



Sustainability Appraisal Stage A – Scoping Study

DRAFT

January 2026

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Executive Summary

1. TBC

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1. Introduction

Purpose

1. Sustainability Appraisal is a means of ensuring that social, economic and environmental considerations are integrated into the development of a Local Plan. The Scoping Report is the first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process and sets out how the appraisal of a Local Plan will be undertaken. Whilst full consultation is not necessary at this stage, the views of the three statutory environmental agencies are being sought on the draft Scoping Report. This final Scoping Report will be used to appraise the Review of the Local Plan, and other development plan documents where appropriate.

Background

2. Section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities (LPA) preparing a Local Plan to do so with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

Solihull Local Plan

3. The Solihull Local Plan (2011-2028)¹ was adopted in December 2013 and is the current development plan for the Borough. Following a High Court challenge in 2014, the overall housing figure for the Plan was remitted to the Council and in 2015 a local plan review process commenced to bring forward a replacement plan.
4. This review process culminated with the submission of the 2020 (Draft Submission Plan) for examination in May 2021. However, following significant changes to national planning policy during this period, the plan was withdrawn from examination in October 2024.
5. Following withdrawal of the 2020 plan, work commenced on bringing forward a new plan with the launch of a call-for-sites exercise over the period November 2024 to February 2025.
6. Since that time the Government has published its intentions on regional planning. As such, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has started work on a Spatial Development Strategy, which will include Solihull.
7. In addition to the changes at regional level, the Government has introduced wider plan-making reforms under the Planning and Infrastructure Act. The Council wants to make a meaningful start on a new plan and believes that an informal consultation setting out high level issues and options can be undertaken in early 2026, before the new local plan process is confirmed.
8. A revised Local Development Scheme was agreed in November with the following indicative milestones:
 - **Winter 2025/26:** Issues and Options Informal Consultation (outside the formal arrangements under the new 30-month plan-making arrangements).
 - **Winter 2026/27:** Mandatory Public Consultation No. 1 (under the new plan-making arrangements). There is potential for this to contain the level of detail typically found in a preferred option consultation.
 - **Summer 2027:** Mandatory Public Consultation No. 2. This is likely to be similar to the R19 draft submission plan stage and would be the version of the Plan the Council expects to submit for examination.

¹ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/StrategiesPlansPolicies_Solihull_Local_Plan_2013.pdf

- Winter 2027/28 - Spring 2028: Examination
- Spring 2028: Adoption

Requirement for SA/SEA

9. The Council is legally required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal for its Development Plan Documents, in accordance with Government legislation (Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004).
10. The Council is also required to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the environmental impacts of its plans and policies, in order to avoid or mitigate negative environmental impacts (EU Directive EC/2001/42). Government guidance on Sustainability Appraisal indicates that it should be incorporate the requirements of the SEA Directive. The Sustainability Appraisal Report will need to show how the SEA Directive requirements have been met.
11. Guidance on SA and SEA for plan-making is set out in Planning Practice Guidance², which was last updated in December 2020.
12. The requirement is reiterated in the NPPF (Para. 33):

“Local plans and spatial development strategies should be informed throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal that meets the relevant legal requirements¹⁸. This should demonstrate how the plan has addressed relevant economic, social and environmental objectives (including opportunities for net gains). Significant adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered).”

Environmental Outcome Reports

13. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 introduced powers to bring forward new regulations and guidance that would replace Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Assessments with a streamlined process called ‘Environmental Outcome Reports.’
14. A policy paper was consulted upon in 2023, however, at the time of writing, the 2004 legislation has not been superseded.

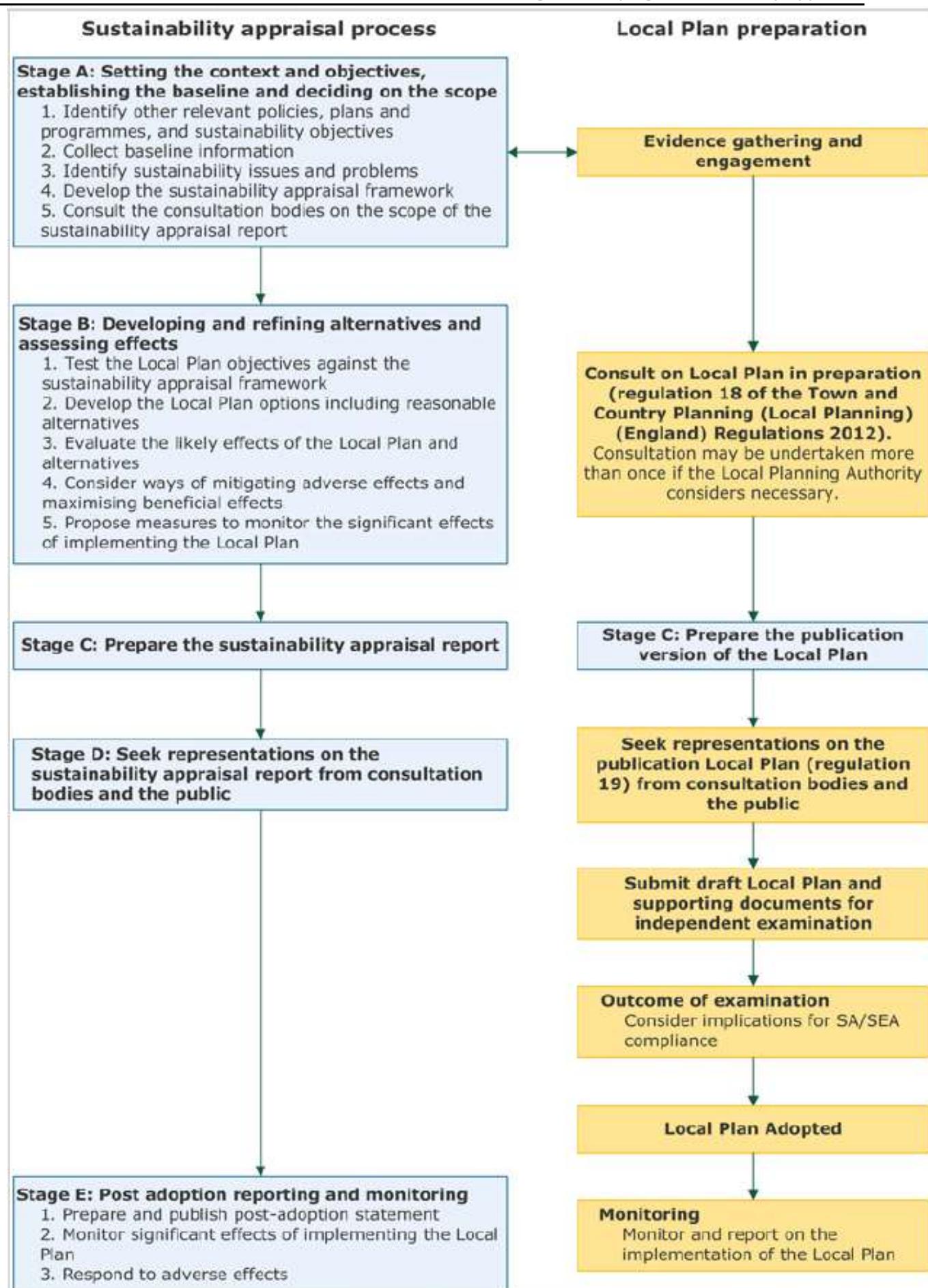
Stages of Sustainability Appraisal

15. The PPG sets out a clear flowchart process³ for undertaking Sustainability Appraisal:

Figure 1. (Page over) - Flowchart: Sustainability Appraisal Process

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#covid19>

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7557f240f0b6360e4735dd/sea1_013.pdf



16. In summary these are:

- Stage A - Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
- Stage B - Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects
- Stage C - Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report
- Stage D - Consulting on the Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal Report
- Stage E - Post adoption reporting and monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan

17. This Scoping Report is at **Stage A**, which is made up of 5 main tasks:

- A1 – Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives
- A2 – Collect baseline information
- A3 – Identify sustainability issues & problems
- A4 – Develop the Sustainability Appraisal Framework
- A5 – Consult on the scope of the SA

18. The PPG (Ref ID: 1-014-20140306) states that although the scoping stage is a key stage in the process, a formal scoping report is not required by law, but is a useful way of presenting information at the scoping stage. “The key aim of the scoping procedure is to help ensure the sustainability appraisal process is proportionate and relevant to the plan being assessed.”

19. In terms of consultation, the planning authority must consult with the following consultation bodies:

- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Historic England

20. Where a consultation body decides to respond, it should do so within 5 weeks of receipt of the request.

Structure of Report

- 21. This scoping report builds on the Sustainability Appraisal work carried out for the Local Plan Review (2015-2020).
- 22. The Council have decided to undertake this work in-house, using Officer expertise and experience, however, may commission external consultants for Stages B or beyond.
- 23. Rather than split the report by ‘task’, this report has grouped chapters under sustainability topics. For each topic there is a mini-review, looking at relevant policies & plans; baseline information; future trends and whether the sustainability objectives are still relevant and require amendment/addition/deletion.
- 24. Table 1 sets out the 11 sustainability topics, the factors covered under each, how these relate to the environmental effects stipulated in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations; and finally, the corresponding SA objectives from the 2017 Interim Report.⁴

⁴ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Sustainability-Appraisal-of-Draft-Local-Plan-2017.pdf>

Table 1. List of Sustainability Objectives supporting the Solihull Draft Local Plan 2020 SA⁵.

Sustainability Topic	Factors covered	SEA Sch. 2 Regulations⁶	2020 SA Objective
Population & Communities	Demographics, Indices of Deprivation, Crime, Health, towns & villages	(b) Population, (c) human health	<p>SA1. To contribute to regeneration and economic development initiatives that benefit the Borough's communities; especially those identified as deprived.</p> <p>SA2. To reduce the number of people experiencing difficulties in accessing employment, education and training opportunities.</p> <p>SA15. Reduce social exclusion and disparities within the Borough</p> <p>SA17. To fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, cultural, recreational, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality to reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>SA18. Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.</p>
Housing	Types and tenure of Housing	(c) Human Health (j) Material assets	SA16. Improve the supply and affordability of housing (particularly in the areas of greatest need)
Economy	Economic Development, Employment, Workforce & Skills, Retail and town centre services	(b) Population	SA19. Encourage development with a better balance between jobs, housing and services, and provide easy and equitable access to opportunities, basic services and amenities for all.

⁵ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-01/Sustainability-Appraisal-Main-Report-with-Appendices-B-C-and-D-October-2020.pdf>⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/schedule/2>

Sustainability Topic	Factors covered	SEA Sch. 2 Regulations⁶	2020 SA Objective
Transport & Access	Transport modes, access to services	N/A	SA3. To ensure that the location of development can be accommodated by existing and/or planned infrastructure and reduces the need to travel.
Pollution – Air Quality & Noise	Air Quality & Noise	(h) Air	SA14. Minimise air, soil, water, light and noise pollution.
Climate Change	Greenhouse gas emissions, climate change adaptation and resilience, flood risk	(i) Climatic Factors	SA5. Minimise greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy generation SA6. To assist businesses in the adaptation they need to become more resource efficient and resilient to the effects of a changing climate. SA8. To ensure that development provides for adaptation to urban heating, the effects of high winds and assists in promoting positive behaviour change.
Biodiversity & Geodiversity	Statutory & Local Designations, Habitats and Species, Local Nature Recovery Strategy	(a) Biodiversity (d) Fauna, (e) Flora,	SA9. Protect the integrity and connectivity of ecological sites and ensure that enhancement for habitats and species are not prejudiced. SA11. To facilitate the delivery and enhance the quality of areas providing green infrastructure.
Landscape & Land	Landscape designations, landscape character, agriculture, open space	(l) Landscape, (f) Soil	SA10. To manage the landscape effects of development in recognition of the European Landscape Convention as well as the risks and opportunities associated with measures to address climate change.
Cultural Heritage	Listed Buildings and SAMs, Conservation Areas, heritage at risk,	(k) Cultural Heritage	SA12. To enhance, conserve and protect buildings, sites and the setting of historic assets as part of development projects.

Sustainability Topic	Factors covered	SEA Sch. 2 Regulations⁶	2020 SA Objective
	archaeology, built environment		SA13. To deliver improvements in townscape and enhance local distinctiveness.
Water	Water resources, wastewater	(g) Water	SA7. Manage, maintain and where necessary improve the drainage network to reduce the negative effects of flooding on communities and businesses.
Waste & Minerals	Waste, Minerals	(j) Material Assets	SA4. Minimise the use of natural resources such as land, water and minerals, and minimise waste, whilst increasing reuse and recycling.

Relationship to other Assessments

25. The new Local Plan Review is at an early stage. The Issues and Options paper is high level and being treated as an informal stage of consultation.
26. As the new plan progresses, and depending on any implications from the plan-making reforms, the Council will also need to undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment and separately, a Health Impact Assessment.

2. Borough Portrait

Introduction

27. The following information is adapted from the Council's latest Authority Monitoring Report.⁷

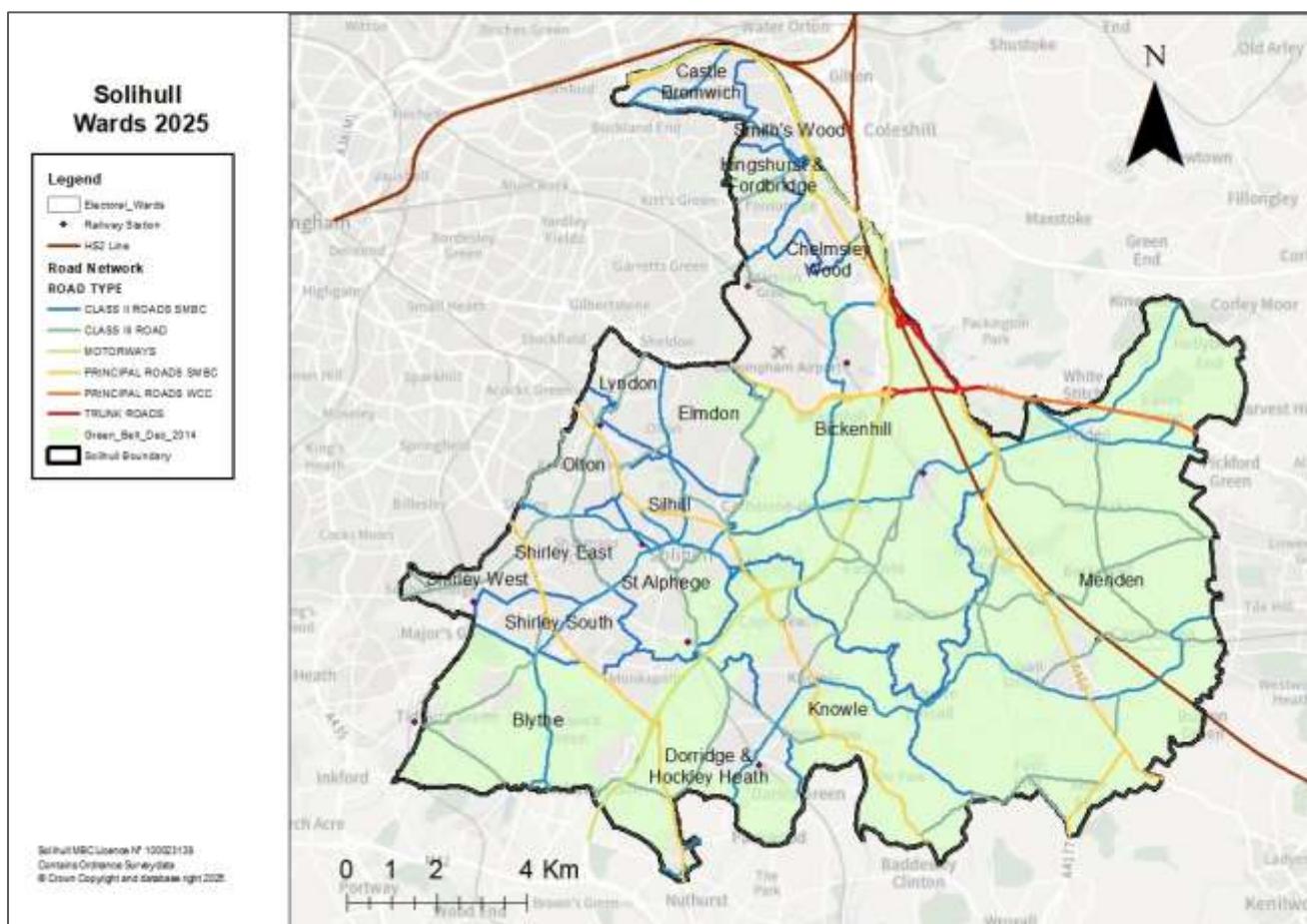
28. Solihull is one of the seven unitary West Midlands authorities and part of the mayoral West Midlands Combined Authority.

Table 2. Key Borough statistics

Key Facts	Data	Source	Notes
Area of Borough	17,828 ha	GIS	
Area of Green Belt	67%	GIS	
Population	221,242	ONS/Nomis Mid-Year Population Estimate 2024	
Households	93,863	ONS Household projections for England	2024 estimate based on 2018 projection
Average Car Ownership	1.42	ONS Census 2021	Average number of cars per household
Unemployment	3.2%	ONS/Nomis Annual Population Survey June 2025	Unemployment Rate for 16-64 year olds
Average House Price	£320,000	ONS House price (existing dwellings)	Median house price (existing dwellings) year ending September 2024
Average Workplace Earnings	£37,130	ONS/Nomis: Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings - Workplace Analysis 2024	Median Full-Time Workplace Earnings

29. Solihull is located on the south-eastern edge of the West Midlands Conurbation and is adjoined by the neighbouring areas of Birmingham and the Black Country to the west and Coventry to the East. To the north it is bounded by the rural area of North Warwickshire and to the south Warwick, Stratford upon Avon and Bromsgrove. A significant proportion of the Borough is covered by Green Belt which is strategically important in maintaining the open gap between the area of Birmingham and Solihull and the 'Meriden Gap' between Solihull and Coventry. It also contributes to the open character and quality of environment within the Borough.

⁷⁷ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-03/AMR-2024-fv.pdf>

Figure 2. Solihull Borough Map.

30. Solihull is well served in terms of the national rail and motorway network with the M42 running through the Borough linking to the M40 in the south and the M6 to the north. There are direct rail services to Birmingham and London and to the north along the West Coast and Chiltern mainlines. Birmingham Airport has a major role in the national airport infrastructure acting as a gateway linking the Borough and the rest of the West Midlands region internationally.
31. The Borough contains an extensive rural area characterised by smaller settlements and villages as well as more mature suburbs surrounding the town centre characterised by Victorian and Edwardian development.
32. It is characterised by a high-quality environment including 18 Green Flag awarded parks and gardens, open spaces and areas of ecological significance as well as historic assets such as listed buildings and a number of Conservation Areas. The Borough has five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), including the extensive River Blythe network.
33. The Borough has a number of other regionally and nationally significant economic assets including the NEC, Jaguar Land Rover, Birmingham Business Park, and Blythe Valley Business Park.
34. The Borough is the planned location of the first high speed rail interchange station outside London, which is key in the delivery of the HS2 line to Birmingham. It is anticipated that this will generate significant investment opportunities in the Borough and wider region.
35. The main retail centre in the Borough is Solihull town centre, a vibrant location with good transport links to Birmingham and London.
36. The Borough is part of a wider housing market area which incorporates Birmingham and 13 surrounding local authorities, and the Council is working with these authorities to address the

housing need across the area. House prices across the Borough are high and the area has a significant need for affordable housing.

37. Despite these economic growth opportunities, there exist wider inequalities as wards in North Solihull have a high proportion of neighbourhoods within the 10% most deprived in the country.

3. Population and Communities

Introduction

38. The data for the draft Local Plan Review and previous Sustainability Appraisal was based on information drawn from the 2011 Census. This Scoping Report and new Local Plan will be able to use the 2021 Census data, which shows that there have been some significant changes in population profile, whilst other trends have continued so that Solihull continues to be quite different from the other six Metropolitan Authorities.

Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

National Context

39. Six months after their election, the current Government set out a mission statement for a 'Plan for Change'⁸. There have been a number of ambitious plans, strategies published since then, and primary legislation introduced, including the Planning & Infrastructure Bill, updated NPPF, Infrastructure Strategy, NHS Health Plan etc.

40. These missions are:

- **Raising living standards** in every part of the United Kingdom, so working people have more money in their pocket as we aim to deliver the highest sustained growth in the G7.
- **Building 1.5 million homes** in England and fast-tracking planning decisions on at least 150 major economic infrastructure projects - more than the last 14 years combined.
- **Ending hospital backlogs** to meet the NHS standard of 92% of patients in England waiting no longer than 18 weeks for elective treatment.
- Putting **police back on the beat** with a named officer for every neighbourhood, and 13,000 additional officers, PCSOs and special constables in neighbourhood roles in England and Wales.
- Giving **children the best start in life**, with a record 75% of 5-year-olds in England ready to learn when they start school.
- **Securing home-grown energy**, protecting billpayers, and putting us on track to at least 95% clean power by 2030, while accelerating the UK to net zero.

NPPF

41. Para. 8(a) of the NPPF refers to the social objective of the 3 principles of sustainable development, i.e.:

'support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being'.

42. Chapter 8 is centred on 'Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities', in particular Para.'s 96 a-c, 98, 100, 101.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/missions>

43. Key messages are:

- Promoting social interaction
- Enabling community cohesion
- Supporting healthy lifestyles
- Easy pedestrian and cycling routes
- Provision of full range of social infrastructure and community facilities
- Co-location of housing, jobs, community facilities and services
- Close working relationships with infrastructure providers
- Public safety

Regional Context

44. The WMCA adopted an Inclusive Growth Framework in 2018⁹ to underpin all other strategies and work that the Combined Authority does. The rationale is that traditional metrics of economic vitality such as growth, GDP, jobs and trade do not tell the story of who is involved in creating that growth, and who does or does not benefit from it. Similarly, these metrics do not provide measures for the social and environmental outcomes (positive or negative) as a result of that growth.

45. In order to ensure that investment in the region is underpinned by social and environmental values, eight 'fundamentals' of inclusive growth have been drawn up. These in turn are derived from the UN's Sustainable Development Goals¹⁰ and adapting them in ways relevant to the WMCA area.

Local Context

46. The Council refreshed its five year Council Plan in 2025¹¹.

Figure 3. Solihull Council Plan on Page – 2025-2030.



⁹<https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/inclusive-growth/inclusive-growth-in-the-west-midlands-an-evidence-informed-approach/>

¹⁰ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

¹¹<https://democracy.solihull.gov.uk/documents/s127039/Council%20plan%202025%202026%20Final%20with%20amends.pdf>

47. The new vision for the Council Plan is 'Solihull: a great place to live, work, invest and enjoy'. The seven ambitions reflect the Council's aspirations for Solihull and its residents and commitments to sustainable economic growth, climate change action, creating conditions for people to thrive as well as maintaining the unique character of the Borough.

48. The Plan is also informed by the new economic reality and a number of unfunded spending pressures facing the Council in the next few years, in particular for Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

49. The **Joint Local Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2032**¹² supersedes the 2021 strategy and takes into account the findings of the new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The strategy seeks to be more effective at preventing illness and addressing inequalities across the Borough in life expectancy and outcomes.

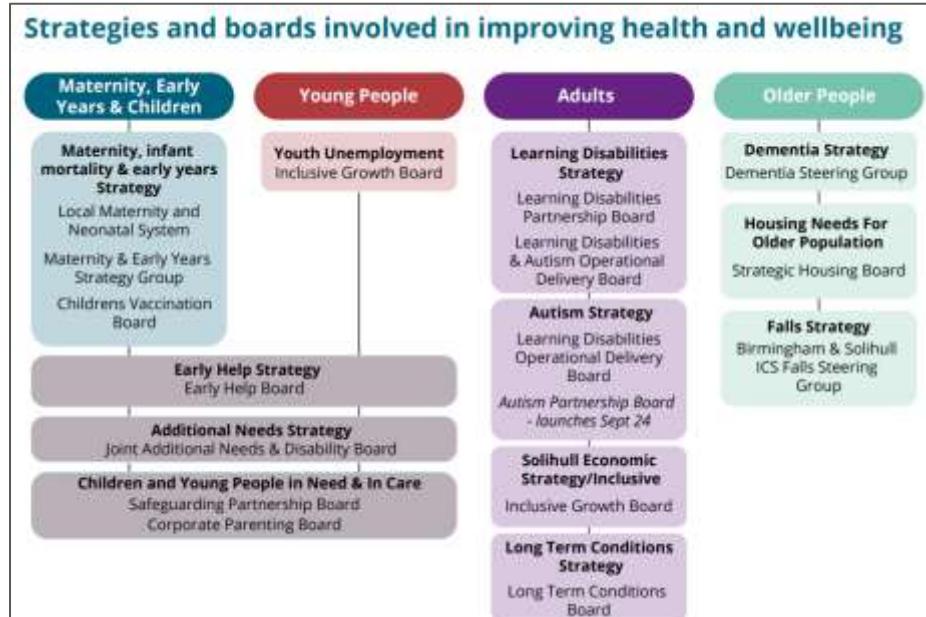
50. The Strategy has a whole life approach to supporting the people of Solihull, from pregnancy to end of life care. Priorities include:

- Healthy pregnancy. E.g. reduce number of babies born with a low birth weight
- Educational attainment. E.g. support for children with special educational needs. Reduce the inequality gap for attainment between most and least deprived LSOAs.
- Mental Health. E.g. in particular better understanding and support for children and young people.
- Prevention and early detection of disease. E.g. Service providers to focus on health as well as illness.
- Healthy ageing. E.g. reduce loneliness factors. Improve dementia diagnosis rates.

51. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy is supported by a number of other strategies and boards (see Figure 4).

52. Finally, the strategy is integrated with other overarching strategies in the Borough, such as the Housing Strategy, Solihull Connected, Air Quality Strategy, Active Wellbeing Strategy etc.

Figure 4. Solihull Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (p.19).



¹² <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/Joint-Local-Health-Wellbeing-Strategy.pdf>

Baseline Information

Census Data

Age

53. Overall, Solihull has an ageing population, with the proportion of over-65s being higher than the national or regional figures. Conversely, there is a lower percentage of 16-39 year olds. However, there are differences within the Borough as well. The population in North Solihull is much younger, with 22.1% 0-15 year olds and 30.8% 16-39 year olds.

Table 3. Age cohorts from ONS Census 2021 data.

Age range	Solihull	West Midlands Region	England
0-15	19.2%	19.3%	18.6%
16-39	26.8%	30.3%	30.9%
40-64	32.8%	31.6%	32.1%
65+	21.1%	18.8%	18.4%
75+	c. 10%	(not found)	c.9%

54. Between 2011 and 2021 the average age of Solihull residents increased by one year, from 42 to 43. Compared to the England average of 40.

Table 4. Change in age cohorts between 2011 and 2021 Census data

Age range	Solihull	West Midlands Region	England
0-15	6.5%	5.0%	4.6%
16-39	4.2%	3.5%	2.7%
40-64	-1.9%	3.4%	4.7%
65+	15.2%	18.1%	20.1%

56. Although the overall population in Solihull grew by 4.6% between 2011 and 2021 (ca. 9,500 people), this is lower than the national average (6.6%). Furthermore, the biggest increase was in 65 and over cohort, circa 6,000 people. This is consistent with the national pattern of an ageing population.

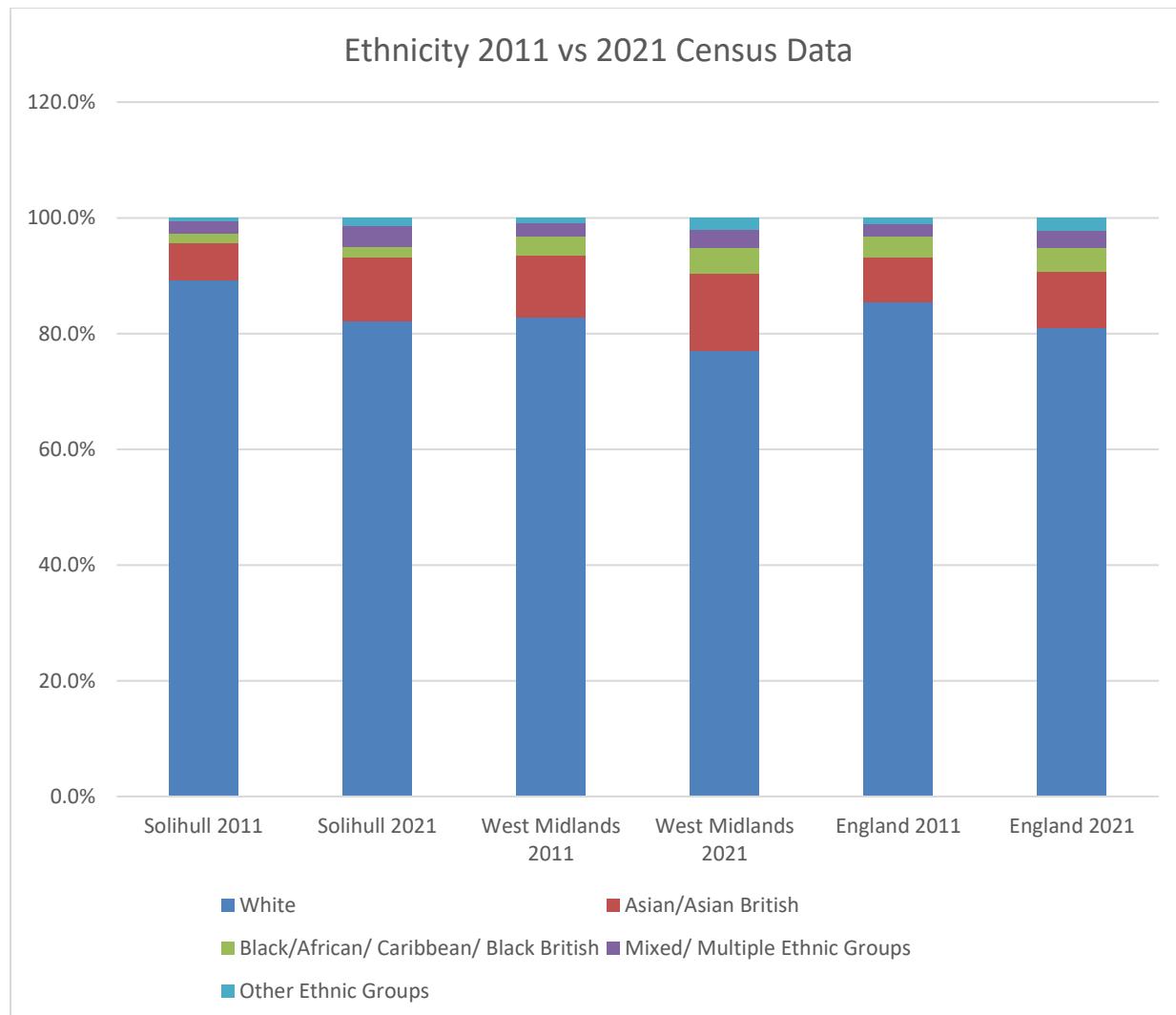
Ethnicity

57. One of the major demographic changes between the 2011 and 2021 Census is that the proportion of Black or Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents has increased from 11% to 18%.

