

DARLASTON STRATEGIC REGENERATION FRAMEWORK: OPTIONS AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION 2 REPORT



OCTOBER 2009



V3 06/11/09

For all matters regarding this project please contact Helen Flage
by calling: 0161 200 5500
or e-mailing: helen@urbed.coop
or posting: URBED, 10 Little Lever Street, Manchester, M1 1HR



CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
Poster	7
Option 1: Darlaston as a 'Suburb'	8
Option 2: Darlaston as a 'Neighbourhood'	12
Option 3: Darlaston as a 'Town'	16
Preferences	20
Participants	22
The Consultation Boards	24
Option 1 Appraisal	34
Option 2 Appraisal	36
Option 3 Appraisal	42
Emerging Preferred Option	48

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OPTIONS

Following on from URBED's baseline study and the first round of public consultations in mid July, three alternative Options were developed for Darlaston's Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF).

These were first tested in a 'workshop' session with local councillors and then the stakeholder Project Reference Group on 7th September. The Options were refined in the light of these comments and approved for circulation.

Our options look at three scenarios foreseeable for Darlaston:

- Option 1 - Darlaston as a "Suburb" - this is the likely character and pattern of uses on current and anticipated policy and market trajectories, notably expansion of housing in the southern employment area, protection of core employment land around Heath Road, and contraction of town centre retail uses other than the ASDA.
- Option 2 - Darlaston as a "Neighbourhood" – this would involve maintaining a mix of adjacent employment and residential uses in close proximity, protecting employment uses on the southerly sites whilst allowing some change of use to residential around the core area e.g. the Wincanton site.
- Option 3 - Darlaston as a "Town" - this is the 'regeneration' option, with an expanded role for the town centre, flagship schemes at the Town Hall and Kings Hill, and an earlier focus on mixed use canalside development, green links and the rapid transit etc.

ENGAGEMENT

A full day of public engagement was held on Saturday October 3rd to assess community reaction to the Options, using the URBED Routemaster bus and various activities including face-painting and a children's entertainer to raise awareness. The bus was positioned in two locations on Saturday 3rd October;

- Darlaston ASDA main entrance, 11am - 4pm
- Zia-e-Madinah Mosque, Walsall Road, 4pm - 5pm

RESULTS

There was an excellent response on the day, with fifty questionnaires returned to date, and approximately three to four times that number of people viewing the Options on the exhibition boards, handouts and council website.

- Option 1 - Suburb - this was disapproved of, with around three people against for every one in favour.
- Option 2 - Neighbourhood - this was strongly approved of, with around three people in favour for every one against.
- Option 3 - Town - this was very strongly approved of, with nine people in favour for every one against.
- Preferred - When asked to choose, those who answered came down heavily in favour of Option 3, by almost nine to one.

COMMENTS

There were many incisive and constructive comments made by attendees, a number of which suggested elements from different options should be combined. Another consistent theme was the desire for Darlaston to recapture its spirit of independent identity, as expressed by local opportunities to access work, shops and services without having to travel.

APPRAISAL

Our team assessed each Option in some detail against a set of criteria looking at impacts on spatial matters, the property market, the economy and transport, as well as the public's response during the consultation. These are summarised in a simplified table (facing page) that rates the contribution of each Option to key regeneration objectives:

- Housing
- Employment
- Community
- Transport
- Support

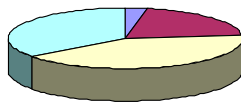
PREFERRED OPTION/DELIVERY

Appraised in the light of public comment and testing by the consultant team, a suggested Preferred Option combines the ambition and town centre expansion of Option 3 with the protection of employment shown in Option 2. SQW anticipate this approach is the best chance for long term employment prospects and 'claw back' of lost jobs.

We will explore more detailed delivery implications of the Preferred Option in the final phase of this study.

PUBLIC RESPONSE SUMMARY

OPTION 1 - SUBURB



■ Strongly approve
■ Approve
■ Disapprove
■ Strongly disapprove

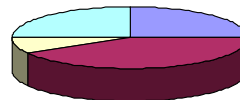
Strongly Approve/Approve 24%

Strongly Disapprove/Approve 76%

OPTION 2 - NEIGHBOURHOOD

Strongly Approve/Approve 67%

Strongly Disapprove/Approve 33%



■ Strongly approve
■ Approve
■ Disapprove
■ Strongly disapprove

OPTION 3 - TOWN



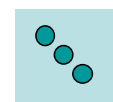
■ Strongly approve
■ Approve
■ Disapprove
■ Strongly disapprove

Strongly Approve/Approve 90%

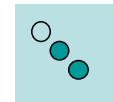
Strongly Disapprove/Approve 10%

APPRAISAL SUMMARY

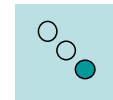
Options	Option 1 Suburb	Option 2 Neighbourhood	Option 3 Town	Option 2 & 3 Preferred
Objectives				
Housing Opens opportunities to create more family housing and increase owner occupation.				
Employment Retains and improves provision of business premises and support.				
Community Expands provision of social infrastructure, particularly for young people and for healthy recreation.				
Transport Improves pedestrian, cycle and public transport connections.				
Support Generates public and stakeholder enthusiasm.				
Totals Indicative scores.	7	11	13	15



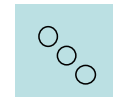
Strongly positive impact



Positive impact



Minimal impact



Weak impact

Under the emerging preferred option SQW would expect that by 2011 there would be a total of around 6,200 jobs in the DRA. This still equates to a contraction of 14% in the area's employment base (equivalent to 1,000 jobs) compared to the 2007 level.

However, by 2015 SQW would expect DRA employment to grow to 7,100 and by 2020 for it to have grown to 7,600. That is, by 2020 the area's employment base should be in excess of 2007 levels (a net growth of 400 jobs) - this is the only scenario with a net jobs increase.



The URBED Routemaster was outside Darlaston ASDA between 11am and 4pm on Saturday October 3rd

INTRODUCTION

Following on from URBED's baseline study and the first round of public consultations in mid July, three alternative Options were developed for Darlaston's Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF).

These were first tested in a 'workshop' session with local councillors and then the stakeholder Project Reference Group on 7th September. The Options were refined in the light of comments and approved for circulation.

A full day of public engagement was scheduled for Saturday October 3rd to assess community reaction to the Options, using the URBED Routemaster bus and various activities including face-painting and a children's entertainer to raise awareness.

Publicity for the consultation day was assisted by posters/flyers. These were placed in local shops, housing offices and the library etc.

This short report sets out the aims and impacts of the three Options, details the response of those who took the time to give feedback, and suggests an emerging preferred option.

The URBED Routemaster bus was positioned in two locations on Saturday 3rd October;

- Darlaston ASDA main entrance, 11am - 4pm
- Zia-e-Madinah Mosque, Walsall Road, 4pm - 5pm

The events were facilitated by members of URBED's consultant team, officers of the council, and Walsall Housing Group. In total eight staff were on hand to listen to people's views and help explain the SRF options and process.

There was an excellent response on the day, with almost fifty questionnaires returned to date, and approximately three to four times that number of people viewing the Options on the exhibition boards, handouts and council website, where they can still be found at:

www.walsall.gov.uk/index/regeneration/regeneration_places/regeneration_transforming_walsall_district/regeneration_darlaston.htm

Appreciation is due to all who took part for their thoughts and enthusiasm. We would like to extend thanks to shopkeepers, particularly the store manager at ASDA, who kindly arranged parking space for the bus outside the supermarket entrance. Similarly, grateful thanks are due to the community at the new Zia-e-Madinah Mosque, who welcomed us most warmly to their open day, and to the Vicar of All Saints, who showed us round the church and adjacent hall.

**Come and have your
say on the future of
Darlaston**



DARLASTON REGENERATION FRAMEWORK PUBLIC CONSULTATION on our Big Red Bus

Saturday 3rd October 2009 at 11am - 4pm in ASDA car park
Family-fun activities will be available



Posters and flyers advertising the event were circulated around the town.

OPTION 1 ‘DARLASTON AS A SUBURB’

This option describes how Darlaston’s character will change if current planning and investment patterns continue – it will become more of a suburb within the Black Country.

The trend over time has been to redevelop manufacturing employment land for family housing, as happened with Rubery Owen and is permitted for the Servis site.

This situation benefits Darlaston from new residents and a wider housing choice.

However, it means people have to travel further for work, not always easy for those without access to cars or good public transport.

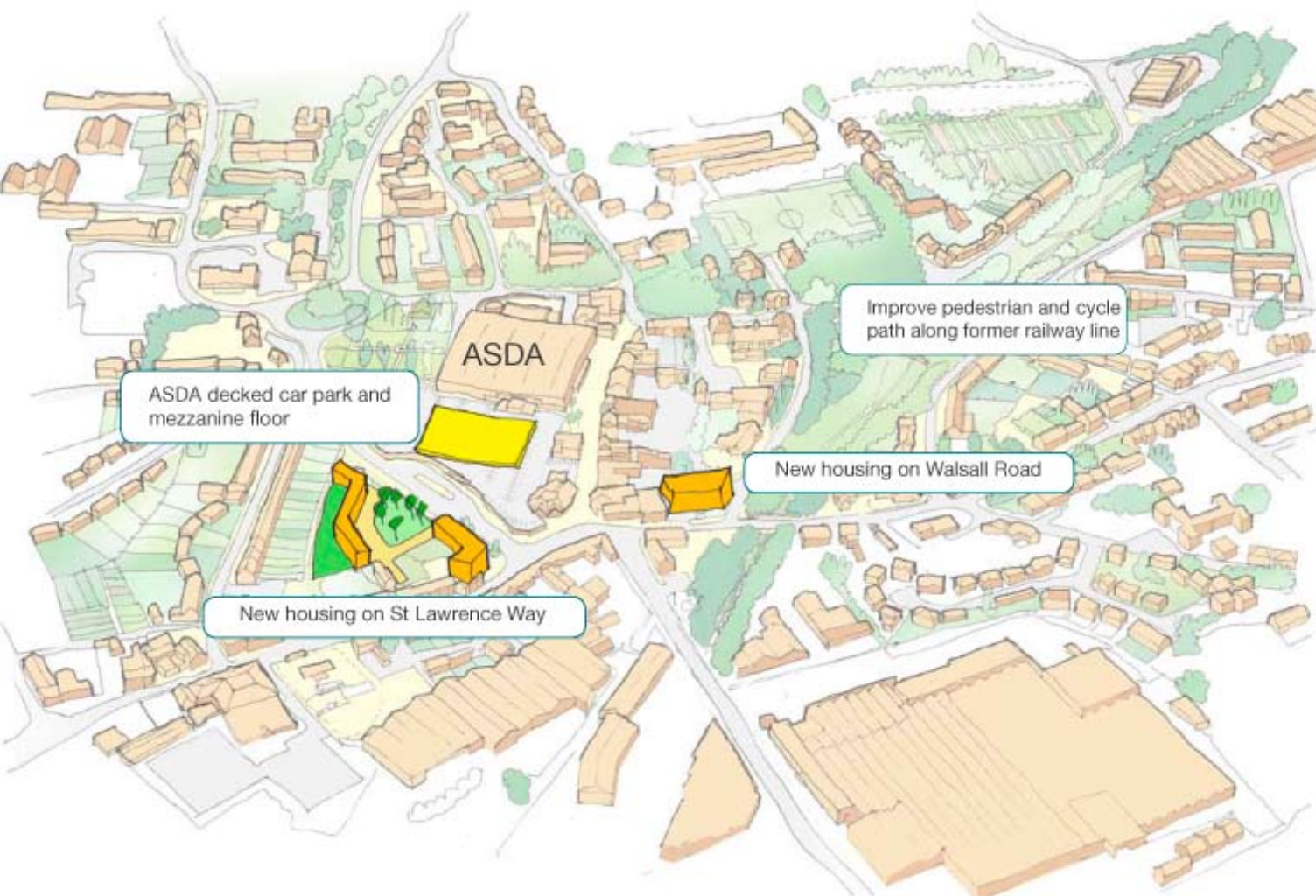
Current policy also accepts a ‘consolidation’ of the town centre. ASDA wish to expand their store with a multi-storey car park deck and ‘mezzanine’ floor. Walsall Housing Group expect to build new housing on the St. Lawrence way tower-block site. Housing could also be built on Picturedrome Way. These are the main town centre investments expected under this option.

Changes to Darlaston anticipated under existing policies:

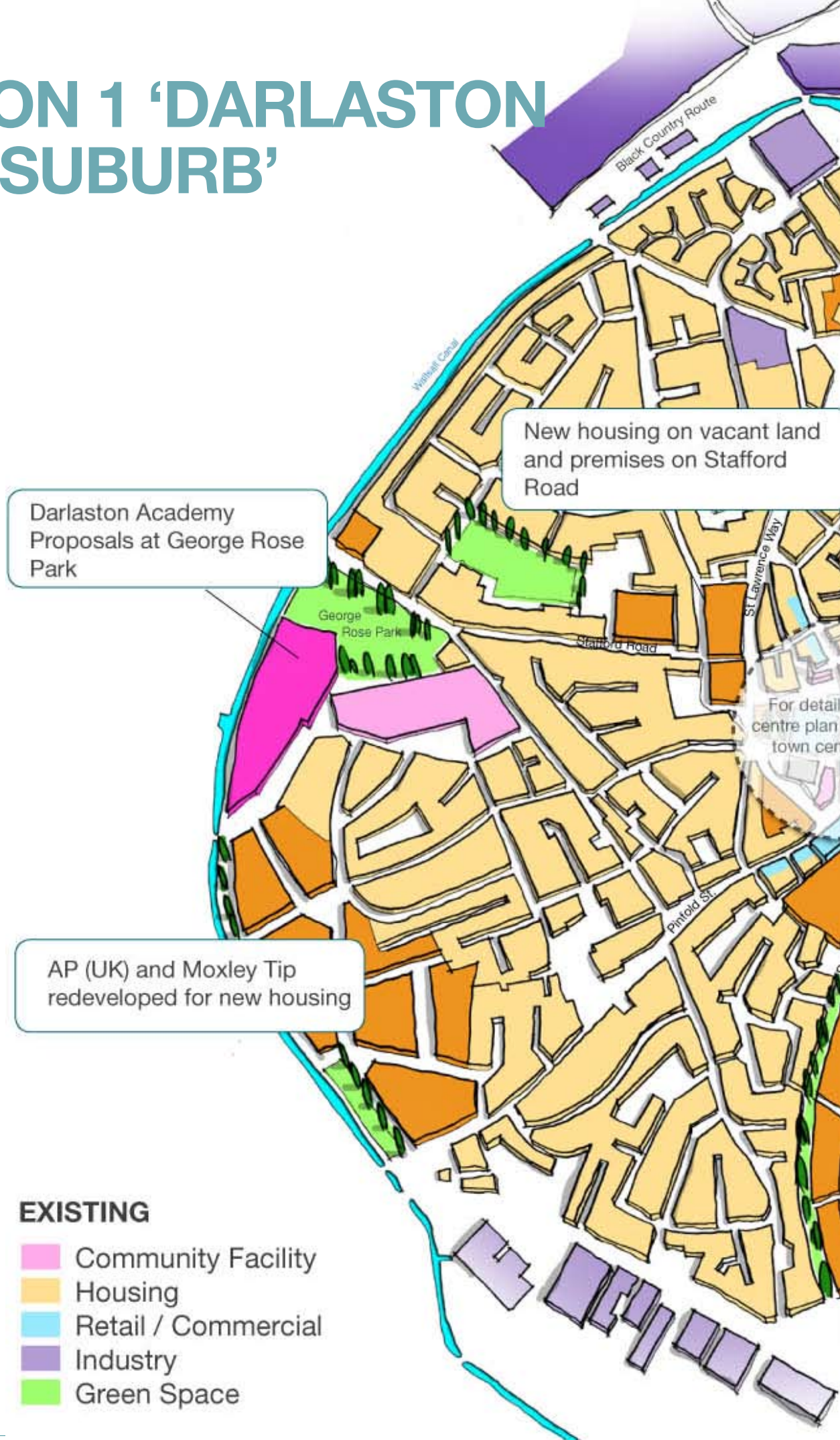
- Employment sites beyond the Heath Road ‘core area’ open to new housing development.
- This means sites like Stafford Road as well as Servis going for housing.
- To balance the above, Heath Road employment core area is protected all the more strongly.
- Darlaston Academy proceeds on George Rose Park.
- Investments in George Rose and Kings Hill parks.
- Possible ASDA expansion - car park deck and mezzanine floor.
- New housing is built on St. Lawrence Way tower block site.

