular importance as it contains a number of the City's larger employers including the University of Wolverhampton and Wolverhampton Business and Science Parks. The corridor's excellent communication links, high quality development opportunities and existing businesses are highlighted as offering potential to attract high profile, growth sector cluster organisations and support to initiatives in the Wolverhampton-Telford High Technology Corridor.

Wolverhampton City Centre
The Black Country Study identifies Wolverhampton City Centre as one of four strategic centres in the Black Country - with its particular USP being to build on its University and R&D base. The City Centre is identified as potentially leading investment in centres the Black Country as a trigger for wider transformation - with the majority of developers consulted preferring Wolverhampton. Investments in Wolverhampton City Centre would complement recent investment in the creative industries and science park plus further investment in the university recommended by the Black Country Study.

The development of a draft 'City Centre Strategy and Action Plan' (June 2004) responds to the increasing competition from other centres for regeneration investment. New residential development in the City Centre (Wolverhampton Urban Village) is a key feature of the plans for the City Centre - with the aim of achieving 80% market housing and 20% affordable housing. Provisions are also made for improving the quality of the environment and access to the City Centre.

3.1.7 Transport Priorities
The UDP identifies a focus for transport investment on the Borough's identified Strategic Regeneration Areas and Corridors - including those corridors identified as a focus for employment development. Priority major transport schemes including Strategic Park and Ride sites on the edge of the conurbation to serve commuters travelling into Wolverhampton and elsewhere in the West Midlands conurbation.

3.1.8 Urban Form
Wolverhampton has developed a traditional city form with a clear urban centre (Wolverhampton City Centre) at the heart of the Borough with concentric development along radial transport routes. The Borough's Revised Deposit UDP makes provision for

- high standards of design
- an urban structure which provides for improved access and movement
- improved environmental quality and public realm improvements

- community safety
- access for people with disabilities
- nature conservation
- sustainable development
- public art

3.2 Walsall

3.2.1 Housing Strategy

Walsall's Housing Strategy has four substantive strategic housing objectives:

- Urban renaissance and creating sustainable communities
- Improving the quality of housing stock and providing safe environments
- Community cohesion, capitalising on cultural diversity and promoting social inclusion
- Ensuring all tenants, social and private, get an excellent service from their landlord

Objective 1 Urban renaissance and creating sustainable communities involves "creating a range of quality housing environments that offer housing choice". The strategy has a key target "to achieve a balanced housing market we will ensure that 90% of all new homes to be built, is on previously developed land". Priorities listed to achieve this objective are

- Implementing the housing proposals within the NDC area and using this as a model for each priority Neighbourhood Renewal Area
- Developing the Black Country and South Telford HMRA
- Supporting quality developments that create choice and opportunity to move up the property ladder
- Support for "targeted new affordable housing provision without exacerbating pockets of low demand"
- Retaining economically active people in the area.

Objective 2 Improving the quality of housing stock and providing safe environments is intended to deliver the decent homes standard and to create safe and secure environments. The key target is to achieve the DHS in all social housing by 2010, with a 45% reduction by 2006. Priorities listed under this objective also include private sector initiatives, including:

- A private sector programme of neighbourhood renewal assessments (NRA)
- Completion of NRAs in Birchills and Alumwell
- Implementation of a private landlords accreditation scheme
- Projects aimed at reducing crime and disorder

Objective 3 Community cohesion, capitalising on cultural diversity and promoting social inclusion is described as being about addressing the needs of specific client groups and ensuring fairness and equality in service delivery. Key targets to meet this objective are successful implementation of the Supporting People programme and the provision of 50% of housing advice in locally based settings by 2007. Stated priorities to achieve this objective are provision of a flexible range of tenure options, additional supported housing and floating support, direct access service provision for single people, development of as registered of adapted properties and development of a BME action plan.

Objective 4 of ensuring that all tenants, social and private, get an excellent service from their landlord contains as its key target ensuring that two transfer organisations (Walsall Housing Group and WATMOS Housing Co-operative) deliver the promises made to tenants in the offer documents at the time of transfer. Key priorities to achieve this are to implement a post transfer strategic housing structure within the authority, to monitor performance and liaise with WHG and WATMOS Housing Co-operative and to develop the role of the Walsall Housing Partnership.

3.2.2 Housing Investment Programme

In March 2003 Walsall MBC transferred its stock of 24,640 dwellings to two RSLs. They are

1. WATMOS – a group of 8 TMOs managing 1,840 properties between them located in Birchills, Bloxwich, Leamore, Palfrey and Pelsall; and

2. Walsall Housing Group (made up of five Housing Trusts) to which 22,800 homes were transferred covering five areas:

   - Aldridge and Brownhills (4,602 units)– Aldridge, Pheasey, Hatherton, Rushall, Shekfield, Walsall Wood, Pelsall and Brownhills
   - Bloxwich (5,497 units) – Leamore, Harden, Goscote, Blakenhall and Bloxwich
   - Central Walsall (4,234 units) – Pleck, Caldmore, Chuckery, Delies, Alumwell, Bichills, North Walsall and Ryecroft
   - Darlaston (3,524 units) – Moxley, Darlaston, Roughhey, Bailey
   - Willenhall (3,533 units) – Wilenhall, New Invention and South Heath

WHG was set up with the aims of improving service standards, raising funding for housing investment; and becoming a major contributor to the regeneration of Walsall. The group plans to spend £240m over a 7-year period and as at January 2005 is reported to be ahead of its programme. The group is focused on asset management options and decisions but sees a future role for itself on development and a wide range of community initiatives. A partnership with the Council was envisaged at transfer with the group assisting WMBC to assess housing need and contributing to its Housing Strategy.

At transfer WHG state that the stock was not to a decent standard and that "our stock profile does not adequately match the needs of our current or future residents". It also envisages significant reductions due to Right to Buy sales and demolitions. In 2003/04 there were 828 RTB sales at a mean average market value of £49,000. In future it envisages having an asset base which will support borrowing to fund development of new homes. It proposal to start building new homes and re-shaping housing markets in key estates, with its first capital grants secured, by 2008 and to have identified opportunities to work outside of the Borough.