58. Solihull is still less ethnically diverse than the West Midlands region (as a whole) and nationally. However, this is significantly less so the case in comparison to the two neighbouring metropolitan authorities, Birmingham (51.4% BAME) and Coventry (34.5%).

59. Since the 2021 census, several national policy initiatives have impacted on UK immigration. For example, not captured in the census data is that since 2021 Solihull has welcomed over 4,000 adults and children to the borough through the Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) Welcome Programme.

Figure 5. Ethnicity census data between 2011 and 2021¹³



¹³ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/c2021ts021>

Religion

60. There has been a 15% drop in the proportion of the population that identify as Christian in the Borough (now just over 50%) (see Figure 5). This figure is higher than the England figure of 46.2%. In terms of 'no religion', the national figure is higher by a similar difference, 37.2% compared to 32.9% in Solihull.

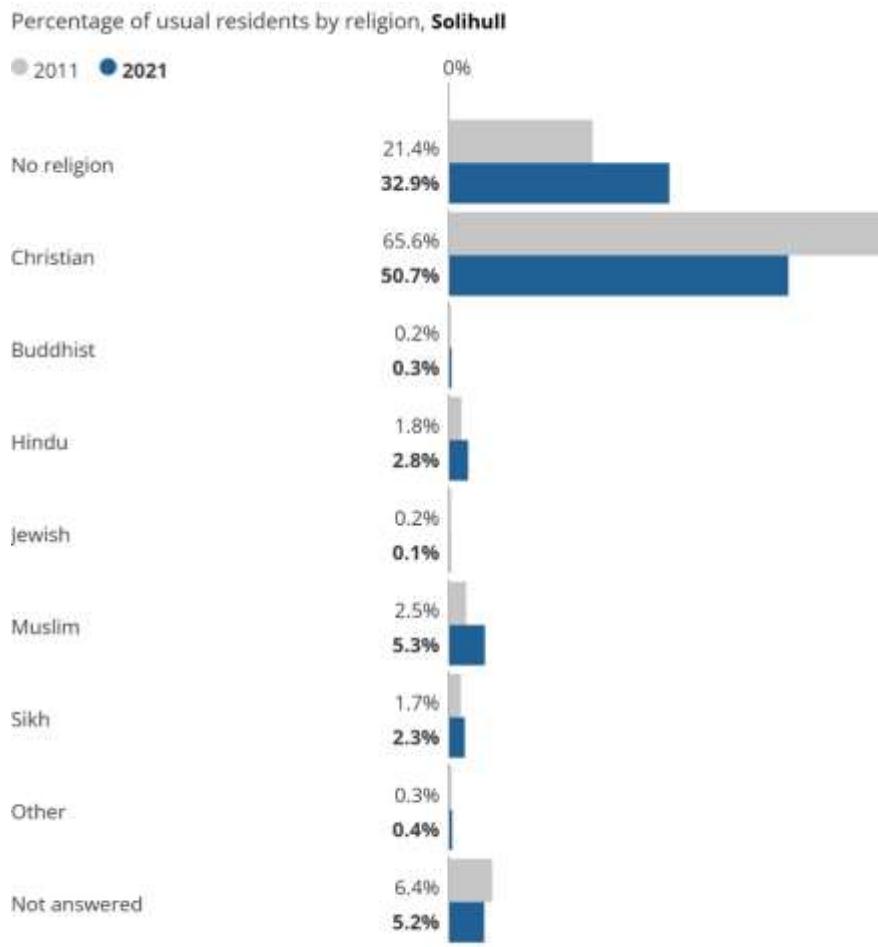
61. For other religions and beliefs, the relative proportions are similar, with slightly higher Hindu and Sikh communities, and somewhat lower Muslim, Buddhist and Jewish communities.

62. It is not clear from the Census to what extent people identify with respective religions and whether they regularly attend places of worship. However, church attendance is in decline, in particular following the pandemic, and 969 places of worship are on Historic England's 2024 Heritage at Risk register. It is estimated 3,500 churches have closed in the last ten years, and many have diversified their community uses in recent years.¹⁴ Conversely, there may be a need for more places of worship for other faiths in the future.

Table 6. Religion identified on Census 2021

Religion	Solihull	England
Christian	50.7%	46.2%
No religion	32.9%	27.2%
Muslim	5.3%	6.5%
Hindu	2.8%	1.7%
Sikh	2.3%	0.9%
Buddhist	0.3%	0.5%
Jewish	0.1%	0.5%
Other religion	0.4%	0.6%

¹⁴ <https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/what-we-do/news/great-expectations>

Figure 5. Percentage of usual residents by religion in Solihull between 2011 and 2021

Source: Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021

Sex

63. The split between male and female is consistent with the national and regional average, i.e. slightly more women than men. This hasn't changed much since 2001.

Table 7. Sex differences Census 2021

Sex	Solihull	West Midlands Region	England
Female	51.5%	50.8%	51.0%
Male	48.5%	49.2%	49.0%

Households

64. The 2021 Census shows a 4% increase in households since 2011, compared to 6% for England.

65. The high level Solihull household profile is similar to the wider West Midlands region and England as a whole. However, there are significant differences within Solihull, with north Solihull having a higher proportion of single young adult households compared to the rest of the borough (17% vs 13%) and households with dependent children (32% vs 29%) and the rest of the borough having more households of just older people (28% vs 22%).¹⁵

Table 8. Household composition between 2011 and 2021 census

	Solihull 2011	West Midlands 2011	England 2011	Solihull 2021	West Midlands 2021	England 2021
Total No. of Households	86,056	2,294,909	22,063,368	89,486	2,429,493	23,436,086
One person household	29.2%	29.6%	30.2%	28.9%	29.9%	30.1%
One/Single family household	65.6%	63.2%	61.8%	66.4%	63.8%	63.0%
Other household types	5.2%	7.3%	8.0%	4.7%	6.3%	6.9%

66. In terms of tenure, the borough has a much higher proportion of owned properties than the national average. However, again, it should be noted that there are stark differences between the North and South of the Borough.

67. Source: ONS 2011 and 2021 census and adapted from Solihull Community Housing report:

Table 9. Percentage of household tenure types, from 2021 census

	Ownership/Shared Ownership	Social Rented	Private rent or lives rent free
Solihull	73%	14%	13%
England	62%	17%	21%
North Solihull	57%	31%	12%
Rest of Borough	79%	7%	13%

68. Since the 2011 census the biggest change in the Borough, and nationally, is the rise in private rent and/or rent-free (e.g. adult children living with parents).

¹⁵ <https://www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/SCH-PSED-March-2023.pdf>

Table 10. Change in Household Tenure 2011-2021

	All Households	Owned/Shared Ownership	Social Rented	Private rented or lives rent free
Solihull	4%	2%	-2%	27%
England	6%	3%	3%	20%
North Solihull	2%	0%	-6%	53%
Rest of Borough	5%	3%	5%	19%

69. The Council will commission a new Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan. One of the challenges will be to translate the Local Housing Need figure into a future household composition as the LHN is so much higher than the population projections.

Health and Wellbeing

70. Solihull has a slightly higher proportion of non-disabled people than the West Midlands and England average (Table 11), and a slightly higher proportion of residents with no long term physical or mental health conditions.

Table 11. Disability in the population from Census 2021

	Solihull	West Midlands Region	England
Not Disabled	83.2%	81.5%	82.3%
Disabled	16.8%	18.5	17.7%

Table 12. Long term health conditions from Census 2021.¹⁶

	Solihull	West Midlands Region	England
No long term physical or mental health conditions	76.3%	74.9%	75.4%
Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited	7.0%	6.6%	6.9%
Day-to-day activities limited a little	9.8%	10.4%	10.2%
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	7.0%	8.0%	7.5%

¹⁶ Long term health conditions from Census 2021 – numbers don't quite round to zero on purpose.

71. Life satisfaction has remained stable in Solihull and is comparable with the West Midlands and England with the population reporting about 7.5/10 as their life satisfaction.

Table 13. Reported Life satisfaction¹⁷ between 2011 and 2021.

	Solihull	West Midlands Region	England
2011	74%	73%	74%
2021	74%	75%	76%

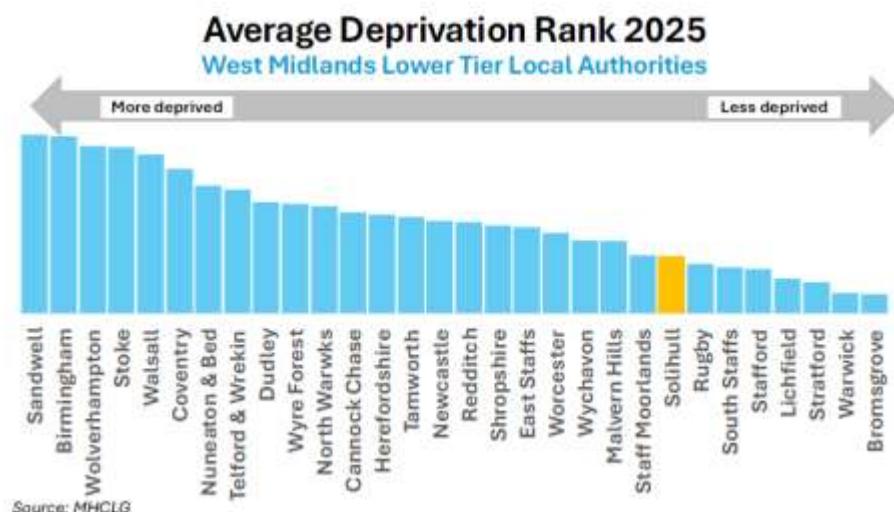
Indices of Deprivation

72. The 2025 Indices of Deprivation have now been published. The following has been summarised from the Solihull Observatory's paper¹⁸:

73. The 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows that based on average rank Solihull is the 28th least deprived upper tier Local Authority in England, ranking the borough in the top quintile in England and the least deprived upper tier Local Authority in the West Midlands.

74. At a district level based on average rank Solihull is in the 2nd best quintile in England and only seven out of 30 lower tier districts in the West Midlands are less deprived.

Figure 6. West Midlands Local Authorities Deprivation Rank



75. Solihull is relatively polarised between large parts of the borough that rank among the least deprived areas of England and a concentration of neighbourhoods in North Solihull among the most deprived.

¹⁷<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/previousreleases>

¹⁸<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-11/Deprivation-in-Solihull-Index-Multiple-Deprivation.pdf>

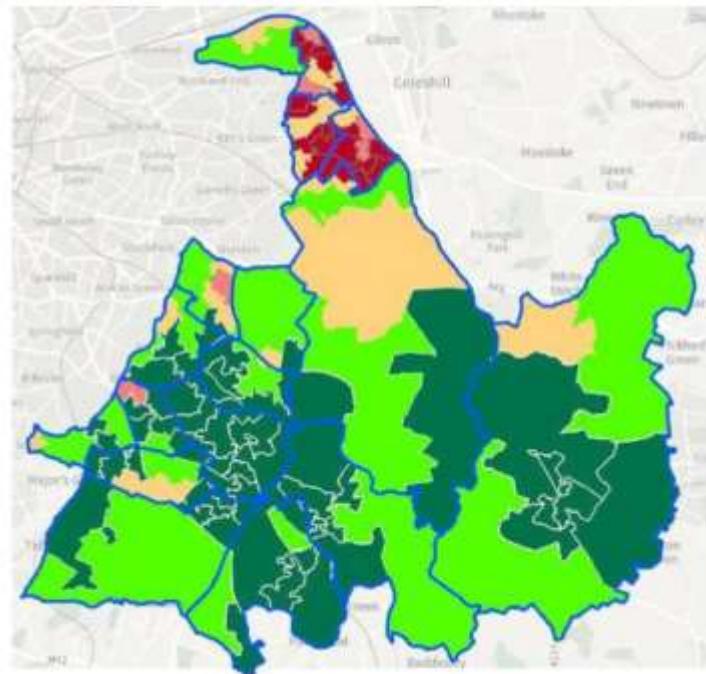
Figure 7. Index of Multiple Deprivation by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in Solihull, 2025.

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025

Overall Deprivation



Source: MHCLG



76. Over one in 10 Solihull residents live in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in England whereas three out of ten live in the least deprived 10% in England.

77. Six out of ten residents of the three North Solihull wards (Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst & Fordbridge, Smiths Wood) live in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in England. One in five live in the most deprived 5%.

78. Deprivation in Solihull is most apparent in terms of employment, health and crime. There is very little deprivation in Solihull in respect of housing & services and the living environment, and in some LSOAs the North of the Borough fares better in these respects than parts of the more rural area.

79. Solihull's overall deprivation rank has been relatively unchanged over time, with the borough in the 2nd top quintile nationally from 2007 through to 2025. There have been some changes in profile between 2019 and 2025 however, with very significant increase in the Borough's housing and services rank (from 47th to 93rd percentile), partly due to changes in the underlying measures e.g. including digital connectivity and core homelessness. Solihull's domain ranking for Health and disability has dropped from 64th to 53rd percentile, however, despite pockets in the north of the Borough, the overall crime and disorder ranking has improved from 36th to 57th percentile.

80. Polarisation has been a consistent theme with Solihull ranking in the 4th quartile on IMD measures of extent and local concentration since 2007 both of which measure deprivation levels among the most disadvantaged populations.

Access to green space

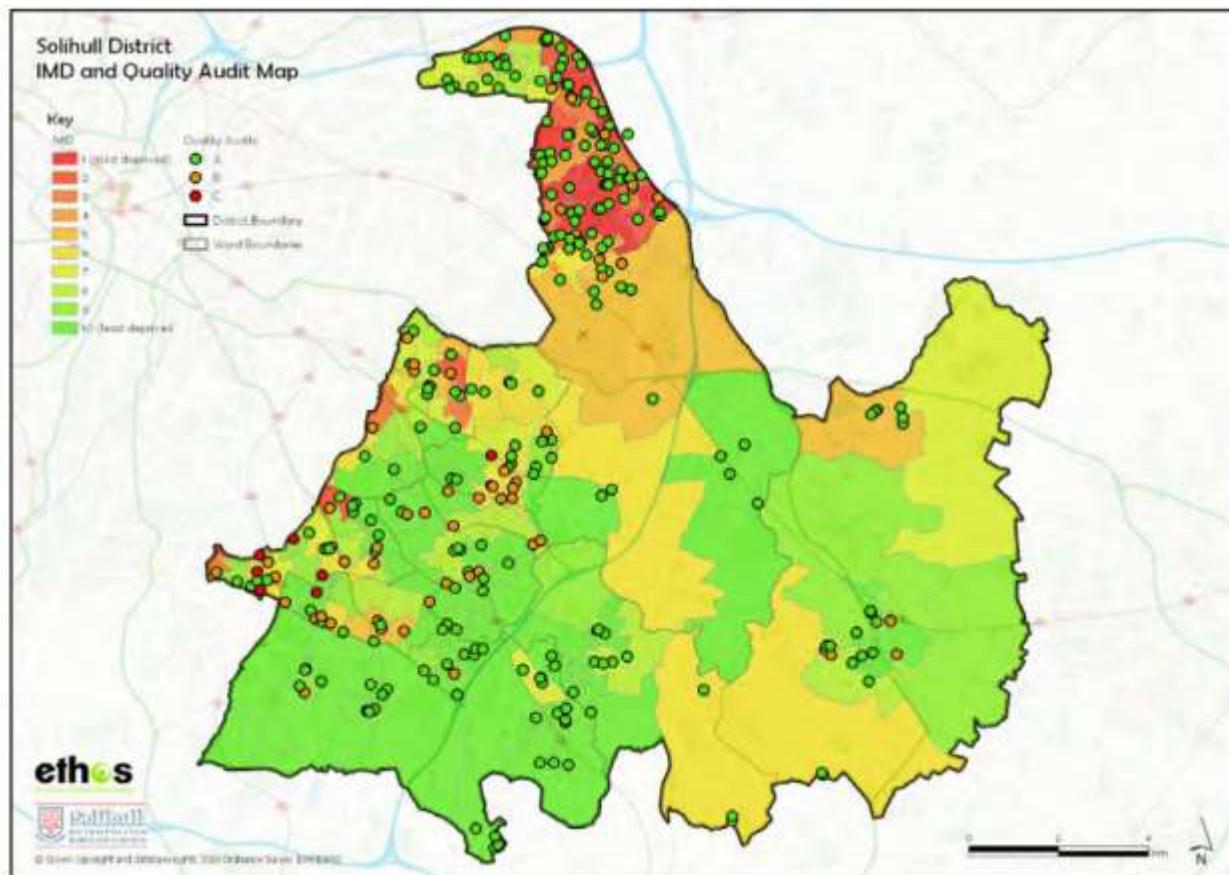
81. One of the seven domains in the 2025 Indices of Deprivation is the Living Environment, i.e. the quality of the local environment, indoors and outdoors.

82. Substantial research has shown that access to local green space has an impact on health outcomes:

- Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health – More green space linked to fewer preventable deaths in most deprived areas of UK¹⁹
- The Lancet – 10-year longitudinal study shows living in greener areas is associated with better mental health²⁰
- Nature – spending at least 2 hours a week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing²¹
- Sport England - Every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity generates nearly £4 for the English economy and society.²²

83. The Council commissioned an Open Space Assessment in 2019²³, which recommended updated targets for open space provision associated with new development. The Covid-19 pandemic also brought to light the importance of access to open spaces in people's daily lives.

Figure 8. Taken from Fig. 4 of 2019 Open Space Assessment – IMD ranks in Solihull (by LSOA) with open space quality assessments.



¹⁹ <https://bmjgroup.com/more-green-space-linked-to-fewer-preventable-deaths-in-most-deprived-areas-of-uk/>

²⁰ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(23\)00212-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(23)00212-7/fulltext)

²¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-44097-3>

²² <https://www.sportengland.org/news/why-investing-physical-activity-great-our-health-and-our-nation>

²³ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Solihull-Open-Space-Assessment-2019.pdf>

84. The figure above shows that the areas of higher deprivation in Solihull actually have high levels of quality green space, and this is reflected in the investment by the Council in the last 10-15 years. However, it can be seen that the areas in the Urban West could benefit from improved quality in open space.

Future trends

85. Since the last Census Solihull has a more ethnically diverse population, which is likely to continue. There is an ageing population, with impacts on suitability of housing stock and need for community services and dementia-friendly places.

86. The new HEDNA will give insights into likely future household formation and types and tenures of housing that will be required in the Borough.

87. The polarisation in social and economic outcomes between the North and rest of the Borough has persisted, despite interventions since the early 2000s, e.g. in housing renewal schemes.

SA Objective

88. There are 5 sustainability objectives from the 2020 SA that relate to the Population and Communities topic:

- SA1. To contribute to regeneration and economic development initiatives that benefit the Borough's communities; especially those identified as deprived.
- SA2. To reduce the number of people experiencing difficulties in accessing employment, education and training opportunities.
- SA15. Reduce social exclusion and disparities within the Borough
- SA17. To fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, cultural, recreational, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality to reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles.
- SA18. Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Conclusion

89. The updated Census data shows some new trends in the Borough and some existing issues that will persist if not addressed more holistically.

90. New evidence could be required as a whole plan Health Impact Assessment.

91. The 2020 sustainability objectives could be revised to:

- Include reference to ageing population
- Address meeting the needs of a more diverse population and different communities
- Link to Inclusive Growth initiatives
- Clearer distinction between SA15 and SA17
- Health and wellbeing, not just healthy lifestyles
- Explicit reference to access to open and green space for recreation and health outcomes

4. Housing

Introduction

National Context

92. Tackling the housing crisis is one of the key cornerstones of the Labour Government's Plan for Growth since coming into power in July 2024.²⁴

93. The ambition is to build 1.5 million homes by 2030. However, the drive is not just for a quantity, it is also to boost affordable housing in the country and have a range of housing types to meet needs.

94. A raft of new legislation has been put to parliament, in particular the Planning and Infrastructure Act, which gained Royal Assent in December 2025²⁵. In summary it aims²⁶ to:

- Streamline consultation process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and enable quicker delivery with more certainty for investors and infrastructure providers
- Introduce a more strategic approach to nature recovery with new Nature Restoration Fund, and therefore fast-track housing projects
- Reform planning committee process resulting in improved quicker determination timescales
- Reform compulsory purchase order process to enable more effective land assembly by public sector bodies, thus speeding up delivery of housing, infrastructure, transport and amenity benefits in the public interest
- Introduction of mandatory Spatial Development Strategies, which will facilitate strategic planning at sub-regional level

95. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill had its second reading on 8th December 2025. If enacted the legislation will transfer powers to mayoral combined authorities such as the West Midlands Combined Authority. These powers and responsibilities will include housing and strategic planning, in addition to the local authority tier.

96. The New Towns Taskforce was established in 2024 to support the government in the delivery of new towns and places to help boost housing and economic growth. A report to government was published in September 2025²⁷. The report recommends 12 initial locations for new towns, none of which are in Solihull or surrounding areas, however this may change in the future.

97. In addition, renters' rights have been improved with the Renters Rights Act 2025. This follows the Social Housing (Regulation) Act of 2023.

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/our-plan-to-build-more-homes>

²⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/34/enacted>

²⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-planning-and-infrastructure-bill/guide-to-the-planning-and-infrastructure-bill>

²⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68d694b79cb44667f7a1cee7/New_Towns_Taskforce_Final_Report.pdf

Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

NPPF

98. The NPPF was revised in December 2024 with the introduction of a new standard methodology, resulting in higher housing targets for many parts of the country. The Local Housing Need figure for Solihull consequently increased by ca. 50% from 865 to 1323 new homes per annum.

99. Housing is placed at the heart of Para. 8(b) in achieving sustainable development:

“b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations;”

100. Chapter 5 of the NPPF sets out how to achieve these aims through the planning process. The revised NPPF also introduced a new policy designation, ‘Grey Belt’, which has since been further developed through the PPG update at the end of February 2025.

101. The introduction of Grey Belt, and the accompanying Golden Rules has already resulted in more residential development being approved within the Green Belt and stretch targets for affordable housing and accompanying infrastructure. Planning consultancy Marrons analysed planning appeals data for the first nine months of the grey belt policy (Jan-Sept 2025). They found 20 major 43 minor residential appeals on grey belt land. 80% of the majors were allowed, whereas 45% of the minors were allowed, totalling 1,620 dwellings. These figures evidently do not include applications that have been approved by local planning authorities.

Regional Context

102. The government’s ambition is to deliver the system of strategic planning across England during this Parliament. The Planning and Infrastructure Act will enable the government to introduce a system of strategic planning across England. The strategic planning tool being introduced is the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), and this is closely modelled on the system that has been in place in London for over 20 years.²⁸

103. The Bill places a duty on combined authorities, combined county authorities, upper-tier county councils and unitary authorities to prepare an SDS for their area. The Bill also enables the government to establish “strategic planning boards” to prepare SDSs on behalf of specified groupings of these authorities.

104. The West Midlands Combined Authority has started work on an SDS²⁹ for the sub-region that will be co-authored by the WMCA and the respective local authorities. The current timetable is:

Summer 2025 – SDS Initiation and evidence gathering

Summer 2026 – Issues and Options Consultation

Spring 2027 – Draft Publication version Consultation

Summer-Autumn 2027 – Public Examination

Spring 2028 – Adoption

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-planning-and-infrastructure-bill/factsheet-strategic-planning>

²⁹ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/housing-property-regeneration/west-midlands-spatial-development-strategy/>

Local Context

105. In 2023, the Council published a ten year housing strategy and implementation plan³⁰ The strategy will support the Council in its multi-functional role as investor, provider, enabler, regulator and enforcer.

106. The key challenges are set out below:

- Delivering excellent housing services in a way that delivers a strong sense of 'place' and contributes to improving wider health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Making the best use of the Borough's housing, across all tenures. There is a need to ensure that the social and private housing sectors are of high quality and that the number of empty homes in all tenures is minimised.
- Tackling climate change. The retrofit of privately owned and socially rented homes to improve their environmental performance is a significant challenge to help tackle both climate change and fuel poverty
- Enabling good housing and care choices and pathways for older people. It is important that all older people have a good range of housing with care and support options. Not all older people need specialist accommodation; many will prefer to remain in their own homes or downsize to a smaller property
- Helping people with additional support needs. People may require additional short-term support, and some may need longer-term support. There is a need to prevent crisis wherever possible, but where crisis does occur, to respond effectively
- Addressing the affordability of housing. House prices are comparatively high, and this makes it hard for young people and other newly forming households on average salaries to afford to buy in Solihull. There is also an acute shortage of social rented homes to meet homelessness and housing waiting list pressures.

Baseline Information

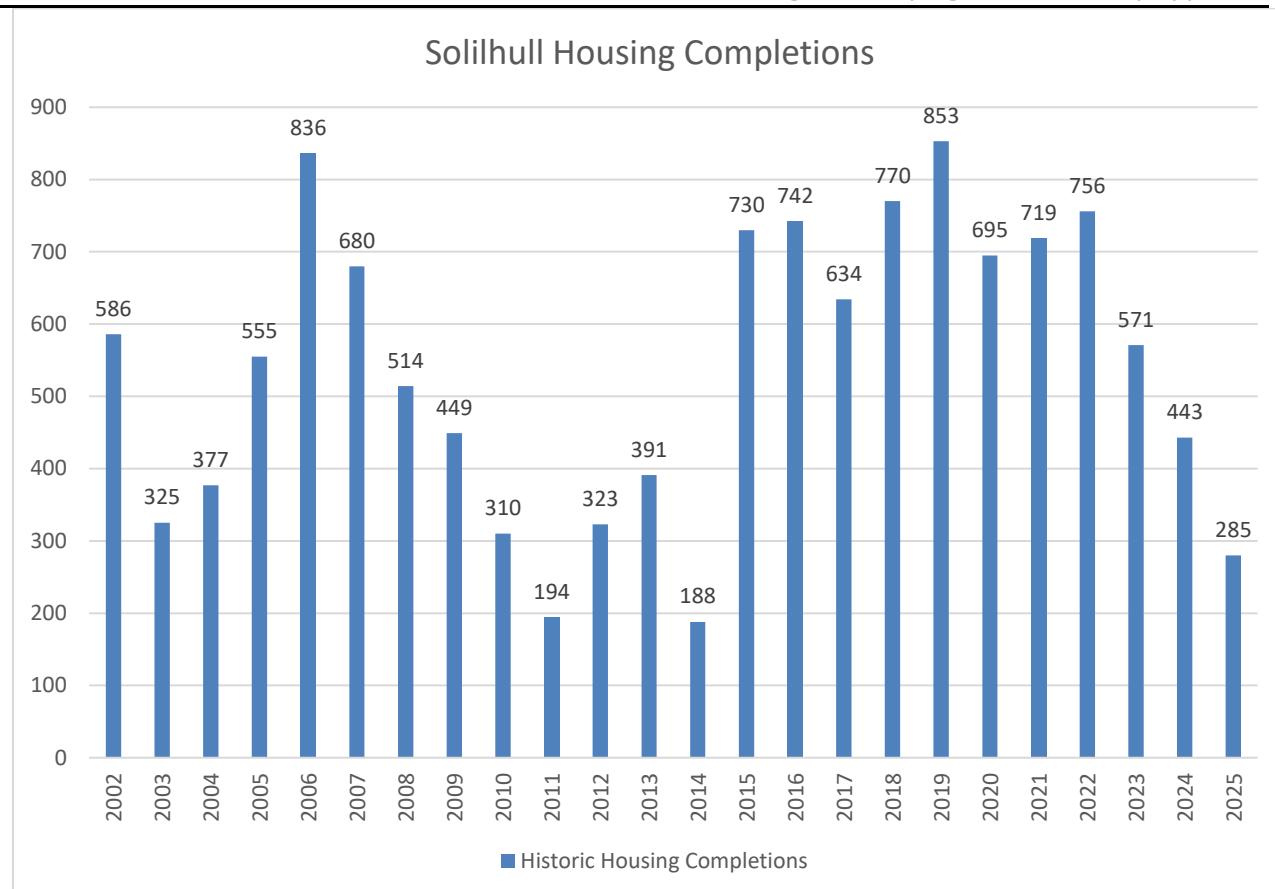
107. The current Local Plan was adopted in 2013, with limited Green Belt release and proposed delivery of 500 dwellings per annum. This figure was subsequently deleted from the Plan by a High Court challenge; however, it did not delete any of the sites, in fact, it reverted two Green Belt sites to white land.