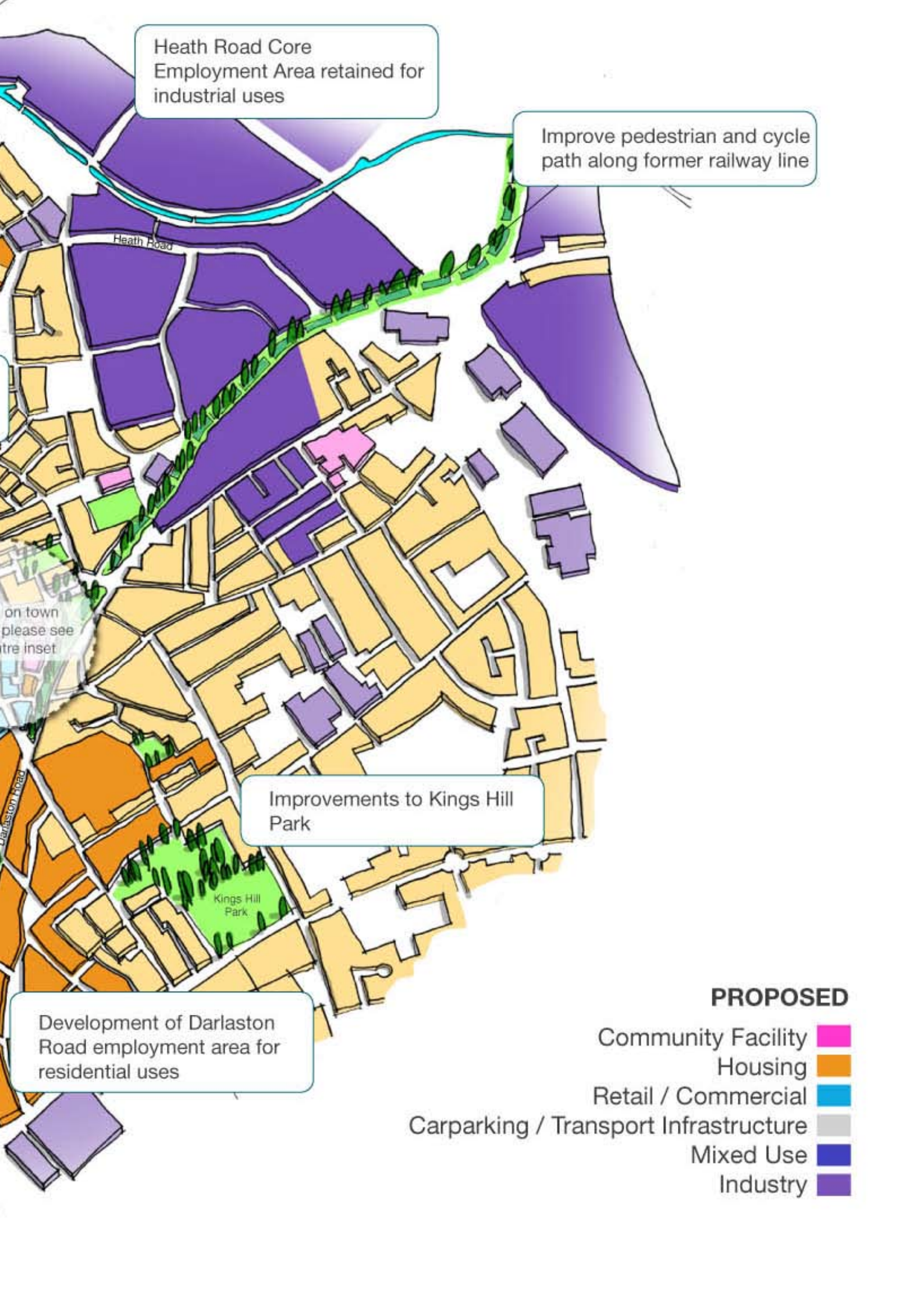
Advantages and disadvantages:

- On the positive side, this option is realistic and deliverable. It does not leave a high risk of raising expectations that cannot be met. It helps bring new people and wider housing choice. It does not challenge existing policies.
- On the downside, people may have to leave to access work and facilities. It does not tackle some of the area’s challenges and opportunities. These include the shops on Pinfold Street and King Street, making more of the Town Hall area, revitalising the canal side and main through routes, and tackling the need for specific community facilities for young and old.



OPTION 1 'DARLASTON AS A SUBURB'





OPTION 2 ‘DARLASTON AS A NEIGHBOURHOOD’

This option would alter existing policy direction. It aims to protect the traditional mixed use character of Black Country neighbourhoods, where employment is mixed quite closely with housing.

It looks to ‘hold the line’ so employment use of sites outside the Heath Road ‘core area’ is still protected – some premises to the south are modern and accessible, bringing into question any potential change of use to housing.

To balance retention of employment on the south side, and emphasise the mixed use nature of this option, some less viable ‘core area’ employment land round the old Wincanton Site would be allowed to change to housing; a wider mix of uses and better environments would be encouraged along the canal. Some town centre retail could be replaced by housing or offices.

A major benefit of this Option is to keep homes and work within walking distance, so people do not have to leave Darlaston for jobs. Mixed use neighbourhoods help reduce the need to travel, protecting the environment.

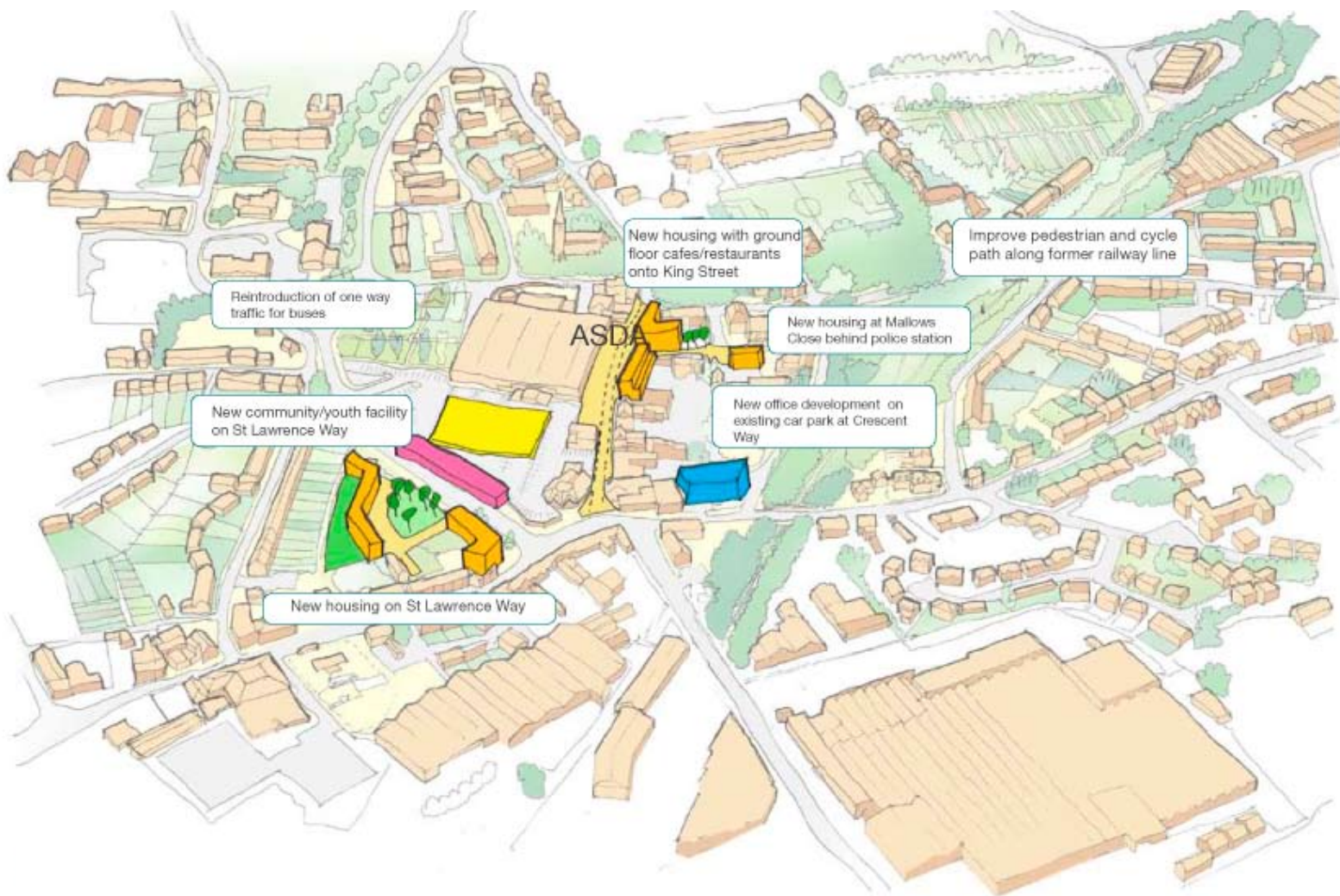
The town centre could also benefit from intervention. This option shows buses re-introduced at low speed to a one-way King Street, in order to bring activity to the ‘dead’ east side of ASDA. This would allow the bus lay-by on St. Lawrence Way to be redeveloped, screening the proposed multi-storey car park deck, and providing a more attractive, active traditional street form. Retail is consolidated, with new units or housing replacing some on King Street. New town centre offices are also shown.

Option 2 differs from Option 1 in that:

- Employment sites outside Heath Road ‘core area’ protected from further residential redevelopment.
- Stafford Road is redeveloped with modern workshop or office units.
- To balance above, sites like Wincanton within the Heath Road employment area are allowed to change to residential.
- Buses are reintroduced on King Street to re-animate the ‘dead’ space alongside ASDA.
- This would allow the potentially unsightly car park deck to be screened by new development on the St. Lawrence Way bus lay-by.
- An office use rather than residential would be sought for the Picturedrome Way car-park site.
- Canalside regeneration is proposed around ‘the Boat’ former pub.

Advantages and disadvantages:

- On the positive side, this option retains more of Darlaston’s close mix of work and home life. It takes steps to re-activate King Street and will make St. Lawrence way a more attractive ‘front-door’ to the town.
- On the downside, it is more ambitious and therefore holds a higher risk of not quite getting there – what if businesses do not want the land kept available? It tackles some but not all of Darlaston’s challenges and opportunities - it could help King Street and the town centre, but still leaves questions over the Town Hall, canal corridor and the poor impression given on through-routes.



OPTION 2 'DARLASTON AS A NEIGHBOURHOOD'





OPTION 3 ‘DARLASTON AS A TOWN’

This option demands resources in terms of planning and investment, but seeks recovery of Darlaston’s pride and identity as a town. It retains the policy led trajectory of Option 1 for the south of the town, but keeps the mixing of uses around Heath Road proposed in Option 1, placing extra emphasis on the town centre and Town Hall, rediscovering their civic role.

Flagship projects are proposed in the Town Hall and around the quaysides near the old ‘Boat Hotel’ on the canal, and a ‘light sculpture’ from King’s Hill Park linking the historic church spires of St. Lawrence and St. Bartholomew’s Wednesbury.

The Town Hall ‘Forge’ is a new hub for activity, reviving the role of this beautiful historic building and expanding its facilities with a modern new extension to the rear. It could combine business incubator, support and conference facilities with a cultural and community role. Youth services and college courses could take place one day with weddings and receptions the next.

Reviving this civic building helps balance the dominance of ASDA and will ‘forge’ relationships across Darlaston’s diverse communities, young and old, and between schools and business.

Greening through routes and creating activity along the canal will show off Darlaston’s best features and create healthier, more desirable residential and investment environments. A visual connection between the spire of St. Lawrence Church and those at Wednesbury could be created with a landmark art-work on the summit of Kings Hill Park.