Key projects for 2005/06 include regeneration and land-use master planning, neighbourhood profiling and development of frameworks for investment choices in later years. Of the 5 constituent trusts

- Bloxwich Trust has been highlighted in carrying out housing market restricting through selective demolition and rebuilding in conjunction with Walsall NDC. This has commenced with demolitions in the Taylor Rd and Walker Rd areas. Consultation is taking place on new properties, play areas and environmental improvements. A master planning exercise is underway for Goscote "in a bid to address the problems which have been faced by the area for many years".
- The Wilenhall Trust has commenced regeneration in Short Heath, with the demolition of tower blocks (Bannington, Fairview and Bannington Courts) to develop a mix of homes for rent and sale.
- The Darlaston Trust has commenced work on a programme to demolish 120 houses (beginning in Harrowby Road) which are unsafe for habitation which will make way for redevelopment of this part of the area.
- Aldridge and Brownhills Trust has demolished empty tower blocks (Silver Courts Area) and is seeking to re-use the land for residential development appropriate to local need

Figure B.9: Walsall Housing Group - Spend Profile, Major Works, 2005/06

Aldridge / Brownhills	£13,603,874
Bloxwich	£10,301,457
Central Walsall	£9,553,530
Darlaston	£8,532,099
Willenhall	£7,751,772
Total	**£49,742,732**

Source: Walsall Housing Group

3.2.3 Neighbourhood Renewal

Walsall's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy identifies that the most deprived wards are concentrated in Walsall Town Centre and to the west and north of the Borough (Darlaston, Willenhall and Bloxwich) - joined by areas of less severe deprivation. There is a clear split between traditional industry, older housing and environmental degradation of west of Borough and more recent urban development (much of which commuter dormitories) to the east of the Borough.

The Strategy identifies nine priority neighbourhoods for renewal - ranked as the most deprived in the Borough - which are concentrated in central/west central and parts of the western area of the Borough:

- Leamore/Harden
- Ryecroft/Coalpool
- Goscote
- Beechdale
- North Walsall
- Alumwell
- Caldmore
- North Blakenhall
- Rough Hay

Walsall's total Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocation for 2005/06 is £7.122m (see Figure B.9) which would give an allocation of £0.791m per priority neighbourhood assuming an even resource split.

Two additional neighbourhoods identified as being ‘vulnerable to decline’ are also identified:

- Bentley
- South Willenhall

The Walsall New Deal programme serves the area of Blakenhall, Bloxwich East and Leamore.

3.2.4 Housing Land Supply

The focus of Walsall UDP housing policies are on the improvement of the existing stock wherever feasible and addressing vacancies in the existing stock. This includes improvements to the Council stock and investment in private sector renewal areas through the Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (NRA) procedure.

Demolition of the existing stock will only be favoured - except where it is required to make way for other desirable development schemes - where any other solution would not represent good value for money or would be environmentally unsatisfactory.

Where appropriate environmental enhancement schemes will be carried out, and dwellings will be converted into smaller or larger units. The Council also seeks to reduce vacancies in the existing stock.

RPG 11 sets a target for 10,100 additional dwellings to be provided over the period 1991-2011 (on average 505 dwellings per year). The UDP identifies sufficient land supply for this provision. Identification of land for new housing is focused on:

- Reuse of previously developed land
- Locations with good accessibility by a choice of means of transport and to local facilities (close of town, district and local centres)
- Utilising existing infrastructure capacity
- The potential to build new communities to support physical and social infrastructure
- Taking account of physical and environmental constraints

The plan identifies that 80% of the housing land supply (1991-2011) is on previously developed land (compared to an RPG target of 79%). This is based on a higher rate of brownfield development (83%) compared to the period 1991 to 2001 which involved 68% of completions on brownfield land. Five Greenfield sites are proposed for development - including three additional sites to the 1995 plan: West of Clayhanger, Berryfields, Aldridge and Lichfield Road/King George Crescent, Rushall.

1997 Advice on the RPG11 review identified a target of 3,600 affordable homes for Walsall over the period 1991-2011. The requirement for remainder of the Plan period (2002-2011) is 1,841 homes - an average of 180 per year. The UDP identifies that 176 affordable homes are being provided per year.

3.2.5 Economic Development

A SWOT analysis (SQW, 2004) of Walsall undertaken to inform the development of the Borough's strategic framework[5] identified that the Borough:

- has a higher productivity rate compared to the regional average with total output per head growing faster than regional and national rates
- has a high dependence on manufacturing and limited presence of knowledge-based and high value-added sectors - although a higher proportion of its workforce is employed in knowledge-based manufacturing compared to the regional and national average - particularly in Medium High Tech manufacturing
- has an extremely limited presence in identified growth sectors - although it is currently enjoying growth in its high skilled knowledge based services sector - with higher than average regional growth predicted in business services sectors 2001-2011
- a greater number of industrial and business premises compared to the rest of the Black Country
- the lowest rate of FDI in the Black Country

Barriers to growth identified to be addressed include: low levels of consumer demand in the local economy which have limited the competitiveness of the Borough as a location for retail and leisure investment, poor quality land supply and infrastructure and low educational attainment. Key priorities identified are to enhance the quality of the Borough's infrastructure and to regenerate the Town Centre as a key wealth generator for the Borough.

The majority of the Borough's key employment sites are located in the vicinity of Junction 10 although a couple of additional key employment sites are to the north east of the Borough in the vicinity of Brownhills and Aldridge town centres. The Borough's best quality employment sites are located:

- at Newtown on the north eastern periphery
- Aldridge District Centre
- Reedswood
- Walsall Enterprise Park Pleck Glassworks site
- East of M6 Junction 10
- James Bridge

Walsall Urban Regeneration Company - announced in December 2003 - has bold ambitions to raise the town's profile and transform the basis of its economic and cultural viability. The UDC's area of operation covers 780 hectares of the Borough - including the Town Centre; the Waterways development; Darlaston Strategic Development Area - offering a prime location for business development next to the M6; Pleck and Alumwell with its major PFI scheme to expand the Manor Hospital; Green Lane and Leamore Business Parks. A masterplan is being commissioned to provide a strategic framework, highlighting the canal network as a major artery of Walsall's regeneration over the next 10 to 15 years. (This is not expected to be available until Year end 2004).

[5] SQW (2004) 'Stepping Up for Change: a new Strategy and Action Plan for developing Walsall'

3.3 Sandwell

3.3.1 Housing Strategy

The strategic housing aims of Sandwell reflect concern about these issues. These aims are:

- To improve the quality of residential environments within the Borough
- To improve the range, quality and choice of housing available
- To bring all social housing to a decent standard by 2010
- To ensure that no one is deprived by virtue of where they live
- To achieve a step change in the quality and performance of housing services.