108. As can be seen from Figure 8 (net housing completions data) there was a dip in delivery as the previous plan period ended and before planning permissions were granted on new sites from the next plan (2011-2014)

109. The Council submitted a draft Local Plan in 2021 with more ambitious Green Belt release. This plan was withdrawn in October 2024, and a similar dip in housing completions is evident from 2022 onwards due to Local Plan sites being built out. However, several of the Local Plan Review sites have since been granted planning permission under Very Special Circumstances

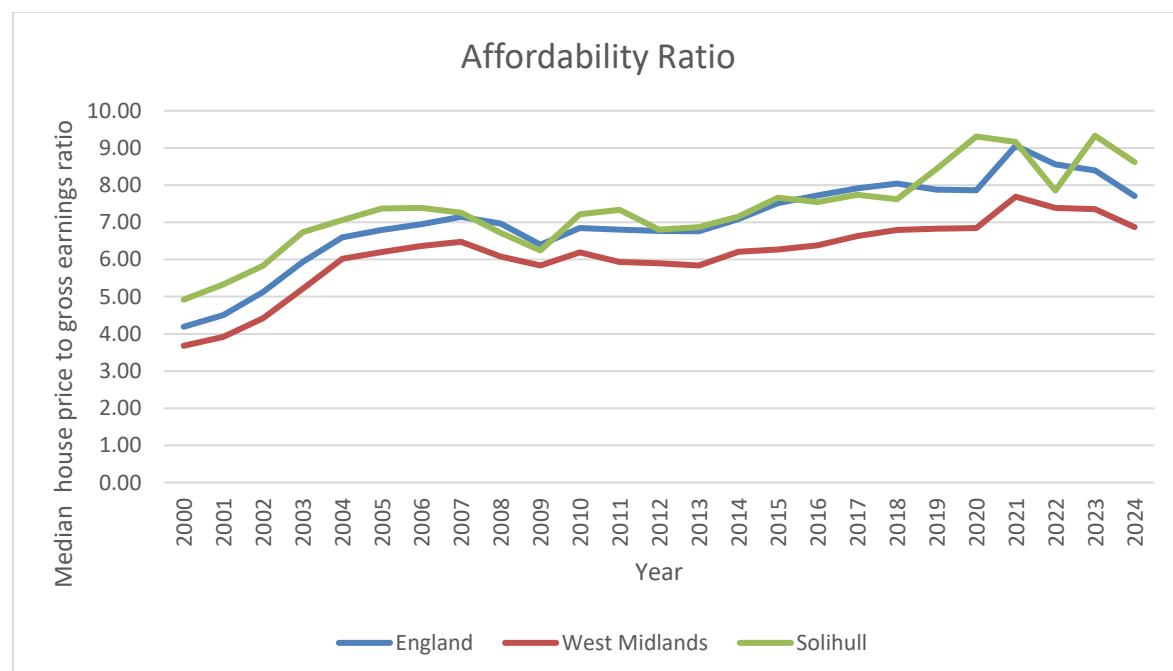
Figure 9. Net housing completions data in Solihull 2002-2005 (see over)

³⁰ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/Solihull-Housing-Strategy.pdf>



110. The standard method to calculate a local authority's 'Local Housing Need' figure is based on the affordability ratio derived from the median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings. Figure 10 shows that the gap between earnings and house prices is much higher for Solihull than the West Midlands in general, as well as the national figure.

Figure 10. Affordability Ratio for Solihull, West Midlands and England³¹



³¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

111. The general trend for the affordability ratio at the local, regional and national level has been an upward trajectory, where it has almost doubled between 2000 and 2024.

112. This is due to a number of factors, and has resulted in the housing crisis that the country is experiencing today.

113. Despite this, the Council has an excellent track record in delivering affordable housing on new development sites.

114. Policy P4a in the Local Plan 2013 addresses affordable housing. Originally the policy was for 40% affordable housing on qualifying sites of 3 or more net dwellings. The threshold was amended by national changes to the NPPF in 2016³² to qualifying sites of 11+ dwellings or greater than 1000sqm floorspace.

115. During the period April 2014 – March 2024, planning permission was granted on 229 qualifying sites for 6,584 dwellings (all tenures). 48 of these 29 sites have (or will) provide affordable housing, amounting to 1,627 dwellings. The overall percentage is therefore 25%. However, it is important to note that the 40% target was not applicable to all of these sites, e.g. due to exemptions under national policy. Of the 48 sites that have included on-site provision of affordable housing, this has been at 43% of the total number of dwellings provided on these sites.

Future Trends

116. If the trend of the past 25 years continue, then the affordability ratio will worsen. Incentives from the Government and WMCA seek to boost housing and tackle the pressure on housing supply not meeting demand in the country and region as a whole.

117. There are also wider macro-economic changes that are beyond the scope of a Local Plan that can affect house prices and wages; however, the Local plan has a role to play in providing an appropriate mix of types and tenure of housing to meet the population's needs.

118. Solihull is also forecast to have an increasing ageing population, and this needs to be reflected in the type of accommodation available.

119. There are limited opportunities for brownfield development in the Borough, and any Green Belt sites that are released should aim for 50% affordable housing, which will help in tackling the affordability gap on new builds.

SA Objective

120. There is one main sustainability objective under the topic 'Housing':

- SA16. Improve the supply and affordability of housing (particularly in the areas of greatest need)

121. The objectives relating to integration of services (SA17) and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (SA5) are also particularly relevant.

Conclusion

122. The Council is facing a big challenge with the number of new homes required under the standard methodology, which exceeds the previous (already ambitious) target by 50%.

123. However, without more house-building, of the right types and tenures, the effects of the housing crisis and low affordability will continue to be felt in the Borough.

³²https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Planning_LDF_Meeting_Housing_Needs_Addendum_2016.pdf

124. New evidence that is required is an update HEDNA.

125. The Sustainability Appraisal has a key role to play in ensuring that the right housing is provided in the right locations.

126. The 2020 sustainability objectives could be revised to:

- Reference the quality of new homes
- The housing need is Borough wide, therefore not necessary to caveat (particularly in the areas of greatest need)
- Focus on timely delivery as well as choice of homes, including for the ageing population
- Could link back to sustainable construction methods and climate change objectives

5. Economy

Introduction

127. Solihull has a thriving economy, well served by its central location on the national motorway and rail network and through the presence of Birmingham International Airport as an international gateway.

128. The Borough has a number of regionally and nationally important economic assets which have a key role in the local economy including the NEC, Jaguar Land Rover, and Blythe Valley and Birmingham Business Parks. These assets have driven growth and a focus for investment particularly in high value-added sectors such as business and professional services, engineering, ICT, creative industries and automotive industries. Jaguar Land Rover in particular is a key national business which continues to expand its operations within the Borough contributing to the wider automobile supply chain network.

129. The Borough is the location for the first HS2 interchange station outside London which is the focus for significant investment proposals being progressed as the UK Central Hub. The growth opportunities at this site will be of regional and national significance and form part of the growth aspirations being progressed by the WMCA.

130. The Borough also has a number of key local businesses and established industrial estates which provide a range of business accommodation for local employment opportunities, such as Cranmore Industrial Estate, Elmdon Trading Estate and Solihull Business Park. These form an important element of the employment land supply.

Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

National Context

NPPF

131. Delivering economic growth is a key objective of national planning policy and one of the three overarching objectives of achieving sustainable development through the planning system as set out in paragraph 8a of the NPPF. This describes the economic objective '*to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure*'.

132. Chapter 6 states that planning policies should 'help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt'. In paragraph 86 specific requirements for planning policies are set out

- a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to the national industrial strategy and any relevant Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration.
- b) set criteria, and identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period
- c) pay particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy, including by identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics

- d) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and
- e) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, and allow for new and flexible working practices and spaces to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances

133. Para. 87 recognises the specific locational requirements of different sectors and the need to address these including making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data driven, creative and high technology industries, storage and distribution operations and the expansion or modernisation of other industries.

134. The NPPF also recognises the need to support the development of a ‘prosperous rural economy’ through planning policies (paragraph 88) which enable; the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, the development and diversification of agricultural businesses, sustainable rural tourism and leisure which respect the character of the countryside and the retention and development of accessible local and community facilities.

UK 10 year Infrastructure Strategy

135. The government has set out its long term plan for delivering infrastructure bringing together economic, housing and social infrastructure in the UK 10-year Infrastructure Strategy (June 2025)³³. This sets out proposals for delivering £725 billion of infrastructure.

UK ‘Plan for Change’ – Kickstarting Economic Growth³⁴

136. This seeks to raise living standards in all parts of the UK measuring progress through higher real household disposable income per person and GDP per capita. It seeks to deliver growth by working in partnership with businesses, ensuring every region and nation realises its potential, driving innovation, investment of technology and by helping people get a job and stay in work. It sets the aim of ‘Rebuilding Britain’, increasing home ownership supported by delivering key infrastructure and a target of building 1.5 million safe and decent homes. This will be delivered by reforming the planning system, working in partnership with local leaders, housebuilders and infrastructure developers and increasing the supply of affordable housing.

Regional Context

137. In 2024 the WMCA published the **West Midlands Growth Plan³⁵** which sets out a vision to transform the region’s economy over the next ten years focusing on increasing living standards, creating good quality jobs, increasing the productivity of the region’s economy and reducing poverty and deprivation whilst achieving net zero emissions by 2041. The Growth Plan identifies high growth clusters and sets out priorities to do this. It also recognises challenges within the region including unemployment, housing shortage and infrastructure. The need to align housing, employment and transport connectivity is highlighted. It highlights the region’s economic strengths in particular advanced manufacturing, digital and creative industries, health industries, life sciences and clean energy. It seeks to monitor success towards these ambitions by 2035 by achieving 93,000 more people in work with working age population which are economically active increasing by 5%, achieve a 2% annual growth rate deliver a £17.4BN larger economy and deliver infrastructure investment and delivering a target of 12,200 homes per year.

³³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6853c5db99b009dcdb73649/UK_Infrastructure_A_10_Year_Strategy_Web_Accessible.pdf

³⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/missions/economic-growth>

³⁵ <https://growth.wmca.org.uk/>

138. The **West Midlands Theory of Growth (April 2025)**³⁶ provides the economic evidence base and context to the WM Growth Plan. It identifies the region's challenges and what is needed to address these. The report highlights household income, employment, productivity, gross domestic product and poverty as some of the areas where the region's economy is not at its full potential. It defines success in achieving growth envisaged by the WMCA as demonstrated by an increase in *gross disposable household income in all places across the West Midlands, underpinned by higher productivity and supporting more of our residents into well-paid, good-quality jobs, in a way that is aligned to the region's net zero goals*

139. The **West Midlands Drivers of Growth Report (May 2025)**³⁷ reviewed the economic potential for the region and sets out scenarios for achieving gains in productivity and employment in the region. It forecasts gains of £6.5 bn to the regions GVA by 2035 making the region grow above the national average growth rate through targeted investment in key industrial clusters.

140. The **West Midlands Strategic Employment Sites Study (2024)**³⁸ is an assessment of strategic employment land need across the region. It identified a needs scenario in the range of 1,920-2,282 ha. Of this total, the road need is 1,555-1,848 ha and the rail need is 365-433 ha. This is the strategic sites need across the West Midlands study area. With existing supply, the residual need is 548-841 ha of land for road needs and from 67 ha to 135 ha for rail. With a typical minimum site size of 25ha this equates to between 22 and 34 sites however with larger sites in the region of 50ha or more this need would reduce to between 11 and 17 sites. The study identifies 9 road based opportunity areas. It is likely that a new strategic rail freight interchange will be needed, four broad areas of search were identified for this.

Local Context

141. The **Solihull Economic Strategy 2023-2032**³⁹ sets out the Council's ambition and economic priorities for the Borough to achieve the vision to create 'the UK's best connected economy' over the ten years to 2032. It seeks to deliver economic growth whilst ensuring that communities are able to benefit, net zero aspirations are achieved, and it leads to the creation of thriving places and communities.

142. The strategy is structured according to four themes; a vibrant business economy, great opportunities for everyone, a sustainable economy, thriving places. It is intended that by achieving the strategy's vision will result in growth in GVA, an increase in lower quartile workplace and resident based earnings, growth in smaller businesses and a reduction in carbon emissions.

143. Birmingham Airport has set out a framework for sustainable growth at the Airport in an updated masterplan in 2019. An Airport Surface Access Strategy was also prepared in 2023⁴⁰.

144. An updated Master plan is being prepared for the NEC to set out future proposals for expansion including significant residential development, leisure and business development.

³⁶https://cloucdn.wmca.org.uk/documents/wmca/pdf/the-west-midlands-theory-of-growth-reduced.pdf?_ga=2.232938524.309744298.1767840414-371776585.1767840414

³⁷https://www.publicfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/West-Midlands_-Drivers-of-Growth-and-scenario-analysis-of-opportunities-by-2035-May-2025.pdf

³⁸ https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/29999/west_midlands_strategic_employment_sites_study_2024

³⁹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/about-council/solihull-economic-strategy-2023-32>

⁴⁰ <https://corporate.birminghamairport.co.uk/planning-and-development/airport-strategy/>

Baseline Information

145. Table 14 provides key information on economic activity in the Borough detailing the proportion of residents who are economically active and identifying sectoral strengths.

Table 14. Economic activity from Census 2021.⁴¹

Area	Solihull		West Midlands		England	
Measure (Census 2021)	Count	% Total	Count	% Total	Count	% Total
Total: All usual residents aged 16-74 years old	174,501	100.0	4,801,331	100.0	46,006,957	100.0
ACTIVE						
Economically active (excluding full-time students)	100,801	57.8	2,710,595	56.5	26,945,252	58.6
In employment	95,976	55.0	2,557,952	53.3	25,632,523	55.7
Unemployed	4,825	2.8	152,643	3.2	1,312,729	2.9
Economically active and a full-time student	2,659	1.5	113,221	2.4	1,056,250	2.3
In employment	1,963	1.1	80,937	1.7	772,691	1.7
Unemployed	696	0.4	32,284	0.7	283,559	0.6
INACTIVE						
Economically inactive (total)	71,041	40.7	1,977,515	41.2	18,005,455	39.1
Retired	44,937	25.8	1,061,221	22.1	9,882,054	21.5
Student	7,622	4.4	280,589	5.8	2,595,453	5.6
Looking after home or family	7,956	4.6	257,817	5.4	2,207,738	4.8
Long-term sick or disabled	6,152	3.5	214,587	4.5	1,874,300	4.1
Other	4,374	2.5	163,301	3.4	1,445,910	3.1

146. In terms of employment levels, Solihull is similar to England and slightly better than the West Midlands. In terms of a student population, however, Solihull is lower than the regional or national level, both as students in work and those not working. This is mainly because Solihull does not have a university establishment within the Borough.

147. Solihull has a higher retired proportion of the population (aged 16-74) at 25.8%, compared to 22.1% and 21.5% of the regional and national population respectively. Conversely, the proportion of long-term sick or disabled is lower than the regional or national levels.

⁴¹ Source: NOMIS data from 2021 Census:

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census_2021/report?compare=E08000029,E12000005,E92000001

Figure 11. Occupation percentage for working age population in Solihull

148. Solihull has a much higher percentage of employees working as professionals or in senior roles (39.6%) than the regional (29.9%) or national (33.2%) levels.⁴²

149. The Economic Strategy for Solihull seeks to capitalise on Solihull's strong employment market. The headlines include that productivity in Solihull is 40% higher than across the West Midlands and employment growth since 2013 is double the West Midlands rate (at 15%).

150. The existing sectoral strengths in Solihull jobs are linked to the automotive and aviation sectors in the Borough, as well as professional services, construction and logistics. Aspirational areas of job growth are in the Digital and Creative industries, life sciences and low carbon technology.

151. Arden Cross, sited around the HS2 Interchange Site, is a development opportunity of national significance and will potentially be a major driver for economic growth in the Borough for the next few decades.

152. Annual monitoring of the Borough's employment land supply shows consistent take up of land allocated in the 2013 Adopted Local Plan (Authority Monitoring Report 2024). The allocated supply of land has largely been taken up therefore future demand will be focused on opportunities at the UK Central hub and delivered through the forthcoming local plan review. However, a range in the size and type of land and premises to meet forecast requirements will be needed. Monitoring data shows the significant investment in Birmingham business park and Blythe Valley Business Parks since 2013, and it is expected that demand for this type of employment land will continue to provide locations for clusters of high value added employment.

153. Older industrial estates continue to form a key part of the employment land supply churn, providing land and premises for small scale manufacturing and services.

⁴²N.B. This is the people living in Solihull, not necessarily the jobs in Solihull.

154. A key element of delivering sustainable development through the planning system is balancing the objectives of meeting the demand for housing alongside employment growth and job creation. An understanding of commuting patterns, affordability and access to training and transport options is key to achieving this.

Future Trends

155. Future trends for the Borough will be heavily influenced by the evolution of Arden Cross and the types and quantum of jobs created around the HS2 Interchange station. The future of the major employers in the Borough, including Jaguar Land Rover and the NEC will also play a key role.

SA Objective

156. There is one main sustainability objective relating to the economy (SA19), with three that are related:

- SA19. Encourage development with a better balance between jobs, housing and services, and provide easy and equitable access to opportunities, basic services and amenities for all.
- SA1. To contribute to regeneration and economic development initiatives that benefit the Borough's communities; especially those identified as deprived.
- SA2. To reduce the number of people experiencing difficulties in accessing employment, education and training opportunities.
- SA6. To assist businesses in the adaptation they need to become more resource efficient and resilient to the effects of a changing climate.

Conclusion

157. A key function of the planning system is providing the right conditions for economic growth and job creation. Ensuring a sufficient workforce is available by meeting the demand for housing (including tackling issues of affordability), providing sustainable transport options and appropriate skills and training are key to realising sustainability objectives in doing this. The Solihull Economic Strategy recognises the gap between job creation and access to work Solihull Economic Strategy: *"There are jobs in Solihull which need filling – and people in Solihull who need jobs. However, there is a disconnect between the two. Issues of access are problematic. There is a transport angle to this but also an employability/skills dimension."*

158. The SA objective (19) from 2020 recognises the relationship between jobs, housing and services together with access to basic services. This echoes SA17, and could be strengthened focussing on 'economic growth' as well as 'jobs' and by referring to 'infrastructure' rather than services. This would recognise not only job creation but wider economic growth aspirations being progressed locally and regionally which seek to increase the value of the economy and build on its strengths in certain sectors and its role in the wider regional and national economy.

159. The SA objective could refer to managing economic growth aspirations alongside adaptation to climate change and achieving net zero carbon as referenced nationally and in the West Midlands Growth Plan. However, these considerations are covered indirectly in SA6 and there is interaction between sustainability objectives when assessing policies (this SA objective could be strengthened elsewhere).

160. New evidence to support the objective will be provided by the HEDNA and updated Employment Land Review.

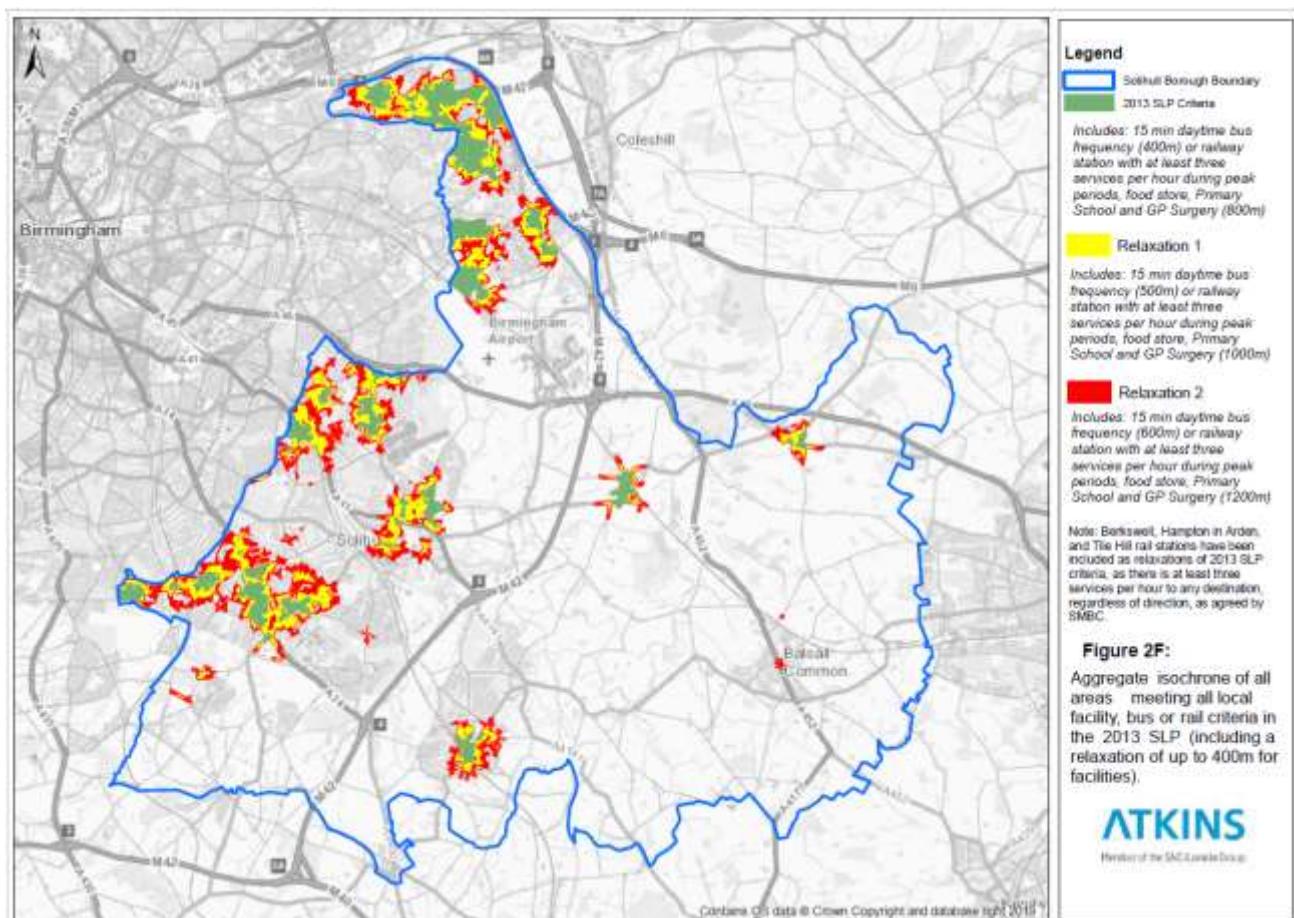
6. Transport and Access

Introduction

161. Siting new development in sustainable location is key to all of these themes to be considered in the sustainability appraisal. It affects carbon emissions, air pollution, diffuse water and soil pollution, accessibility and reduces inequalities of opportunity to jobs, education and affordable housing. Walkable neighbourhoods lower the incidence of sedentary lifestyles, improve a sense of place, natural surveillance and community sentiment.

162. Solihull has a mixed picture of accessibility. The Accessibility Study of 2020⁴³ looked at the standards within the 2013 Plan and how locations in the Borough performed when they were applied. Unsurprisingly, the rural areas other than the village centres of Dorridge, Hampton-in-Arden and Meriden fared poorly.

Figure 12. Map of Accessibility Zones in the Borough, from 2020 Accessibility Study.



Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

National Context

163. The current Government finished consulting on a 'call for evidence' for an Integrated National Transport Strategy at the start of 2025, and a Strategy is due by the end of the year. It is intended to set out the high level direction for how transport should be designed, built and operated in England over the next ten years.⁴⁴

⁴³ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Accessibility-Mapping-Report-Sept-2020.pdf>

⁴⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/integrated-national-transport-strategy-a-call-for-ideas/integrated-national-transport-strategy-a-call-for-ideas#integrated-national-transport-strategy-a-call-for-ideas>

164. That said, transport features heavily in the Government's UK 10-year Infrastructure Strategy⁴⁵. In bringing together economic, social and housing infrastructure under one strategy it is intended to better integrate these sectors to reduce potential conflicts and optimise investment. For transport this should mean:

- Long-term investment in road and rail maintenance
- Funding for urban public transport infrastructure in the city regions (such as WMCA)
- Connecting major northern English towns with the Midlands
- Progressing HS2
- Decarbonising transport – electric vehicles and charging infrastructure
- Encourage innovation in low carbon fuel for aviation sector

165. This will build on the previous Government's 'Decarbonising Transport' strategy⁴⁶, published in 2020 and reviewed in 2022. The review reported on phase out dates for non-zero emission heavy goods vehicles; the rise in electric vehicle car ownership; increased funding for walking and cycling schemes; almost 2,000 zero emission buses; battery-only train trial etc.

NPPF

166. Chapter 9 of the NPPF is dedicated to 'Promoting Sustainable Transport.' Para. 109 is clear that 'Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places.'

167. The emphasis is on early engagement with local authorities, making the most of walking, cycling and public transport; taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure; address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; creating places that are safe, secure and attractive; incorporating or future-proofed for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

168. (Para. 110) - Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This is particularly important for new development in the Green Belt (Para. 155).

Regional Context

169. As one of the seven Metropolitan Authorities in the West Midlands, the regional transport body is TfWM (Transport for West Midlands).

170. TfWM has published the Core Strategy of its fifth Local Transport Plan in 2023.⁴⁷ It sets out the overall aims, vision and approach to guide the development and delivery of transport policies until the end of 2041.

171. The following are some of the key areas to deliver the LTP5:

- Inclusive Growth in the region
- Net Zero target by 2041
- Facilitating behaviour change
- Improved connectivity between neighbourhoods & centres

⁴⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6853c5db99b009dcdb73649/UK_Infrastructure_A_10_Year_Strategy_Web_Accessible.pdf

⁴⁶<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/610d63ffe90e0706d92fa282/decarbonising-transport-a-better-greener-britain.pdf>

⁴⁷<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/who-we-are/our-strategy/local-transport-plan/>

- Improve customer experience
- Reduce car dependency with realistic alternatives for all users
- Reduce need to travel with improved digital connectivity

172. N.B. The LTP Core Strategy has its own Sustainability Appraisal as part of the evidence base.⁴⁸

173. Further policy elements and ‘Big Moves’ to guide the LTP were approved in November 2025⁴⁹, and it is expected that the final Area Strategies and Implementation Plan will be adopted in 2026.

Local Context

174. The Council refreshed its Local Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan in 2023 - Solihull Connected⁵⁰. The evidence supporting it includes:

- a Local Centres Accessibility Review
- Solihull Town Centre Access Strategy
- Public Transport Vision

175. The Strategy sets out the Council’s future vision for transport in that ‘Solihull will have a multi-modal transport system that accesses all parts of the Borough, supports our economy, is safe to use and makes the Borough healthier and fairer for communities, businesses, and visitors’.

176. The Strategy places an increased onus on the need to improve public transport across the borough. It highlights the need to reconfigure the bus network to better meet local needs, not just to serve arterial routes to Birmingham City Centre, with a key priority being the delivery of a priority bus rapid transit route between Chelmsley Wood Town Centre, Birmingham Airport / Birmingham International Station / NEC, Solihull Town Centre and Blythe Valley Business Park.

177. In addition, it promotes the delivery of a strategic cycle network to connect key destinations throughout the borough, the implementation of highway capacity improvements in key locations to ensure the ongoing economic vitality of major economic assets that serve the region and the commissioning of further work exploring the benefits and implications of innovative transport solutions such as Connected Autonomous Vehicles.

178. In 2023, the Council also adopted a Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)⁵¹, that in part refreshes the Solihull Vehicle Parking Standards and Travel Plans SPD from 2006⁵².

179. The SPD seeks a Travel Statement or Full Travel Plan on larger types of development (e.g. residential development of 50+units). Travel Plan measures act to e.g. reduce the need to travel, reduce car parking demand, increase level of active travel and public transport use etc.

Baseline Information

180. TfWM collects data on inward trips into Strategic town centres within the region, including Solihull, on an average weekday between 07:30 and 09:30. This metric gives an indication of modal share during the peak morning rush hour.

⁴⁸ <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/lp5mwpjyj/tfwm-ltp5-isa-non-technical-summary-v2-0.pdf>

⁴⁹ <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=2647#:~:text=Note%20that%20the%20full%20WMLTP5,o%20the%20Implementation%20Plan%20elements>.