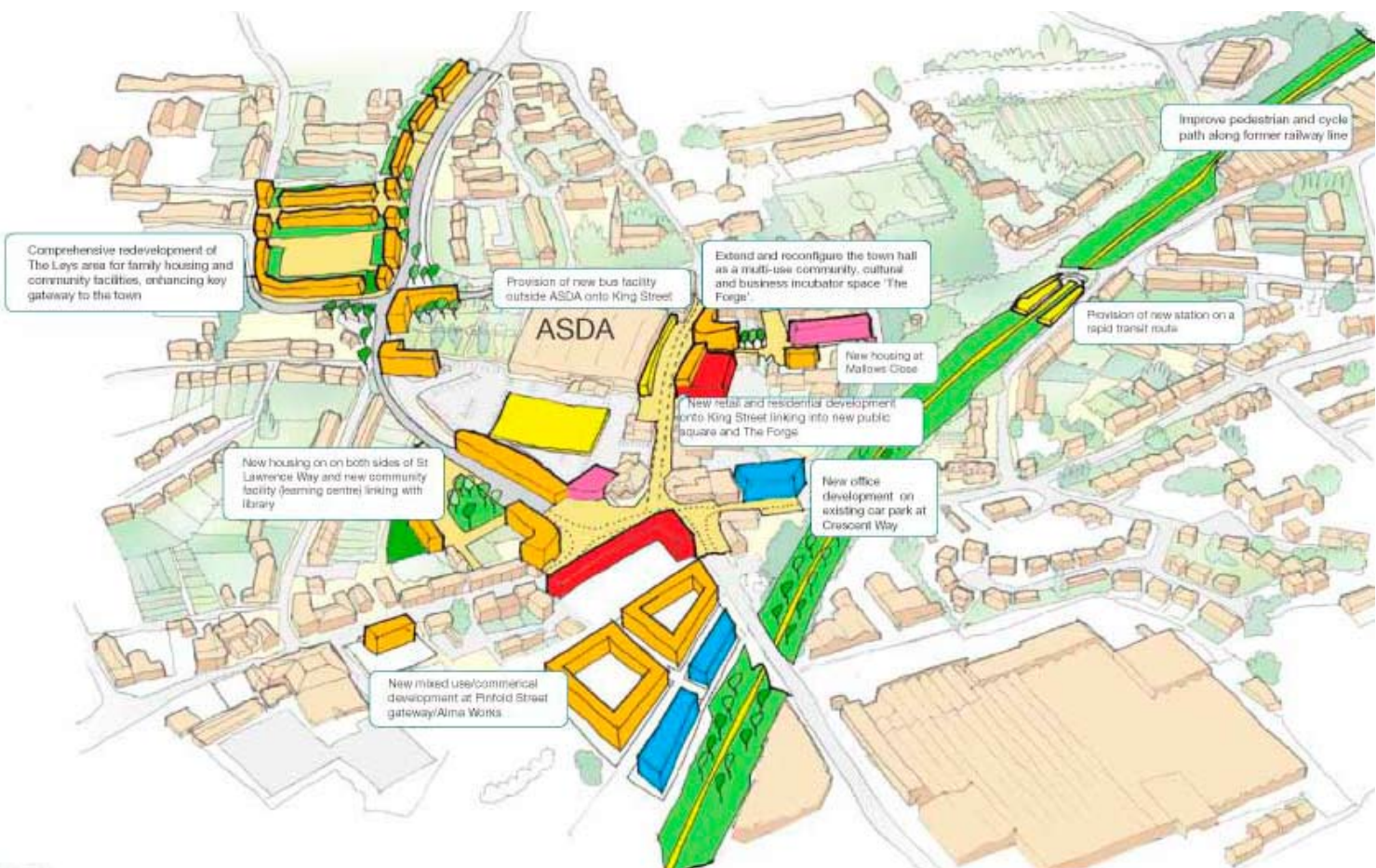
Connecting Darlaston to opportunities within the West Midlands and Black Country would be made easier for all with construction of the proposed Rapid Transit route, either as a guided bus or preferably tram when funds allow.

Option 3 differs from Options 1 and 2 in that:

- There is a greater emphasis on the town centre. This includes...
- ... the extension of Darlaston Town Hall as ‘The Forge’ – a flagship multi-purpose centre offering youth and community facilities, business support, council services, cultural and event space for plays, concerts, weddings etc.....
- ... significant redevelopment around the Leys and the northern section of St. Lawrence Way....
- ... new retail blocks around King Street, a mixed use redevelopment of Pinfold Street...
- ... and new pedestrian priority surfacing and crossings to recreate the old Bullstake public focal point.
- There is also a landmark art work ‘light sculpture’ on Kings Hill Park to visually link the historic spires.
- Development corridors are themed to provide a careful mix of employment, education/recreation and housing.
- Expanded canal side regeneration for a mix of uses - e.g. cafe, hotel, leisure, housing and business, focused round the ‘Boat’ public house and former Richard’s factory.

Advantages and disadvantages:

- On the positive side, this option is ambitious and comprehensive, a chance for Darlaston to re-assert its historic strength as an ‘independent’ town. A new hub for activity in the Town Hall restores a focal point for local identity, regeneration is spread along the canal and a stronger visual character is established alongside through routes.
- On the downside, it is the most ambitious vision and therefore holds the highest risk of over reach – it will need sustained effort and resources across the board.



Comprehensive redevelopment of The Leys area for family housing and community facilities, enhancing key gateway to the town

Provision of new bus facility outside ASDA onto King Street

Extend and reconfigure the town hall as a multi-use community, cultural and business incubator space 'The Forge'

New housing at Maltes Close

New retail and residential development onto King Street linking into new public square and The Forge

Provision of new station on a rapid transit route

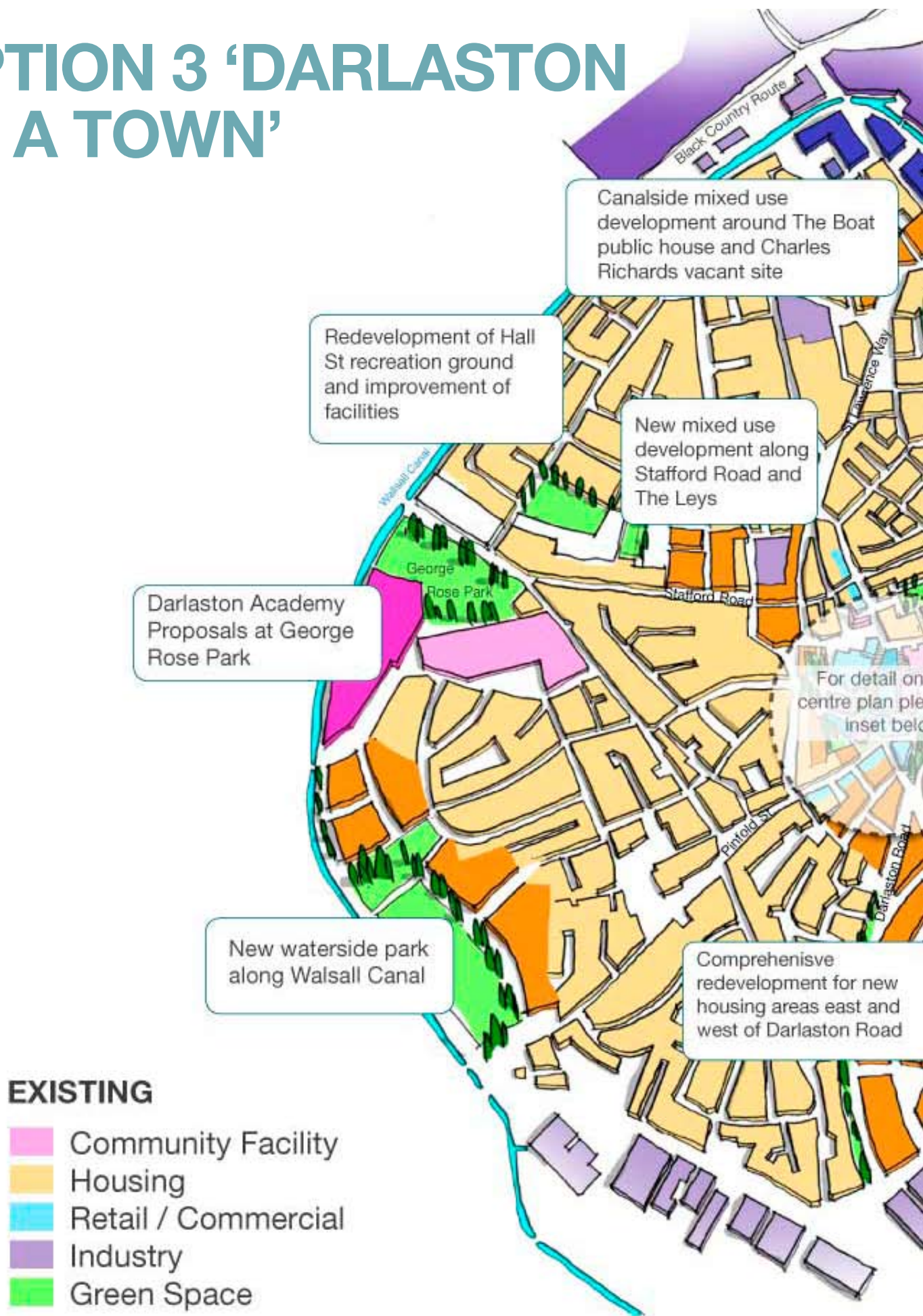
New housing on on both sides of St Lawrence Way and new community facility (learning centre) linking with library

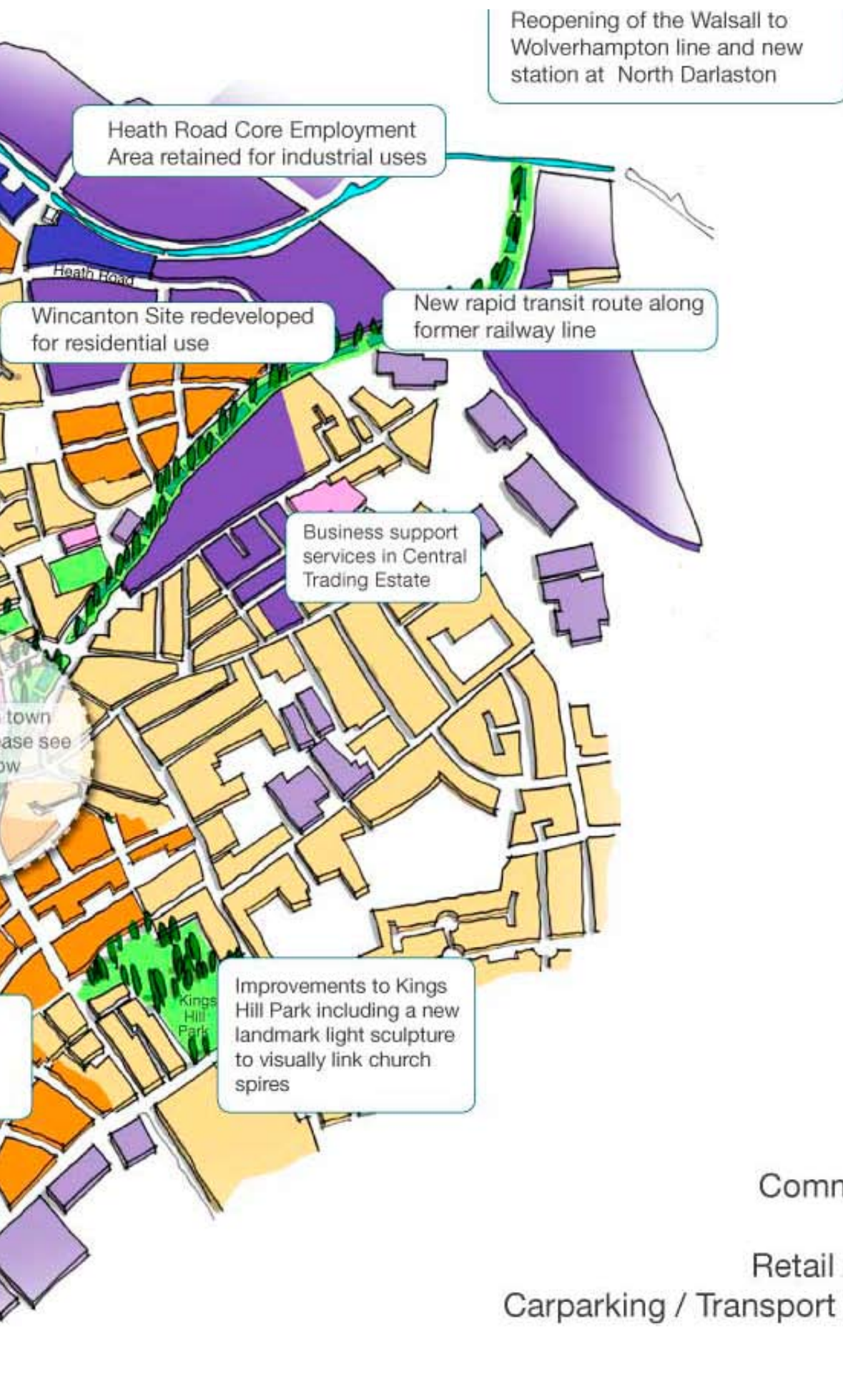
New office development on existing car park at Crescent Way

New mixed use/commercial development at Finfold Street gateway/Alma Works

Improve pedestrian and cycle path along former railway line

OPTION 3 'DARLASTON AS A TOWN'

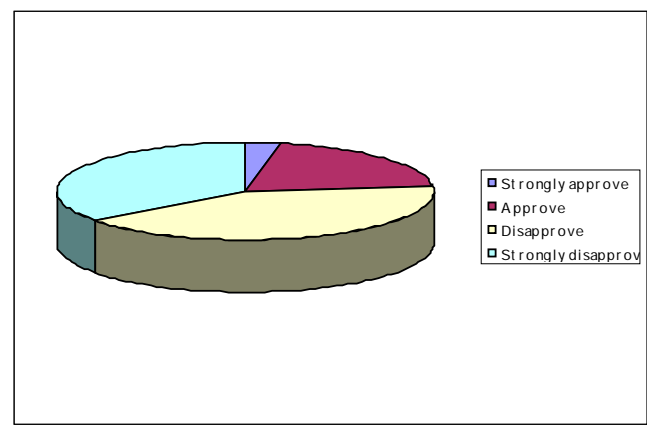




PREFERENCES

Respondents expressed a clear favourite among the three Options. Option 3 was preferred and achieved an overwhelming approval rating of 90%, although Option 2 was also well-liked, achieving two thirds approval. By contrast, Option 1 attracted the disapproval of over three quarters of respondents.

OPTION 1 - SUBURB



Strongly Approve	1	(30%)	
Approve	26	(70%)	24%
Disapprove	14	(41%)	
Strongly Disapprove	12	(35%)	76%

Did not answer 14

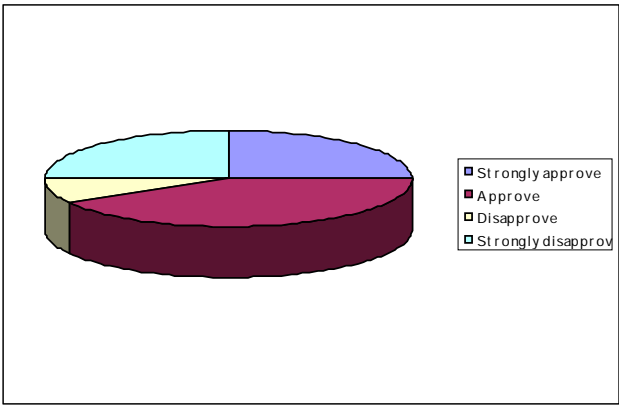
Questionnaire feedback revealed disapproval of the policy led option by a strong margin.

OPTION 2 - NEIGHBOURHOOD

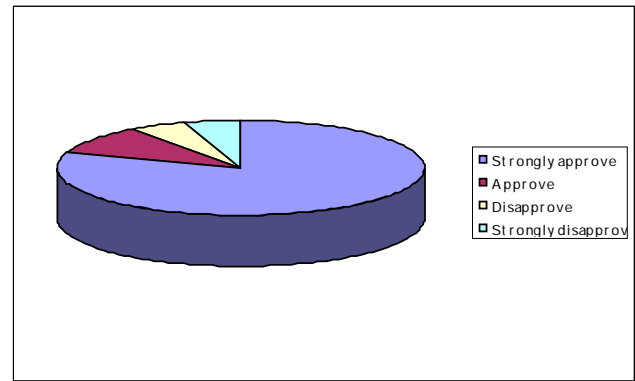
Strongly Approve	9	(25%)	
Approve	15	(42%)	67%
Disapprove	3	(8%)	
Strongly Disapprove	9	(25%)	33%

Did not answer 12

Questionnaire feedback revealed approval of the mixed use option by around two to one, with positive comments about protecting employment land from change of use.