The overall analysis of the housing market with the housing strategy is that

- Low demand is generic and extends across tenures
- Low income and low levels of investment have resulted in restricted choices and high level of disrepair
- House prices are low in a band of neighbourhoods which correspond with low demand in the council stock
- Retaining BME communities will be vital to the future of Sandwell over the next 20 years.

Sandwell's Community Plan (the 'Sandwell Plan') identifies objectives to improve the existing stock, promote choice of accommodation in terms of tenure and affordability and promote mixed-use developments. Key issues are:

- Dealing with the stock of unfit dwellings which are concentrated in pre-1919 terrace housing representing 26% of the total stock. The Council is committed to a holistic approach to area-based regeneration to address housing renewal needs.

- Achieving a better mix of housing supply, by reducing the surplus of one bedroom flats and larger properties of insufficient quality to attract demand and including higher quality and larger homes. Creation of mixed communities is seen as important through a new housing mix – particularly on Council-owned sites

- Out-movement from the Borough (greater than any of the other Black Country Boroughs) – to the "more affluent" Black Country boroughs – although (young) professionals are being attracted into the Urban Living area

- There is substantial developer interest in the Borough and the number of completions are identified as outstripping the Black Country average (doubled from 500/600 to 1,100 per annum including on windfall and difficult sites – e.g. 900 homes being built on the Cape Brewery site in the Urban Living area) – with houses being sold to graduates and professionals.

3.3.2 Housing Investment Programme

In terms of its own stock Sandwell has pursued the ALMO option to enable it to meet the decent homes standard by 2010. However the Housing Needs and Demand Study (2002) indicated a projected surplus of 2,000 social rented units, with this surplus being mainly confined to unpopular flats. The Council has therefore decided that whilst upgrading the accommodation that it will retain, it will also address the imbalance in supply by reducing the numbers of unpopular property types such that its overall stock will fall from 35,000 to 28,500 by 2010. The ALMO will generate sufficient resources to meet the decent homes standard. However the HRA Business Plan also pointed out that "the scale of oversupply of social housing in Sandwell's local housing market and the extent of private sector renewal required means that addressing the investment needs of the Council's housing stock alone will not be sufficient".

The Asset Management Strategy for the Council's stock includes taking a consistent approach to rank priorities and secure funding for all programmes, including tackling obsolete homes through clearance. The stock condition survey completed in 2003 found that 74% of the stock did not meet the decent homes standard. The Council calculated that the cost of meeting the standard was £535m, of which £411m would be sought from Government through establishment of an ALMO. Whilst the resources required for the DHS will be made available to the ALMO, it should be noted that the survey said that "considerable financing will be required to improve landscaping, security and communal lighting to improve landscaping, off street parking, security and communal lighting to ensure the long-term sustainability of properties and estates". Expenditure is also required on aids and adaptations for disabled persons and the clearance of obsolete homes. The Council's Decent Homes Strategy also reports tenant demand for additional improvements including porches and canopies, extensions and conservatories, ground floor WCs and walk in showers and well maintained lifts in blocks of flats.

Property types identified as problematic are high rise flats, bed-sits, non-traditional and designated defective homes. Whilst the latter are reported to be in many cases very popular the costs of 'reinstating' them is high and has to be evaluated against alternative options such as replacing them or removing them. There is a three stage decision making process to planning and prioritising investment to achieve the DHS as follows:

1. Community sustainability test – asking, is the home in a sustainable location?
2. Value for money tests – asking, is the home is a sustainable best value investment?
3. Decent Homes Standard – asking, is the home decent already and will it be so by 2010 without investment?

In the case of larger interventions to turn around communities not considered sustainable, such as Greets Green NDC and the Urban Living Area investment is part of a multi-faceted approach to improving the sustainability of communities. Housing investment will aim to achieve the DHS in homes that have a long term future and require investment to reach the standard.

3.3.3 ALMO Delivery Plan

Sandwell Homes is an ALMO which has secured an allocation of an additional £349m to invest in the stock of Sandwell MBC condition on achieving a 2* rating. Of this £20m is available for environmental works and the remainder for the Decent Homes Standard - with 67% of the stock estimated to be below the standard in April 2004. This is in addition to existing anticipated resources of £183m in the period 2005/06 and 2010/11. The ALMO plans to invest in stock for which there is long term demand whilst reducing the stock in specific areas – through sales, demolition and remodelling, from 35,000 to 28,500 by 2010.

It is planned to deliver 85% of the programmed spend through strategic partnerships with large firms capable of dealing with £7-10m per year work packages. SMEs will be contracted to deliver specialist works and local work packages. Sandwell Homes sees this as stimulating the construction market and promoting local job opportunities. The peak years in its Delivery Plan are 2006/07 – 2009/10 when approximately £80m will be spent each year.

Sandwell states that it has taken care to ensure that every home in which it invests has a long term future through three housing investment decision making processes

1. An assessment of whether or not the community is sustainable
2. An assessment of whether or not the building is sustainable and its improvement would offer value for money
3. The level and nature of improvements need to reach the DHS

The ALMO will be responsible for the delivery of this programme and the management and day to day maintenance of the stock. The local authority will have housing strategy and regeneration responsibilities, together with commissioning and monitoring, supporting people and private sector housing. It will retain capacity for housing research, analysis, and planning to identify needs and to deliver plans to meet housing and corporate goals. This means that the authority should steer the ALMO's investment plans in a way that is consistent with housing, corporate and community strategies.

3.3.4 Neighbourhood/Housing Renewal

Sandwell's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy notes the high levels of deprivation across the Borough rather than just pockets. Neighbourhood renewal activity is focused at the town level in each of the six towns (Rowley Regis, West Bromwich, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and Oldbury) - with responsibility held by six Town Teams. Provision is made for the development of six town strategies for housing to cover local public and private housing markets and action plans to address housing demand and conditions. Towns Plans have been developed to date for Rowley Regis, West Bromwich and Smethwick.

Six neighbourhood management pilots have been established - one in each of the six towns. Sandwell's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocation for 2005/06 is by far the highest of the Black Country authorities' at £13.773m – reflecting the scale of deprivation in the Borough. This allows for £2.296m of NRF resource for each of the six neighbourhood management pilots (assuming an equal split).