⁵⁰ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03-13%20Solihull%20Connected%202023%20-%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf>

⁵¹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/additional-planning-policy-documents>

⁵² https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Planning_PARKINGPRINT1s.pdf

Table 15. Total Trips into Solihull Town Centre AM Peak (07:30–09:30) – by Number

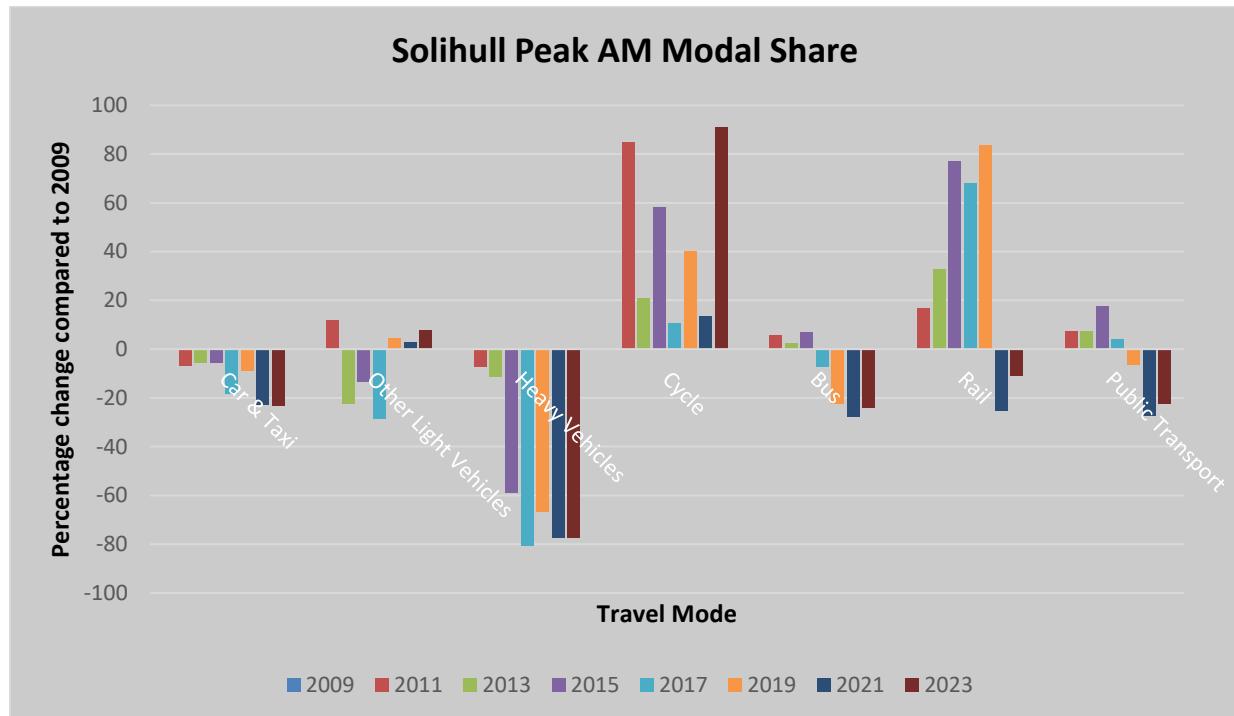
Mode	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
Car & Taxi	16,542	15,381	15,608	15,648	13,503	15,088	12,797	12,707
Light Vehicles (Excluding Car & Taxi)	909	1,017	706	787	648	950	934	979
Heavy Vehicles	285	264	253	117	55	95	64	64
Cycle	67	124	81	106	74	94	76	128
Bus	3,327	3,515	3,415	3,560	3,089	2,581	2,401	2,521
Rail	589	688	781	1,043	990	1,081	440	524
Public Transport	3,916	4,203	4,196	4,603	4,079	3,662	2,841	3,045

Table 16. Total Trips into Solihull Town Centre AM Peak (07:30–09:30) (%) – by Percentage

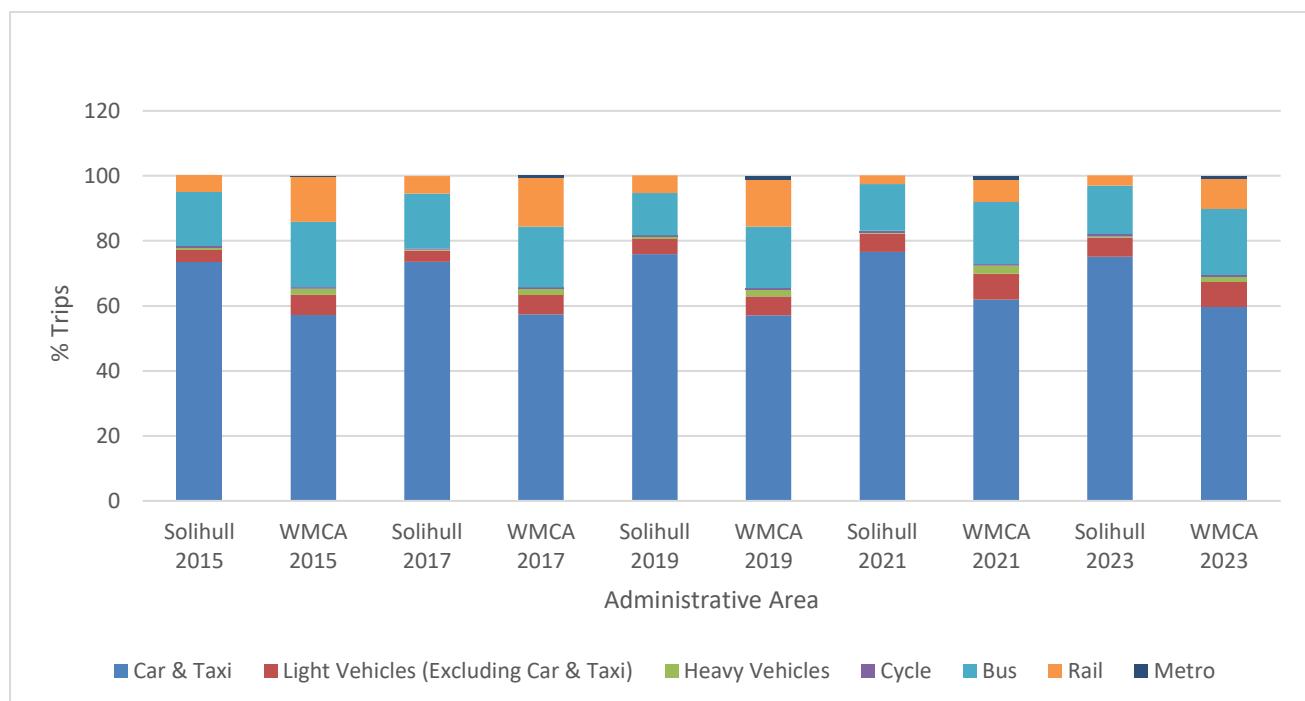
Mode	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
Car & Taxi	76.2	73.3	74.9	73.6	73.5	75.9	76.6	75.1
Light Vehicles (Excluding Car & Taxi)	4.2	4.8	3.4	3.7	3.5	4.8	5.6	5.8
Heavy Vehicles	1.3	1.3	1.2	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.4
Cycle	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.8
Bus	15.3	16.7	16.4	16.7	16.8	13	14.4	14.9
Rail	2.7	3.3	3.7	4.9	5.4	5.4	2.6	3.1
Public Transport	18	20	20.1	21.6	22.2	18.4	17	18

181. Between 2009 and 2023 trips across all modes of transport have fluctuated with a reduced number of trips for all modes. Since 2019 the average number of trips by rail has declined significantly whilst the number of trips made into Solihull by bus and cycle has remained reasonably consistent, which shows that rail has yet to recover since the effects of Covid-19. Car and taxi trips have reduced considerably over the same time period, and it will be interesting to note if the figures remain lower.

182. The following chart shows % change over time using 2009 as the baseline to help illustrate the changes:

Figure 13. Solihull Peak AM Modal Share (%)

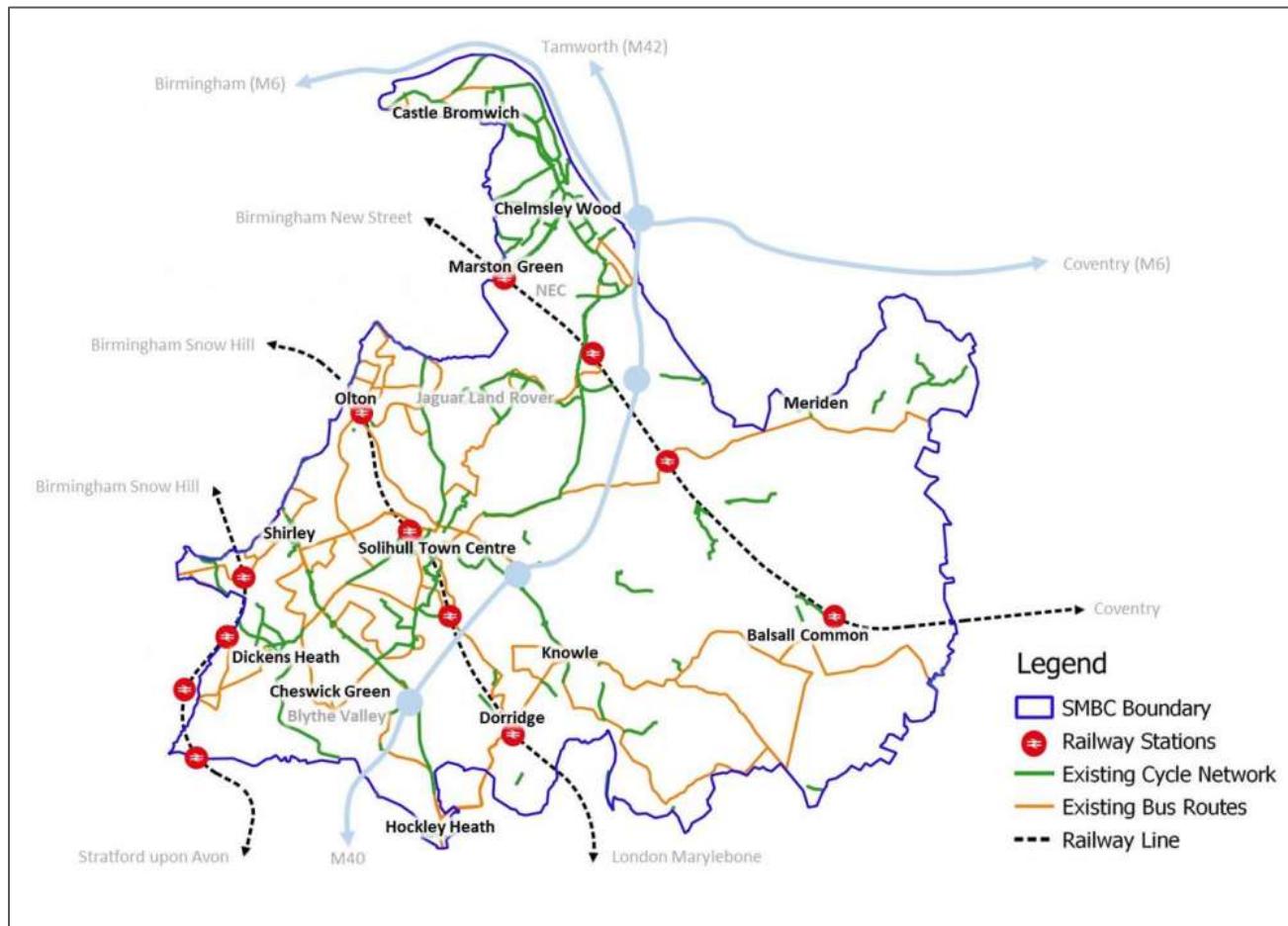
183. It is also useful to compare Solihull with the overall percentage for all of the seven metropolitan authorities. The available data is for 2015 to 2023. It is clear that a much higher proportion of trips are by private vehicle in Solihull (ca. 75%) when compared to all 7 authorities (almost 60%).

Figure 14. % Trips Modal Share in Solihull vs whole WMCA 2015-2023.

184. Solihull is within the 'Birmingham Box' motorway network, with the M42 bisecting the Borough and the M6 along the northeast boundary. Three railway lines traverse the Borough; the West Coast Mainline (Marston Green to Berkswell), Chiltern Railways (Olton to Dorridge), both of which run to London; and the Shakespeare Line (Shirley & Whitlocks End), which runs between Stratford-upon-Avon and Birmingham.

185. The Local Authority is the Highway Authority for the majority of roads in the Borough except the motorways and the A45 trunk road.

Figure 15. Map of Existing Public Transport Network – Taken from Solihull Connected 2023.

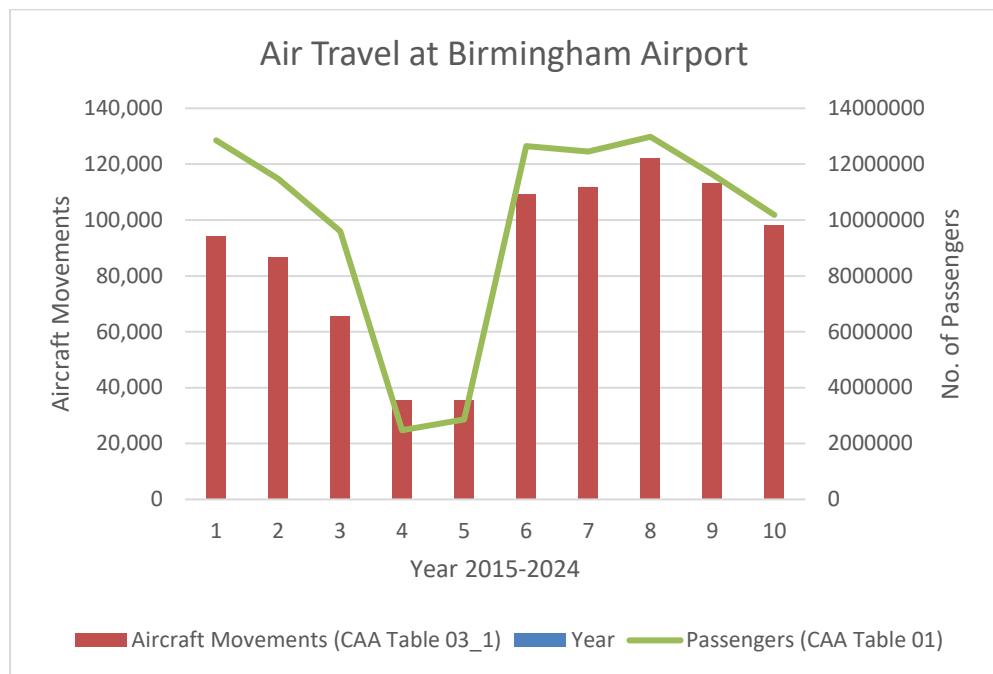


186. Solihull is home to Birmingham International Airport, the seventh largest airport in the UK in terms of passengers. There was an obvious dip in flights around Covid, however, this has now picked up to similar levels as pre-pandemic.

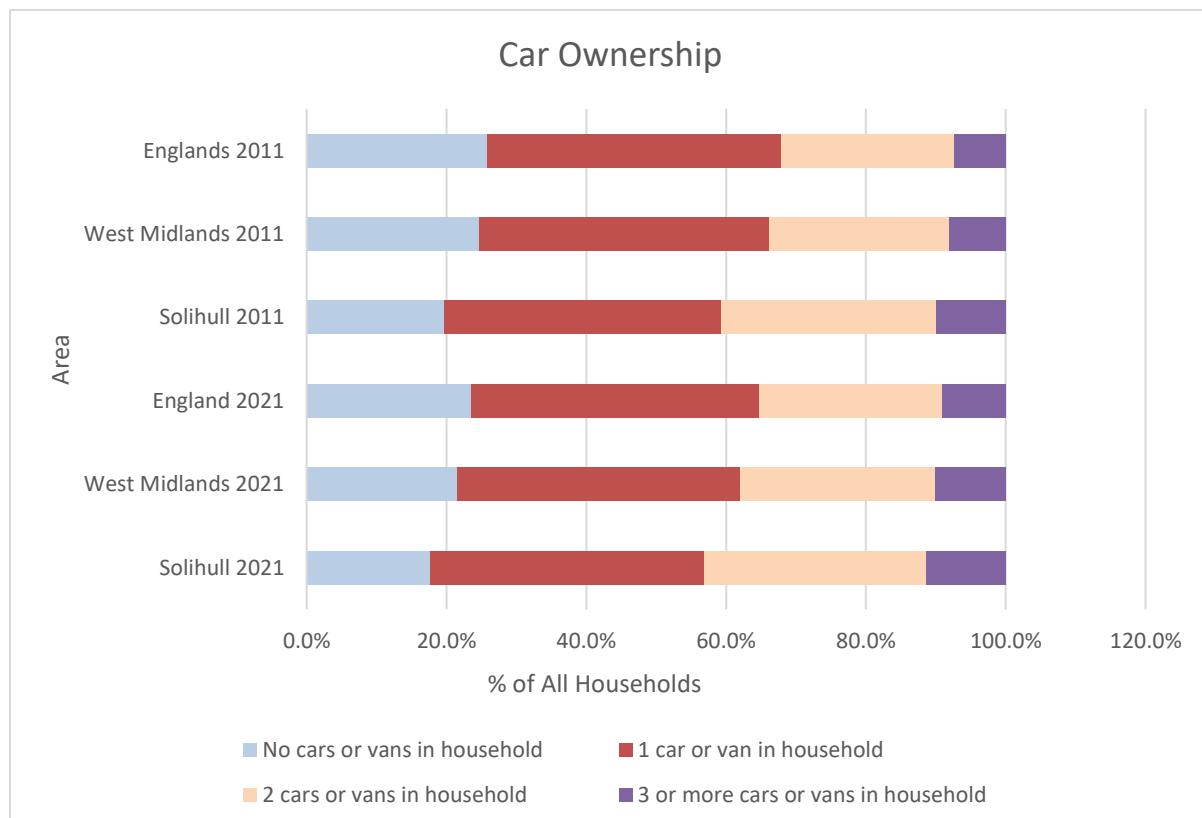
187. The 2018 Masterplan foresaw that passenger volume would increase significantly between 2018 and 2033; the Government forecast saw a 4.4million increase from 2018 base levels (13 million) whereas the Airport predicted between 4.8 and 9.2 million increase.

188. The Airport is expecting 2025/6 to be its busiest year for passenger volume. They have appointed Arup to lead the development of a new 15-year Masterplan, and a draft should be ready for consultation in Summer 2026.⁵³

⁵³ <https://www.birminghamairport.co.uk/latest-news/birmingham-airport-records-busiest-november-ever/>

Figure 16. Flights & passengers at Birmingham Airport 2015-2024

189. Figure 17 shows the levels of car ownership in Solihull between 2011 and 2021, compared with the regional and national picture. Solihull has the least number of households without a car, and that figure has reduced overall, but more obviously in Solihull. This trend continues over the number of cars/vans per household, with Solihull having the highest percentage of 3+ cars/vans, and this figure has also increased between 2011 and 2021.

Figure 17. Car Ownership between 2011 and 2021

190. The figures above however do not reflect the proportion of private vehicles that are electric or hybrid models. Solihull Council has introduced a wide range of initiatives to increase uptake of electric vehicles within the Borough with charging infrastructure and innovate models.⁵⁴

Future Trends

191. The biggest future change to the Borough's transport network will be the opening of the HS2 Interchange Station and the impact of associated works. This could include traffic movements on the strategic and local highway network as potentially 7,500 car spaces could be associated with the development, drawing in trips from surrounding Birmingham, Coventry, south-east Staffordshire, and part of Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

192. The opening of HS2 Interchange will also provide opportunities to re-align regional rail services.

193. The number of passengers and flights is expected to increase at Birmingham Airport following the pandemic.

194. Solihull already has higher levels of car ownership and reliability than other parts of the WMCA, it will be a challenge for the next plan to address this trend and increase the modal share percentage for sustainable and active travel modes.

SA Objective

195. There is one main sustainability objective relating to transport:

- SA3. To ensure that the location of development can be accommodated by existing and/or planned infrastructure and reduces the need to travel.

196. The objectives relating to integration of services (SA17), access to employment, education and training opportunities (SA2) and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (SA5) are also particularly relevant.

Conclusion

197. There are a number of challenges and opportunities facing the Borough. Green Belt land can be released for new development; however, growth needs to be de-coupled from car reliance. Policies and allocations will need to prioritise sustainable transport and active travel modes and outline how to provide walkable neighbourhoods and access to key rail and bus routes.

198. New evidence that will be required will include an updated Accessibility Study; and capacity studies comparing the impact of different growth options on the transport network. We will need to understand the scope for improvements to sustainable travel options as well reliance on internal movements rather than external trips.

199. The 2020 sustainability objectives could be revised to:

- Refer to walkable neighbourhoods
- Not just reduce need to travel (e.g. many trips now done by deliveries rather than shopping excursions), but also be clear about need to reduce reliance on private motor vehicles.
- Sustainable transport and active travel as attractive, realistic alternative options

⁵⁴ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/about-council/going-electric-solihulls-electric-vehicle-strategy>

7. Pollution (including Air Quality & Noise)

Introduction

200. This section will focus mainly on air pollution, but will also reference noise and soil pollution. The Water section will address water quality.

Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

National Context – Air quality

201. A national Clean Air Strategy⁵⁵ was published in 2019, which set out the then Government's plans "for dealing with all sources of air pollution, making our air healthier to breathe, protecting nature and boosting the economy." Research by Public Health England estimated that long-term exposure to man-made air pollution in the UK results in 28,000 to 36,000 deaths annually. Long-term exposure can lower life expectancy, mainly due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and lung cancer.⁵⁶

202. As such, air pollution is considered the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. In 2010, it was estimated that the cost of health impacts due to air pollution was likely to exceed £8-20 billion.

203. The Environment Act (2021)⁵⁷ includes environmental targets for air pollution and established a legally binding duty on government to bring forward at least two new air quality targets in secondary legislation. This was achieved in the Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023.⁵⁸

204. The two new legally binding PM2.5 targets are:

- 10µg/m³ annual mean concentration for PM2.5 nationwide by 2040.
- 35% reduction in average population exposure by 2040 (compared to a base year of 2018).

205. Defra also published an 'Air Quality Strategy - Framework for local authority delivery'⁵⁹ in 2023. This document includes the actions that Defra expects local authorities to take in support of our long-term air quality goals, including our ambitious new PM2.5 targets.

206. In 2024 a petition was brought to Government to consider the introduction of a Clean Air Act. The Secretary of State responded that it is compliant with its 2020 domestic and international emission reduction commitments; that emissions had reduced from 2010 to 2022, and the Government would be providing funding to address the limited number of NO₂ exceedances. The statement also referred to a wide range of information available to the public through the UK-AIR website.

National Context – Noise

207. The Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) apply to environmental noise, mainly from transport. The regulations require regular noise mapping and action planning for road, rail and aviation noise and noise in large urban areas. They also require that Noise Action Plans are produced based on these maps. The Action Plans identify Important Areas (areas exposed to the highest levels of noise) and suggests ways the relevant authorities can reduce

⁵⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019>

⁵⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution>

⁵⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents>

⁵⁸ <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/pm25targets/targets-development>

⁵⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-air-quality-strategy-for-england>

these. Major airports and those which affect agglomerations are also required to produce and publish their own Noise Action Plans separately (e.g. Birmingham Airport).⁶⁰

208. The Regulations do not address noise sources closer to home such as loud music, noisy pubs, neighbours arguing and barking dogs. These issues are dealt with by the local Council's Environmental Health Team.

209. Defra published a National Policy Statement on Noise in 2010⁶¹, and is still being referred to⁶². The aims of the policy align with sustainable development goals and seek to avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life, and where possible contribute to their improvement.

210. The Secretary of State for the Environment recently rejected the notion of introducing minimum complaints threshold for investigating noises that could be a statutory nuisance as people have very individual reactions to noise, and there could be unintended consequences on restricting certain types of development. Therefore, these will continue to be treated on a case by case basis.

National Context – Soil

211. In terms of planning and development, the biggest impacts to soil health are often sterilisation of soil from building waste materials and compaction of soil in surrounding areas. Urbanisation can also create run-off that includes pollutants.⁶³

212. The Environment Agency published "State of the environment: Soil"⁶⁴ in 2019. The document recognises that compaction and loss of organic carbon are serious threats to soil health, affecting agricultural production and climate change resilience. Approximately 300,000 hectares of land is thought to be contaminated across the UK. Threats such as microplastics are widespread in the soil, and the long-term consequences are not yet known.

213. The newly published 2025 Environment Improvement Plan⁶⁵ includes soil health in Goal 6: Resources and has the aim to: 'Manage, improve and Protect Soil responsibly'. Commitment 57: bring at least 40% of England's agricultural soil into sustainable management by 2028, increasing to 60% by 2030. In acknowledgment of the paucity of data, commitment 58 states: Improve the quality, consistency and availability of soil data by 2029.

⁶⁰[https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/noise-management#:~:text=Environmental%20Noise%20\(England\)%20Regulations%202006,-The%20Environmental%20Noise&text=The%20regulations%20require%20regular%20noise,noise%20and%20noise%20in%20agglomerations.](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/noise-management#:~:text=Environmental%20Noise%20(England)%20Regulations%202006,-The%20Environmental%20Noise&text=The%20regulations%20require%20regular%20noise,noise%20and%20noise%20in%20agglomerations.)

⁶¹ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7956e0ed915d0422067947/pb13750-noise-policy.pdf>

⁶² <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-29/2195>

⁶³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65fd6fddf1d3a0001132adb8/CD1.I_DEFRA__Safeguarding_our_Soils_A_Strategy_for_England.pdf

⁶⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment/summary-state-of-the-environment-soil>

⁶⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan-2025/environmental-improvement-plan-eip-2025#:~:text=It%20sets%20clear%20goals%20and,actions%20needed%20to%20deliver%20them.>

NPPF

214. Addressing pollution impacts is contained within Chapter 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' of the NPPF. In particular Para. 187 (e) and Para.'s 198-201.

Para. 187) Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans;

Regional Context

215. Tackling air pollution is a key public health objective for the WMCA. Their website⁶⁶ includes the chilling statistic that up to 2,300 people die early each year in the West Midlands, due to long-term exposure to air pollution.

216. The WMCA have developed a Regional Air Quality Framework⁶⁷, which contains 145 options to improve air quality that could be put in place within the region, and an Implementation Plan⁶⁸ that focuses on the priorities for actions in the period 2024-2026.

217. Primary NO2 and NOX emissions in the West Midlands are dominated by road transport, in particular older diesel vehicles. Therefore, the transition to electric vehicles is a key driver to reducing air pollution. Particulate matter emissions originate from a wider range of sources, including road transport, but also commercial and domestic combustion (e.g. wood-burning stoves) and industrial processes.

218. Air quality is poorest in the main city centres in the West Midlands area, and this does not include Solihull. In fact, Solihull is the only authority of the 7 Mets that does not have an Air Quality Management Plan. However, this does not mean that there aren't areas of poor air quality in the Borough. Furthermore, there is no clear evidence of a safe level of exposure for particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide.

Local Context

219. Solihull Council (led by Public Health) first published a Clean Air Strategy in 2019, which was refreshed in 2024.⁶⁹ The strategy uses latest legislation and guidance and examples of best practice as a basis for ensuring 'Clean air for all'.

220. It should be noted that the worst impacts of air pollution are often felt in the most deprived areas, therefore it is not just an environmental issue, but also a socio-economic one. E.g. the Council works closely with Birmingham Airport on a number of key environmental issues, including air quality. Ambient air quality levels and key pollutants are monitored 24 hours a day on site and reported annually to the Council.

221. Strategic priorities set out in the Solihull 2024 Clean Air Strategy are:

- Improving our approach to monitoring air quality
- Leading by example whilst protecting our environment and minimising our own emissions.

⁶⁶ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-energy/air-quality/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/documents/environment-energy/air-quality-framework-reference-document/>

⁶⁸ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/lkchqkr4/wmca-air-framework-implementation-plan-2024-2026.pdf>

⁶⁹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/Air-Quality-Strategy-2024-2028.pdf>

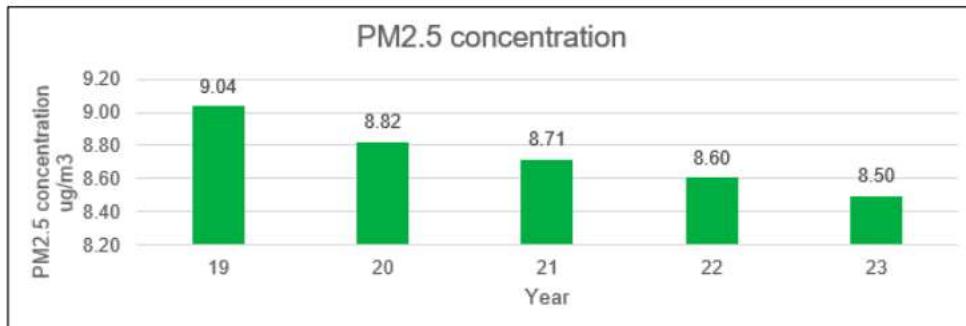
- Raising awareness, providing quality information and guidance to members of the public
- Supporting schools and businesses, promoting initiatives to reduce air pollution.
- Managing emissions from developments and buildings
- Cleaner road, rail and air transport

Baseline Information

222. The following data for Solihull is taken from the LAQM Air Quality 2024 report⁷⁰:

PM_{2.5}

Figure 18. PM_{2.5} recorded in Solihull Town Centre



223. Data for Solihull Town Centre from Defra background maps have shown a gradual reduction in PM_{2.5} levels in the period 2018 to 2023. (2018 – 2023). A review of 2024 modelling predictions shows that this decline is expected to continue.

224. N.B. The Defra background maps do not show any areas of Solihull that exceed the 2020 Stage 2, EU Limit Value for PM_{2.5} (an annual average concentration of 20 µg/m³).

NO₂

225. Solihull Council undertook non-automatic (i.e., passive) monitoring of NO₂ at 31 sites during 2023. These figures show an encouraging general trend of decline for the period 2019-2023. None of the samples taken exceeded the annual mean objective of 40µg/m³, and only two exceeded 35µg/m³.

Other forms of pollution

226. There is a scarcity of information on other forms of pollution within the Borough.

Noise

227. Air traffic is one of the most obvious sources of noise pollution, however, this can also stem from diverse sources such as heavy road traffic, industrial processes and night life uses.