OPTION 3 - TOWN



Strongly Approve	32	(80%)	
Approve	4	(10%)	90%
Disapprove	2	(5%)	
Strongly Disapprove	2	(5%)	10%

Did not answer 8

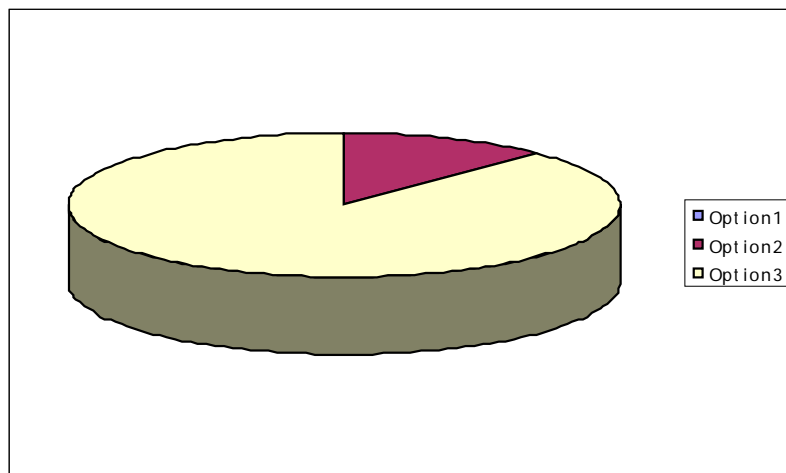
Questionnaire feedback revealed overwhelming approval of the transformational option by nine to one, with positive comments about its ambition and impact.

PREFERRED OPTION

Option 1	0	
Option 2	4	(12%)
Option 3	29	(88%)

Didn't answer 15

The respondents express an overwhelming preference for Option 3. No one at all preferred Option 1.



COMMENTS

Respondents were dismissive of Option 1, but liked Option 2 for its mix of uses, and the ambition of Option 3, particularly its ambition emphasis on new shops and facilities in the town centre.

A number of comments suggested combining the mixed use elements of Option 2 with Option 3's town centre approach.

OPTION 1

"Not really planning at all, it's just letting things go on as they are."

"Just a big housing estate"

"Does not develop the town"

"Although 'realistic and deliverable' it reduces Darlaston to even more of a ghost-town with little to commit people to its development."

OPTION 2

"Keeps mixed use south of the town."

"I prefer this option to the first as there's a mix of jobs and housing."

"Improves community spirit and identity. Positive and progressive – addresses multiple issues. It's comprehensive"

"This approach would appear to be the best of both worlds given the financial constraints likely to be encountered. Darlaston needs jobs, not just affordable housing."

OPTION 3

"The 3rd option because we need more stores."

"More larger shops would benefit Darlaston."

"Darlaston needs to return to some kind of independence in order to improve facilities that were once the pride of the town."

"Good strategic vision."

"I feel a mixture of options 2 and 3 would be the most suitable."

"Love the radical nature of it – go for it. Comprehensive, positive and progressive. Can Walsall council put the money (our money) where its mouth is???"

"The third option would lead to the best creation of regeneration."

"Option 3 is the best option for development."

"Darlaston is dying and needs a shot in the arm – option 3 should happen."

"I prefer option 3 as there will be more businesses in Darlaston."

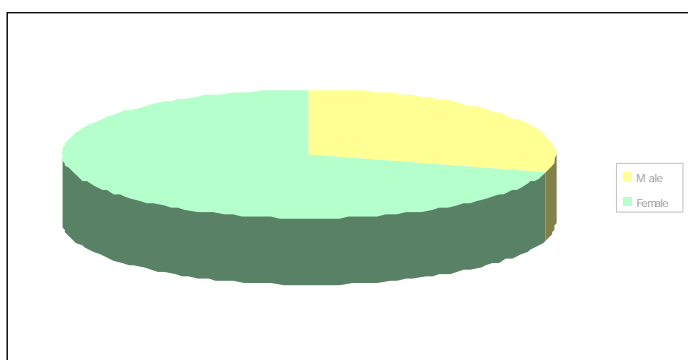
"Option 3 is my preferred option – it would bring Darlaston alive."

PARTICIPANTS

Participants who filled in a questionnaire were asked to record some personal details for monitoring purposes. This breakdown gives only a partial representation of attendees, as not everyone filled in a questionnaire, and some chose not to answer all questions.

Overall, almost 50 forms have been returned so far, estimated at around a quarter to a third of the total number of people we spoke to on the day. There is a reasonable representation of age groups and ethnicities amongst those who gave their details, and a notable skew towards female respondents. It is interesting that while the vast majority lived in Darlaston, less than a third of those answering work there. It may be they do no paid work (young people, retirees, homemakers, claimants etc.), or earn a living outside the town.

GENDER



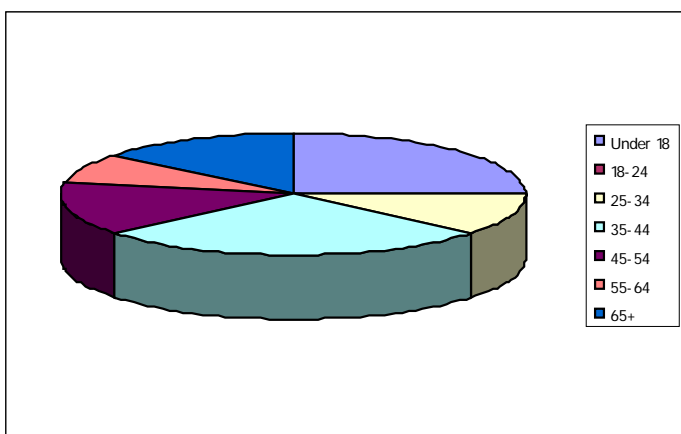
Male	11	(30%)
Female	26	(70%)
Didn't say	11	

Of those who responded to this question, 70% were female.

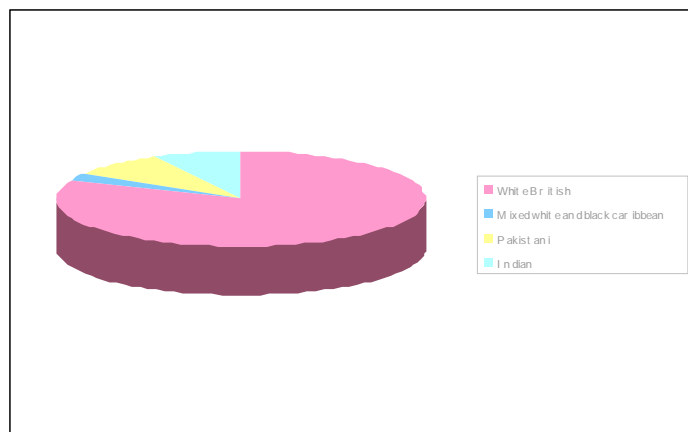
AGE

Under 18	9	(25%)
18-24	0	
25-34	4	(11%)
35-44	10	(28%)
45-54	5	(14%)
55-64	3	(8%)
65+	5	(14%)
Didn't say	11	

Of those who gave details, the largest group were in the 35 to 44 age range, followed by under 18s, over 65s and 45-54 year olds. There were no respondents saying they were 18 - 24.



ETHNICITY



White British	31	(81%)
Mixed white and black caribbean	1	(3%)
Pakistani	3	(8%)
Indian	3	(8%)
Sikh	0	
Other Asian	0	
Black Caribbean	0	
Black African	0	
other black	0	

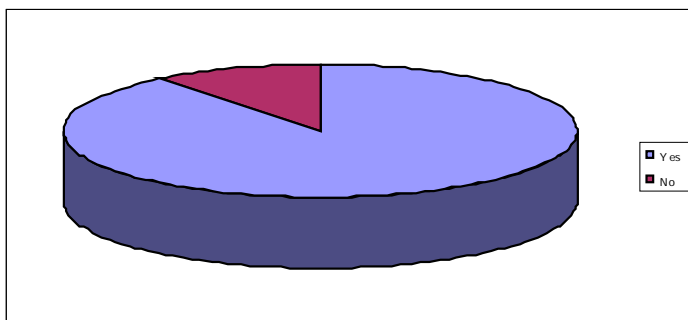
The majority of those that answered this question identified themselves as White British.

Almost a fifth of respondents identified themselves as being from minority ethnic groups.

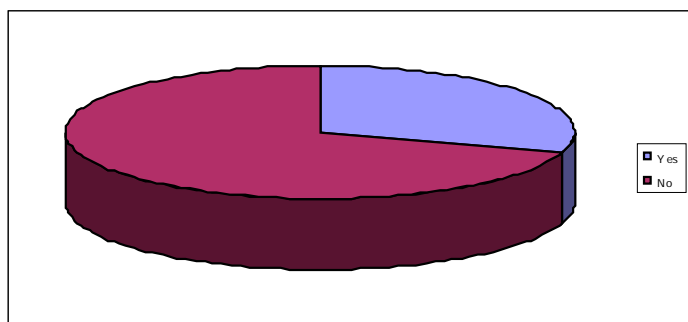
LIVE IN DARLASTON

Yes	33	(89%)
No	4	(11%)
Didn't say	11	

An overwhelming majority of those answering live in Darlaston. The questionnaire was primarily aimed at residents, so the breakdown does not necessarily align with the catchment visiting the consultation venues at ASDA and the Zia-e-Madinah Mosque.



WORK IN DARLASTON



Yes	9	(30%)
No	21	(70%)
Didn't say	18	

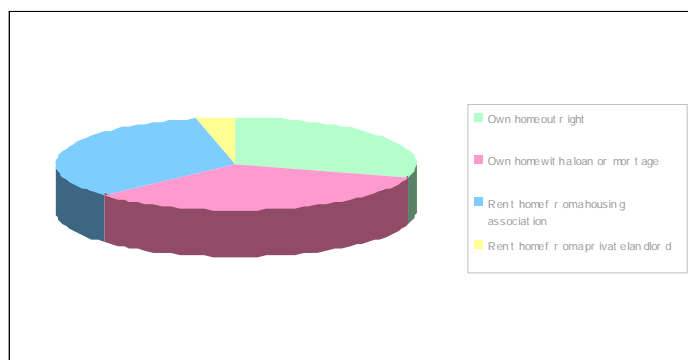
While the vast majority of those answering live in Darlaston, less than a third of those answering work there. It may be they do not work at all (young people, retirees, homemakers, claimants etc.), or earn a living outside the town.

Note that this question has a high proportion of questionnaire respondents who 'didn't say'.

HOUSING TENURE

Own home outright	8	(30%)
Own home with a loan or mortgage	9	(33%)
Rent home from a housing association	9	(33%)
Rent home from a private landlord	1	(4%)
Didn't say	21	

There was a roughly equal split between respondents who said they owned their home outright, owned it via a loan or rented from a social landlord. Only one person said they were a private tenant.



Note that this question has the highest proportion of questionnaire respondents who 'didn't say'.

THE CONSULTATION BOARDS

DARLASTON STRATEGIC REGENERATION FRAMEWORK

PUBLIC CONSULTATION 2 03/10/09

WHAT IS HAPPENING TODAY?

Today is the **second public consultation** on the plan for the future of Darlaston. It looks at options for the **future development of Darlaston** to make sure it is not left behind neighbouring areas. Walsall Council and Walsall Housing Group have commissioned URBED and partners to prepare a plan called a **Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for Darlaston**. This 10 to 15 year vision will set out how Darlaston should change to provide a more sustainable place to live and work.

Key objectives are:

- Revitalise the town centre
- Attract & retain good jobs
- Invest in new community uses
- Widen Darlaston's housing choice
- Improve access & public transport
- Support education, skills & cohesion
- Protect & enhance heritage character
- Create a healthier, greener environment

URBED started in May 2009. Since then we have:

- Undertaken detailed research in the area
- Met members of the public in Rough Hay, Salisbury Street School and the Town Hall
- Met traders, school staff, community workers
- Held a stakeholder roundtable workshop
- Produced a thorough 'Baseline Report'
- Developed outline options for the future

The following boards suggest possible options for Darlaston.

We would like your views so we can develop a preferred option plan - please fill in a questionnaire or just have a chat with us.

For people who missed the live event, copies of these boards and an online questionnaire can be found at our website:

www.urbed.coop

PLEASE COMPLETE A QUESTIONNAIRE AND LET US KNOW YOUR VIEWS.



Strategic Regeneration Framework Area



Walsall Canal - Hidden but not forgotten



George Rose Park - Academy and new facilities



Town Centre - ASDA dominates



King St - Lacking activity and footfall



WHO ARE WE?

URBED (Urbanism, Environment, Design) are a regeneration co-operative based in Manchester. We have teamed up with economists SQW, commercial advisors DTZ, transport specialists ARUP and Landscape Projects to create a vision for Darlaston.



URBED take pride in supporting communities in the urban design process and have experience working across diverse locations with many different people.



The exhibition boards, questionnaire and other documents will be available to view on www.urbed.coop and the Council website at <http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/regeneration.htm>



ANALYSIS

As part of the first stage of our work we analysed the area to produce a 'diagnosis' for Darlaston.

HOUSING

- Very 'self-contained' housing market - fairly low moves in and out.
- Quite high satisfaction with social housing - low 'voids' and turnover.
- Relative lack of 'aspirational' owner-occupied housing for sale.
- Comparative lack of housing choice, especially larger houses.
- Relative under-representation of key 35-49 'trading up' age-group.
- Relatively high 'over-crowding' in the owner occupied sector.
- Need for controlled delivery of new housing - more family houses rather than apartments.

EMPLOYMENT

- There has been increasing economic activity across Walsall, but the opposite is the case in Darlaston.
- Job losses in manufacturing have not been replaced by service sector.
- Employment base is down 11% 2005-07.
- Manufacturing down by 38% (900 jobs) in same period.
- No emerging specialist sector as yet that could drive growth.
- Potential to grow start-up, public services, advanced manufacturing and knowledge businesses.
- Need to invest in re-skilling and enterprise support.
- Darlaston Strategic Development Area represents major employment opportunity.

TOWN CENTRE

- ASDA is successful and wants to expand: it attracts thousands of shoppers.
- BUT - retail pedestrian circuits are restricted to ASDA; the blank wall on King Street creates a dead frontage along King Street.
- The traditional high-street has been badly damaged by insensitive development; the Bullistals is dominated by traffic.
- Apart from ASDA, football is low and vacancy rates high.
- The historic core around the Town Hall and St. Lawrence's lacks activity.
- Busy through routes lack a memorable image of the town.
- Bus stops are disconnected from the retail area.
- In places the paving and 'public realm' is cluttered and poor quality.

ENVIRONMENT

- Darlaston has a beautiful conservation area, but its best townscapes are hidden from view and visually disconnected from the retail area.
- Similarly the parks, canal and local landmarks have real potential, but don't create much of an impression on busy through routes.
- There are plans to invest in Kings Hill and George Rose Parks - how do we also revive the canal and Hall Street recreation ground?
- Too much green space is low quality and does not positively contribute to the town; gap sites and run down buildings give a poor image.