Area based initiatives in the Borough for neighbourhood renewal include:

- Investment in the Lyng Urban Village; and
- Greets Green New Deal for Communities programme

Greets Green New Deal for Communities

The Greets Green New Deal for Communities programme plans to target £59.8m of investment on the themes of housing, education, lifelong learning and young people.

The area has a high level of unfitness in the housing stock (11.7% of private homes) – with a concentration in the Edith Street/Chapman Street Housing Assessment area of 200 unfit private sector homes (declared for clearance? – confirm).

An estimated £70m is identified as required to deliver the NDC Housing Plan – over a longer period that the programme lifespan of ten years. The NDC proposes to fund 20% of this investment with 80% levered from other funding sources. The local authorities limited financial capacity to deliver this supported is noted and that funding arrangements will need to be maximised through other sources – with the HMA, private sector developers and housing associations identified. It is hoped that the HMA will provide £8m to £9m over the two-year period 2004/06.

The NDC plans £14m of NDC programme expenditure over the life of the programme (2000-2010) (see Table B.10) on housing and urban form investment with strategic objectives to:

- Tackle unfit and poor quality housing – through substantial clearance and redevelopment/refurbishment. (Approximately £1.18m is identified for home improvement activities for the first seven years of the programme).
- Raise the quality and scope for choice of housing through the development of 700 new homes. (Approximately £7.2m has been committed up to 06/07 for the development of new 'Lifestyle Apartments' at Hambletts Road).
- Achieve new standards of housing and neighbourhood management (with funding for a neighbourhood renewal manager, a housing implementation team, a repairs and maintenance team and support for new council tenants)
- Ensure the full and active engagement of residents in decision making
- Raise the quality of the physical environment

Table B.10: Planned and Actual Expenditure on Housing and the Urban Form (£000s)

00/01-03/04	**04/05**	**05/06**	**06/07**	**07/08**	**08/09**	**09/10**	**Total committed**	**Total actual (03/04)**	**Total all years**
744	750	970	970	3,711	3,931	2,391	13,263	744	14,008

Source: NDC Delivery Plan

3.3.5 Housing Land Supply

The RPG target for housing development in the Borough is 18,550 dwellings to 2011. (It should be noted that the UDP review process has identified that demolition rates in the Borough exceed RPG estimates – giving a greater replacement requirement). The UDP identifies sufficient housing supply to meet this target - approximately two-thirds of which is identified capacity. A high proportion of these are on windfall sites – including difficult to develop sites. A key issue for the Borough is the quality of the land supply and environment for residential development.

According to the proposals map, housing sites are scattered around the Borough - with some concentrations in the central western part of the Borough around Tipton and the metro corridor. Other concentrations can be identified at the north eastern edge of the Borough (Wednesbury) and in Smethwick/Cape Hill.

A key issue for the Borough is resolve environmental quality issues - with the Home Ownership Study indicating that three quarters of those expecting to move again would leave Sandwell - most commonly to obtain a better environment. A particular issue is conflicts between residential and industrial uses. A process of reallocating industrial land for residential uses is being undertaken. Where conflicts still occur, other mechanisms to mitigate these will need to be implemented.

Housing affordability is a key issue in Sandwell - with the 2000 Sandwell Housing Market Study identifying that over 40% of households had gross annual incomes of less than £10,000 - meaning that many households are unable to purchase a home even at the lower end of the open market. The UDP identifies a need for 4,800 affordable homes to be provided in the Borough between 1998 and 2011.

A key issue for the Borough is to supply types of affordable housing that meet people's needs. The Housing Market Study 2000 indicated that the supply of social housing (34% of the Borough's housing stock) exceeded demand because the type of accommodation did not meet needs of households (e.g. extended BME households and vulnerable households) and because of environmental factors which reduce demand (e.g. environmental quality, lack of jobs and poor educational facilities).

3.3.6 Economic Development

An Economic Development Strategy is currently being prepared for Sandwell (as the current Strategy is now five years old). The Sandwell Plan is the current information source identified for Sandwell's Economic Development policies. The 'State of Sandwell' report used to inform the development of the Plan identifies:

- 40% of Sandwell's resident workers work outside Sandwell
- The local economy is slowly diversifying and the Borough lags a long way behind the national average as regards service industry jobs - although employment figures for West Bromwich ward indicate some success in development the role of the town centre
- Local employment has contracted with some areas experiencing high job losses (e.g. Tipton Green which lost 27% of jobs 1998-2003)
- Concentrations of particularly high rates of unemployment in some areas (e.g. between Smethwick and West Bromwich)

Sandwell is identified as being a key employment base for the sub-region – employing people living outside the Borough.

Most of the Borough is within the 'Arc of Opportunity' Regeneration Zone.

The UDP identifies the following strategic regeneration areas for the Borough:

- ➢ West Bromwich town centre - to physically restructure as the main town centre in the Borough for economic investment (Master plan) – focused on retail and employment uses (rather than residential). Alongside adjacent neighbourhood renewal initiatives - the Lyng Housing Estate and Greets Green New Deal for Communities. There would a tension between the proposed Metro link between Wednesbury and Brierley Hill and plans for the development of the Borough's town centres.

- Hill Top - to maximise the access opportunities created by the Black Country New Road and the Midland Metro. A large area are the core of the conurbation identified as a significant opportunity for brownfield economic development thereby alleviating pressure for peripheral development.

- M5 Junction 1 in North Smethwick - identified as a location for major leisure development to complement existing leisure uses as a new focus for the Borough.

- M5 Junction 2 (south of Oldbury town centre) identified as a site for industrial development. Considering leisure development on Birchley Playing Field site.

- Bescot site on northern edge of Borough (Walsall) identified for freight interchange or industrial use although road access limited.

- Land on the edge of Oldbury town centre (West Bromwich street) identified for leisure development.

Sandwell focuses on the re-establishment of *West Bromwich* town centre - which has lost out as a comparison shopping centre to Walsall, Birmingham and Merry Hill - as the principle centre in the Borough in a network of centres, and the focus for major new trip-generating developments (retail, leisure, entertainment and commercial).

The Urban Regeneration Company for Sandwell (RegenCo) has prepared a Masterplan for West Bromwich (see documentation from AIF work) and a Sandwell Regeneration Framework. (Business Plan not available at the time of writing).