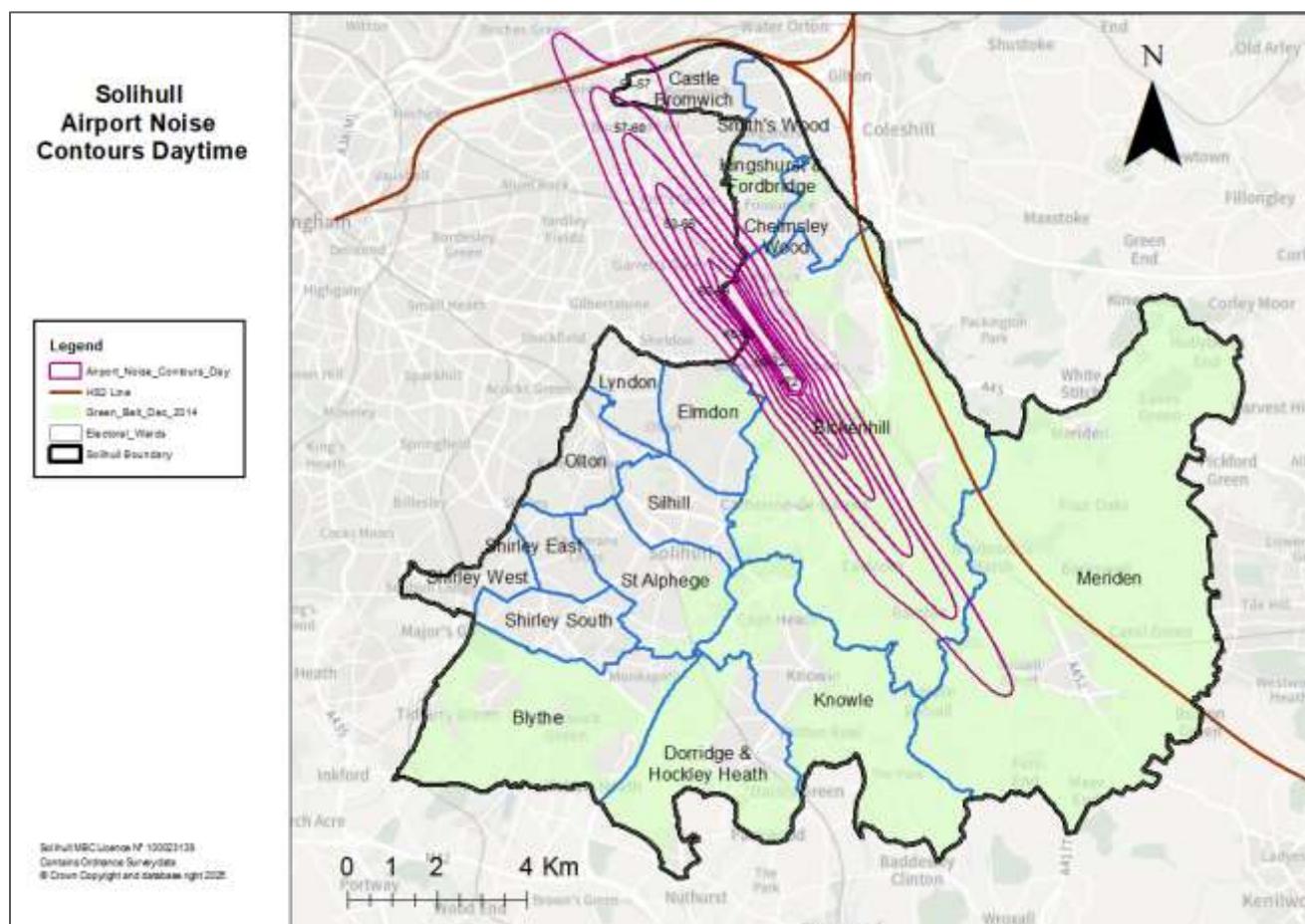
228. Birmingham Airport has a noise action plan⁷¹ and a sound insulation scheme in place to help reduce the impact of noise on local communities.⁷²

⁷⁰ 29th July 2024 Cabinet Climate Change & Planning. Appendix 3 of Air Quality Strategy papers:

<https://democracy.solihull.gov.uk/documents/s120419/Appendix%203.pdf>

⁷¹https://downloads.ctfassets.net/qacv5m4pr8sy/e99oriwt4sAvIKs35xGFM/088d519446ad55a44db1f74d4efdda6a/Noise_Action_Plan_2024-2028.pdf

⁷² <https://corporate.birminghamairport.co.uk/community-and-environment/aircraft-noise/>

Figure 19. Daytime Noise Contours for Birmingham Airport

Soil pollution

229. The Council is responsible for enforcing contaminated land legislation. The Council's constraints mapping for Solihull includes sites of contaminated land (or in some cases, suspected contaminated land) and historic landfill.

230. For agricultural land responsibility comes under the Environment Agency to carry out farm inspection and check for pollution due to agricultural practices.⁷³

Light pollution

231. Solihull is two-thirds Green Belt, and although it is intersected by the M42 and includes an international airport and convention centre, there are still parts of the Borough that experience lower light pollution that can be expected in the countryside. With the advancement of HS2 and the DCO extension to the M42, darker areas in the borough are at risk. This has knock-on impacts for wildlife as well.

Future Trends

232. Air quality from road transport emissions is likely to improve as more vehicles shift to electric and other sources of energy. However, it is important to continue monitoring, in particular in association with new development close to the Airport. Any increases in industrial processes and/or biomass burning can affect air quality locally.

⁷³ <https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2024/04/05/farming-rules-for-water-the-vital-role-of-soil-testing/>

233. Anticipated noise pollution is being mitigated as part of the HS2 works. New development that is likely to be located close to motorways/airport (e.g. Arden Cross) will need to be properly designed to reduce noise impacts. Intensification of town centre uses and more residential development close to e.g. night life uses, also needs to be mitigated adequately.

234. The planning system has a role to play in minimising adverse impacts on soil health. Large proposed developments on existing agricultural land and close to wildlife sites must take long-term safeguarding of soils into account.

SA Objective

235. There is one 'catch-all' sustainability objective for tackling pollution sources, i.e.:

- SA14. Minimise air, soil, water, light and noise pollution.

Conclusion

236. This objective can be supported by any emerging evidence from the Council's Air Quality Strategy Action Plan.

237. It seems acceptable to keep the one overarching objective for the different potential sources of pollution, and nuance can be provided in the supplementary questions/indicators.

238. The 2020 sustainability objective could be revised to go beyond minimise pollution to enhancing and/or improving quality where feasible, e.g. impacts on water quality of River Blythe.

8. Climate Change

Introduction

239. It is unequivocal that climate change has been caused by human activities, primarily through emissions of greenhouse gases. The activities include unsustainable energy use, agriculture, land use and land-use change, patterns of consumption and production across the globe, in particular in more developed countries.⁷⁴

240. The impacts of climate change have already been felt with extreme weather events becoming more frequent. In the UK this has resulted in warmer, wetter winters, hotter summers, more heatwaves and flooding. This has knock on impacts on human health (e.g. respiratory disease), smaller harvests, failing infrastructure and costs of re-build, negative impacts on the semi-natural habitats and species, which in turn affects the economy and day-to-day running of the country.

241. Even if we stopped all greenhouse gas emissions tomorrow, we would still feel the effects of a warming climate decades into the future. It is therefore not exaggerated to state that climate change is the biggest threat facing humanity in modern times, and addressing the causes and impacts of climate change is at the heart of policy interventions for land use and infrastructure.

Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

National Context

242. The **Climate Change Act (2008)** made the UK the first country to establish a long-term legally binding framework to cut carbon emissions. It contains a target requiring emissions reductions to Net Zero by 2050. The Act puts in place a rolling cycle of statutory national risk assessments and a resulting Adaptation Programme that must address the risks.

243. The Act also established the Climate Change Committee (CCC) to ensure that emissions targets are evidence-based and independently assessed. The CCC's Adaptation Committee also advises on these climate change risks and assesses progress towards tackling them.⁷⁵

244. Six carbon budgets have been put into law and run up to 2037. The UK is currently in the Fourth Carbon Budget period (2023 to 2027).

245. The Government have legislated the Great Energy Act in 2025.⁷⁶ This will result in more funding for offshore wind supply, onshore wind, solar power and technologies including hydrogen and tidal power.

246. The **NPPF** in Chapter 14 sets out a clear commitment to addressing the impacts and causes of climate change:

Para. 161

"The planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing

⁷⁴ <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/resources/spm-headline-statements>

⁷⁵ Taken from: [https://www.theccc.org.uk/climate-action/#:~:text=The%20Climate%20Change%20Act%20\(2008,to%20Net%20Zero%20by%202050](https://www.theccc.org.uk/climate-action/#:~:text=The%20Climate%20Change%20Act%20(2008,to%20Net%20Zero%20by%202050).

⁷⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-british-energy-bill-factsheets/great-british-energy-bill-overarching-factsheet#:~:text=The%20Great%20British%20Energy%20Act,the%20whole%20of%20the%20UK>.

resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.”

247. Changes in the 2023 and 2024 update to the NPPF have helped to remove some planning barriers to the delivery of renewable energy generation. However, these still need to be weighed up against impacts on the wider environment.

Regional Context

248. In 2025, the WMCA Board endorsed a refreshed West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy 2025⁷⁷. The WMCA is committed to the reaching net zero by 2041. It has a track record of securing retrofit funding, and going forward can strengthen the delivery of low carbon and net zero initiatives in collaboration with the new National Energy Systems Operator.

249. The strategy focuses on five strategic priorities:

- **Smart spatial planning** – joining up energy planning with the transport strategy and spatial plans
- **Local flexibility** – use of flexible technologies which balance energy transfer and grid balancing services, at a local scale and reaping local benefits.
- **Co-located Clean Generation** – ensuring renewable energy generation is located close to demand, to avoid additional pressure on the electricity network
- **Skilled workforce and Supply Chain** – Building expertise within the region and integrating skills and training offers with growing sustainable energy demand
- **Commercial & Financial Innovation** – Creating business and finance products that help to overcome barriers and accelerate the delivery of different types of energy systems.

250. In 2024 the WMCA commissioned an ‘Economic Impact Assessment of Climate Change on the Economy of the West Midlands Combined Authority Region’⁷⁸. The study found that the WMCA area is already experiencing economic impacts from climate change, e.g. disruption to transport networks and cost of flood remediation. These figures could amount to 1.5%-3% of GVA by the 2050s, or equivalent to £1.5-£2.9 billion/year. However, these are likely to be underestimates as not all the risks can be quantified. The study recommends development of a regional adaptation plan for the WMCA area and associated investment framework.

Local Context

251. Solihull Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019⁷⁹ and commissioned a Net Zero Action Plan, which was adopted in November 2021⁸⁰.

252. The NZAP focuses on 7 key sectors (see Figure 20). It recognises that its scope is limited to the Council’s sphere of influence, for example, the transport sector does not include aviation emissions. Many of the targets for buildings were reliant on the delivery of the Climate Change policy in the Draft Local Plan.

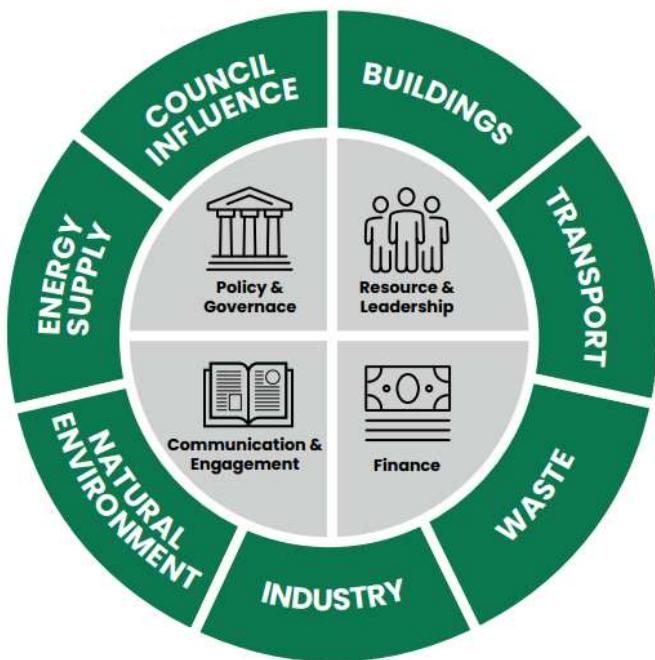
⁷⁷⁷⁷ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-energy/energy-capital/policy/regional-energy-strategy/>

⁷⁸ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/zw5dfb2k/economic-impacts-assessment-executive-summary.pdf>

⁷⁹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/your-future-solihull/climate-emergency>

⁸⁰ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/your-future-solihull/net-zero-action-plan-nzap>

Figure 20. Solihull NZAP 2021 – 7 Key Sectors and 4 Foundational Pillars



The Net Zero Action Plan contains **54 goals** and **203 actions** across 7 key sectors.

Of the 203 actions, **75** have an element of communication and engagement, **65 involve implementation**, and **62** relate to research and policy/strategy design (actions can sit within more than one category).

This shows the breadth of actions required and the need to include actions that relate to all aspects of decarbonisation including behaviour change and technology.

253. The latest annual report is for the year 2023/24⁸¹.

Baseline Information

National Data

254. The following is taken from the CCC's report 'Progress in reducing emissions – 2025 report to Parliament'⁸²:

- Emissions in the UK have been steadily decreasing, with 2024 levels 50.4% below the 1990 baseline
- Emission reductions in 2024 were driven by electricity supply and industry sectors. The UK's last coal-fired electricity power station was closed in October 2024.
- However, these were partially offset by an increase in emissions from flights. Consequently, aviation now contributes a greater share of total UK emissions than the entire electricity supply sector.
- Significant increase in tree planting and peatland restoration in 2024 – 20,700 hectares of new trees planted in 23/24, the highest planting rate in two decades.

Future Trends

- Over 80% of the required emissions savings between now and 2030 (see Figure 21 below), need to come from sectors other than energy supply.
- Beyond 2030, to achieve the Sixth Carbon budget, surface transport, buildings and industry continue to make major contributions to emissions reduction. There will also be

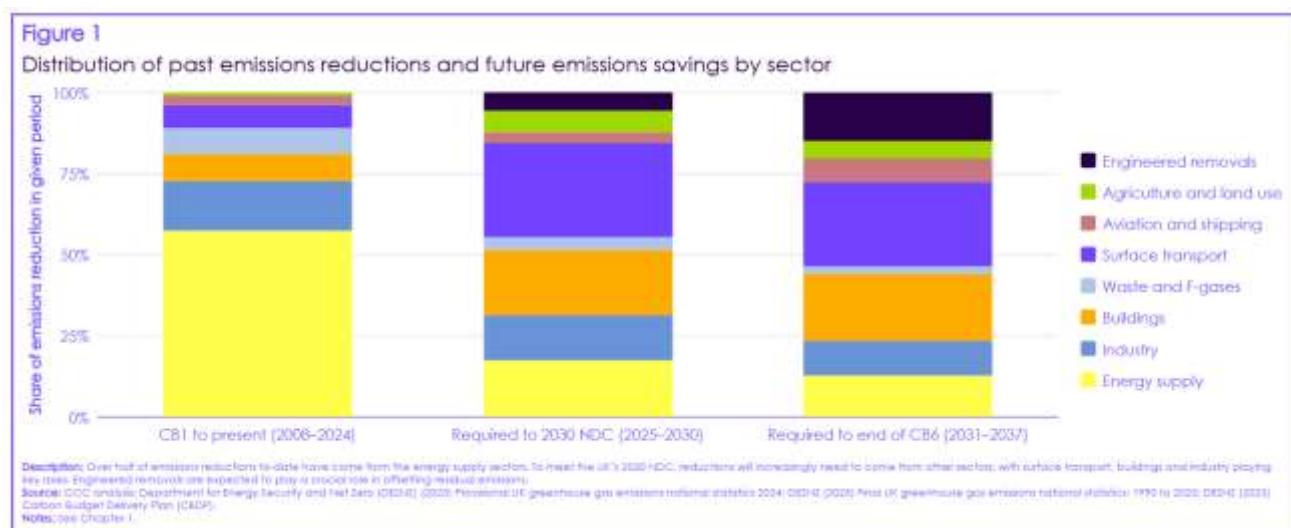
⁸¹https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/NZAP%20Annual%20Report%202023-24%20%28inc%20appendices%29_1.pdf

⁸² <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/progress-in-reducing-emissions-2025-report-to-parliament/>

increasing contributions from reducing emissions in aviation, agriculture and land use, as well as increasing carbon capture methods.

- One of the key factors in improving the pace of emissions reduction will be the uptake of Electric Vehicles (EVs).
- Require a significant increase in roll-out rates of low-carbon technologies, which can be supported by the Government's Warm Homes Plan, Industrial Strategy and Land Use Framework to help supply chains and markets grow. (E.g. domestic heat pump installations, electrification of industrial processes)
- Similarly, a continued investment in nature based-solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation is needed, such as increasing carbon sinks by tree planting and peatland restoration.
- The share of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) as a proportion of all jet fuel used in the UK aviation must further increase from 2.1% (2024) to 10% by 2030, in order to meet the UK SAF Mandate, and to reverse the risk of aviation emissions threatening UK's emissions targets.

Figure 21. CCC 2025 Progress Report – Distribution of past emissions and future savings (2025-2037) required by sector in UK⁸³



255. The CCC report includes recommendations that have national and local impact, but are beyond the scope of the Local Plan. For example, the report calls on the Government to remove policy costs from electricity prices; to implement regulations to ensure that new homes are not connected to the gas grid; deliver rapid expansion of the low-carbon electricity system; develop policy to ensure that the aviation industry takes responsibility for its emissions reaching Net Zero by 2050.

256. In addition, there are other recommendations that the Council is pursuing through the Net Zero Action Plan, such as the decarbonisation of public sector buildings.

⁸³<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Progress-in-reducing-emissions-2025-report-to-Parliament.pdf>

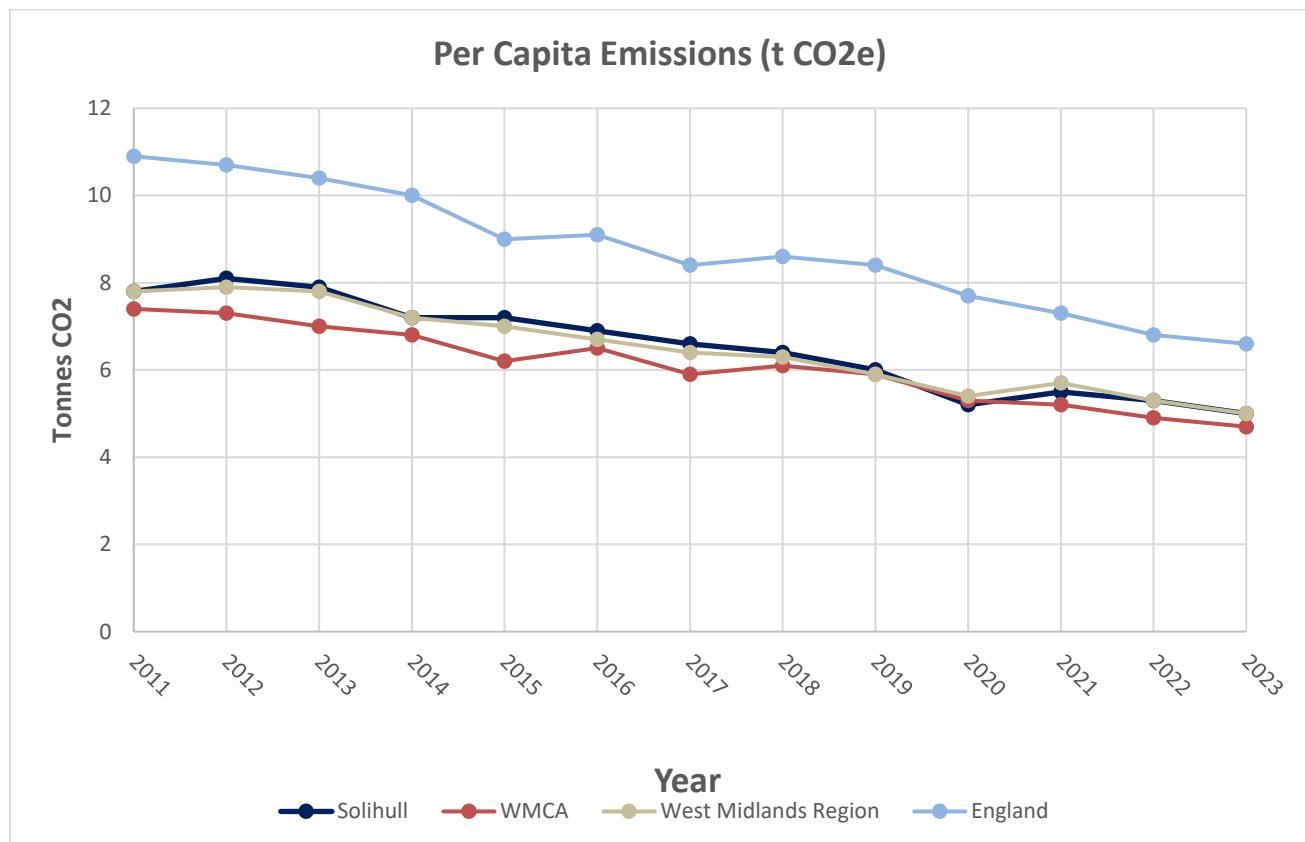
Local Data

257. The local authority level greenhouse gas emissions are reported 2 years in arrears⁸⁴. Table 17 and Figure 22 below show the data trends from 2011-2023 for Solihull, the Combined Authority as a whole, the wider West Midlands region and for England. N.B. this excludes aviation data.

Table 17. Per capita CO2 emissions 2011-2023.

Year	Per Capita Emissions (t CO2e)			
	Solihull	WMCA	West Midlands Region	England
2011	7.8	7.4	7.8	10.9
2012	8.1	7.3	7.9	10.7
2013	7.9	7.0	7.8	10.4
2014	7.2	6.8	7.2	10.0
2015	7.2	6.2	7.0	9.0
2016	6.9	6.5	6.7	9.1
2017	6.6	5.9	6.4	8.4
2018	6.4	6.1	6.3	8.6
2019	6.0	5.9	5.9	8.4
2020	5.2	5.3	5.4	7.7
2021	5.5	5.2	5.7	7.3
2022	5.3	4.9	5.3	6.8
2023	5.0	4.7	5.0	6.6

⁸⁴<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F686539026569be0acf74db5a%2F2005-23-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

Figure 22. Per capita CO2 emissions 2011-2023.

258. The graph in Figure 22 illustrates that the downward trend for Solihull is very similar to the wider West Midlands region, but consistently slightly higher than the combined 7 Metropolitan Authorities. However, all of the West Midlands is trending lower than the national average by ca. 25%.

259. The latest NZAP annual report is for the year 2023/24⁸⁵. It states that the GHG emissions in 2022 were 2.7% higher than its net zero trajectory, however, when compared to the Tyndall Centre pathway, the levels are 33% higher than recommended. This is a national picture, however, that although GHG emissions are reducing, the rate needs to ramp up.

260. However, the report states that nearly three-quarters of the 202 actions in the NZAP are underway. Significant progress has been made in reducing the Council's own emissions (55% drop since 2017/18; approval of the Council's Air Quality Strategy and its Natural Capital Investment Strategy).

261. One of the major initiatives from the NZAP is the introduction of a Town Centre Low Carbon Energy Network, which is in final phases of construction. As it is estimated that 49% of Solihull's carbon emissions originate from buildings, this will help to reduce those emissions within the main town centre.⁸⁶

SA Objective

262. The 2020 Sustainability Appraisal Framework listed the following objectives under the topic 'Climate Change':

⁸⁵https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/NZAP%20Annual%20Report%202023-24%20%28inc%20appendices%29_1.pdf

⁸⁶<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/roads-pavements-and-streetcare/solihull-town-centre-energy-network>

- SA5. Minimise greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy generation
- SA6. To assist businesses in the adaptation they need to become more resource efficient and resilient to the effects of a changing climate.
- SA8. To ensure that development provides for adaptation to urban heating, the effects of high winds and assists in promoting positive behaviour change.

Conclusion

263. SA5 supports the crucial factors to reaching net zero, but could go further than 'encourage' energy efficiency and renewable energy generation given the Council's Climate Change pledge and net zero commitments.

264. Updated viability evidence will be important to inform any new policies on energy standards.

265. SA6 and SA8 refer to elements of climate change adaptation, however, can go further than just refer to businesses in SA6 and include importance of nature-based solutions in climate change resilience.

9. Biodiversity & Geodiversity

Introduction

266. Successive governments in recent years have put in place a number of initiatives to tackle biodiversity decline across the nations of the UK. These include commitments under the 2010 Convention on the Biological Diversity; England's 2011 Biodiversity Strategy following the 'Making Space for Nature report'; and the Environment Act 2021.

267. The Environment Act 2021 has introduced biodiversity net gain, which became mandatory in 2024 for most developments requiring planning permission. It also introduced Local Nature Recovery Strategies, which have begun to be adopted in 2025, more on those below.

268. These policy interventions are all the more necessary as it is now recognised [State of Nature report 2023] that the UK is 'one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth'.⁸⁷ On a more positive note is the message that 'the reasons for the [biodiversity] decline are clear and we know conservation actions deliver results for nature. We have never had a better understanding of the State of Nature and what is needed to fix it.'

Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

National Context

269. The latest in these policy initiatives is the 'National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to 2030'⁸⁸, which was published in February 2025. The strategy has been drawn up to help the UK meets its obligations under the Global Biodiversity Framework, which continues the international commitment of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

270. The main legislation protecting wildlife and its habitats in England are:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

271. The Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB) Act was granted Royal Assent on 18th December. The PIB Act will result in wide-ranging planning reforms (as mentioned in earlier sections), and Part 3 of the Act, if enacted, will fundamentally change how developers will discharge their environmental and biodiversity duties in planning. For example, instead of site specific mitigation, developers could contribute to a Nature Restoration Fund.

272. Improving biodiversity and protecting and enhancing our natural environment are key components of Para. 8(c) – the environmental objective towards sustainable development in the NPPF. Chapter 15 focuses on these aims, including the countryside, geodiversity, ecological networks and the wider benefits of natural capital. Plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites in Solihull).

⁸⁷<https://stateofnature.org.uk/#:~:text=The%20UK%20like%20most%20other,nature%2Ddepleted%20countries%20on%20Earth>.

⁸⁸<https://uk.chm-cbd.net/NBSAP>

Regional Context

273. Following the Environment Act 2021, the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 set out how LNRS would be implemented across the country and:

- agree priorities for nature's recovery;
- map the most valuable existing areas for nature; and
- map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals (adopting nature-based solutions).

274. The West Midlands Local Nature Recovery Strategy⁸⁹ has been published by the West Midlands Combined Authority, the region's responsible body. The LNRS has three themes and ten priorities. Particularly relevant for Solihull are: long-term sensitive management of rural land for nature, soils and agriculture; potential species introductions (e.g. marsh fritillary); ecological functionality of freshwater networks and wetlands; bigger, better and more joined up habitats.

275. The WMCA has also published a 'West Midlands State of Nature report'⁹⁰. Below are some of the findings:

276. Solihull has highest percentage of broad-leaved woodland (8.8%), and second highest absolute area in hectares after Birmingham. Solihull is just behind Coventry with 1.6%. Solihull also has the most wet woodland in the CA area and highest tree density per hectare. Despite this, Solihull is in the middle range for tree canopy cover at 13.1% (compared to Walsall – 10.9% and Sandwell – 18.1%).

277. In terms of other key habitats, Solihull has very little heathland (0.1% of area); a higher than average extent of scrub (1.8%), the highest relative percentage of modified grassland and a good proportion of semi-natural grassland (28% and 7% respectively). Solihull also has the highest relative percentage of wetland in the WMCA at 0.36% and also river habitat (% not shown).

278. Solihull has by far the greatest amount of arable habitat, as well as relative %, in the WMCA area, given the almost two thirds of the Borough is Green Belt. Solihull also has the second highest absolute amount of road verges in hectares in the WMCA.

279. The report doesn't give figures on the amount of public green space, but does for private gardens. Solihull has the lowest relative percentage in the WMCA, but the third largest by area.

Local Context

280. In 2024, Solihull Council published its first Natural Capital Investment Strategy and Delivery Plan⁹¹. The NCIS is the Council's response to the biodiversity crisis and recognises that any work by the Council for the natural environment needs to be fully integrated with social and economic agendas around housing, economic growth, skills and transport in a similar way to the Net Zero Action Plan.

281. The NCIS includes a broad range of projects focusing on: species recovery; developing our wildlife corridors; delivering Biodiversity Net Gain; improving access to green space; tree and hedgerow planting; and suitable monitoring practices.

282. The Council's Biodiversity Duty Report from November 2025⁹² states that a new joint board has been created to lead the oversight of the NCIS as well as the Climate Change Prospectus and

⁸⁹ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-energy/west-midlands-local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

⁹⁰ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/5zwkzhmj/state-of-nature-report.pdf>

⁹¹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-08/Appendix%201%20-%20NCIS%20June24%20281%29%20Final%20Publication.pdf>

⁹² <https://democracy.solihull.gov.uk/documents/s129226/Appendix%201.pdf>

Net Zero Action Plan, so that the responsibilities and timescales for carrying out actions for each are aligned.

283. The Council adopted a ten-year Urban Forestry Strategy⁹³ and Service Plan in 2019⁹⁴. There are 9 themes to the strategy, including Planning. An update⁹⁵ was published in 2024 and the Cabinet Member report gives this helpful overview: “The Strategy assists the Council in responding to pressures placed on its tree stock, as the urban infrastructure expands. It recognises the role that trees play in helping to achieve net zero by 2041, through isolating and storing carbon and providing essential ecosystem services for nature, people and the economy.”

284. The Council also pledged in 2020 to plant 250,000 trees⁹⁶ to help combat climate change and improve biodiversity. By 2025, 100,000 trees had been planted in the Borough.

Baseline Information

285. The Council has 5 SSSIs, the largest being the River Blythe, which is designated along its entire length in the Borough. There are also 2 SSSIs close to the Borough boundary. There does not appear to be up-to-date data on condition status of River Blythe, as the Natural England citation refers to October 2010 as the date it was last assessed.⁹⁷ However, at last assessment the condition status was assessed as ‘Unfavourable’. This is likely due to run-off from agricultural practices, as well as other forms of pollution. Invasive species have also been found along stretches of the river, and inappropriate weirs and dams.

286. The Council does not have any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites.

287. There are only three Local Geological Sites⁹⁸ (formerly known as Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites) in the Borough:

- Nursery Cottage Brickworks – Mercia Mudstone (Triassic)
- Meriden Hill Cutting – Salop Formation (Carboniferous)
- River Blythe Oxbow – Natural Oxbow formation

288. #- Question to Natural England – Update on the status of the Nursery Cottage brickworks?

289. The total number of Local Wildlife Sites has increased in the last fifteen years (see Table 18). The percentage in positive management increased from 2008 to 2014 (39 to 50%), and has been stable at 48% for the past few years. Unfortunately, the data does not indicate the coverage in hectares, so it is not possible to compare the absolute area that has changed in positive management over the years. The fact that only half of the 130 sites are in positive management is likely due to threats from development (e.g. HS2) and lack of appropriate management.

⁹³https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/StrategiesPlansPolicies_LeisureandParks_Solihull-Urban-Forestry-Strategy.pdf

⁹⁴<https://democracy.solihull.gov.uk/documents/s72901/Appendix%202%20-%20Service%20Plan.pdf.pdf>

⁹⁵<https://democracy.solihull.gov.uk/documents/s118023/Urban%20Forestry%20Strategy%202019%20-2029%20Update.pdf>

⁹⁶ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/your-future-solihull/planting-our-future>

⁹⁷<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteFeatureCondition.aspx?SiteCode=s1001772&SiteName=River%20Blythe%20SSSI>

⁹⁸<https://www.wgcf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/WGCF-Geodiversity.pdf>

Table 18. Defra - Nature conservation: Local Sites in positive conservation management in England, 2008/09 to 2023/24⁹⁹

Year	Total number of sites	No. of sites in positive conservation management	Percentage of sites in positive management
2008/09	95	37	39
2009/10	95	37	39
2010/11	95	39	41
2011/12	97	39	40
2012/13	[x]	[x]	[x]
2013/14	104	52	50
2014/15	107	53	50
2015/16	[x]	[x]	[x]
2016/17	[x]	[x]	[x]
2017/18	120	55	46
2018/19	[x]	[x]	[x]
2021/22	130	62	48
2022/23	130	62	48
2023/24	130	62	48

290. N.B. This data slightly differs from the Council's 2024 AMR. This data was updated on 25th February 2025, but only goes until the 23/24 year.