PEOPLE & COMMUNITY

- There is still a strong sense of belonging amongst residents, with active community and voluntary groups and pride in Darlaston's history.
- There is population decline, especially amongst working age groups, meaning an increasing proportion of retired and young people.
- Most workers are in lower skilled occupations, hence incomes are low.
- People are concerned about a lack of youth and other community facilities.
- Educational achievement has been low - new Academy aims to address this.
- Businesses have identified a need to improve access to adult education and training (e.g. to Walsall College courses).

TRANSPORT

- Darlaston is well connected by road but suffers congestion effects and 'rat-running'; roads give a large catchment for town centre and employers.
- 42% of households have no access to a car (national average is 27%).
- Darlaston once enjoyed 2 stations, but now has poor access to the rail network.
- Basic bus facilities and poor evening and employment links, limited 'penetration' of routes into the neighbourhoods.
- Pedestrian/cycling facilities are weak - but the canal 'green link' offers a 15min bike route to Walsall town centre.

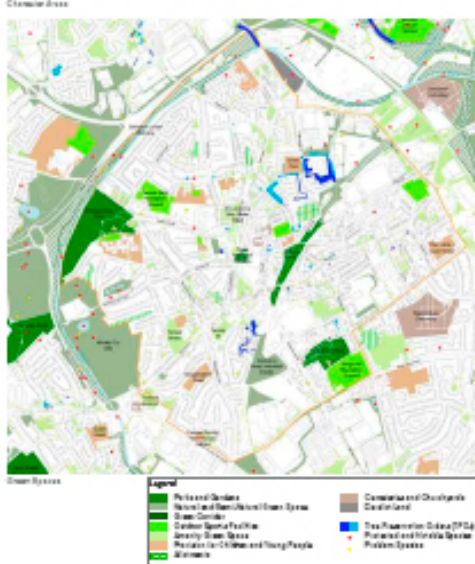
Over time a hollowing out has occurred of the town which has seen the transition from a self-sufficient inter-related series of residential areas, factories, workshops and town centre to a fragmented area with a contracted economic role and function. This has been accompanied by out migration and the shrinking of the town centre. The legacy of the past has left a workforce struggling to adapt to the changing economy and employment opportunities.



Second Level Use Plan of Study Area



Conservation Areas



What is Darlaston's relationship with the rest of Walsall?

Is it a 'dormitory' reliant on other places for jobs and services?

Can it be 'self-sufficient'?

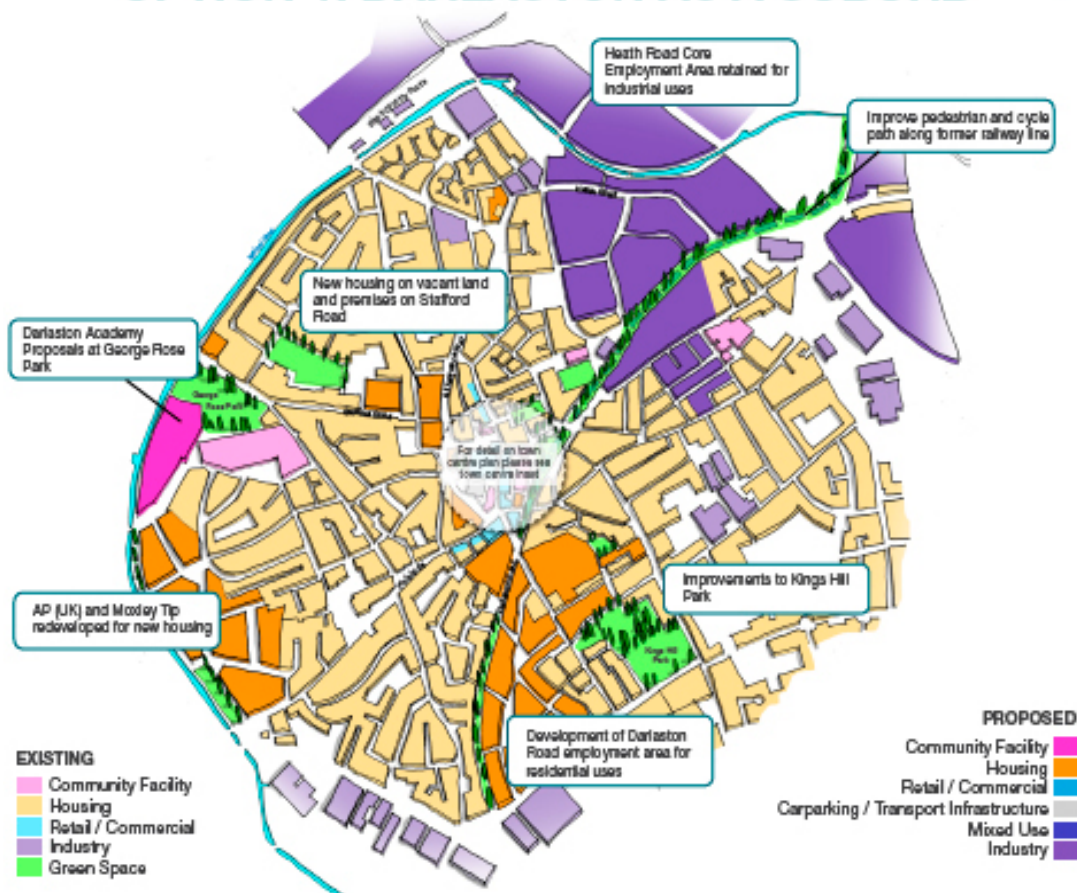
Therefore how does the town evolve into the 21st century?
The following boards suggest options for the future of Darlaston



The exhibition boards, questionnaire and other documents will be available to view on www.urbed.coop and the Council web site at <http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/regeneration.htm>



OPTION 1: DARLASTON AS A SUBURB



Darlaston as a Suburb

- This option describes how Darlaston's character will change if current planning and investment patterns continue - it will become more of a suburb within the Black Country.
- Change from employment use to housing is likely to continue on land outside of the Heath Road Core Employment Area.
- Whilst providing new housing, this means people may have to travel further for work - not always easy for those without access to cars or good public transport.
- Current policy also includes the 'consolidation' of the town centre.
- This means contracting its role as a retail centre outside of the ASDA.
- ASDA's proposals to expand their store with a multi-storey car park deck and 'mezzanine' floor are shown along with Walsall Housing Group's longer term plan to build new housing on the St. Lawrence way tower-block site.
- New housing is also proposed on a gateway site on Walsall Road.

Pros

- Option 1 is realistic and deliverable.
- New housing would bring new people to live in the area and increase local spending power.
- Properly planned it can provide wider housing choice and may retain in Darlaston people that would otherwise leave.
- Business occupiers in the Heath Road Core Employment Area are retained, allowing them to expand and grow.
- New housing on the former tower-block site will improve St. Lawrence Way.
- Pedestrian and cycle provision would be improved along the former railway line linking the town centre and canal.

Cons

- Option 1 does not address some of the fundamental physical issues in the town, such as vacant and unused sites and buildings - e.g. Town Hall, Pinfold Street.
- It may not unlock the full potential of the town centre or canal.
- Changing land from employment to housing may create more out-commuting without any improvement in public transport.
- Doesn't create opportunities for higher value employment uses.
- Risks continued dominance of town centre by ASDA with little diversification or strengthening of wider offer.
- Unlikely to create a fundamental change in people's image and perception of Darlaston.

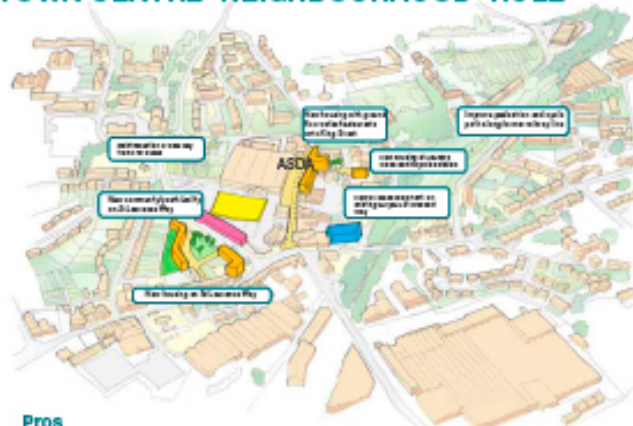


The exhibition boards, questionnaire and other documents will be available to view on www.urbed.co.uk and the Council web site at <http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/regeneration.htm>

OPTION 2: DARLASTON AS A NEIGHBOURHOOD



TOWN CENTRE 'NEIGHBOURHOOD' ROLE



Pros

- Retains employment land with good proximity to the Black Country Route, allowing more local access to jobs.
- Lets poorer quality industrial sites be redeveloped for housing, improving image and environment.
- New housing would bring new people to live in the area and increase local spending power.
- Provides wider housing choice and may retain Darlaston people that would otherwise leave.
- Makes significant positive impact on town gateways and routes.
- Begins to introduce high quality canal side development.
- Provides residential frontage on the former railway linear park.
- Creates more attractions, activity and diversification of uses in the town centre.
- Brings a new role to King Street by introducing housing uses.

Cons

- Does not address all the physical issues in the town such as vacant and underused sites and buildings, particularly the Town Hall and Pimblet Street.
- It will be difficult to create a quality environment along the canal whilst it remains dominated by scrap recycling etc.
- There is little strengthening of the town centre's retail role beyond the ASDA.
- Delivery of new community/youth facility on St Lawrence Way will require dedicated funding.
- Need to identify and users for any new office development.

Darlaston as a Neighbourhood

- This option would change existing policy direction.
- It aims to protect the traditional inland use character of Black Country neighbourhoods, where employment is mixed quite closely with housing.
- Our approach recognises that some employment land is of a poorer quality and could be more effectively used for new housing such as the Wilnottan site and neighbouring uses.
- It also seeks to protect better quality employment premises with good access to the Black Country Route, such as that along Darlaston Road.
- The intention is to keep horses and work within walking distance, so people can access jobs locally with less need to commute out of Darlaston.
- More broadly, mixed use neighbourhoods reduce the need to travel, helping protect the environment.
- We would like to encourage a stronger role for the town centre beyond ASDA.
- Ideas include more diverse uses to introduce more residential, community, café and office space.
- A mix of uses can improve spending and activity, sustaining a wider range of amenities.
- Development overlooking the canal and linear park will be encouraged, to provide safety and activity on these routes.

OPTION 3: REBUILDING DARLASTON AS A 21ST CENTURY SUSTAINABLE TOWN



TOWN CENTRE IN A '21ST CENTURY TOWN'



Pros

- Ambitious and transformational regeneration vision.
- Retains best employment land and supports local jobs.
- Allow poorer quality industrial sites to be redeveloped for housing, improving image and environment.
- New housing would bring more people to live in the area and increase local spending power.
- Provides wider housing choice and may retain Darlaston people that would otherwise leave.
- Provides essential business support services to local firms.
- Makes significant positive impact on town gateways and routes.
- Opens up access and environmental setting of Watall Canal.
- Provides an attractive frontage onto linear park.
- Creates more attractive, activity and diversification of uses in the town centre.
- Strengthens the role of King Street by improving accessibility and relocation of new bus facility.
- Provides new services and facilities for the community in the Town Hall.

Cons

- Will require significant resources in investment, land assembly and planning.
- Only deliverable in the longer term.
- Requires occupiers for new office and retail premises.
- Could be difficult to create quality environment along the canal with environmental impact of neighbouring industrial occupiers.
- Uncertainty over funding for rapid transit.

Darlaston as a '21st Century Town'

- This option is the most ambitious, offering a chance to recover pride and identity by reasserting Darlaston as a fine town in which to live, work and trade.
- In this option Darlaston becomes more self-sufficient with a range of new housing, employment, retail and community facilities.
- New housing is concentrated in and around the town centre.
- The rapid transit route provides a 'green' means of commuting around the West Midlands.
- Investment is made along the key corridors round the town, connecting neighbourhoods and facilities such as the new Academy.
- Ambitious plans are identified for the town centre which would see retail provision expanded as well as further intensification and diversification of uses.
- The Town Hall is given a new lease of life as multi-purpose centre for business and community use.
- The Bullake area is given a fresh treatment to reduce traffic speed and offer more comfort and safety to pedestrians.
- Pinfold Street and St Lawrence Way are physically transformed, redefined and linked back to surrounding neighbourhoods.
- The linear park is linked to the town centre across Victoria Road, supporting footfall to the heritage quarter from adjoining neighbourhoods.



The exhibition board, questionnaire and other documents will be available to view on www.urbed.coop and the Council website at <http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/regeneration.htm>



Walsall Council



VISIONS OF THE FUTURE



Indicative view down a revitalised King St. with a reconfigured ASDA frontage, shared space for buses and taxis to travel along throughout the day, new street surfacing and furniture and new mixed use development.



Indicative view towards 'Bullstake' junction from St. Lawrence Way and Pinfold Street, framed by new gateway buildings with mixed use development and an improved pedestrian environment. Three Horseshoes pub is retained and refurbished, and a glimpsed view through to the spire is protected.



The exhibition boards, questionnaire and other documents will be available to view on www.urbed.coop and the Council website at <http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/regeneration.htm>



EXAMPLES

We have gathered together some examples from places elsewhere in the UK and Europe that may guide development in Darlaston.

In response to the last consultation we found some main aspirations were:

- More family housing.
- Better youth facilities.
- A wider range of shops.
- Cleaner and safer streets.
- Improved and connected parks and playgrounds.
- Community space to replace Multi-Purpose Centre.

The images shown on this board and the next respond to these ideas.



Tramway in Utrecht, The Netherlands



Wide pedestrian and cycle space in Amsterdam, The Netherlands



Modern residential building



Street scene in Utrecht, The Netherlands



Modern building facade



Pedestrian walkway in Utrecht, The Netherlands



Public art sculpture in Utrecht, The Netherlands



Shopping centre in Utrecht, The Netherlands



Modern residential building in Utrecht, The Netherlands



Urban parking



Modern building



Modern building



Modern building



Modern building in Utrecht, The Netherlands



Modern building



Modern building



Modern building in Utrecht, The Netherlands



The exhibition board, questionnaire and other documents will be available to view on www.urbed.coop and the Council website at <http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/regeneration.htm>

NEXT STEPS

Please fill out a questionnaire and let us know your views on these options.

Following the consultation URBED will draw up a preferred option for the future of Darlaston that will take into account, financial viability, market demand, regeneration potential and most importantly community and stakeholder consultation feedback.

URBED will then put together a draft strategic regeneration framework for consultation in November / December 2009. The final strategy will be produced by January 2010.

The report will then be used by Walsall Council to guide and bring forward development in the town.

Thank you for taking the time to have a look at the options facing Darlaston, please ensure that you have filled in a questionnaire and noted down any comments you have.