3.3.7 Urban Form

Sandwell has an unusual and complex urban form - developed around the Borough's six towns: Sandwell, Oldbury, West Bromwich, Tipton, Wednesbury and Smethwick - with transport corridors cutting through the Borough (metro and rail east to west and the M5 north to south). As a result of this complex urban form, a key issue for the Borough to resolve is conflict between different land uses - industrial/employment, transport and residential. Supplementary Planning Guidance for urban design has been produced to address this issue and Section 106 agreements are being used to deliver higher quality urban spaces.

3.4 Dudley

3.4.1 Housing Strategy

Dudley's Housing Strategy (February 2004) includes

- Improvement of housing conditions to reach the Decent Homes Standard
- Maximising the use of existing stock e.g. reducing number of empty homes
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing.

The Borough's recent Options Appraisal led to the decision to retain the stock.

Housing needs analysis is that of 12,400 homes to be provided in 1991 – 2011, there were 5,300 still to be provided. This is reflected an updated housing needs survey in 2002 which concluded that 30% of this new provision should be affordable. It states that "it has to be recognised that the 1998 study and its subsequent review [2002] concentrated on the housing market specific to Dudley and took little account of the wider regional and sub-regional housing markets". The Study said that affordable housing need can best be met by social rented housing, with a small proportion of shared ownership.

It assesses priority as being to alleviate a shortage of family housing, especially that for larger households, and two bedroom bungalow accommodation for the elderly. It prefers to meet demand for young single person's accommodation (under 29 years of age) by adjustments to lettings policy and the redesignation of existing stock. It argues that such development is dependent on external grants as existing capital resources are needed to meet the Decent Homes Standard (this would change if the Option Appraisal process were to attract extra funding to meet this standard).

Since 1995 Dudley has cleared six high-rise blocks of flats and three large complexes of low-rise flats and maisonettes that were unpopular, difficult to let and had high maintenance costs. The sites have been redeveloped for a mix of market and affordable family housing. The strategy states that a similar is being considered for "an area" of less popular inter-war housing where partial clearance and redevelopment could be combined with environmental improvement in the part where stock is retained.

The strategy includes commitment to a further housing needs survey in conjunction with the RHP "to take into consideration cross boundary housing markets".

27% (6,920 properties) of the Council's stock is assessed as 'non decent' with a significant number of additional homes becoming non decent from 2009 onwards. The strategy estimates £357m is required by 2010 towards an investment requirement of £398m (consisting of £163m catch up repairs and further investment needed of £235m). These figures cover other investment requirements beyond the DHS aimed at increasing 'liveability of estates' such as environmental works and community safety. Very little of the RSL stock is below the decent homes standard. Projections of the shortfall in resources for works to the Council stock were £290m by 2010.

The strategy reports that 4.9% of the private sector stock is unfit, rising to 11.6% amongst pre-1919 dwellings. These account for 25% of the unfit properties in Dudley. The level of unfitness in properties occupied by BME households is nearly twice the Dudley average at 8.4%. The cost of remedial works to deal with unfitness and disrepair are reported to be £68m, with an estimated shortfall of £32m after taking into account the ability of owner occupiers to fund repair works themselves. However it also comments that widespread grant assistance has undermined homeowners' responsibilities to use their own resources as a result of a "grant culture which passes the burden of responsibility from the individual to the local authority". The private sector programme of £1m (2002/03) is "no out of scale and has little impact on the overall problem" with annual expenditure of £25m over 10 years being required to deal with the properties than are currently unsatisfactory.

The strategy reports that the low private sector vacancy rate of 1.1% does not appear to be concentrated in any particular areas and "indicates that Dudley remains a popular borough with a reasonably buoyant housing market and little, if any, experience of the market failure and abandonment experienced by many other metropolitan areas".

The new private sector housing strategy is designed to shift the balance of expenditure for a small number of high cost grants to supporting and enabling home owners to raise private finance and release equity to fund repairs, in conjunction with some small grants.

3.4.2 Housing Investment Programme

In 2003/4 the Council's HRA Business Plan estimated that its own stock required £162m in "capital type" investment. It included in these calculations works to 85% of its stock with only 3,500 requiring no such works. No demolition was planned and 239 units would be converted by 2012/13. In the period 2003/4 – 2012/13 it planned to spend £197m on "capital type" investment, of which £49m would be related to making dwellings decent. It showed no expenditure in this period in relation to newly arising need, this approach would leave a substantial investment backlog by 2012/13, albeit that the DHS was met. `

3.4.3 Neighbourhood Renewal

Dudley identifies 23 priority neighbourhoods for neighbourhood renewal activity:

- Beacon
- Wallbrook
- Oval
- Shadwell
- Wren's nest and priority
- Kate's Hill
- Abberley St./Flood St.
- Sledmere
- Woodside
- Lodge Farm
- Saltwells
- Fens Pool/The Wallows
- Norwood
- Hawbush
- Chapel St.
- Enville St.
- Steppingstones
- Lye/Clay Croft
- Tanhouse
- Fatherless Barn
- Shell Corner
- Halesowen Central/Highfields

The Borough's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocation is the smallest of the Black Country authorities for 2005/06 at £1.521m (£66,000 per priority neighbourhood assuming an even split of resource).

3.4.4 Housing Land Supply

The RPG11 target for housing supply in Dudley is 12,950. The UDP Revised Deposit 2002 identifies land supply for 12,943 homes. The Borough has identified strategic locations for housing land supply around the Borough - identified as key to facilitating urban renewal in the Borough. More than half the minimum housing capacity associated with these sites relates to town centre allocations in each of the Borough's four main centres (Brierley Hill Town Centre, Dudley Town Centre, Stourbridge and Halesowen).

The Borough introduced a phased approach to allocating housing sites for development in the Revised Deposit UDP 2002 - with two phases of land release - 2001-2007 and 2007-2011. These strategic allocations are divided into these two phases based on their viability - with infrastructure provision, access and contamination taken into account. Phase 1 allocations relate to each of the Town Centres, Wordsley Hospital, Lower Gornal, Hawne Colliery (Halesowen), Brierley Hill Crystal Works, Netherton, Wolverhampton Street and Thorns
Road, Brierley Hill.

It is estimated that over 90% of housing completions will be achieved on previously developed land (RPG target is 98%).

Advice on the revision of RPG11 identified that some 4,400 of Dudley's housing requirement should be for social housing - of which 2,800 has been provided. The Plan provides for the provision of 1,600 units of affordable housing on suitable sites

A key issue for housing land supply in the Black Country is the quality of the land supply and urban environment - with much of the brownfield land supply being land reconverted from former industrial uses.