SA Objective

291. There are two sustainability objectives relating to biodiversity and green infrastructure:

- SA9. Protect the integrity and connectivity of ecological sites and ensure that enhancement for habitats and species are not prejudiced.
- SA11. To facilitate the delivery and enhance the quality of areas providing green infrastructure.

⁹⁹<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-sites-in-positive-conservation-management--2#full-publication-update-history>

Conclusion

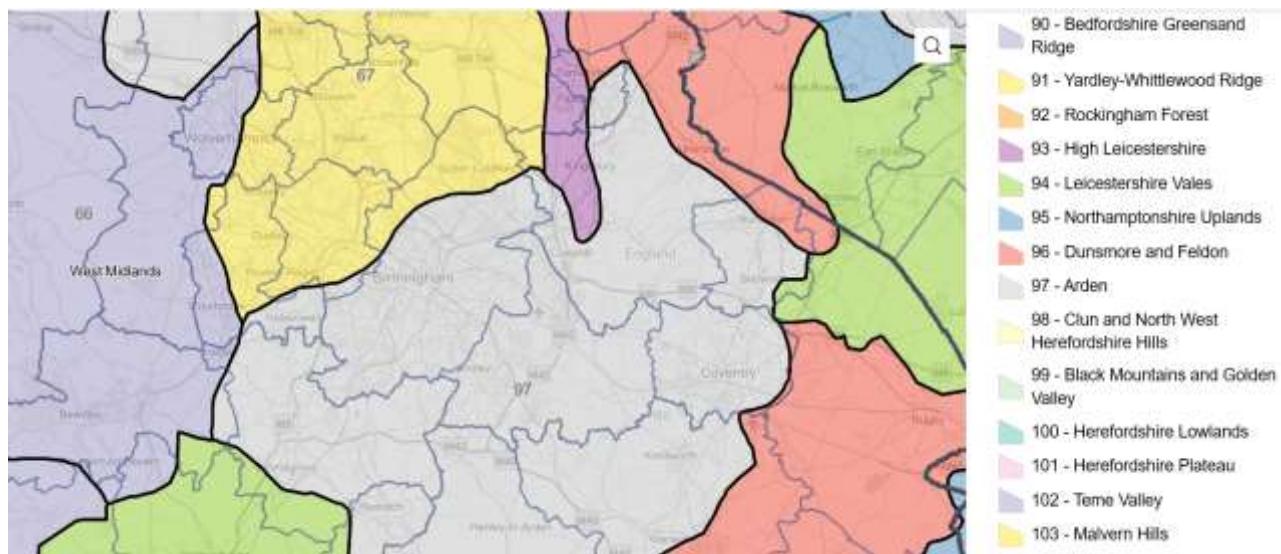
292. New evidence to support this objective will be updates to the Natural Capital Infrastructure Strategy, as well any ecological assessment carried out on potential development sites.
293. Objective SA9 could be more positively worded and refer also to net gains.
294. Objective SA11 could refer to the multi-functionality of green infrastructure, in acknowledgment of the role biodiverse habitats play in tackling the effects of climate change as well as health and wellbeing.

10. Landscape & Land

Introduction

295. The entirety of the Solihull borough lies within the National Landscape Character Area 97 – Arden. Four of the seven distinct Arden landscape types are still evident within the Borough, i.e. Arden Parklands, Arden Pastures, Ancient Arden and Arden River Valleys.

Figure 23. Character Areas in West Midlands¹⁰⁰



296. There are no national landscape designations, such as National Park or AONB within the Borough or close to its boundary.

Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

National Context

297. Para. 187 in the natural environment chapter of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should seek to:

- (a) Protect and enhance valued landscapes
- (b) Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside

298. In the design Chapter 12, Para 135 (c) includes landscape setting as a criterion when considering how a development is sympathetic to local character and history.

299. Although not a defining feature of Green Belts, Para. 151 states that 'once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan to positively enhance their beneficial use, including to retain and enhance landscapes.'

300. Furthermore, climate change policies should take into account the long-term implications for biodiversity and landscapes (Para. 162).

301. In the 2025 Environment Improvement Plan, (Goal 6) states that the Government will '*remain committed to the Glasgow Leader's Declaration – led by the UK and signed at the United Nations Climate Change Conference26 – to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.*

¹⁰⁰ Taken from the Natural England interactive National Character Area map:
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/805c6ba91684461092def63445b1bf5c>

This goal will work in tandem with the work on a plan for the circular economy transition and the industrial strategy. It will grow the economy, create green jobs, protect our environment, and accelerate progress towards net zero.”

302. The countries in the United Kingdom are still bound to their international obligations under the Council of Europe Landscape Convention (aka European Landscape Convention). The Landscape Institute¹⁰¹ states:

“The Convention defines landscape as “an area perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.” Comprising 18 articles, the Convention promotes cooperation among European nations on landscape protection, planning, and management and to establish and implement policies, including integration into regional and town planning, to deliver these objectives. It also encourages the exchange of expertise and training among landscape professionals.

It applies to all landscapes — from rural to urban, coastal to inland, degraded to exceptional — recognising their cultural, social, ecological, and economic value.

Crucially, the ELC views landscape not as a restrictive or purely conservationist concept, but as a shared expression of the relationship between people and place — a reflection of local culture and identity. Public participation in shaping landscape policy remains central to its vision.”

Regional Context

303. The “Warwickshire Guidelines: Arden”¹⁰² were produced in 1993 by Warwickshire County Council and are still referenced by Solihull Council’s Landscape team when assessing planning implications.

304. An overview of the four main Arden landscape types that occur in Solihull:

Arden Parklands: Includes large country houses set in mature parkland. Remnant deerparks. Belts of mature trees associated with estatelands. Pockets of ancient woodland and thick roadside hedges. Gentle rolling topography.

Arden pastures: Small scale, enclosed landscape often pervaded by suburban influences. Characterised by pattern of small fields and paddocks. Hedgerows include mature oaks. Network of minor lanes often with ribbon development. Gentle rolling topography.

Ancient Arden: Forms the core of the Warwickshire countryside. A farmed landscape, that is characterised by small to medium irregular sized fields and narrow lanes, partitioned by thick hedgerows. Pockets of permanent pasture with field ponds. Varied undulating topography.

Arden River Valleys: Narrow meandering river corridors with riverside trees and grazing meadows, often with patches of wet grasslands. Alluvial floodplains. Curvilinear hedgerows along the floodplain edge. Marginal vegetation.

305. The WMCA LNRS references the Arden Farm Wildlife Network, which brings together farmers and land managers and supports them to collectively deliver benefits for soil, water and wildlife at a landscape scale e.g. distribution of over 2,000 trees for hedgerow and woodland planting.

¹⁰¹<https://landscapeinstitute.org/news/landscape-institute-reinforces-role-of-european-landscape-convention-on-its-25th-anniversary/>

¹⁰² https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Planning_LDF_Arden_Landscape_Guidelines.pdf

Local Context

306. The most recent Landscape Character Assessment for Solihull Borough was commissioned in 2016¹⁰³ and carried out by Watermans as part of the Local Plan Review evidence base.

307. The LCA identified 10 broad character areas within the Borough, and additional sub-areas within 3 of these. Each area and sub-area was then assessed in terms of landscape character sensitivity, visual sensitivity and the overall general capacity to accept development and change.

308. N.B. These assessments were carried out before major works for HS2 had taken place in the Borough and prior to the Development Consent Order for the M42 Junction 5A and additional 'leg' of the motorway.

309. Character Areas:

- LCA 1 – Solihull Fringe (2 sub-areas)
- LCA 2 – Southern Countryside
- LCA 3 – Knowle & Dorridge Fringe
- LCA 4 – Rural Centre (4 sub-areas)
- LCA 5 – Balsall Common Eastern Fringe
- LCA 6 – Eastern Fringe
- LCA 7 – Northern Upland
- LCA 8 – Blythe Lowland
- LCA 9 – Motorway Corridor
- LCA 10 – Urban Green Spaces (two sub-areas)

Figure 24. Map of Solihull Landscape Character Areas from 2016 Assessment

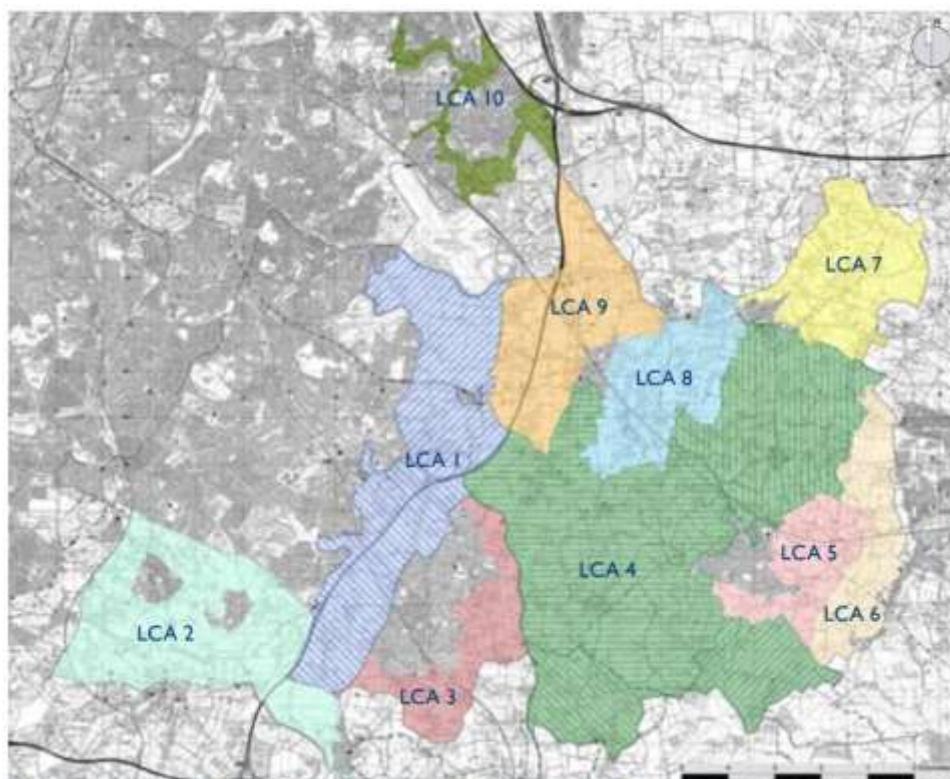


Figure 2: Solihull Borough Landscape Character Areas Map (Refer to Appendix D for a full-sized map.)

¹⁰³ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Landscape-Character-Assessment-2016.pdf>

Baseline Information

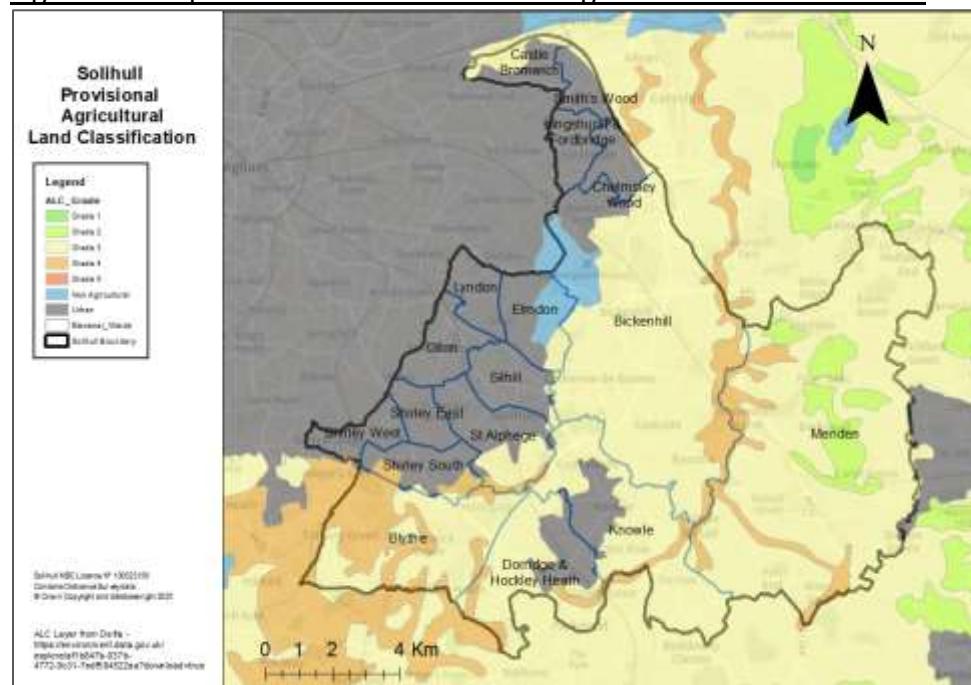
310. The following information is extracted from the 2016 LCA for Solihull.

Table 19. Solihull 2016 Landscape Character Assessment Matrix

Area/Sub-Area	Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Landscape Capacity for Change
1	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
2	High	Medium	High	Medium	Very Low
3	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
4	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
5	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
6	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Very Low
7	Medium	High	High	Medium	Very Low
8	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low - High	Low
9	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
10	High	High	High	High	Very Low/None

311. The table shows that at that time there was little capacity for change in the landscape, and as such any development would need to be sympathetic to the landscape character as far as possible. N.B. 4D had much higher landscape character sensitivity and consequently very low capacity for change

Figure 25. Map of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land in Solihull.



312. In terms of agricultural land (Figure 25), the broad Grades are available on the Defra website. More detailed differentiation between Grades 3a and 3b are not available online. Grade 2 agricultural land can be found to the east of the Borough, with much of undeveloped Bickenhill and the rest of Meriden wards being Grade 3. More Grade 4 land is found following the River Blythe valley and in the western part of the Blythe ward.

Future Trends

313. In the future there will be more development and urbanisation of the Arden landscape within the Borough. The HS2 railway line and accompanying works will have an impact along their route, but also provide opportunities for more planting and swales. Over time these will provide a different landscape character to these parts of the Borough, but as much mitigation planting has been secured as possible.

314. The new Junction 5A route of the M42 will have an impact on the area around Bickenhill, as will the new M42 service station if it is built in Catherine de Barnes. Furthermore, there are several planning applications for battery storage units that have been granted approval on appeal.¹⁰⁴

SA Objective

315. There is one main sustainability objective relating to land and landscape:

- SA10. To manage the landscape effects of development in recognition of the European Landscape Convention as well as the risks and opportunities associated with measures to address climate change.

Conclusion

316. Additional work may be required to update the 2016 Landscape Assessment, however, much of what is within the 2016 will still be relevant.

317. SA10 objective is quite high level and incorporates the European Landscape Convention so is likely still fit for purpose.

¹⁰⁴ #ADD REFERENCES

11. Cultural Heritage

Introduction

318. Cultural heritage encompasses the tangible, physical historic environment and artefacts such as castles, museums and works of art; historic landscapes; as well as intangible cultural traditions and songs, crafts, clothing styles. In the modern era, this now includes digital culture.¹⁰⁵

319. Historic England have produced an Advice Note (8) to support all those involved in assessing the effects of certain plans on the historic environment; and includes advice on taking heritage considerations into account during the SA and SEA process.¹⁰⁶

Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

National Context

320. Chapter 16 of the NPPF addresses the historic environment. Para. 203 is clear that plans ‘should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.’

321. Plans should also take into account the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.’

322. The National Design Guide also places importance on the consideration of heritage and culture in establishing a place’s local character and context.¹⁰⁷

323. In 2023 English Heritage published their ‘Sustainable Conservation Principles’¹⁰⁸. These include (4) – integrating nature for the benefit of both the natural & historic environment; (5) – reducing EH’s environmental impact and building resilience to climate change’, and (7) making EH’s conservation accessible and relevant to all. EH also has a Climate Action Plan, which will help to safeguard historic properties against the impacts of climate change.

Regional Context

324. The WMCA have prepared a Regional Culture and Heritage Framework as part of the 2023 Deeper Devolution Deal. The WMCA recognise the crucial role that culture, heritage and sport can play in supporting “levelling up,” through giving people pride in the places they live, supporting a vibrant local economy and promoting wellbeing.¹⁰⁹

325. The WMCA has since established a culture and creative industries team, to support the WMCA’s role as an enabler and champion of the sub-region’s cultural and creative sector.¹¹⁰

326. The WMCA has also helped establish a new charity, the West Midlands Heritage Trust.¹¹¹ It is dedicated to rescuing and re-using at risk historic buildings. The charity is formed from a collaboration between the Worcestershire Building Preservation Trust, the West Midlands

¹⁰⁵ <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/eu-policy-for-cultural-heritage>

¹⁰⁶ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/heag036-sustainability-appraisal-strategic-environmental-assessment/>

¹⁰⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/602cef1d8fa8f5038595091b/National_design_guide.pdf

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/siteassets/home/0-about-us-new/01-policies-and-reports/01.08-sustainability/sustainable-conservation-strategy.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6411bf0be90e07769e2a28cc/West_Midlands_Combined_Authority_Trailblazer_deeper_devolution_deal.pdf

¹¹⁰ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/culture-and-digital/culture-and-creative-industries/>

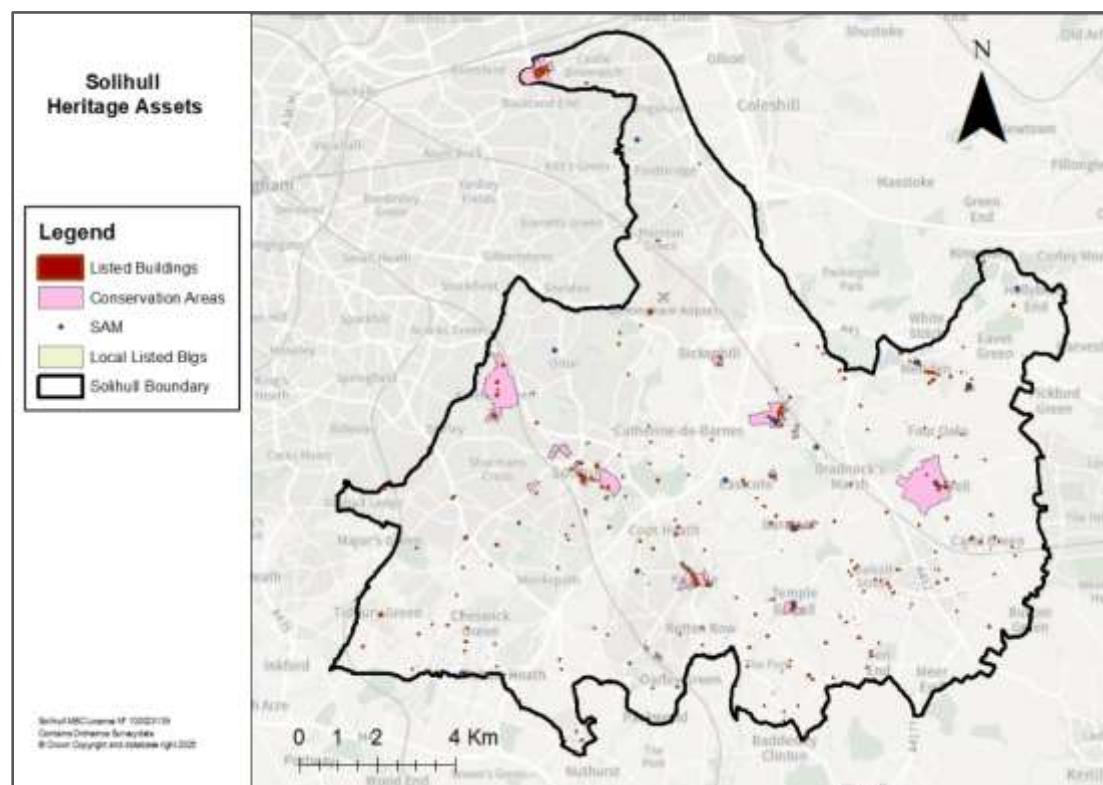
¹¹¹ <https://wmhbt.org.uk/blog/west-midlands-heritage-trust-launch/>

Historic Buildings Trust and the Wolverhampton Heritage Trust, who have adopted a long-term strategy for longer term sustainability.

Local Context

327. Solihull has a Local History Circle and Society of arts, interested in the history and artistic life of Solihull and the surrounding area.¹¹²
328. In terms of planning documents, supplementary planning guidance was adopted in 2001 on the Historic Environment¹¹³. The SPG includes advice on development and material changes in appearance in Conservation Areas, as well as advertisements and local listed buildings. The Council had looked to review the SPD under a broader Design SPD, however, this was postponed after the Local Plan was withdrawn.
329. Solihull recently published their first Cultural Strategy for the period 2025-2035.¹¹⁴ The strategy recognises the role of celebrating cultural heritage and creative sectors in boosting economic growth, health and wellbeing, community cohesion and an attractive place to visit. The strategy will be supported by a formal cross-sector partnership and Action Plan.
330. The Council have also published a Town Centre Masterplan¹¹⁵, followed by a Public Realm Strategy¹¹⁶. The Masterplan creates a blueprint for future investment and development in the main town centre within the Borough. Key to this, however, is enhancing the townscape and respecting the local character and the setting of heritage assets such as the Grade I listed St Alphege Church and the transition from urban edge to the adjoining parklands.

Figure 26. Map of Solihull Heritage Assets



¹¹²<https://www.solihullarts.co.uk/local-history/#:~:text=The%20Local%20History%20Circle%20is,West%20Midlands%20and%20Warwickshire%20areas.>

¹¹³ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Planning_SPG1Historicenvironment.pdf

¹¹⁴ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/arts-and-culture/our-vision-solihull/cultural-strategy>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/about-council/solihull-town-centre-masterplan>

¹¹⁶<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/about-council/solihull-town-centre-masterplan/solihull-town-centre-public-realm-strategy>

Baseline Information

331. There are 386 entries for Listed buildings in Solihull on the National Heritage list for England¹¹⁷. These range from a terminal building at Birmingham Airport, churches, pubs, farmhouses and even a post box.

332. In addition to the above, Solihull Council has maintained a non-designated 'Local List of Heritage Assets' since 1982. It has been revised over time with additions and some deletions. As of April 2024, the local list includes 229 heritage assets.¹¹⁸

333. Solihull is also home to:

- 20 Conservation Areas, 5 of which have an up-to-date Conservation Area appraisal
- 14 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 1 Registered Park and Garden

334. In terms of threats to the above, the following was noted in the 2023-24 AMR:

335. Two listed buildings are at risk, one (Grade II) near Earlswood and another (Grade II*) in Hampton-in-Arden¹¹⁹. Remedial work has been approved on the latter.

336. The Grove Avenue -Solihull Conservation Area has been reported to Historic England as being at risk due to insensitive alterations undertaken.

337. The Local Authority does not monitor the condition of Scheduled Ancient Monuments but is not aware that any located within the Borough are at risk.

338. The Historic Park and Garden at Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens does not suffer from any problems with condition.

339. The Warwickshire Historic Environment Record holds archaeological data for the Borough.

Future Trends

340. There will be increasing pressure on the Borough's historic environment in the light of climate change impacts and the need to mitigate its impacts.

SA Objective

341. There are two main sustainability objectives that relate to Cultural Heritage and these are:

- SA12. To enhance, conserve and protect buildings, sites and the setting of historic assets as part of development projects.
- SA13. To deliver improvements in townscape and enhance local distinctiveness.

Conclusion

342. New evidence will be required to provide more detailed information on any proposed sites or broad locations.

343. More could potentially be made of in the SA objectives about high quality design, but this may be more suitable for a different objective.

¹¹⁷ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

¹¹⁸ Seven have been demolished but remain recorded for historical purposes.

¹¹⁹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/282936>

12. Water – Supply, Wastewater, Quality and Flood Risk

Introduction

344. Solihull Borough mostly falls within the Anker and Mease Management Catchment area within the ‘Humber River Basin District’. Parts of the outer edges of the Borough fall within the River Severn Catchment.

345. There are several ‘main rivers’ (i.e. managed by the EA) within the Borough. The River Blythe being the principal of these is a lowland clay river, designated as a SSSI in 1989 along its entire length in Solihull due to its diverse physical features and rich biodiversity. The Blythe runs through the agricultural south and east of the Borough. The other main rivers are tributaries of the River Blythe, the largest being the River Cole. The Cole runs through a much more urbanised environment in the North of the Borough.

346. There are two canals in the Borough, the Grand Union Canal and Stratford upon Avon canal.

347. The water company for Solihull is Severn Trent Water, who are responsible for water supply, wastewater treatment and associated infrastructure.

348. The current Government is introducing a host of changes to the way water is managed, regulated and monitored for the next ten years, with an ambitious slate of strategies and legislation. These are explored in more detail below.

Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

National Context

National Framework for Water Resources 2025

349. The National Framework for Water Resources¹²⁰ recognises the enormous challenge facing the water industry over the next 50 years, where modelling suggests that by 2055 there could be a deficit of 5 billion litres/day for public water supplies.

350. This will be driven by a growing population (8 million more people), changing climate, water required for energy production such as hydrogen and nuclear, and agriculture, as well as other industries.

351. One of the ways to tackle these challenges is the formation of regional water resources groups and multi-sector planning.

Environment Improvement Plan (EIP) 2025

352. The EIP is a long-term delivery plan setting out 10 goals with corresponding commitments and actions. Goal 3 under chapter ‘Restored Nature’ is Water, i.e. ‘We will ensure English waters are clean, resilient and plentiful’:

“As part of a decade of national renewal, we will restore our rivers, lakes and seas to good health. We want a climate resilient and secure water system that continues to provide affordable world-leading clean drinking water, supports development and economic growth around the country, supports public health and recreation, improves the natural environment, and enables us to reach net zero and have food security.

¹²⁰<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-framework-for-water-resources-2025-water-for-growth-nature-and-a-resilient-future/forewords-executive-summary-and-structure-national-framework-for-water-resources-2025>

Achieving this requires all of us – the public, water companies and investors, government, regulators and environmental groups – to work together to secure the investment to clean up our water.”

Water Framework Directive & Regulations

353. The Water Environment Regulations 2017¹²¹ (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) transpose the Water Framework Directive into UK law.

354. The WFD protects surface waters including rivers, lakes, groundwater and estuarine and coastal waters. The Regulations require (in England) that the Environment Agency prepare River Basin Management Plans for each river basin district.

355. These RBMPs should describe:

- the current state of the water environment for each river basin district
- the pressures affecting the water environment
- the objectives for protecting and improving it
- the programme of measures needed to achieve the statutory environmental objectives of the WFD

356. The WFD Regulations (Para. 13) contain a set of environmental objectives to protect, enhance and restore water bodies. Given extensions, the aims are:

- for the surface water bodies to achieve good ecological status and good surface water chemical status by December 2027;
- For artificial or heavily modified water body (e.g. canals) to achieve good ecological potential and good surface water chemical status by December 2027;
- To reduce progressively pollution from priority substances
- To cease or phase out emissions, discharges and losses of priority hazardous substances by December 2027.
- To prevent deterioration of the status of each body of groundwater
- Prevent or limit pollutants into groundwater and ensure a balance between abstraction and recharge of groundwater with aim of achieving good groundwater chemical status and good groundwater quantitative status by December 2027.
- Desirable to improve shellfish protected areas

The Water (Special Measures) Act 2025

357. The Water (Special Measures) Act gives regulators new powers to take tougher and faster action against water companies who are damaging the environment and failing their customers.

NPPF

358. The NPPF (Para. 20) states that sufficient infrastructure planning for water supply, wastewater and flood risk should be included in strategic policies of local plans.

359. Chapter 14 of the NPPF addresses ‘meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’. Local plans (Para. 162) should take into account the long-term implications of climate change for flood risk, water supply and drought from rising temperatures. In turn policies should support appropriate measures to ensure that communities are protected, as well as

¹²¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/407>

providing space for physical protection measures or the re-location of vulnerable development and infrastructure, if applicable.

360. All plans (Para. 172) should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development, taking into account all sources of flood risk as well as modelling the current and future impacts of climate change, to avoid flood risk to people and property where possible.

361. Sustainable drainage systems (Suds) are mentioned in Para. 182. Where a development could affect drainage, Suds should be incorporated to control flow rates and reduce runoff, in a measure proportionate to the proposal. These should also provide benefits for water quality, biodiversity and amenity where possible.

362. See Annex 3 for Flood Risk vulnerability classification.

Other National Planning Guidance

363. The NPPF was updated in December 2024. In July 2025, the Government published National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)¹²². This puts greater emphasis on SUDs as the principle means to deal with surface water drainage on new infrastructure and development, whether on greenfield or brownfield sites.

364. There is also a National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure.¹²³

Regional Context

Water Resource Management Plan

365. It is a statutory requirement under the Water Industry Act 1991 for water companies to publish a Water Resource Management Plan every five years. Severn Trent Water (STW) published their latest update in April 2025.¹²⁴

366. The challenges set out are:

- Mitigating the impacts of climate change
- Growing population
- Continue to reduce leakage (currently 21% of all water lost), which will help to meet demand from a growing population
- Sustainable Abstraction – by the 2030s existing groundwater abstraction licences will be capped
- Delivering best value – making changes affordable for customers

367. STW state they are on track with commitments made in the 2019 WRMP. However, the EA has now classed the region as a ‘water stressed area’, which means there is a risk of customer demand exceeding supply.

368. The WRMP refers to the new National Framework for Water (see below). As a result, STW are now expected to plan for resilience to a 1 in 500-year drought, as well as assess a range of climate change scenarios. STW also recognise that they are expected to include ambitious environmental targets, including restrictions on water abstraction.

