

APPENDIX 11

Waterfront and Merry Hill Offices

A sub-regional business centre, the Waterfront is a mixture between traditional town centre markets and out of town provision. Originally developed in the 1980s, it is now a prominent office location, and the rents are considerably above rental rates in other areas of the Black Country but below those in central Birmingham. It offers up to 69,675 sq m (750,000 sq ft) of modern office space. The current peak rent is £14.50 at Waterfront Business Park, the highest in the Black Country office sector.

Major businesses with representation include Egg.com, Barclays, Inland Revenue and The Child Support Agency. They are attracted by competitive rentals for modern, well-equipped, good-sized offices with easy access, car parking, public transport and connections to the main road routes serving the area and West Midlands.

The setting is appealing to tenants because of the proximity of the Merry Hill Centre and also the canal marina, which offers a diverse range of bars and restaurants as well as the four star Copthorne Hotel.

As part of Dudley's Unitary Development Plan Process, it is proposed that Merry Hill, the Waterfront, and Brierley Hill will be integrated, forming a larger town centre of Brierley Hill. This integration is expected to create for than 10,000 jobs over a 10-year term, improving leisure, cultural and community activities as well as introducing the Midland Metro to Brierley, thus providing better accessibility. The masterplan would offer over 75,000 sq m (807,314 sq ft) of B1 space at Brierley Hill. This scheme will strengthen Brierley Hill's standing as a central office location within the West Midlands, just behind Birmingham City Centre. The completion of the plan is important to establish the Waterfront as a significant regional employment base, which in turn will act as an economic driver for the rest of the Black Country area. No other centre in the Black Country has the ability to achieve the critical mass necessary to create such a strong business centre.