3.4.5 Economic Development

Dudley's Economic Strategy (2003/04) notes that:

- The service sector accounted for 72.7% of employment in 2001 and according to Cambridge Econometrics will continue to be a major employer in Dudley - reflected in an increase in employment of 1.7% in the last four years and expected to continue with major development opportunities in Brierley Hill, Castle Gate, Castle Hill, Claughton and King Street/Flood Street
- The Black Country Survey 2001 concluded that of the four local authority districts, 24% of employers in Dudley reported the highest increase in market share (compared to the lowest in Walsall at 18%) - although average earnings are the second lowest in the Black Country (after Walsall)
- Dudley has the highest number of registered businesses and largest volume of newly registered businesses of the Black Country authorities

Employment land in the Borough has been identified as part of a central employment zone at the core of the Borough including: Castle Gate, Castle Hill, Claughton, Dudley Town and Brierley Hill. Particular actions to improve the economic infrastructure of Dudley are:

- The development of Brierley Hill as the Borough's strategic town centre and principle location for employment, commerce, shopping and leisure activity - with the Regeneration Area investment plans to develop a mixed-use environment linking Brierley Hill High Street, Merry Hill and the Waterfront - to create around 10,000 new jobs

- The proposed Brierley Hill Transport Scheme

- Development of Claughton as a Business Park

A key issue for the Borough is the relationship between its town centres with the regeneration of Brierley Hill Waterfront and Merry Hill shopping centre as central locations for employment, commerce, retail and leisure activity. Proposed extension of the metro route to Brierley Hill would further strengthen the role of Brierley Hill/Merry Hill as an employment centre in the Black Country. The role of Merry Hill is being decided.

3.5 Telford & Wrekin

3.5.1 Housing Strategy

The mission statement of the housing strategy is to provide "access for all to good quality, affordable and healthy housing in order to promote community and individual well being'. The strategy has four key aims

- To ensure that housing needs are met particularly the need for social and affordable housing
- To support regeneration particularly in South Telford and to improve the quality of housing
- To promote housing choice and to prevent homelessness
- To facilitate independent living and to support vulnerable people

The first aim - to ensure that housing needs are met particularly the need for social and affordable housing, involves the Council working with its partners and using its planning powers to secure the provision of social and affordable housing whilst also making the most effective use of existing housing. One of the partners is the stock transfer RSL, Wrekin Housing Trust which owns 81% of social housing in the Borough.

The second aim - To support regeneration particularly in South Telford and to improve the quality of housing is based on an analysis that that in terms of housing quality the earliest new town estates are in need of comprehensive regeneration. It describes these areas, based on Radburn layout and "of questionable construction standard" as now displaying clear signs of market failure, including abandonment. The priorities within area of the strategy are:

- To demolish unpopular deck access flats on Woodside and declare a housing renewal area on part of this estate
- To undertake comprehensive regeneration of Woodside and other estates in South Telford
- To improve housing standards in all sectors, particularly in parts of the private sector and certain geographical areas – the area has some relatively low price private sector housing and "a significant and growing private sector, some of which is of questionable standard"
- To develop a housing renewal strategy

The third aim - to promote housing choice and to prevent homelessness, includes priorities to work with partners to introduce a choice based lettings scheme, the development of a homelessness strategy and the development of housing advice services, to prevent homelessness and help local people to access decent and affordable homes.

The fourth aim - to facilitate independent living and to support vulnerable people, has as its priorities supporting vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes and the successful implementation of the Supporting People programme.

Telford has a significant element of good quality housing built in the last 10-15 years and is seeing additional building of 1,000 homes per year. At the same time the Council is concerned about the growing unmet maintenance and disrepair in the private sector. It estimates that 2,500 mostly private sector properties are unfit and that around 5,000 properties in the private sector are in substantial disrepair. These dwellings include a significant number on what were previously social housing estate where the strategy comments that "there is major concern locally about the long term sustainability of some of these estates". The majority of homes on these estates have been sold to owner occupiers and private landlords, who are in many cases failing to invest sufficiently in maintaining their properties.

3.5.2 Housing Investment Programme

Resources needed for the maintenance and improvement of former Council stock are no longer channelled through the local authority. The Business Plan of the Wrekin Housing Trust aims to meet the required repairs and improvement work which, prior to transfer, were estimated to be £41m. Some of its properties are considered suitable for conversion or redevelopment, including some PRC homes with high repair and modernisation costs. It is engaged as a partner with the local authority and other RSLs operating in the Borough to achieve regeneration in South Telford.

3.5.3 Wrekin Housing Trust Investment Plans

Wrekin Housing Trust was established to take over ownership 13,000 dwellings from Telford & Wrekin District Council in 1999. The trust was aimed to maintain and improve the stock transferred to it and eventually to carry out remodelling and small specialist infill developments which would improve the quality of life. It has spent £77m in 1999 – 2004 on planned maintenance and refurbishment. It has a long term aim to be a growing business developing both within and beyond the area. It has recently established the Wrekin Housing Group with a structure designed to facilitate development and growth.

The Trust has provided approximately 50 additional homes to date. The stated intention of the Council to fund 500 additional homes from its transfer receipts has not come about. The Trust says that "it [the Council] has fallen spectacularly short of this target. This is the only significant [transfer] promise to tenants not kept".

WHT has a loan facility of £196m sufficient to cover spending commitments made at the time of stock transfer together with the continuing costs of managing and maintaining the stock. Projected borrowings are now approximately £150m. The Trust figures estimate that as at April 2006 35% of its stock will not meet the DHS and has identified the costs of reaching the standards by 2010. These are estimated at current procurement rates to be at a cost of £51m, although an external advisor has quantified to cost at £32m.

The Trust reports major concern with the regeneration needs of the former New Town estates in South Telford. It states that parts of these estates demonstrate local housing market failure and high levels of property abandonment. The Trust, English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation and the Council are working in partnership on a major regeneration project at 'Courts in Woodside', an estate of deck access flats, which are to be demolished and replaced with 'high quality homes'.

The Trust sees new social housing development as being insufficient to met what is required, with a programme of 150 SHG funded units across all RSLs in 2003/04 and the Trust having a programme for 252 units in the period 2004 – 2009, mainly arising from refurbishment and renewal schemes in Woodside, Dothill and the Three Avenues.