¹²²<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems-suds>

¹²³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6437e3a2f4d420000cd4a1a7/E02879931_National_Policy_Statement_for_Water_Resources.pdf

¹²⁴ <https://www.severntrent.com/about-us/our-plans/water-resources-management-plan/wrmp24-final-documents/>

369. The plan sets out a number of measures to tackle the challenges, and these include:

- Active leakage control on distribution network; reducing pressure in supply system and renewal of mains
- Water meters for households (aim for near universal coverage by 2035). These help motivate behaviour change and reduce water usage
- Provision of free and subsidised water saving devices, education etc. Work to reduce average customer use to 110L/person/day.
- Water saving through Water Labelling of efficient water using products, including fittings and white goods.
- Larger infrastructure works to expand treatment works, reservoirs, enable transfer between main location

Humber River Basin Management Plan (2022)

370. Solihull is within the Humber River Basin District. The Borough mostly lies within the River Trent catchment, with parts of the east and western boundaries falling within the River Severn catchment.

371. The EA's River Basin Management Plans (updated in 2022) are a legally binding environmental planning framework setting objectives to tackle the challenges facing the water environment, including water company pollution, agricultural pollution, climate change and population growth.

372. The Humber RBMP has 141 measures/mechanisms; 16 of which are linked to 2027 outcomes.

- Question to Environment Agency, are there any of these projects within Solihull? E.g. [Completed River Blythe restoration works to provide new habitats | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

373. The RBMP 2025 Interim Progress Report¹²⁵ highlights 90% of measures from the 2022 River Basin Management Plans are complete, ongoing, or about to begin. These measures are central to improving and safeguarding England's rivers, lakes, coasts, and groundwater for future generations. The current RBMPs are expected to deliver £67 billion in environmental benefits, representing £50.6 billion of investment.

Humber River Basin District Flood Risk Management Plan (2021-2027) ¹²⁶

374. The Humber RBDFMP states that parts of Solihull lie in the Birmingham Surface Water Flood Risk Area (p.82), however, there are no specific actions for Solihull in the FRMP.

¹²⁵ <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/river-basin-management-plans>

¹²⁶ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/638099ed8fa8f56eb302c6f8/Humber-FRMP-2021-2027.pdf>

Local Context

375. Under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010), Solihull Council is a designated Lead Local Flood Authority. The Council's responsibilities are:

- To prepare and maintain a strategy for local flood risk management
- To investigate significant local flooding
- To carry out works where appropriate to manage local flood risks.

376. As a unitary authority Solihull Council is also the Local Highway Authority, and therefore has responsibilities for drainage on the local (public) highway network.

377. As a landowner ('riparian owner'), the Council only has responsibility for those water bodies and watercourses on their own land.

378. The Council published the Solihull Local Flood Risk Management Strategy¹²⁷ in 2015, which sets out the Council's responsibilities and an Action Plan. The Flood Risk Management team update Cabinet Members regularly on progress.¹²⁸

379. The Council's Flood Risk and Drainage team respond to planning applications and in 2023 produced a Solihull SuDS Design Guide 2023¹²⁹ to assist developers in the design of SuDS systems, which are the preferred option where possible.

380. As part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review, a Water Cycle Study¹³⁰ and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment¹³¹ were prepared in 2017. A follow-up Level 2 SFRA¹³² was published in 2020, going into more detail on flood risk characteristics of 12 of the proposed Local Plan Review allocations.

¹²⁷ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/CrimeAndEmergencies_Final_LFRMS.pdf

¹²⁸ <https://democracy.solihull.gov.uk/documents/s120379/Flood%20Risk%20Management%20Scrutiny%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

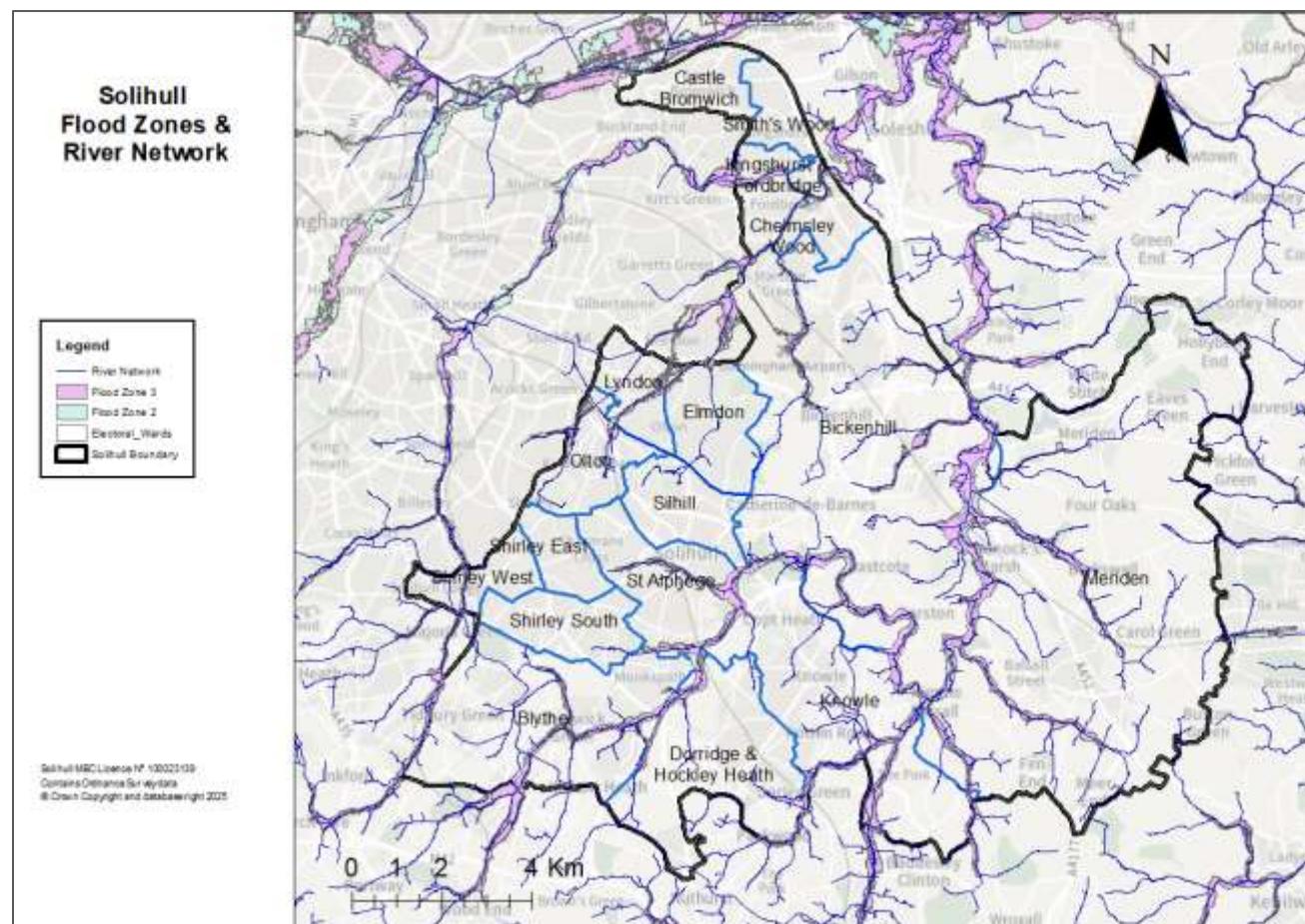
¹²⁹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/SuDS-Design-Guide-2023.pdf>

¹³⁰ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Water-Cycle-Study-2017.pdf>

¹³¹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/2016s4911-SMBC-SFRA-Report-FINAL-v1.0.pdf>

¹³² <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Level-2-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-Report-October-2020.pdf>

Figure 27. Map of River network and Flood Zones 2 and 3 in Solihull area.



Baseline Information

Water Supply and Treatment

381. The recent STW Water Management Plan states that the Environment Agency has officially designated Severn Trent as being in a seriously water stressed area (across the whole region).

382. The 2020 Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the Local Plan Review reported that there are 6 wastewater treatment works that serve the Solihull area, and that upgrades to these would be required as a result of new development, but that would be occur as part of the development management process.

383. About 55% of land in England is designated as part of a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZs), and this includes the whole of Solihull¹³³. NVZs are areas that are at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. However, the Borough does not fall within a nutrient neutrality zone.

384. The rural south and east of the Borough are also part of a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone.¹³⁴

¹³³ <https://environment.data.gov.uk/farmers/>

¹³⁴ View SWSGZ2204 Action Plan at Drinking Water Safeguard Zones (Surface Water): <https://environment.data.gov.uk/farmers/download/SW/SWSGZ2204.pdf>

Water Quality

385. In England, the Environment Agency is responsible for regulating water quality. The main driver is the Water Framework Directive that was transposed into UK Law as the Water Environment (WFD) Regulations in 2017¹³⁵. The main vehicles to achieve this are the River Basin Management Plans.

386. One of the key targets under the WFD Regulations is to restore 77% of water bodies so that they achieve or maintain good ecological status or potential by 2027.

387. The Government published an updated Environmental Improvement Plan in December 2025¹³⁶. Under Goal 3: Water, the EIP reiterates the commitment in the 2023 version to work towards our obligation to restore 75% of water bodies to good ecological status (GES) and remain committed to securing continuous improvement for the water environment. We are considering recommendations made in the Independent Water Commission on the future of GES.

388. Under the Environment Act 2021 is a legally binding target to reduce nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment loadings on the water environment from diffuse agricultural pollution by 40% in 2038 (compared to a 2018 baseline) with an interim target of 10% reduction by 2028.¹³⁷

389. The latest information on overall water quality status of water bodies in England is dated from 2019, with an interim status report on ecological status/potential only produced in 2022. ¹³⁸

Table 20. Water Quality Status of various water bodies in Solihull Borough

Water Body	Overall Water Body Classification					Ecological Status
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2019	
River Blythe: Source to Cuttle Brook*	Moderate	Moderate	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor ecological status
Cuttle Brook: Source to River Blythe*	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Moderate	Moderate ecological status
Temple Balsall Brook: Source to River Blythe*	Bad	Bad	Bad	Bad	Poor	Poor ecological status
River Blythe: Temple Balsall Brook to Patrick Bridge*	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate ecological status

¹³⁵[https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nitrate-vulnerable-zones#:~:text=Nitrate%20Vulnerable%20Zones%20\(NVZs\)%20are,This%20collection%20of%20guidance%20explains:https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ksi/2017/407#:~:text=Monitoring%20programmes%2011.%20E2%80%94\(1\)%20The%20appropriate%20agency,\(b\)ecological%20and%20chemical%20status%20and%20ecological%20potential.](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nitrate-vulnerable-zones#:~:text=Nitrate%20Vulnerable%20Zones%20(NVZs)%20are,This%20collection%20of%20guidance%20explains:https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ksi/2017/407#:~:text=Monitoring%20programmes%2011.%20E2%80%94(1)%20The%20appropriate%20agency,(b)ecological%20and%20chemical%20status%20and%20ecological%20potential.)

¹³⁶<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan-2025/environmental-improvement-plan-eip-2025#goal-6-resources>

¹³⁷ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2025-0007/CDP-2025-0007.pdf>

¹³⁸ Information from EA in relation to AMR 2024 reporting: For purposes of the 2022 interim classification Overall Waterbody Status was not assessed. This is because there was no assessment of Chemical Status in 2022. In the absence of an Overall Waterbody Status, the closest proxy would be the Ecological Status (for waterbodies not designated as Artificial or Heavily Modified) or Ecological Potential (for waterbodies designated as Heavily Modified or Artificial).

Water Body	Overall Water Body Classification					Ecological Status
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2019	
River Blythe: Patrick Bridge to River Tame*	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor ecological status
River Cole: Source to Springfield**	Moderate	Moderate	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor ecological status
River Cole: Springfield to Hatchford/Kingshurst Brook**	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor ecological status
Hatchford/Kingshurst Brook: Source to River Cole**	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate ecological status
River Cole: Hatchford/ Kingshurst to River Blythe**	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate ecological status
Grand Union Canal: Warwick to Solihull***	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No Update
Grand Union Canal: Solihull to Birmingham***	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No update
North Stratford Canal***	Good	Good	Good	Good	Moderate	No update

Data from the Tame Anker and Mease Catchment Data Explorer¹³⁹:

* - Blythe Rivers Operational Catchment

** - Tame Lower Rivers and Lakes Operational Catchment

*** - Canal data. N.B. Post 2016 - The EA no longer actively monitors canals, and 2019 status was based on a Mitigation Measures Assessment informed by expert opinion, in some cases alongside rolled forward monitoring data from 2016.

390. These figures, although not encouraging, also reflect the national picture, where only 16% of surface waters and 14% of rivers that were assessed achieved good ecological status. However, for individual tests the result was 79% and 77% respectively. This is because under the current regulations, failure of any one of the individual tests to achieve good ecological status, the whole water body fails to achieve GES (the ‘one out all out’ rule). The Government are looking to review the indicators and develop natural capital indicators as it has proven challenging to separate

¹³⁹ <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ManagementCatchment/3090>

evidence of environmental change over time and measure which are important in providing good and services on which the economy and people rely.¹⁴⁰

Question to the Environment Agency: Is it useful to include the information below from 'State-of-the-water-environment-indicator-b3' with more context added?

Table X. Main sectors affecting water bodies in England (as percentages)

Sector	% of water bodies impacted
Agriculture	45%
Industry	6%
Mining and quarrying	3%
Navigation	2%
Urban and transport	18%
Water industry	44%
Local and central government	14%
Domestic general public	0.08
Recreation	0.03
Waste treatment and disposal	0%
No sector responsible	23%

Table X. Main issues affecting water bodies in England (as percentages)

Issue	% of water bodies impacted
Physical modifications	41%
Pollution from wastewater	36%
Pollution from towns, cities and transport	18%
Changes to natural flow and levels of water	15%
Non-native invasive species	23%
Pollution from rural areas	40%
Pollution from abandoned mines	3%

See also: [Government response to the Office for Environmental Protection report on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive Regulations and River Basin Management Planning in England - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-water-environment-indicator-b3-supporting-evidence/state-of-the-water-environment-indicator-b3-supporting-evidence#key-issues-and-sectors-affecting-water-bodies-in-england)

[Tame Anker and Mease Management Catchment | Catchment Data Explorer](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tame-anker-and-mease-management-catchment-catchment-data-explorer) (Latest Data)

[Tame Anker and Mease Management Catchment | Catchment Data Explorer](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tame-anker-and-mease-management-catchment-catchment-data-explorer) (River Basin Management Plan)

[Environmental Indicator Framework Theme B \(Water\) - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-indicator-framework-theme-b-water)

¹⁴⁰<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-water-environment-indicator-b3-supporting-evidence/state-of-the-water-environment-indicator-b3-supporting-evidence#key-issues-and-sectors-affecting-water-bodies-in-england>

Flood Risk & Drainage

391. Data from the 2024 Authority Monitoring Report indicates that no development has been approved contrary to Environment Agency advice on flood risk.

392. In recent times, Solihull has experienced major flood risk events in 2007, 2012, 2018 and 2021. As a consequence of an extreme flood event in May 2018, over 300 reports of flooding to property were received, with residents being forced to leave their homes and live in alternative accommodation. As a result of follow-up investigations by the Council, a Property Level Resistance and Resilience scheme was delivered in Dickens Heath¹⁴¹, and flood mitigation schemes in Cheswick Green, Shirley, Solihull Lodge and Tidbury Green. After the 2021 incident, additional properties benefited from Property Flood Resistant measures.¹⁴²

393. However, there are no formal flood defences within the Borough.

Future Trends

394. The biggest challenge to the water environment in the short and longer-term is dealing with the impacts of climate change – more extreme weather events, such as drought and flash floods, and these occurring more frequently. To exacerbate these are a rising population, potential for any increase in abstraction rates, maintaining ageing infrastructure, in particular leakage across the whole network, supplying more water-hungry processes (such as data centres), pollution control (e.g. nitrates) and governance changes.

395. These are national challenges, but each will impact Solihull as a driver of regional growth and a rising population.

SA Objective

396. There are three main sustainability objectives affecting the water environment from the 2020 SA:

- SA7. Manage, maintain and where necessary improve the drainage network to reduce the negative effects of flooding on communities and businesses.
- SA4. Minimise the use of natural resources such as land, water and minerals, and minimise waste, whilst increasing reuse and recycling.
- SA14. Minimise air, soil, water, light and noise pollution.

Conclusion

397. There are significant challenges in water resource management and flood risk management in the next 15-20 years that the current Government is looking to address.

398. New evidence will be required to support the Local Plan in the form of an updated Water Cycle Study, Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

399. Changes to the sustainability objectives could include reference to proactive water resource management, water efficiency measures and improving water quality.

¹⁴¹ <https://befloodready.ciwem.org/case-study/pfr-delivery-through-the-ea-pfr-framework-in-solihull/>
<https://www.jbaconsulting.com/projects/pfr-measures-supporting-the-solihull-property-flood-resilience-scheme/#:~:text=We%20have%20been%20supporting%20the,~and%20benefit%20from%20enhanced%20resilience.>

¹⁴² <https://democracy.solihull.gov.uk/documents/s120379/Flood%20Risk%20Management%20Scrutiny%20Report%20%20FINAL.pdf>

13. Waste & Minerals

Introduction

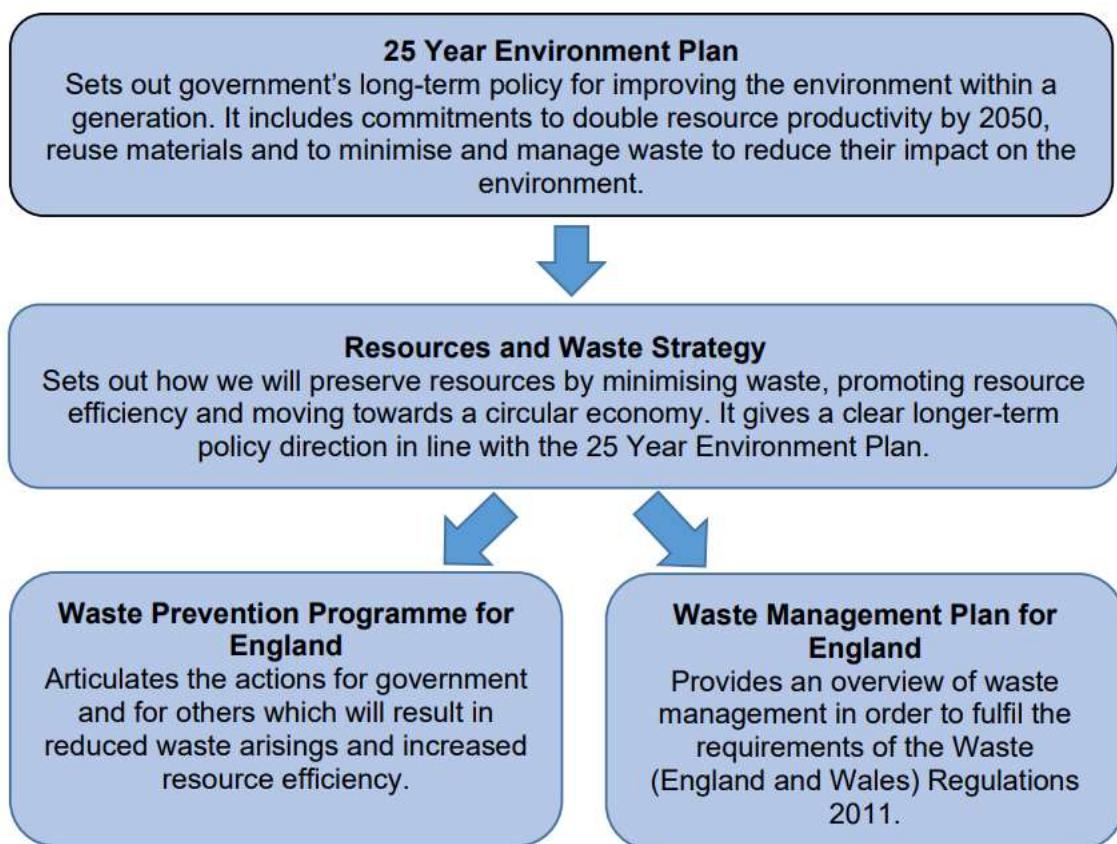
400. As a unitary authority, Solihull is the planning authority for both waste and minerals. There is a Household Waste Recycling Centre in Bickenhill, and also one in Castle Bromwich that also serves Birmingham. Solihull has working mineral sites for sand and gravel.

Relevant Policies, Plans & Strategies

National Context - Waste

401. The Waste Management Plan was updated in 2021¹⁴³:

Figure 28. Relationship between national plans and waste and resource management in England.



402. The Plan quotes the Regulations saying:

“Waste management is defined by virtue of regulation 3(2) of the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 as “the collection, transport, recovery (including sorting), and disposal of waste, including the supervision of such operations and the after-care of disposal sites, and including actions taken as a dealer or broker”. The way waste is managed in England (and the UK) is continually evolving as we move away from landfilling the majority of our waste to a more circular economy where we recover and regenerate products and materials whenever we can.”

403. The Plan was published as the Environment Act was going through Parliament. The Act includes legally binding targets in resource efficiency and waste reduction. These have been

¹⁴³ Fig 1, p.4 of WMP for England: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60103f71d3bf7f05bc42d294/waste-management-plan-for-england-2021.pdf>

repeated in the updated Environment Improvement Plan 2025. Of the five chapters, Chapter 3 is dedicated to the 'Circular Economy', with the following goals:

- Goal 5 – Waste - We will minimise waste by designing it out of the system, reusing and recycling materials wherever possible.
- Goal 6 – Resources - We will ensure that natural resources are produced, managed and consumed sustainably.

NPPF - Waste

404. The National Planning Policy for Waste (2014)¹⁴⁴ sits alongside the NPPF to form national policy. It should also be read in conjunction with National Policy Statements for Wastewater and Hazardous Waste.

405. Waste planning authorities are expected to calculate the quantity and types of waste likely to arise within their area over the plan period and identify suitable and adequate opportunities to meet those needs for the management of different waste streams in their area.

406. Guidance is provided on identifying suitable sites and/or areas for new or enhanced waste management facilities; criteria to consider when determining planning applications; monitoring.

407. Prudent use of natural resources and minimising waste are included under the environmental objective for sustainable development in Para. 8(c) of the NPPF. Managing waste is a strategic policy matter and should be considered a potential cross-boundary issue.

National Context & NPPF- Minerals

408. Section 97 of Part II of Schedule 5¹⁴⁵ and Schedule 9¹⁴⁶ to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 establish a range of orders for mineral planning authorities to control minerals development.

409. Chapter 17 of the NPPF and the Minerals section of the Planning Practice guidance¹⁴⁷ provide more detail on how mineral planning authorities can plan for and safeguard minerals within their administrative area as well as addressing cross-boundary issues.

410. Key to these in terms of sustainable development is that mineral workings, although often lasting a long time, are a temporary use of land. Workings may have adverse and positive environmental effects, and some adverse effects can be mitigated effectively. Finally, after the operations have completed, the land should be restored to make it suitable for beneficial after-use.

411. Significant environmental impacts should be addressed through an Environmental Statement and statutory consultees must be consulted as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process to ensure that the planning authority has sufficient information on all environmental matters when determining any planning application for the site.

412. As part of the Government's Growth Mission, a Critical Minerals Strategy was published in November 2025 to complement the Industrial Strategy from earlier that year:

"This new, targeted Critical Minerals Strategy sets the UK's long-term ambition for securing critical minerals and harnessing our competitive advantage in recycling and innovative

¹⁴⁴https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ef594e5274a2e8ab4946c/141015_National_Planning_Policy_for_Waste.pdf

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/97>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/schedule/9>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/minerals>

midstream processing – the transformation of mined or recycled materials into refined or upgraded forms suitable for manufacturing”

413. The document defines Minerals which are ‘Critical’, ‘Growth’ and both. These include minerals such as lithium, graphite, cobalt and nickel which are required for electric vehicle batteries. Demand for these will grow exponentially in the next few decades.

Regional Context

Waste

414. The WMCA published a Circular Economy Routemap in 2021. It identifies 3 initial priority sectors that will help the region in the transition to a circular economy:

- Circular Manufacturing – will build on WM’s strong manufacturing base. Focus will be on growing the clean tech sector, in particular the decarbonisation of the transport sector.
- Circular Construction – this is the largest consumer of resources and biggest producer of waste in the region. Initiatives will include growth in Modern Methods of Construction and off-site manufacturing as well as the re-use of materials on brownfield development sites.
- Circular Food – chosen as it is the largest consumer of natural resources in the region. Despite the predominantly urban environment in the sub-region, there are large agro-businesses and food processors located here. Adopting circular economy principles would also help to reduce the amount of wasted food.

415. The WMCA reported on its progress in 2024.¹⁴⁸ In that same year, the West Midlands Resource Re-use Network’ was launched, and has supported a number of businesses to engage in the circular economy. E.g. the delivery of the region’s first construction materials Re-Use Hub in Wolverhampton.

Minerals

416. The NPPF (Para. 226) states that mineral planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates by participating in the operation of an Aggregate Working Party and to take their advice when preparing an annual Local Aggregates Assessment, either individually or jointly, to forecast future demand.

417. Solihull is a member of the West Midlands Aggregate Working Party (WMAWP). It is a technical advisory group for the 14 mineral authorities in the West Midlands region, comprising public sector and industry representatives. The 2024 AMR based on 2023 Data was finalised in March 2025 (see below).

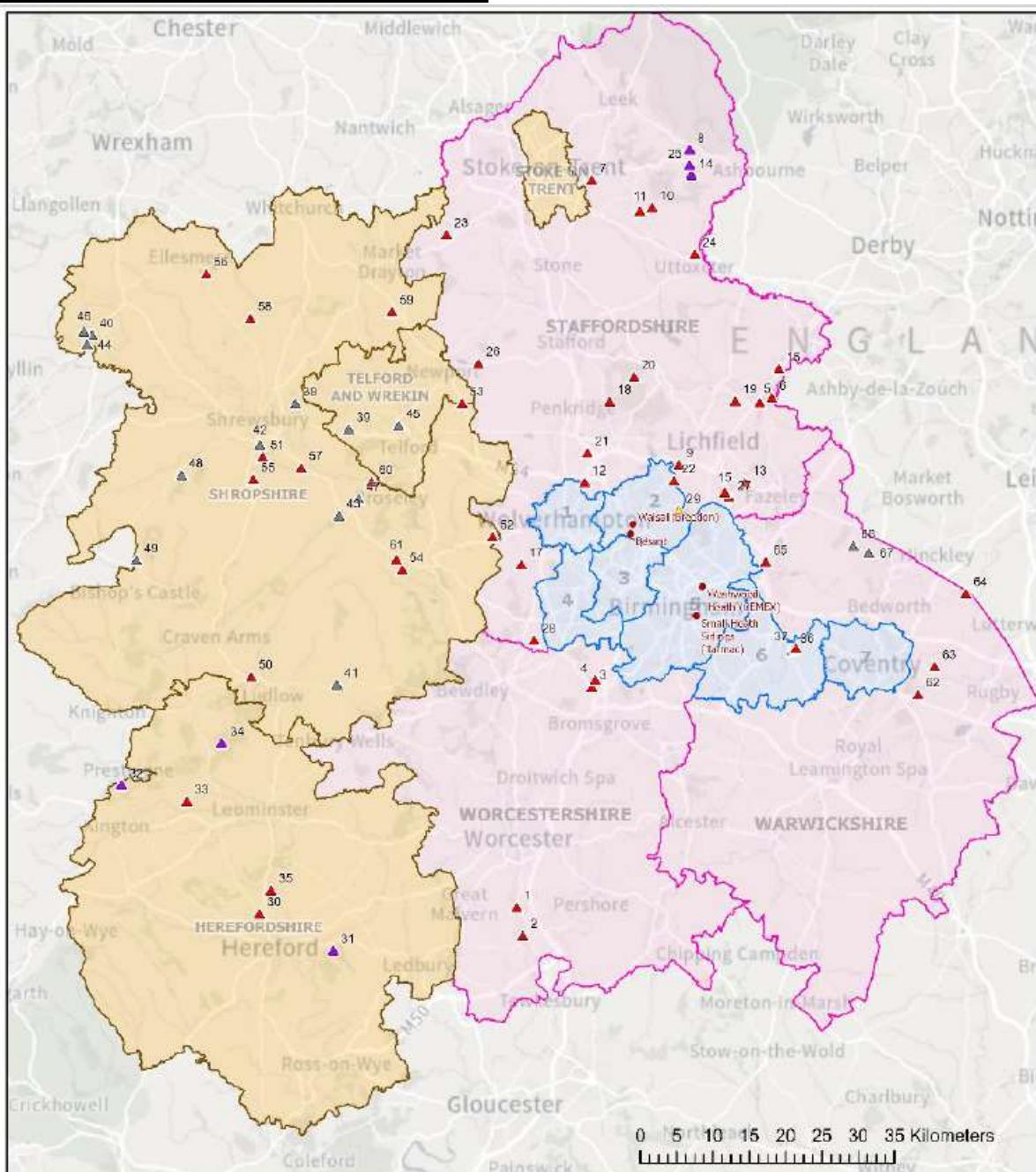
418. Solihull and Walsall are the only two local authorities in the West Midlands Metropolitan area with workable sand and gravel quarries. The Branton Hill Lane Quarry ceased operations in the 2010s, however, an extension was granted permission in 2018, and resumed extraction in 2022 in Walsall.

419. There also remain active brick clay quarries in Walsall as well as secondary and recycled aggregates activity (e.g. Shire Oak).

420. N.B. There has been no production of crushed rock in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area since 2007 when the last quarry closed, and there are no winnable deposits of crushed rock remaining in the Area.

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/zfdibyx1/circular-economy-routemap-2024.pdf>

Figure 29. Map of West Midlands Mineral Authorities' Location of Quarries, Wharves and Rail Depots in 2022 (Taken from AWP 2023)¹⁴⁹.