For further information please go to:

www.urbed.coop



The exhibition boards, questionnaire and other documents will be available to view on www.urbed.coop and the Council website at <http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/regeneration.htm>

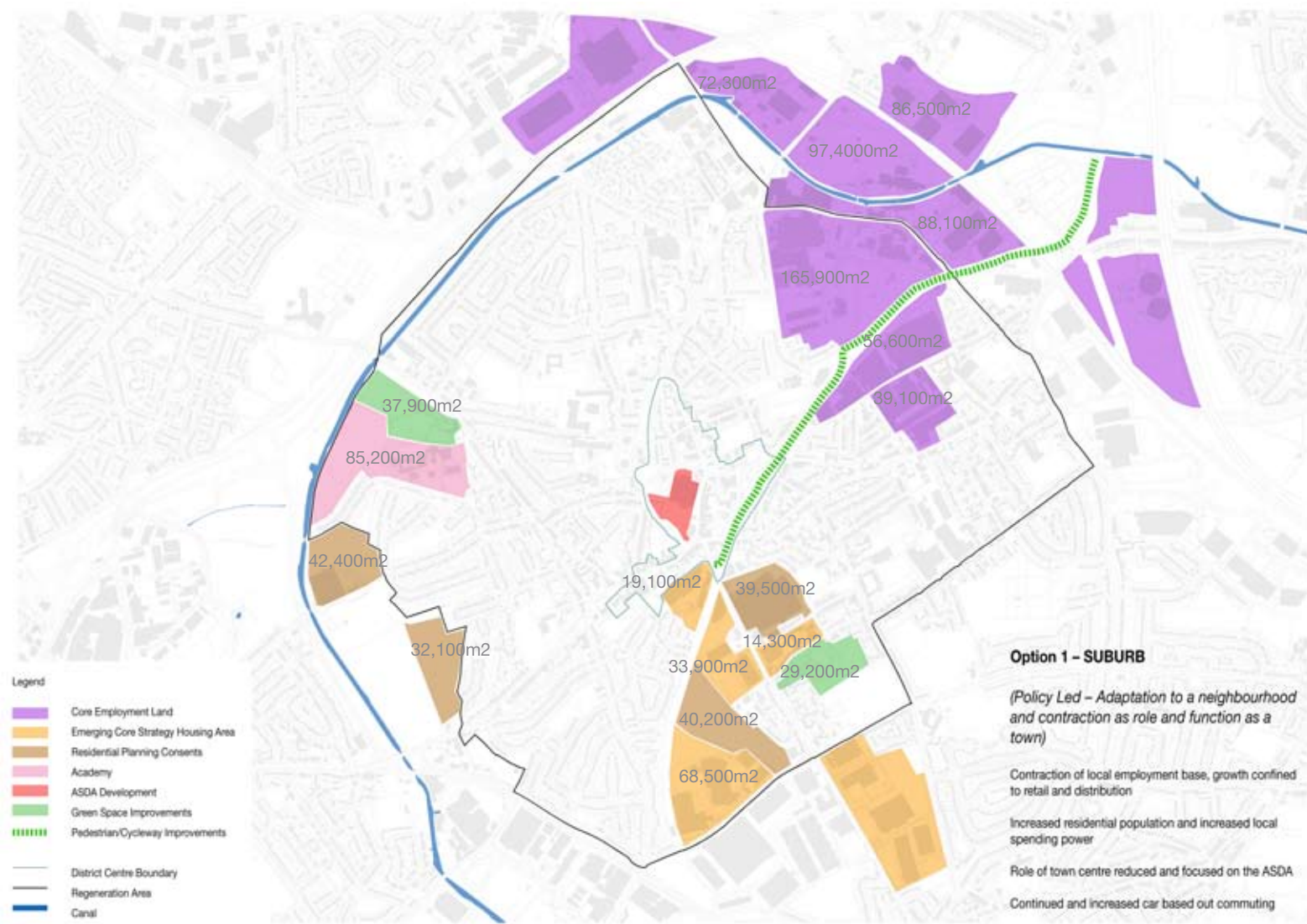


Walsall Council



OPTION 1 APPRAISAL

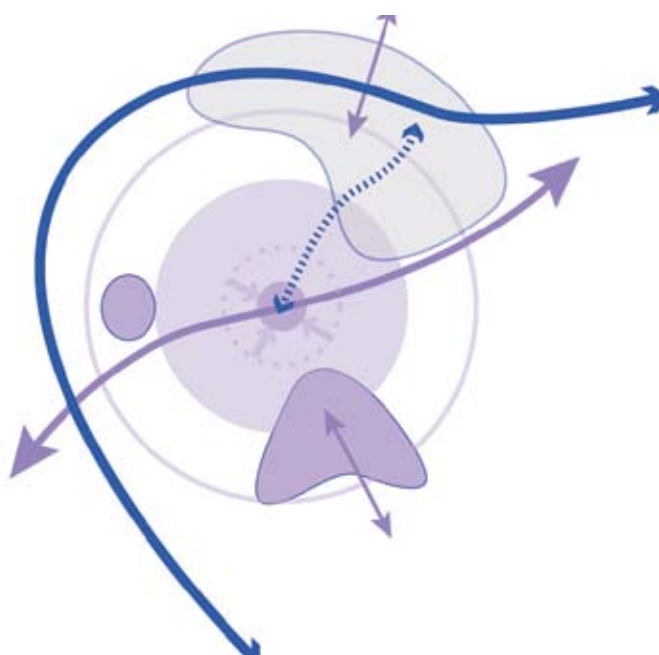
Option 1 Suburb	Aspect	Commentary - This option is <i>consistent with adopted UDP policy and the emerging policy context</i> of the Black Country Core Strategy. It also includes what the market alone would deliver without public sector intervention. This includes committed sites.
Changes/ Actions	Housing	Includes the planning permission of the AP (UK) Site, MarCity site, Moxley Tip and the Servis Site. It also includes other areas of land to the west of Darlaston Road as indicted in the Core Strategy Options Paper.
	Employment	Includes all of the currently designated core employment Land around Heath Road [n.b. employment sites to the south are not protected by this designation].
	Town Centre	Includes the proposed mezzanine extension, decked car park and increase in comparison retail at the ASDA store.
	Green Space	Includes proposed S106 investment to George Rose Park through the MarCity site.
	Community	Includes the proposed Darlaston Academy.
	Transport	Introduces a better defined and higher quality footpath and cycle path along the former railway line.



Areas are approximate should be used for indicative purposes only

Spatially, the key points include:

- Change of employment to residential in the south
- Contraction of town centre
- Cluster of investment on the western edge
- Protection of Heath Road core uses
- Linear green link along former rail route



OPTION 1 APPRAISAL (CONTINUED)

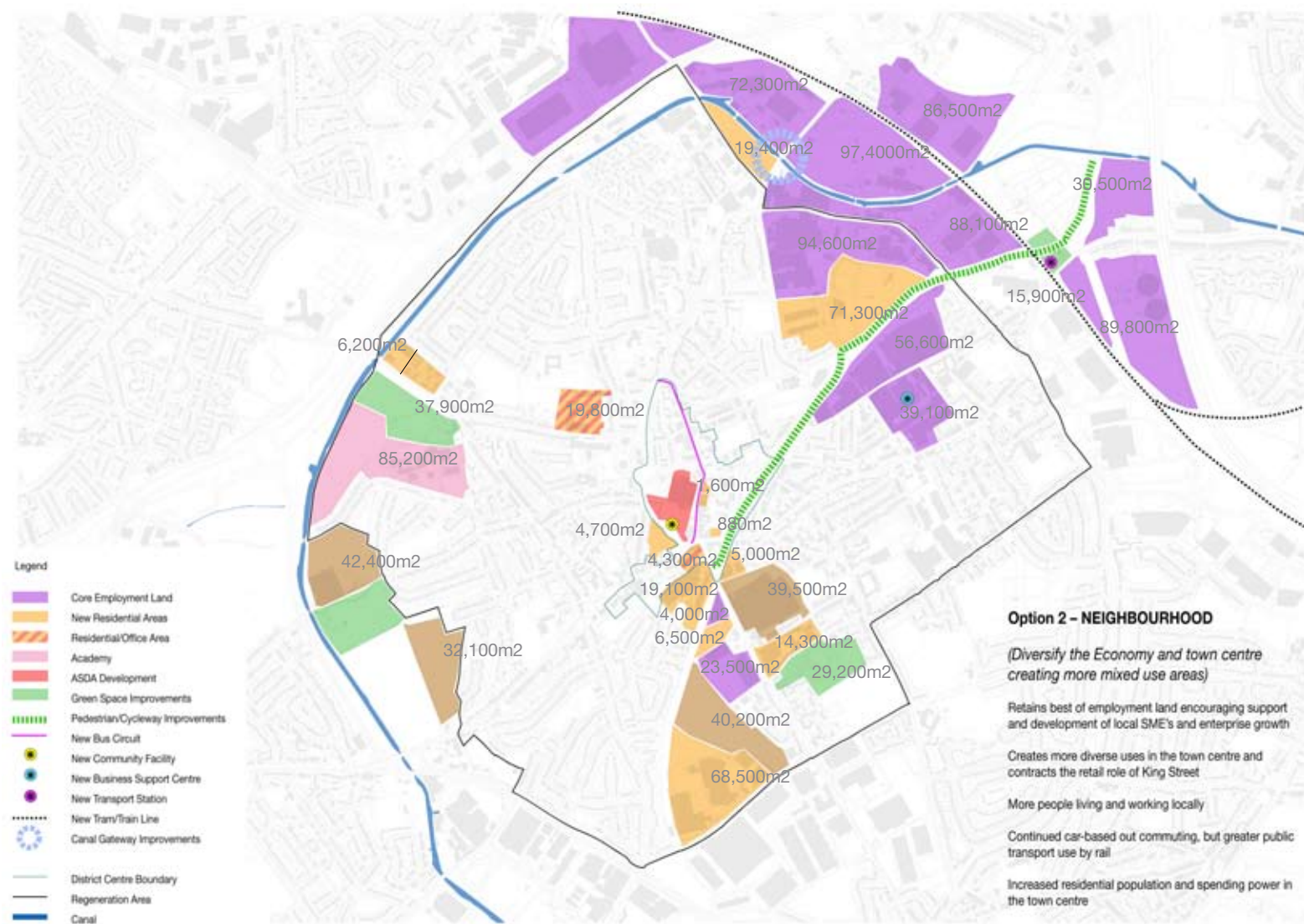
Option 1 Suburb	Aspect	Commentary . What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?
Impact	Spatial Implications	<p>Much of the potential housing supply sites do not relate particularly well to Darlaston as a town due to their peripheral position.</p> <p>Such supply is either that which may be delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through extant permissions (e.g. the Bloor Homes scheme on the former TRW Automotive site off Wooden Road, and the APUK site off Heathfield Road), or... • in the future, referencing emerging core strategy designations (e.g. the area of the Woods Bank Corridor residential designation in the emerging Joint Core Strategy that is south of the Darlaston Road Industrial Estate, and the Kings Hill emerging JCS allocation).
	Market Impacts	<p>Residential</p> <p>In the baseline DTZ highlighted that the supply of pipeline housing (permissions and allocations) in the Darlaston Catchment area is particularly high, higher than the generous supply that the Borough of Walsall benefits from. However, there may be a medium term supply paralysis affecting sites in a number of ways:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites with extant permissions acquired by developers at residential values (c£1m) at the height of the market – from our understanding this may not affect any site in Darlaston (due to their not having been purchased by a developer), but it is likely to affect sites in the wider catchment • Those on site are likely to be built out very slowly, such as at Wooden Road – 1 or 2 completions per month is a reasonable rate now, compared to the 4plus rates of the years up to 2007; and at Persimmon's site at Stafford Street, where development has actually stopped • Land owners with extant permissions revisit the format of their developments to reflect changed circumstances. We would expect this to be the case at the Servis site, where the 29% of apartments and 54 dph density seem out of step with the new market situation, and at the AP-UK site, where the 60 dph (net) density is particularly high. However, one should not expect that these sites will necessarily be picked up quickly by developers even with the benefit of a new permission. Even though, as we enter the Autumn 2009, some developers in the West Midlands are beginning to acquire sites once again, their acquisition strategy is marketed different than before.

Option 1 Suburb	Aspect	Commentary . <i>What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?</i>
Impact	Market Impacts (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single developers are not keen to take on large sites, such as Servis and APUK on their own (on the basis that a site of 200 units would take around 8 years to build out assuming a completion rate of 2 dwellings per month!). • Peripheral sites in marginal market locations are being avoided. The APUK site fits this description, and the same is likely to apply to many other sites south of Darlaston and north of Wednesbury, affected by the emerging JCS corridor designations for change from employment to residential land <p>Employment</p> <p>A key argument put forward for the strict protection of the integrity of the core employment land south of south road, as referenced in the planning officer's report recommending the refusal of the residential planning application on the former Wincanton site, is a wish not to prejudice the future comprehensive redevelopment of the site for employment purposes. It is our view that this outcome is unlikely, on the basis of the complex nature of land ownerships, including a number of owner occupiers, and the behavior of key owner occupiers as the Car Auctions, which seem to be expanding their business.</p>
	Economic Impacts	<p>Under the policy-led scenario SQW expect that, by 2011, there would be a total of around 5,600 jobs in the DRA. This equates to a contraction of 22% in the area's employment base (equivalent to 1,600 jobs) compared to the 2007 level. If this forecast transpires it would represent a decline of 31% (2,500 jobs) in the areas employment base since 2003. A contraction of this scale would imply a further decline of around 12% of local economic output (GVA) and a contraction in the area's business base of around 7%.</p> <p>Job losses would be concentrated amongst:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled trades • Machine operatives • Elementary occupations, and • Administrative clerical and secretarial occupations <p>Under this scenario SQW would expect that the DRA area's employment base is likely to stabilise at around 6,000 jobs by 2015.</p> <p>Employment growth would be confined to distribution and retailing (an increase 200 jobs, from 2007 to 2015) with public service and third sector employment stabilized at 2007 levels.</p> <p>The majority of job losses would be in manufacturing (1,200 jobs lost 2007-2015).</p>

Option 1 Suburb	Aspect	Commentary . <i>What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?</i>
Impact	Transport Impacts	<p>Under this policy led scenario JMP would expect the reduction of local employment to result in an increase in journey length for employment.</p> <p>With new jobs being created in the SDA and at Walsall Gigaport there will be an increase in demand for journeys to the north of the residential area of Darlaston.</p> <p>The creation of a high quality walking and cycling routes between Darlaston and the SDA and Walsall will improve access to these opportunities.</p> <p>Creation of home zones in Darlaston would improve access to strategic walking and cycling routes and public transport corridors.</p> <p>As part of the bus review there will be an opportunity to promote public transport to residents of Darlaston.</p>
	Response from Public Consultation 3rd October 2009	<p>Questionnaire feedback revealed disapproval of the policy led option by a strong margin:</p> <p>Strongly Approve 3% Approve 21% (24%) Disapprove 41% Strongly Disapprove 35% (76%)</p> <p>Typical respondent comments include:</p> <p>“Not really planning at all, it’s just letting things go on as they are.”</p> <p>“Just a big housing estate”</p> <p>“Does not develop the town”</p> <p>“Although ‘realistic and deliverable’ it reduces Darlaston to even more of a ghost-town with little to commit people to its development.”</p>