Current and recent development projects include:

- Three avenues Project, St Georges – demolition of 33 bungalows and construction of 46 new bungalows to Lifetime Homes Standards
- Mount Road, Darley – building of 11 rent bungalows and 15 shared ownership properties for sale
- Pinfold Croft, Waters Upton – village scheme building 4 flats for rent and 5 shared ownership homes
- Lancaster Avenue, Darley – 11 self contained supported housing flats providing temporary accommodation
- Blakemore Flats, Brookside – 40 small one bed flats converted it 15 apartments together with 8 houses for sale.

Established RSLs with development activities underway are Bromford Carinthia HA, Beth Johnson HA and Bournville Village Trust. Bromford is an extremely active and successful development, has 1,000 properties in the area and a preferred partner for the Council. Beth Johnson has 600 units in Telford with a strong reputation for development and which acts as development agents for a number of RSLs, including Wrekin Housing Trust. The Bourneville Village Trust has 600 units, mostly acquired former New Town stock in Telford and is creating a 'new Bourneville' at Lightmoor in Telford.

3.5.4 Neighbourhood Renewal

The Borough has a policy of six 'priority neighbourhoods': Arleston College, Hadley, Donnington/Donnington Wood, Malinslee and Langley, Brookside, and Sutton Hill/Woodside. Work is being undertaken to identify small neighbourhoods within the current policy.

3.5.5 South Telford

The Woodside estate is the main focus for neighbourhood renewal activity - as the most problematic of the four South Telford Radburn estates - with numerous problems of crime and community safety issues – with an unsustainable housing stock. At the time of the Census, 52% of households were owner occupiers (a fall of 8% since the previous Census) and 11% privately renting (compared to 3% previously).

The area represents a concentration of social problems in the Borough with high unemployment (11.3% in 2001), concentration in lower paid employment, poor health, and high crime rates. The quality of the environment is poor as is access to facilities.

Recent options appraisal undertaken for the area (Bentilee Community Housing Ltd., Aprili 2004) on behalf of the Woodside Regeneration Partnership[6] identified a preferred option of remodelling for value for money. Other options considered (other than do nothing) were:

- Demolish the 'Courts' (usually residents' top priority) – would achieve demolition of the worst, most unpopular stock but not wider scheme objectives for Woodside (including community safety, liveability, environmental quality, housing quality and future sustainability)
- Deliver catch up improvements and maintain – again, would not deliver the wider objectives for the area
- Remodel with infill development – with costs and risks – due to larger scale demolition and rebuild involved – offering lower value for money compared to the remodel only option

A 7-10 year partnership programme involving the Borough, English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation the Wrekin Housing Trust, Advantage West Midlands and the Government Office for the West Midlands (European Regional Development Funding) worth around £73.5m of public sector investment (plus an estimated £100m private sector leverage) is identified for the area. Planned activities include:

- acquisition, demolition and replacement of stock;
- improvements to decent homes standard; and
- remodelling of the infrastructure and public realm - including provision of a new road link to Madeley town centre.

Key issues for the Woodside programme are:

- how nearby housing developments led by English Partnerships (Kettley Millennium Village, Litemore etc) impact on Woodside and an agreement has been reached on how to prevent people being 'sucked out' of Woodside by these schemes.

- The Housing Corporation's view that HMR funds will be used for housing acquisitions and demolitions – rather than mainstream Housing Corporation funding (Housing Corporation funding has been used to date)

It is hoped that funding will become available through the HMA to improve conditions in the remaining South Telford Radburn-designed housing estates: Woodside, Brookside, South Hill and Malinslee.

3.5.6 Housing Land Supply

The RPG target for new housing development in the Borough is 13,300 units from 2001 to 2010 (at an average of 1,300 units per annum). SWQ[7] identified that at traditional densities, the available land

[6] Bentilee Community Housing Ltd. (April 2004) ' Woodside Regeneration Project Options Appraisal'
[7] SQW (2004) 'Telford & Wrekin Economic Development Strategy: SWOT Analysis'

would only accommodate some 50% of the required units - although the required number could be delivered if densities are raised in accordance with Government policy (to between 30 and 50 units per hectare). The majority of the land supply is located in Telford (97% in 1995).

RPG annual targets beyond 2011 are reduced by nearly 50% to 700 units per annum - representing the policy shift in the Regional Spatial Strategy towards concentration of development on the Major Urban Areas. SQW identify that new housing land capacity will need to be identified to deliver these target - by bringing forward key brownfield sites (e.g. Redland Quarry, Blockley, Clay Quarry), identification of further brownfield sites, “land swaps” of employment land and windfall sites. English Partnerships are bringing forward major developments which are expected to have a significant impact on housing numbers (at Lightmoor, Lawley, Woodside and East Ketley).

SQW note a substantial slow-down in the rate of housing development in the Borough in 2003/06 (600 units) since a peak of over 1000 completions in 1999/00. This is attributed primarily to both the national slowdown in housing development and the review of English Partnership sites which delayed the release of housing land. (English Partnerships own some 90% of development land in the Borough).

The Wrekin Local Plan (1995-2006) adopted in 2000 identities that the majority of the District’s housing stock is of recent construction although in the established settlements there are some pockets of pre-1919 housing - together with larger areas of pre-war housing. A major issue for the Borough is the condition of the older stock - particularly the Radburn-layout estates in South Telford (Woodside, Brookside, South Hill and Malinslee) - which has been recognised within the Regional Housing Strategy as a priority area for renewal.

As identified in SQW’s report, social housing makes up about 50% of the housing stock (now owned by the Wrekin Housing Trust) - much of which is in disrepair, with 2,500 homes identified as being statutorily unfit. In addition, some 5,000 private sector homes are assessed as being in need of substantial repair. However, the Borough also includes some high quality market housing.

The Wrekin Local Plan 1995-2006 identifies that the most acute need in the Telford and Wrekin District in terms of affordable housing - is for social housing. This includes cheap, small units to buy (low-cost market housing) as well as new social housing which are rented or part-owned. The Council’s target is that 32% of dwellings are available for rent or shared ownership via an RSL.

Targets for affordable housing supply in Telford identified in the Wrekin Local Plan (1995-2006) are 203 homes in total - in South East Hadley and The Grooms, Wellington. A key issue in securing low cost-market housing and social housing identified in the Plan is the special position of English Partnerships as the dominant owner of housing land in the Borough. The Local Plan identifies a lower threshold for negotiating affordable housing provision in Telford (sites of 0.5 hectares or 15 dwellings) given the special circumstances of the area. A key issue for the sites identified for affordable housing identifies in the Plan is the need for significant funding to reclaim the sites to an acceptable standard for redevelopment and the traffic management implications of the sites.

3.5.7 Economic Development

Telford is identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy as a sub-regional focus for development (including housing) on the basis of its potential to attract new investment. RPG identifies Telford as a strategic focus for major retail, leisure and office developments. Designation of the Wolverhampton-Telford High Technology Corridor recognises Telford's potential to develop high-technology and high value added activities - particularly building on the Borough's existing polymer engineering and ICT sector base.

The Borough's own vision is for Telford to be re-established as a major sustained growth point in the region (in terms of population and economic activity) - with a vision of a diversified economy by 2020 with strength in certain knowledge sector industries (value added manufacturing), certain services and an expanded workforce of 110,000 individuals. Although the Borough's URC there is a generally recognised need to define and clarify Telford's role in the wider regional and sub-regional context (Telford First Business Plan).

A recent SWOT analysis undertaken for the Borough (SQW, 2004[8]) identifies economic projections[9] on the basis of continuing trends which indicate annual growth rates of 1.2% in employment (14,000 net jobs) and 3.4% in output between 2002 and 2015. However, the analysis also identifies the vulnerability of the Borough's economy - to central government policy change (with nearly half of the net jobs created coming from 'computing services' believed to be largely driven by the expansion of EDS driven by changes to the Inland Revenue's business) and the trend towards shifting manufacturing production (automotive and electronics) overseas.

The study also identifies the major slow down in inward investment to the Borough from a very high rate of attraction of 1,500 companies over 20 years. Whilst the Borough has excess supply of employment land, offers a good quality environment, low wages and good internal access, it is identified as struggling to retain competitive advantage for inward investment. This is linked to low unemployment, limited access to London and the national motorway network (M6 congestion), a lack of affordable broadband connection in some industrial areas and a lack of Regional Selective Assistance Grants compared to Wales and the Black Country. Competition from new regional employment sites elsewhere - particularly the Wobaston Road 90 hectare employment park north of Wolverhampton is also identified.

The strategic framework developed for the Borough identifies a focus on seven priority clusters: advanced engineering, polymers, tourism and leisure, ICT, specialist and business services, food and drink and building technologies. The strategy identifies infrastructure developments as having a crucial role in delivering the economic vision for the Borough and proposes to ensure improved links to the national road and rail networks (including an M54-M6 link road), redevelopment of the Borough's town centres (particularly Telford), ensuring an appropriate supply of commercial premises and sustainable, quality, mixed-tenure housing, and affordable broadband connectivity. The framework also identifies a focus on developing knowledge economy activity - through inward investment and developing the knowledge economy infrastructure, investment in development of the indigenous business base and in workforce skills development.

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[8] SQW (2004) 'Telford & Wrekin Economic Development Strategy: SWOT Analysis'
[9] Cambridge Econometrics using the Local Economy Forecasting Model (LEFM)

Attraction of highly skilled workers (as residents or commuters - the Borough has a high rate of net in-commuting) is identified as key to the development of the Borough's high tech industrial base. SQW note that the Borough already has high quality executive housing stock and that the housing land supply provides opportunities to create high quality residential environments - although there is a potential gap in housing supply for young professionals which the Borough will seek to address.

Establishment of the Telford First Regeneration Company and restructuring of the Telford Development Agency as an independent economic development company aims to co-ordinate investment priorities towards delivery of the Borough's economic strategy - amongst participating (English Partnerships, the Borough and AWM) partners and non-participating partners (e.g. the Housing Corporation).

The establishment of the Regeneration Company occurs within the context of a changing role for English Partnerships from development manager to strategic partner. The Regeneration Company will act as the bespoke delivery vehicle for leading physical regeneration activity in the Borough - with a main priority being the re-planning and re-development of Telford Town Centre - as a critical project for driving economic growth. The Regeneration Company Action Plan - including the development strategy and priority projects - are identified as 'to be completed'.

Table B.11: Private Sector Investment

	Need to Spend				Plans to Spend				
	Number of unfit private sector dwellings	Estimated Cost of making fit	Average Cost	Proportion made fit by as a result of LA action 2003/4	Number of grants proposed 2005/06	Number of proposed loans by LA 2005/06	Number of proposed loans by third parties 2005/06	Cost of proposed grants 2005/06	Amount of loans made available 2005/6 proposed
Dudley	4,982	£28m	£5,620	4.0%	112	0	75	£1.1m	£0.9m
Telford & Wrekin	1,200	£75m	£62,500	11.0%	125	10	30	£0.478m	£0.030m
Sandwell	11,122	£75.2m	£6,761	2.95%	430	0	125	£2.747m	£1.250m
Walsall	4,364	£27.970m	£6,409	2.75%	250	0	0	£2.750m	0
Wolverhampton	6,644	£39.8	£5,990	2.0%	484	20	42	£1.060m	£0.390m

Source: Local Authority Annual Monitoring Returns to ODPM at 01/04/04

4.0 Monitoring Research & Intelligence

Key sources of intelligence identified as being used by the HMA local authorities to inform the urban policy context are as follows:

- Housing needs analysis (informs housing strategy and land use planning policies relating to affordable housing supply)
- Technical reports commissioned by the unitary (Black Country) authorities to inform the UDP review process: urban capacity, housing background, role of local centres etc. (Not having gone through a UDP review process, Telford is unlikely to have benefited from similar studies).
- Economic intelligence reports to inform preparation of local economic development strategies

Some intelligence sources identified are included in Table B.12.

Table B.12: Key Intelligence Sources

	Wolverhampton	**Walsall**	**Sandwell**	**Dudley**	**Telford & Wrekin**
Economy	Prism economic futures report	Stepping Up for Change – A New Vision for Walsall's Economy (SQW) (2003) Local Economic Prospects for Walsall (2002)	State of Sandwell Report Employment (Capacity) Study	Economic Strategy (not sourced)	Economic SWOT analysis (SQW)
Urban Capacity			Urban Capacity Study (2002)	Urban Capacity Study (2002)	
Local Centres	Retail and centres background paper	Shopping and town centres background paper	Centres Study (due)	Dudley retail study	
Housing	Housing capacity study; housing needs assessment	Housing needs assessment, housing background paper	Housing Needs and Demand Study (2002) Housing capacity study`	Housing Needs survey (1998) Housing background paper (2001)	