OPTION 2 APPRAISAL

Option 2 N'hood	Aspect	Commentary - This option includes committed development as in Option 1 but introduces a <i>greater mix of land uses</i> into areas within Darlaston, including around Heath Road. It protects the remaining employment land to the south, and allows the Wincanton site and part of the scrap yard within the 'core' employment area to develop as housing giving definition to the linear park along the former railway.
Changes/ Actions	Housing	Includes the planning permission of the AP (UK) Site, Moxley Tip and the Servis Site. It also includes sites along Stafford Road, the canal and part of the land south of Heath Road (the Wincanton site and the car scrapping site).
	Employment	Includes all of the currently designated core employment land except part of the land to south of Heath Road. This option also proposes a business support centre in the Central Trading Centre.
	Town Centre	Includes option 1 changes but seeks to consolidate the town centre and high street by rationalizing the amount of retail floor space on King Street removing 2 blocks, thereby increasing demand for the remainder. These blocks could be redeveloped at a more appropriate scale and design for residential use with a ground floor active frontage. The option also includes residential development on the former tower block site (owned by WHG) and Pinfold Street, preserving the historic pub facade. Some buses could be re-routed along King Street to new stops alongside ASDA, to generate footfall beyond the superstore and animate the dead space here. The existing bus lay-by is shown redeveloped. New uses could be residential, community, retail, commercial, leisure or a mix of these.
	Green Space	Includes proposed S106 investment to George Rose Park through the MarCity site as in Option 1. Includes better landscaping along the linear park connecting into the new railway station and improvements to George Rose Park and Hall Street Recreation Ground. Proposes a new canal gateway at Bentley Bridge.
	Community	Includes the proposed Darlaston Academy and potentially a new town centre facility.
	Transport	Anticipated reinstatement of the Wolverhampton to Walsall line (train/tram) and a new station at James Bridge. Opens up King Street to buses and taxis, and provides new bus stops adjacent to ASDA with circulation into King Street and returning on Crescent Road. Redevelopment of Pinfold Street would give an opportunity to improve the A462/A4038 junction to improve pedestrian facilities and reduce localised congestion.

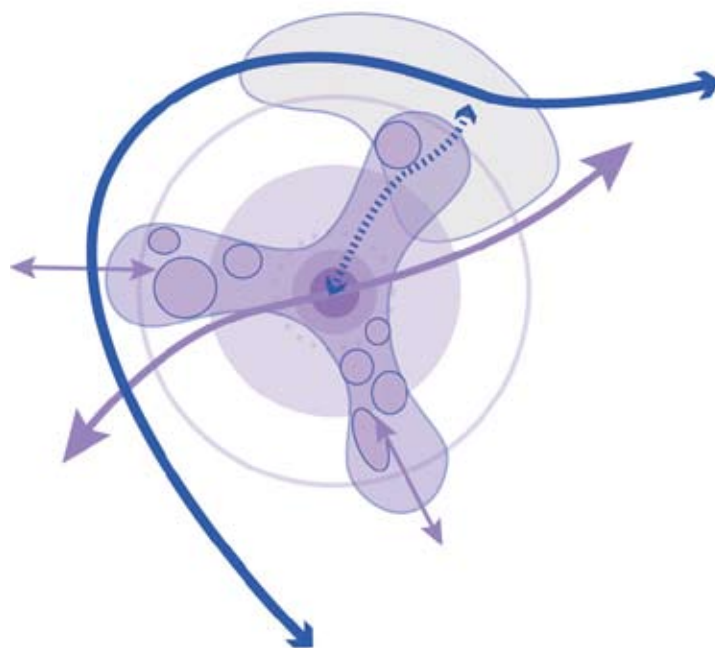


Areas are approximate should be used for indicative purposes only



Spatially, the key points include:

- Mix of employment and residential in the south
- Some expansion of town centre
- Corridors of investment
- Some mixing of Heath Road core uses
- Linear greenlink along former rail route



OPTION 2 APPRAISAL (CONTINUED)

Option 2 N'hood	Aspect	Commentary - What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?
Impact	Spatial Implications	Retains something of the classic Black Country pattern of industry and housing in close proximity. Rebalancing the employment land with new residential around Wincanton and the scrapyards site can reinforce the linear park, but will need careful masterplanning.
	Market Impacts (Residential)	<p>Residential Allocating the former Wincanton site to residential, subject to a revisited scheme of enhanced urban design, could yield a potentially attractive site location adjacent to the open space. The site is smaller and potentially more deliverable than the Servis, APUK and TRW Automotive sites.</p> <p>The additional town centre sites are also an attractive proposition. However, caution is needed in allocating further land to residential – designating the land currently occupied by the Car breakers and auctioneers, east of the Wincanton site, may give a new residential area with critical mass, but would represent significant additional supply that must be judged in the existing housing supply context.</p> <p>DTZ have spoken to the land manager of an active local developer, who is of the view that they would be interested in future sites in Darlaston, but not large parcels - they will take the phased approach. Overall their view of the town is that outsiders' perception of Darlaston as an industrial town with a contained housing market will not change, and this will continue to influence the product they build – any proposal for new housing will continue to take account of local demographics.</p> <p>It may be some time before developer activity picks up, as the view is Darlaston prices may have further to fall, and the residential market downturn may be more prolonged in Darlaston due to the significant rise in unemployment.</p> <p>Places in the West Midlands like Darlaston may have a harder and longer residential market downturn than elsewhere. Notably it seems that all residential developer build activity in Darlaston at the moment is grant dependent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stock being built out at the Bloor/ Woden Road site is for Sanctuary HA (80% of the 100 units Bloor propose for the portion of the site they bought off Marcity is for Sanctuary HA), and is HCA grant dependent. • The Persimmon scheme at Stafford Road has HCA KickStart funding. DTZ do not believe new canalside housing is viable while the context remains unattractive and the site peripheral.

Option 2 N'hood	Aspect	Commentary . <i>What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?</i>
Impact	Market Impacts (Employment and Retail)	<p>Employment DTZ feel good employment sites close to the Black CountryRoute/New Road should be preserved for this purpose.</p> <p>However, whilst in good proximity to the BCNR, the Wolverhampton Street site that this option suggests for residential is small and the benefits of developing residential close to George Rose Park and the new College must be taken into consideration.</p> <p>DTZ Comment on site Proposals Offices Workshops at Stafford Road: A good idea, but not an an important core employment site; residential should not be discounted; live-work units attractive if viable.</p> <p>St Lawrence Way: This would actually make for an attractive site for drive through fastfood units or a Carphone warehouse (a couple of 4000sqft units), and could give the frontage activity required Potential for retail redevelopment on King Street: This could be a very important scheme, if the land can be assembled.</p> <p>Whilst the DTZ search of retailer requirements in Darlaston revealed only Greggs with an apparent interest, this is a reflection of the knowledge that there is no suitable stock to offer for modern chain retailers in Darlaston.</p> <p>Sketch plans suggest retail space of circa 12,000sqft, and DTZadvise a Poundland type retailer would be interested in this (7-12,000sqft space requirement), and possibly B&M Bargains.</p> <p>Wilkinsons might only consider if the opportunity was at least 15,000 sqft as would need such sized space to be able to compete with Asda. Could possibly fit in a Lidl or Aldi 8,000sqft gross.</p> <p>Consideration could be given to a retail element on the former tower block site, perhaps with residential above.</p> <p>Office Development on Picturedrome Way car park: This would have to be a pre-let, and on the basis of the current market this is likely to be a public / quasi – public sector body.</p> <p>A training provider is an alternative, though this might compete with the ideas for the Forge Mixed Use Development in Option 3.</p>

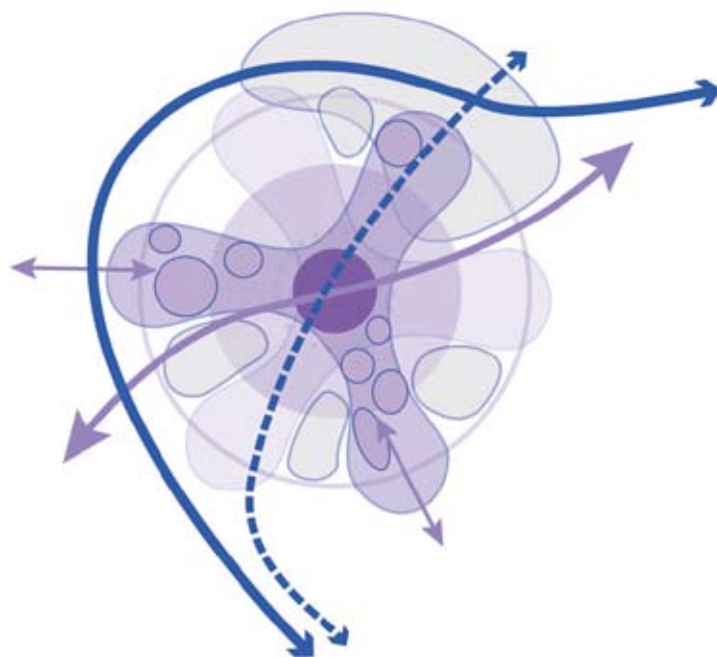
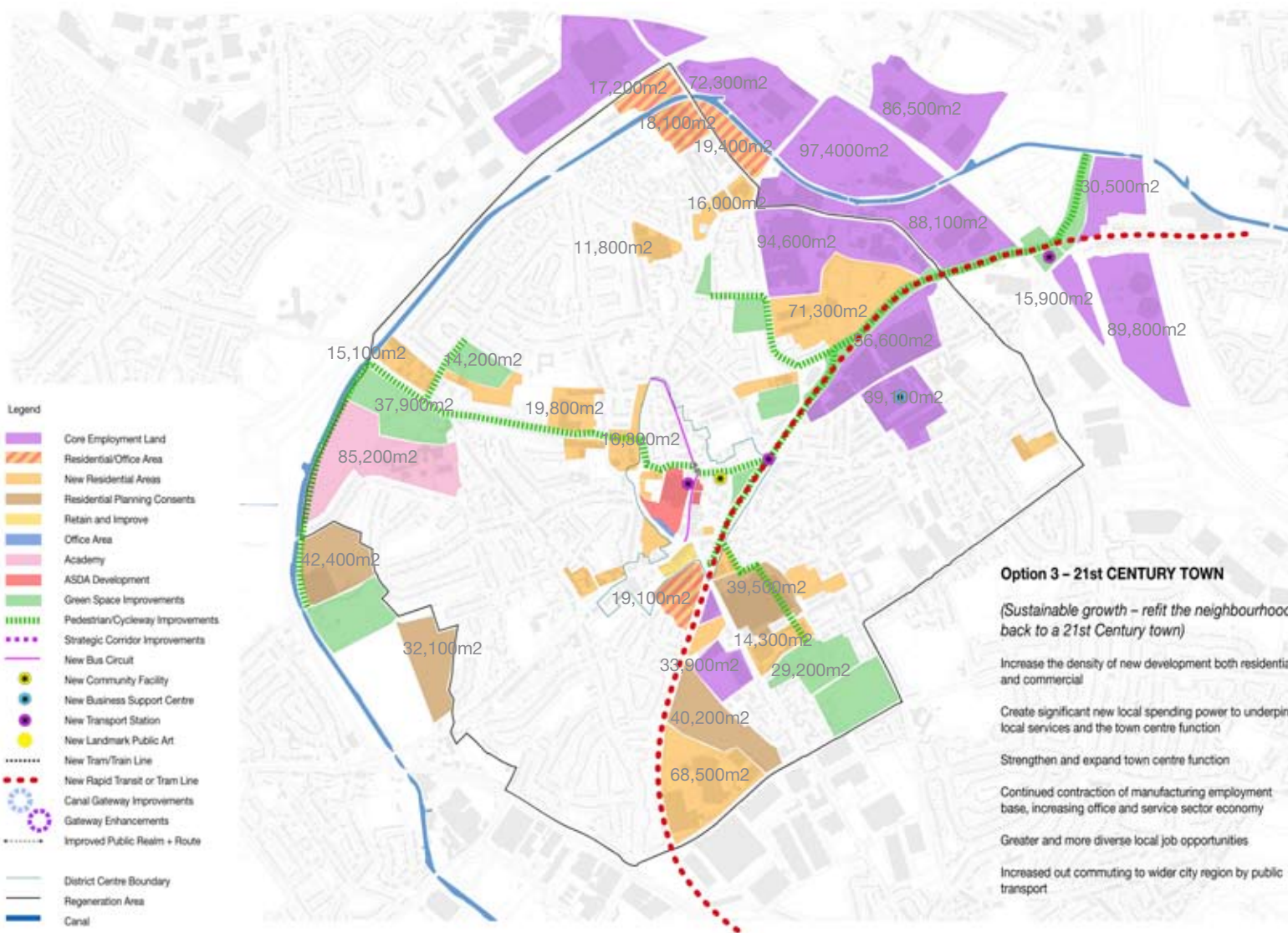
OPTION 2 APPRAISAL (CONTINUED)

Option 2 N'hood	Aspect	Commentary - What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?
Impact	Economic Impacts	<p>Under this scenario there is more of an emphasis on strengthening Darlaston's town centre service functions.</p> <p>There is an initiative to provide local business and enterprise support via the proposed business support centre in the Central Trading Centre.</p> <p>Under the mixed use scenario SQW would expect that, by 2011, there would be a total of around 5,900 jobs in the DRA. This equates to a contraction of 18% in the area's employment base (equivalent to 1,300 jobs) compared to the 2007 level.</p> <p>SQW would also expect a decline of around 9% of local economic output (GVA) and a decline in the size of the local business base (ie the number of business units) of 6%.</p> <p>This reflects the expected boost to enterprise (over and above the baseline situation) given by the local business and enterprise growth initiative.</p> <p>Job losses would continue to be concentrated amongst skilled trades relevant to manufacturing (as for the policy-led scenario, we anticipate that the majority of job losses would be in manufacturing (1,200 jobs lost 2007-2015)).</p> <p>Under the mixed use scenario we would expect that the DRA area's employment base is likely to stabilise at around 6,400 jobs by 2015. Employment growth would be confined to distribution and retailing (an increase 300 jobs, from 2007 to 2015) and public service/third (a total increase of 200 jobs</p>
	Transport Impacts	<p>Under this mixed use scenario JMP would expect the retention of local employment to assist in moderating journey length for employment. With new jobs being created in the SDA and at Walsall Gigaport there will be an increase in demand for journeys to the north of the residential area of Darlaston.</p> <p>The creation of a high quality walking and cycling routes between Darlaston and the SDA and Walsall will improve access to these opportunities. Creation of home zones in Darlaston would improve access to strategic walking and cycling routes and public transport corridors.</p> <p>Re-routing of buses onto King Street - Up to 18 buses per hour currently serve Darlaston. Further analysis is needed to assess the best option for services. Whilst two way bus services are preferable from a passenger perspective analysis of vehicle loading would maximise impact on footfall.</p>

Option 2 N'hood	Aspect	Commentary . <i>What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?</i>
Impact	Economic Impacts	<p>Questionnaire feedback revealed approval of the mixed use option by around two to one, with positive comments about protecting employment land from change of use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strongly Approve 25% - Approve 42% (67%) - Disapprove 8% - Strongly Disapprove 25% (33%) <p>Typical respondent comments include:</p> <p>"Keeps mixed use south of the town."</p> <p>"I prefer this option to the first as there's a mix of jobs and housing."</p> <p>"Improves community spirit and identity. Positive and progressive – addresses multiple issues. It's comprehensive"</p> <p>"This approach would appear to be the best of both worlds given the financial constraints likely to be encountered. Darlaston needs jobs, not just affordable housing."</p>

OPTION 3 APPRAISAL

Option 3 Town	Aspect	<p>Commentary - This option includes a greater restructuring of land uses and the economy of Darlaston. The town centre's role is enhanced and extended by new commercial development and attractions. There is a focus on the town centre, with a flagship civic project in the Town Hall. Better quality industrial and employment sites are protected, and some lower grade sites diversified into a mix of other uses, including residential. It shows the rapid transit route introduced along the linear park, to culminate in an interchange at James Bridge. Green routes are enhanced to integrate new housing development with the linear park.</p>
Changes/ Actions	Housing	<p>This option accepts the policy led scenario in Option 1 to the south of the town, but allows more housing around the canal, linear park, town centre and on former industrial sites in the core area.</p>
	Employment	<p>There is greater rationalization of industrial sites alongside the canal and in the core area, to introduce other uses, still focused on employment. By focusing on the town centre the town may be able to grow employment in retail, office and leisure uses to claw back job numbers threatened by decline in traditional industries. This option also proposes a business support centre in the Central Trading Centre.</p>
	Town Centre	<p>In this option the role of the town centre is expanded and diversified with greater attractions and a quality environment.</p> <p>As in Option 2 this option suggests greater amount of modern retail space on King Street with larger floor plates and an office development on the Picturedrome Way site which could accommodate public sector relocation or commercial user.</p> <p>The flagship project is for 'The Forge', a multi purpose centre based in an extended and reconfigured town hall. A multiuse facility here could address needs identified for business support, youth facilities, college outreach and other community uses. To assist viability the building could generate revenue by, for example, including business incubation and conferencing space, banqueting and performance facilities.</p> <p>The service area could be configured as a court-yard, perhaps in conjunction with the adjacent historic pub. It also seeks to reconfigure the space off Wallows Close behind the town hall to create an enhanced public realm, activity and a route through to Crescent Road, thereby encouraging pedestrian circuits.</p> <p>The project would consolidate a 'community' hub of activities in the town centre reinforcing the town's identity and helping 'forge' the diverse communities of Darlaston in one of its most distinctive buildings. The Forge concept offers a civic counter-balance to the commercial dominance of the super market.</p>



Spatially, the key points include:

- Change of employment to residential in the south
- Expansion of town centre
- Corridors of investment throughout
- Mixing of Heath Road core uses
- Rapid transit along former rail route

OPTION 3 APPRAISAL (CONTINUED)

Option 3 Town	Aspect	
Changes/ Actions	Green Space	<p>This includes Option 1 and 2 proposals for George Rose and Kings Hill Parks.</p> <p>It adds reconfiguration of Hall Street recreation ground, to provide a more open and intensively used facility.</p> <p>In addition we propose a new 'Panopticon' light sculpture to create a unique 21st Century landmark on the highest point in Darlaston at Kings Hill Park.</p> <p>The Kings Hill park mound sits on the axis of the two spires St Lawrence and St Bartholomew's Wednesbury. It is also visible from Walsall Art Gallery. A visible marker linking the spires would aid orientation, reinforce these landmarks and celebrate the links between them as well as attract visitors.</p>
	Community	<p>Includes the proposed Darlaston Academy but also adds a range of possible uses within the Forge, and an opened up Darlaston Recreation Ground on the old GKN sports and social Club.</p>
	Transport	<p>This includes proposals from option 1 and 2 plus the development of a rapid transit through the linear park to the restored railway line where a public transport interchange would link modes of transport together.</p> <p>A Rapid transit stop would be located next to the town centre. A new bus station facility would be provided on King Street. St Lawrence Way would be narrowed and reconfigured. Traffic management measures would calm traffic on key routes and around the town centre.</p>

Option 3 Town	Aspect	Commentary - <i>What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?</i>
Impact	Spatial Implications	<p>This is about rebuilding the town's sense of identity from the middle out, creating common ground where people from the different neighbourhoods, ages and ethnicities found in Darlaston feel able to meet and take pride.</p> <p>In addition to a strong centre, this Option requires a detailed reconfiguration of the Heath Road area to make it more outward facing, allowing definition and animation of the canal and linear park, to bring a wider range of uses and visitors.</p> <p>It does however allow the 'suburbanisation' of the south end of the town from employment to residential uses, as in Option1.</p>
	Market Impacts (Residential)	<p>This option would see the loss of some good, "non core" employment sites in good proximity to the BCR/BCNR corridor (Site 2) and may prejudice the operations of businesses in the Bentley Road South industrial area.</p> <p>DTZ feel the more extensive area of canalside housing may be difficult to deliver until the longer term for two reasons.</p> <p>First, as already highlighted under Option 2, the industrial and peripheral context of the allocations do not make for an attractive residential environment and risk an over supply of housing.</p> <p>(This is a critical point, especially in the context of the observations of the local developer DTZ talked to – the downturn could be deeper and longer in Darlaston, which suggests that efforts must be made to encourage residential activity where we think such development will have critical regeneration benefits, such as around "The Leys" and the Wincanton site).</p> <p>Secondly, although the owner of the Boat is keen for housing, residential should not be the priority here when there are more important sites to promote in regeneration terms.</p>

OPTION 3 APPRAISAL (CONTINUED)

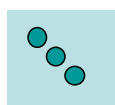
Option 3 Town	Aspect	Commentary - What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?
Impact	Market Impacts (Employment and Retail)	<p>Pinfold/Alma Works: DTZ are uncertain of the viability of proposed retail here. Acquisition and assembly costs are likely to be high, and URBED feel a refurbishment scheme may offer better value. The overall complexion may rest on the rapid transit line, but the creation of a large unified site as proposed is important to entice an operator.</p> <p>Former Tower Block Site We should also highlight that vacant land highlighted for residential on the former tower block site faces, we understand, many constraints in addition to ground issues - pipes and cables, so a low density use could be appropriate. A 'Lidl' type retail use perhaps with some residential above could fit well with new development on the former bus-lay-by.</p> <p>Corus Site Caution needs to applied were there ever to be any suggestion of a residential use for the Corus site should the firm wish one day to relocate. The units are of quite a good size, and could attract another warehouse operator.</p> <p>Heath Road If the area south of Heath Road was comprehensively redeveloped the market would probably require a mix of units of 5-10,000sqft, and 20,000sqft under an open B1/B2 and B8 consent.</p> <p>It needs to be considered though that the attractiveness of the area south of Heath Road is the low rents for moderate accommodation, and a number of businesses are owner occupiers – rental accommodation may not fit their business model.</p> <p>Some sites around Heath Road are tightly constrained and residential may be an appropriate use (though others may not be suitable given proximity to EMR).</p> <p>Some businesses could be relocated and would be minimal loss to the area if given to residential, but others accommodate important businesses involved in machine tool work and other activities that add significant value.</p>

Option 3 Town	Aspect	Commentary . <i>What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?</i>
Impact	Economic Impacts	<p>Under the transformational scenario there is a still greater emphasis on strengthening Darlaston's town centre service functions.</p> <p>The provision of local business and enterprise support also expands as part of 'the Forge' flagship scheme.</p> <p>Under the transformational scenario SQW would expect that, by 2011, there would be a total of around 6,100 jobs in the DRA.</p> <p>This equates to a contraction of 15% in the area's employment base (equivalent to 1,100 jobs) compared to the 2007 level.</p> <p>However, by 2015 SQW would expect DRA employment to grow to 6,900 and by 2020 for it to grow to 7,300. That is, by 2020 the area's employment base should have returned to 2007 levels.</p> <p>However, the mix of employment by 2020 will be very different compared to 2007.</p> <p>Overall SQW would anticipate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A reduction of 1,300 jobs compared to 2007, in the areas manufacturing base (with concomitant reductions in demand for skilled and manual occupations) - Growth of 700 jobs in the retail and distribution sector - Growth of 200 jobs in banking and finance - Growth of 400 jobs in public services - Growth of 200 jobs in 'other services' (i.e. third sector)
	Transport Impacts	<p>JMP support the principles behind the movement interventions suggested in Option 3.</p> <p>Walking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the impact of traffic in Darlaston by creating more retail, social and leisure facilities within the town centre. • Creates better conditions for pedestrians along Pinfold Street and St Lawrence Way by widening pavements where possible, removing street clutter and providing more convenient crossing facilities. • Improves the permeability of the town centre by opening up a new east-west pedestrian route from Victoria Park to King Street and creates active frontages through retail and leisure development.

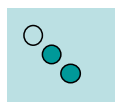
Option 3 Town	Aspect	Commentary . <i>What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?</i>
Impact	Transport Impacts (continued)	<p>Cycling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates better access to the canal network, the Darlaston SDA and onwards to learning and employment opportunities in Walsall. • Opens up the proposed Rapid Transit Corridor to create a shared traffic free route for cyclists and pedestrians. • Should seek to provide secure cycle parking at King Street and other local shopping centres in all options. <p>Public Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As with Option 2, opens up King Street for key bus services. Up to 18 buses per hour currently serve Darlaston. <p>Further analysis is needed to assess the best option for services. Whilst two way bus services are preferable from a passenger perspective analysis of vehicle loading would maximise impact on footfall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rapid transport route would be reviewed to ensure that proposed stops are positively linked by new pedestrian routes to local facilities and the route facilitates redevelopment sites along it. • Consider access to potential new railway Station for North Darlaston by walking, cycling and rapid transit. <p>Car</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should seek in all Options to create short term on street parking along main roads (where sufficiently wide) and in side roads in order to encourage greater use of local shops and businesses in the town centre and other local retail centres. • Will help create a series of gateways that enable drivers to identify the neighbourhood they are entering .
	Responses from Public Consultation 3 rd October	<p>Questionnaire feedback revealed overwhelming approval of the transformational option by nine to one, with positive comments about its ambition and impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strongly Approve 80% - Approve 10% (90%) - Disapprove 5% - Strongly Disapprove 5% (10%)

Option 3 Town	Aspect	Commentary . <i>What effect does this option have on the baseline issues raised around each of the following issues? [Spatial development, property market, economy and transport?</i>
Impact	Responses from Public Consultation 3 rd October	<p>Typical respondent comments include:</p> <p>"Really addresses the centre."</p> <p>"Bold and ambitious, but needs to recognise the needs of the young people who have no facilities."</p> <p>"I would amalgamate the district centre development with the spread of job opportunities in Option 2. I would like to see more youth facilities, better housing, and more hob opportunities."</p> <p>"Good strategic vision."</p> <p>"I feel a mixture of options 2 and 3 would be the most suitable."</p> <p>"Love the radical nature of it – go for it. Comprehensive, positive and progressive. Can Walsall council put the money (our money) where its mouth is???"</p> <p>"The third option would lead to the best creation of regeneration."</p> <p>"Option 3 is the best option for development."</p> <p>"Darlaston is dying and needs a shot in the arm – option 3 should happen."</p> <p>"I prefer option 3 as there will be more businesses in Darlaston."</p> <p>"Option 3 is my preferred option – it would bring Darlaston alive."</p>

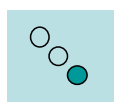
EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION



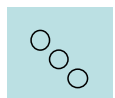
Strongly positive impact



Positive impact



Minimal impact



Weak impact

Options	Option 1 Suburb	Option 2 Neighbourhood	Option 3 Town	Option 2 & 3 Preferred
Objectives				
Housing <small>Opens opportunities to create more family housing and increase owner occupation.</small>				
Employment <small>Retains and improves provision of business premises and support.</small>				
Community <small>Expands provision of social infrastructure, particularly for young people and for healthy recreation.</small>				
Transport <small>Improves pedestrian, cycle and public transport connections.</small>				
Support <small>Generates public and stakeholder enthusiasm.</small>				
Totals <small>Indicative scores.</small>	7	11	13	15

A preferred option is emerging building on the comments and conversations during the consultation period, added to our consultant team's considered input.

This would combine the emphasis on the town centre found in Option 3 with the mix of employment and residential land uses proposed in Option 2.

If this is agreed in principle with the client group, we will undertake further testing of this approach.

SQW have made an early assessment of the combined scenario, showing it would help the town claw back employment levels threatened by decline in traditional industries:

Under this scenario emphasis is given to strengthening Darlaston's town centre service functions, as well as providing locally-focused business and enterprise support, particularly aimed at minimising the decline of the area's manufacturing base. .

Under the emerging preferred option SQW would expect that by 2011 there would be a total of around 6,200 jobs in the DRA. This equates to a contraction of 14% in the area's employment base (equivalent to 1,000 jobs) compared to the 2007 level.

By 2015 SQW expect DRA employment to grow to 7,100 and by 2020 for it to have grown to 7,600. That is, by 2020 the area's employment base should be in excess of 2007 levels (a net growth of 400 jobs).

However, the mix of employment by 2020 will be very different compared to 2007. Overall SQW anticipate:

A reduction of 1,000 jobs – compared to 2007 levels – in the area's manufacturing base (with concomitant reductions in demand for skilled and manual occupations).

By 2020 the proportion of local jobs in the manufacturing

sector will probably decline from 27% (2007) to around 13%.

However, despite the reductions in jobs the sum value of economic output from these business may not fall. Down-sizing of employment will be a response to competition from low cost centres. Businesses that can make this transition may remain in the area and will be important sources of wealth creation and demand for jobs and procurement

Businesses in sectors less prone to low cost competition will remain active in the area. There may also be scope to grow some small specialised businesses on the back of the area's heritage of engineering skills and competencies.

Growth of 700 jobs in the retail and distribution sector.

This is predicated on a strengthened town centre retail offer as well as some growth in distribution activities in the area's business parks.

Growth of 200 jobs in banking and finance.

This assumes some growth in town centre retailing but also the potential for some back office functions to be attracted to the area's business parks.

Growth of 400 jobs in public services.

This assumes some local relocation of Walsall MBC and other public sector functions and activities.

Growth of 200 jobs in 'other services' (i.e. third sector).

EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION









Indicative view down a revitalised King St, with a reconfigured ASDA frontage, shared space for buses and taxis to travel along throughout the day, new street surfacing and furniture and new mixed use development.



Indicative view towards 'Bullstake' junction from St. Lawrence Way and Pinfold Street, framed by new gateway buildings with mixed use development and an improved pedestrian environment. Three Horseshoes pub is retained and refurbished, and a glimpsed view through to the spire is protected.