Material

- Crushed Rock
- Limestone
- Sand
- Sand and Gravel

Mineral Authorities

- West Midlands Conurbation Area
- Unitary Authority
- Counties

Transport - Rail

- West Midlands Rail Depots

West Midlands Area Conurbation

- City of Wolverhampton
- Walsall
- Sandwell
- Dudley
- Birmingham
- Solihull
- Coventry

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¹⁴⁹ Figure 2 of West Midlands Aggregates Working Party Annual Report 2023 [2022 Data]

Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65c107e2704282000d752251/2022_-_WMAWP_Report.pdf

Local Context

Waste

421. A Waste Needs Assessment¹⁵⁰ was prepared in 2018 to support the Local Plan Review. It found that there are a small number of permitted facilities in Solihull (12 licensed facilities as of 2020). There is limited transfer capacity of waste, and all transfer of waste is related to local authority municipal waste. There is no transfer capacity for C&I waste, but that said, Solihull is a net importer of waste from the C&I sector. This is largely due to the inert landfill site at Meriden Quarry.

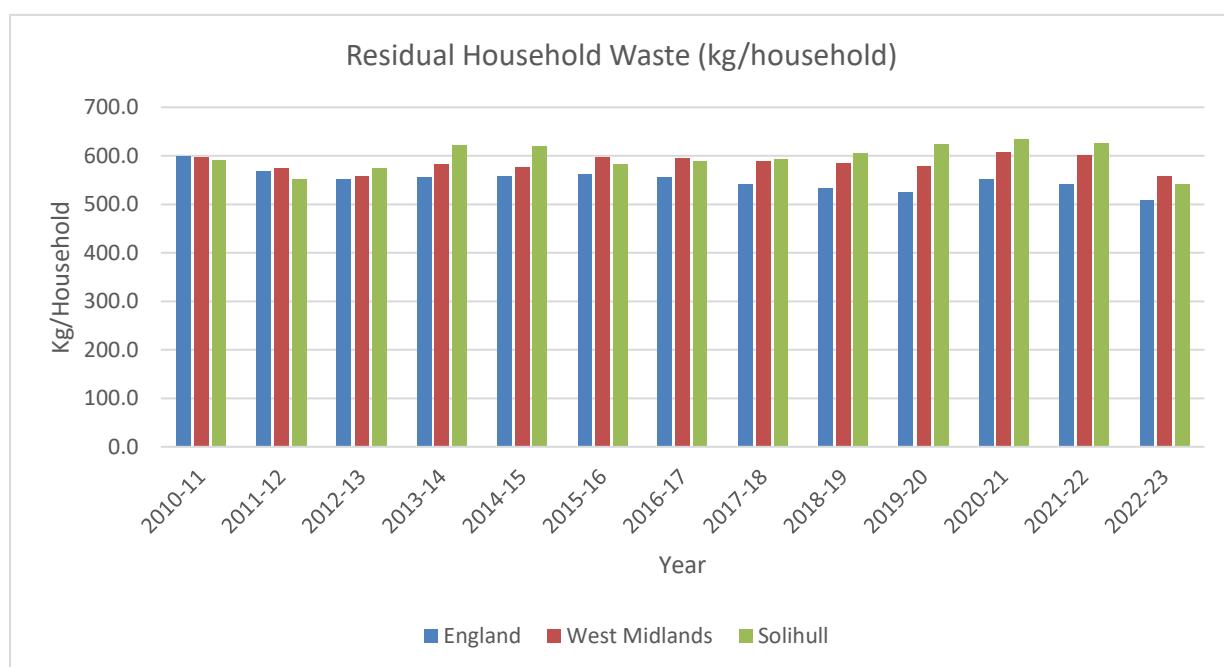
422. Solihull has data on its own waste (see below); however, the Council will need to prepare an updated Waste Needs Assessment for the next Local Plan Review.

423. Solihull has a Household Waste Recycling Centre at Bickenhill (HWRC). In 2016 it was considered necessary to relocate the HWRC to facilitate construction of the railway line for HS2. Since then, the site is no longer considered necessary for HS2 purposes, however, the Council has identified capacity constraints and issues with access to the current HWRC remain a concern, therefore, the Council is still considering the development of a new HWRC¹⁵¹ in the near future.

Baseline Information

Waste

Figure 30. Residual Household Waste (kg/household).¹⁵²



424. Between 2010-2022 Solihull hovered around the 600kg/household waste figure, and in recent years exceeded the national and regional average. However, the figure dropped in 2022-2023 to

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/Waste-Needs-Assessment-for-Solihull-2018.pdf>

¹⁵¹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Assessment-of-land-for-potential-relocation-of-household-waste-recycling-centre.pdf>

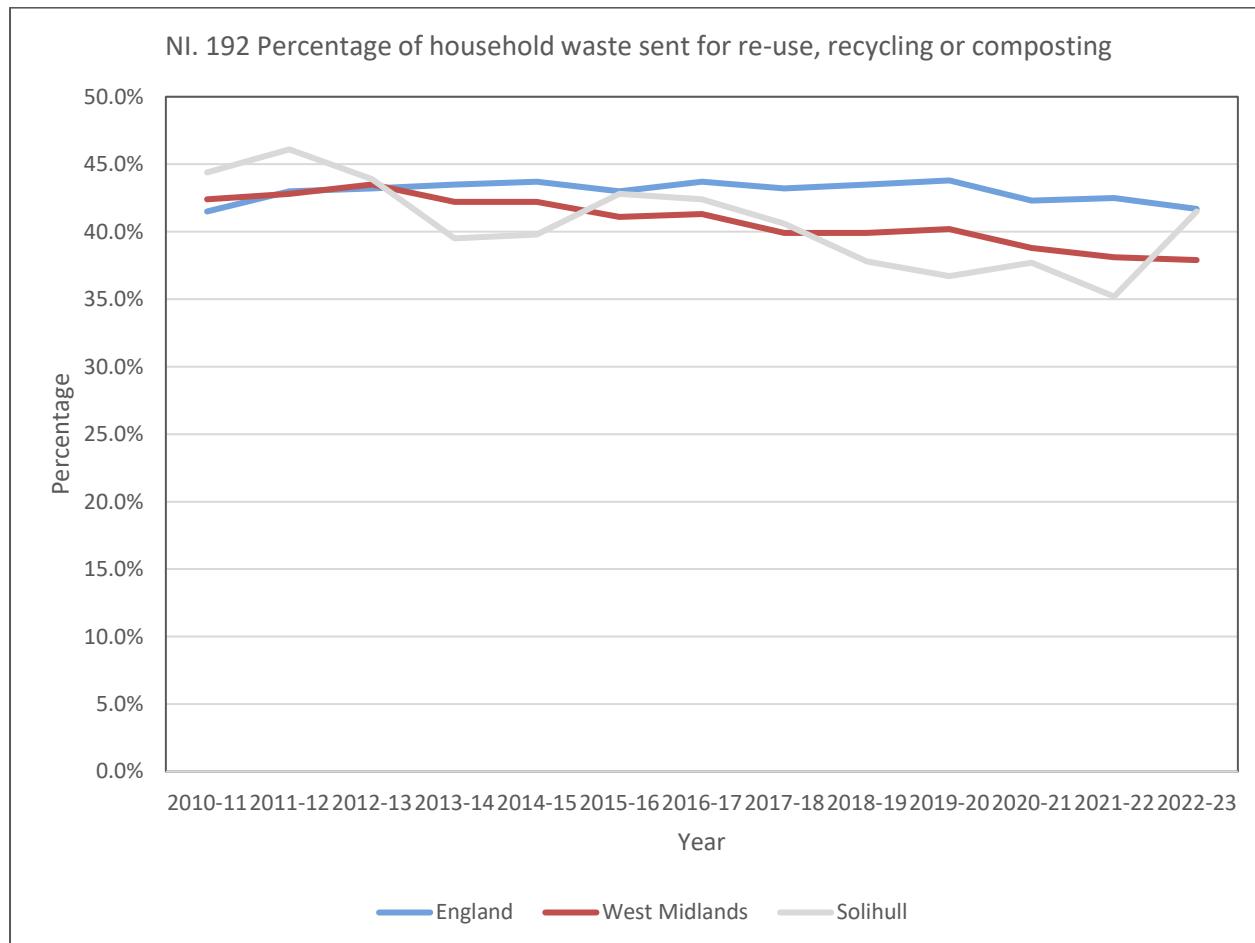
¹⁵² Data source:

https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F67e186ed0114b0b86e59f513%2FLA_and_Regional_Spreadsheet_2022-23_for_Web.ods&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

From: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results>

541.4kg/household. It will be worth noting if this is a general trend and Solihull has a reduced rate, especially with the roll-out of food waste collections.

Figure 31. National Indicator 192 – Percentage of Household Waste sent for Re-use, Recycling or Composting.



425. In 2011, Solihull peaked with a high of 46.1% of household waste being recycled (or re-used or composted), and gradually fell to ca. 35% over the following ten years. As the chart shows, West Midlands and Solihull were somewhat below the national average in this time, however in 2022-2023 Solihull increased the share of household waste going to recycling again to exceed the 40% threshold. Data from the 2024 AMR shows that for the 2023-2024 year, the proportion was again over 40%.

Table 21. Capacity of Waste Management Facilities (in tonnes)

Year	Waste Removed	Waste received
2019	264,012	1,261,034
2020	243,053	1,371,180
2021	272,948	1,364,068
2022	206,998	1,183,256

From the Solihull 2024 AMR:

426. The Environment Agency licences most waste management facilities and provides data on waste removed and managed elsewhere, and waste received and managed at the facilities. Of the waste removed, just under half goes elsewhere in the West Midlands and a quarter to Wales. Most of the waste received comes from elsewhere in the West Midlands, with over two-thirds being construction and demolition waste. Waste received has increased significantly since 2015 due to recycling and landfill activities at Berkswell and Meriden quarries. Some waste streams are exempt from Environment Agency licencing, so the data is only a partial picture.

Minerals

427. For last National and Sub-National Guidelines (period 2005-2020) for apportioning minerals in the country was published in 2009, and not since reviewed. The NPPF indicates that Mineral Planning Authorities should undertake Local Aggregate Assessments (LAA) to forecast future demand for aggregates and provide an assessment of supply options.

428. The latest adopted LAA for the West Midlands was published in 2015. An updated LAA for the WM Metropolitan Area has been in preparation, but not yet finalised. However, the Working Party has continued to produce an Annual Monitoring Report, with the most recent for 2024.¹⁵³

429. The 2015 LAA set out the annual quota for the WM Metropolitan Area at 0.5 Mtonnes of sand and gravel extraction/year. Solihull has provided 100% of production in recent years for the Met Authorities.

From the Solihull 2024 AMR:

430. There are two active sand and gravel quarries in the Borough; Berkswell and Meriden quarries. Production dipped following the closure of Stonebridge quarry in 2017, but in recent years has increased to around the Local Aggregate Assessment figure following increased activities at Meriden.

431. The sand and gravel landbank in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area has varied as extensions to quarries have come forward, but fell to under 3 million tonnes, equivalent to 6.3 years at the average sales rate in 2022. This reflects the loss of reserves at Stonebridge Quarry and the potential sterilising of SLP 2013 preferred areas for sand and gravel extraction at Berkswell Quarry by the HS2 rail link.

432. Both Berkswell and Meriden quarries also produce secondary and recycled aggregates.

Table 22. Extraction rates from Solihull sand and gravel quarries 2012-2022 (from AMR)

Period	Sand & Gravel Production (Megatonnes)	10-year Sales Average	Permitted Reserves	Landbank
2012	0.460			
2013	0.490			
2014	0.500			

¹⁵³ Finalised in March 2025, based on 2023 data. This has not yet been published in the public domain. The latest version in the public domain is for 2023 based on 2022 data.

2015	0.530			
2016	0.580			
2017	0.480	0.480		
2018	0.036		0.326	
2019	0.026		0.471	
2020	0.039		0.426	
2021	0.050		0.296	
2022	0.056	0.0465	2.930	6.3

Future Trends

Waste

433. The Council is still looking at options on relocating the Bickenhill Household Waste Recycling Centre. It is likely that the Council will continue to divert some waste to the Waste to Heat centre in Coventry. Recycling rates can still improve, and from 2026-2027 there will be a wider rollout of food waste collections.

Minerals

434. The ambitious growth programme in WMCA area, including HS2 in Solihull and widespread housing developments will continue to need mineral resources and secondary aggregates.

435. N.B. The Coal Authority is not expecting future reserves to be counted in Local Plans.

SA Objective

436. The main sustainability objective concerning waste and minerals in the 2020 SA is:

- SA4. Minimise the use of natural resources such as land, water and minerals, and minimise waste, whilst increasing reuse and recycling.

Conclusion

437. New evidence will be required in the form of an updated Waste Needs Assessment¹⁵⁴, as the last one was carried out in 2018.

438. Further work from the Local Aggregates Group should help to establish a new baseline for Mineral Workings in the sub-region.

439. The approach in the sustainability objective SA4 should progress from a protective stance of minimising the use of natural resources, to embrace the Circular Economy.

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/Waste-Needs-Assessment-for-Solihull-2018.pdf>

14. Conclusions

Draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework

440. Table 24 below puts forward revised sustainability objectives to reflect the change in policies/guidance and information from the baseline data.

441. The changes are presented in the third column and shown in red.

442. The table includes potential questions that delve deeper into whether and to what extent the sustainability objective is being met.

443. The last column includes potential indicators to compare options/policies/sites. More work will need to be done on these, and will be informed by more detailed evidence base. E.g. Accessibility Indicators.

444. In order to assess significant impacts these indicators can be presented in the Stage B report like so:

Table 23. Symbology for SA objective effects

Symbol	Description of SA objective effects
++	Significant positive effect
+	Positive effect
0	Neutral effect
-	Negative effect
--	Significant negative effect

445. Some instances will not be so straightforward, and they will have a mix of positive and negative effects.

Table 24. Draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Topic	2020 SA Objective	2026 SA Objective (change in red)	Questions – Does the option/draft policy...?	Potential indicator
Population & Communities SEA Topic: (b) Population (c) Human Health	SA1. To contribute to regeneration and economic development initiatives that benefit the Borough's communities; especially those identified as deprived.	SA1. To contribute to regeneration and economic development initiatives that benefit the Borough's communities; especially those in fifth quintile of Indices of Deprivation 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to regeneration initiatives? 	Development in and/or benefitting communities in lower quintile
	SA2. To reduce the number of people experiencing difficulties in accessing employment, education and training opportunities.	SA2. To improve equitable access to employment, education and training opportunities, regardless of background.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase access to employment, education and training opportunities? Contribute to providing the appropriate skills, education and training for the local/regional economy? Enhance digital inclusion? 	Accessibility of development to employment, education and/or training opportunities (or vice versa) Higher/Further education opportunities
	SA15. Reduce social exclusion and disparities within the Borough.	SA15. To contribute to inclusive growth, address social determinants of health and reduce inequalities within the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include initiatives that benefit inclusive growth? Promote diversity? 	Inclusive growth indicators Health determinants
	SA17. To fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, cultural, recreational, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality to reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles.	SA17. To fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, cultural, recreational, environmental and health systems to create sustainable neighbourhoods and promote healthy lifestyles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide new/improved health care facilities that benefit new and/or existing residents? Provide sustainable transport options? Provide new/improved community facilities that benefit new and/or existing residents? 	Proximity to healthcare facilities and/or provision of new/improved facilities Proximity to high frequency sustainable transport options and/or provision of new/improved sustainable transport infrastructure

Topic	2020 SA Objective	2026 SA Objective (change in red)	Questions – Does the option/draft policy...?	Potential indicator
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide new/improved educational facilities that benefit new and/or existing residents? Integrate new neighbourhoods with existing neighbourhoods? Provide new/improved open space that will benefit new and/or existing residents? 	Proximity to community facilities and/or provision of new/improved facilities Proximity to primary or secondary education and/or provision of new/improved educational establishments Proximity to recreational facilities and/or provision of new/improved facilities Connectivity with existing neighbourhoods
	SA18. Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.	SA18. Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include initiatives/ measures to reduce/ minimise levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime? 	Crime rates
Housing SEA Topic: (c) Human Health (j) Material assets	SA16. Improve the supply and affordability of housing (particularly in the areas of greatest need).	SA16. Improve the supply and affordability of housing, with an appropriate mix of types that is of good quality, energy efficient design and resilient to climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide minimum affordable housing threshold? Can deliver housing in timely way? Provide accommodation for an ageing population Meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities? Provide a range of house types that meet the HEDNA recommendation? Have good quality design? 	Affordable housing threshold HEDNA recommendations for older person accommodation; supported housing; market mix Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision Deliverability of sites

Topic	2020 SA Objective	2026 SA Objective (change in red)	Questions – Does the option/draft policy...?	Potential indicator
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy efficient homes? • Resilient to climate change impacts? 	Design Quality
Economy SEA Topic: (b) Population	SA19. Encourage development with a better balance between jobs, housing and services, and provide easy and equitable access to opportunities, basic services and amenities for all.	SA19. Deliver development that supports inclusive economic growth and the investment in infrastructure required to support the vitality and prosperity of the local economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new jobs that are accessible in an equitable way? • Encourage employment that is consistent with local needs? • Allow small businesses to thrive? • Encourage rural diversification? • Unlock infrastructure? 	Job creation
Transport & Access SEA Topic: N/A	SA3. To ensure that the location of development can be accommodated by existing and/or planned infrastructure and reduces the need to travel.	SA3. To ensure that development is served by or can be served by frequent sustainable transport modes that connects to key centres, includes safe and accessible walking and cycling routes and reduces reliance on private vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have existing frequent and accessible sustainable transport services? • Will the development provide frequent and accessible sustainable transport services • Provide walkable neighbourhoods • Co-locate housing with other services and employment opportunities thereby reducing the need to travel • Locate employment opportunities in proximity to other services 	Availability of Sustainable transport modes Accessibility standards
Pollution	SA14. Minimise air, soil, water, light and noise pollution.	SA14. Minimise air, soil, water, light and noise pollution and enhance air quality, water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise air pollution and/or enhance air quality? 	Air Quality indicators Soil health indicators

Topic	2020 SA Objective	2026 SA Objective (change in red)	Questions – Does the option/draft policy...?	Potential indicator
SEA Topic: (h) Air		resource management, attenuate noise pollution and reduce light pollution where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise soil pollution and/or improve soil health? Minimise water pollution and/or improve water quality? Minimise light pollution? Minimise noise pollution and/or attenuate noise interference where possible? 	Water Quality indicators Noise indicators Dark skies
Climate Change SEA Topic: (i) Climatic Factors	SA5. Minimise greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy generation	SA5. Minimise greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, maximise energy efficiency and deliver renewable energy generation in aiding Solihull's net zero objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver low or net carbon energy? Reduce energy consumption? Improve energy efficiency? Promote low to net zero carbon transport options? Increase affordability of low carbon/net zero generation? Tackle fuel poverty? 	Relevant NZAP objectives and indicators
	SA6. To assist businesses in the adaptation they need to become more resource efficient and resilient to the effects of a changing climate.	Amalgamate with objective below		
	SA8. To ensure that development provides for adaptation to urban heating, the effects of high winds and assists in promoting positive behaviour change.	is resilient to the effects of climate change including extreme weather events, urban heat island effect, adaptable species, with a focus on nature-based solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate appropriate nature-based solutions? Design and layout of development take high winds and urban heat island effect into account? (see below for flood risk) 	Relevant NCIS indicators

Topic	2020 SA Objective	2026 SA Objective (change in red)	Questions – Does the option/draft policy...?	Potential indicator
Biodiversity & Geodiversity SEA Topic: (a) Biodiversity (d) Fauna (e) Flora (c) Human health	SA9. Protect the integrity and connectivity of ecological sites and ensure that enhancement for habitats and species are not prejudiced.	SA9. Protect and improve the integrity, function and connectivity of ecological sites. Achieve net gains through the creation and enhancement of species-rich habitats that meet the Lawton principles and are resilient to climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy? • Avoid/minimise impacts on biodiversity? • Improve the resilience of ecosystems to the effects of climate change? • Improve connectivity between priority habitats? • Support native species? • Protect vulnerable species/habitats from anthropogenic encroachment 	LNRS indicators Measures of biodiversity net gain Habitat banks
	SA11. To facilitate the delivery and enhance the quality of areas providing green infrastructure.	SA11. To facilitate the delivery and enhance the quality of areas providing multi-functional green and blue infrastructure, including open spaces for recreation, sport and interaction with nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide wildlife corridors? • Provide greenways that support walking and cycling infrastructure with species-rich planting? • Include open space for recreation that is accessible to all? • Include opportunities for appropriate tree planting? 	Provision of open space per 1000 population Quality and Accessibility of Open Space Tree planting Retention/improvement of hedgerows
Landscape & Land SEA Topic:	SA10. To manage the landscape effects of development in recognition of the European Landscape Convention as well as the risks and opportunities	SA10. To manage the landscape effects of development in recognition of the European Landscape Convention as well as the risks and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sympathetic to the Arden landscape character? • Consider impacts of climate change on the wider landscape? 	Landscape impacts

Topic	2020 SA Objective	2026 SA Objective (change in red)	Questions – Does the option/draft policy...?	Potential indicator
(l) Landscape (f) Soil	associated with measures to address climate change.	associated with measures to address climate change.		
Cultural Heritage SEA Topic: (k) Cultural Heritage	SA12. To enhance, conserve and protect buildings, sites and the setting of historic assets as part of development projects.	SA12. To enhance, conserve and protect buildings, sites and the setting of historic assets as part of development projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect heritage assets and their settings? • Help heritage assets be less vulnerable to impacts of climate change? 	Conservation Area Appraisals No. of Listed Buildings impacted by development
	SA13. To deliver improvements in townscape and enhance local distinctiveness.	SA13. To deliver improvements in townscape and enhance local distinctiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support patterns of growth that respect local distinctiveness? • Improve the townscape? • Create high quality public realm? 	Town Centre Masterplan objectives Design Codes
Water SEA Topic: (g) Water	SA7. Manage, maintain and where necessary improve the drainage network to reduce the negative effects of flooding on communities and businesses.	SA7. Manage, maintain and where necessary improve the drainage network to reduce the negative effects of flooding on communities and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that development does not increase flood risk on site or downstream? • Avoid vulnerability to flood risk? 	% of planning applications in accordance with EA advice.
Waste and Minerals SEA Topic: (j) Material Assets	SA4. Minimise the use of natural resources such as land, water and minerals, and minimise waste, whilst increasing reuse and recycling.	SA4. Minimise the use of natural resources such as land, water and minerals, and minimise waste, whilst increasing reuse and recycling and contributing to a circular economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise the use of brownfield land over greenfield for development? • Make the most efficient use of land? • Minimise water consumption? • Avoid the loss of BMV agricultural land? • Protect the future use of land for agricultural purposes (e.g. solar farms)? 	% of development that is on previously developed land. % of development that is on BMV land. Recycling rates in the Borough. Reduction in waste arisings per capita.

Topic	2020 SA Objective	2026 SA Objective (change in red)	Questions – Does the option/draft policy...?	Potential indicator
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of minerals deposits? • Re-use and recycle aggregates where possible? • Contribute to the Circular Economy? 	Minerals landbank.

A. Policies, Plans, Programmes

Table 25. List of relevant Policies, Plans and Strategies.

Policies/ Plans	Economic	Social	Environmental
Local	Solihull Economic Strategy 2023-2032 ¹⁵⁵	Solihull Housing Strategy 2023-2032 & Implementation Plan ¹⁵⁶	Solihull Net Zero Action Plan 2020 & Annual report 2023/24 ¹⁵⁷
	Solihull Connected Transport Strategy 2023-2032 ¹⁵⁸	Joint Local Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2032 ¹⁵⁹	Solihull Green Space Strategy 2014 Refresh ¹⁶⁰
	Birmingham Airport Masterplan 2018 & Airport Surface Access Strategy 2023 ¹⁶¹	Solihull Adult Social Care Plan 2022-2027 ¹⁶²	Solihull Clean Air Strategy 2024-2028 ¹⁶³
	Council Plan 25-30 ¹⁶⁴	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment ¹⁶⁵	Solihull Local Flood Risk Management Strategy ¹⁶⁶
	Solihull Local Development Plan (2013) ¹⁶⁷	Solihull Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan (2014) ¹⁶⁸	Solihull SuDS Design Guide 2023 ¹⁶⁹

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/about-council/solihull-economic-strategy-2023-32>

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/Solihull-Housing-Strategy.pdf>

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/your-future-solihull/net-zero-action-plan-nzap>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03-13%20Solihull%20Connected%202023%20-%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/Joint-Local-Health-Wellbeing-Strategy.pdf>

¹⁶⁰ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/StrategiesPlansPolicies_LandscapeandEcology_Green_Spaces_Strategy_Review.pdf

¹⁶¹ <https://corporate.birminghamairport.co.uk/planning-and-development/airport-strategy/>

¹⁶² <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/Adult-Social-Care-5-year-plan.pdf>

¹⁶³ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/Air-Quality-Strategy-2024-2028.pdf>

¹⁶⁴ <https://democracy.solihull.gov.uk/documents/s127039/Council%20plan%202025%2026%20Final%20with%20amends.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/about-solihull/story-solihull>

¹⁶⁶ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/CrimeAndEmergencies_Final_LFRMS.pdf

¹⁶⁷ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/StrategiesPlansPolicies_Solihull_Local_Plan_2013.pdf

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/gypsy-and-traveller-development-plan-document>

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/SuDS-Design-Guide-2023.pdf>

Policies/ Plans	Economic	Social	Environmental
	Solihull Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2020 ¹⁷⁰	Hampton-in-Arden Neighbourhood Development Plan ¹⁷¹	Solihull Travel Plan SPD 2023 ¹⁷²
	Solihull Accessibility Study (2020) ¹⁷⁵	Knowle, Dorridge & Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan ¹⁷³	Solihull Vehicle Parking Standards and Travel Plans SPD 2006 ¹⁷⁴
	Solihull Electric Vehicle Strategy (2025) ¹⁷⁸	Berkswell Neighbourhood Development Plan ¹⁷⁶	Solihull Natural Capital Investment Strategy and Delivery Plan 2024 ¹⁷⁷
	Solihull Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2021) ¹⁸¹	Balsall Neighbourhood Development Plan ¹⁷⁹	Solihull Urban Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 ¹⁸⁰
	Solihull Town Centre Masterplan (2020) ¹⁸⁴	Meriden Neighbourhood Development Plan ¹⁸²	Birmingham Airport Noise Action Plan ¹⁸³
		Solihull Cultural Strategy 2025-2035 ¹⁸⁵	Solihull Landscape Character Assessment (2016) ¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/GL-Hearn-HEDNA-Report-Oct-2020-Final.pdf>

¹⁷¹ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Planning_Hampton-NDP-Final-Version.pdf

¹⁷² <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/additional-planning-policy-documents>

¹⁷³ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Planning_KDBH_NP_Final_webversion.pdf

¹⁷⁴ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Planning_PARKINGPRINT1s.pdf

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Accessibility-Mapping-Report-Sept-2020.pdf>

¹⁷⁶ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Planning_BNDP_Berkswell-NDP-plan-made-5-September-2019.pdf

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-08/Appendix%201%20-%20NCIS%20June24%20%281%29%20Final%20Publication.pdf>

¹⁷⁸ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-09/Electric-Vehicle-Strategy.pdf>

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/Balsall-Parish-Neighbourhood-Development-Plan.pdf>

¹⁸⁰ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/StrategiesPlansPolicies_LeisureandParks_Solihull-Urban-Forestry-Strategy.pdf

¹⁸¹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-06/Solihull-Cycling-Walking-Strategy.pdf>

¹⁸² <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-07/Meriden-NDP-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁸³ https://downloads.ctfassets.net/qacv5m4pr8sy/e99oriwt4sAvIKs35xGFM/088d519446ad55a44db1f74d4efdda6a/Noise_Action_Plan_2024-2028.pdf

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/about-council/solihull-town-centre-masterplan>

¹⁸⁵ https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiJ3-6_uRAxWEAAHZpJ1gQFnoECBgQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.solihull.gov.uk%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2025-08%2FCultural-Strategy.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1VXjlnjIGTkjTeV0xQnPxu&opi=89978449

¹⁸⁶ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Landscape-Character-Assessment-2016.pdf>

Policies/ Plans	Economic	Social	Environmental
		Solihull Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29 ¹⁸⁷	Solihull Public Realm Strategy ¹⁸⁸
		Solihull Tackling Health Inequalities 2022-25 ¹⁸⁹	Solihull SuDS Design Guide 2023 ¹⁹⁰
		Solihull Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027 ¹⁹¹	Solihull Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015) ¹⁹²
		Solihull Adult Social Care - 5 Year Plan 2022-2027 ¹⁹³	Water Cycle Study (2017) ¹⁹⁴
		Solihull Strategy for Inclusive Education 2022-25 ¹⁹⁵	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017) ¹⁹⁶
		Living Well in Solihull – Prevention Strategy ¹⁹⁷	Level 2 SFRA (2020) ¹⁹⁸
			Draft Open Space SPD ¹⁹⁹
Regional	West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy 2025 ²⁰⁰	West Midlands Inclusive Growth Framework ²⁰¹	West Midlands Local Nature Recovery Strategy ²⁰²

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/Homelessness-Rough-Sleeping-Strategy.pdf>

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/about-council/solihull-town-centre-masterplan/solihull-town-centre-public-realm-strategy>

¹⁸⁹ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-08/Tackling-health-inequalities.pdf>

¹⁹⁰ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/SuDS-Design-Guide-2023.pdf>

¹⁹¹ Solihull Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

¹⁹² https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/CrimeAndEmergencies_Final_LFRMS.pdf

¹⁹³ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/Adult-Social-Care-5-year-plan.pdf>

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Water-Cycle-Study-2017.pdf>

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/Solihull-Strategy-for-Inclusive-Education-2022-2025.pdf>

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/2016s4911-SMBC-SFRA-Report-FINAL-v1.0.pdf>

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/Living-Well-in-Solihull-Prevention-Strategy-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁹⁸ <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Level-2-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-Report-October-2020.pdf>

¹⁹⁹ <https://yourvoicesolihull.uk.engagementhq.com/draft-public-open-space-supplementary-planning-document>

²⁰⁰ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-energy/energy-capital/policy/regional-energy-strategy/>

²⁰¹ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/inclusive-growth/inclusive-growth-in-the-west-midlands-an-evidence-informed-approach/>

²⁰² <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-energy/west-midlands-local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

Policies/ Plans	Economic	Social	Environmental
	TFWM Local Transport Plan ²⁰³	Regional Culture and Heritage Framework Principles ²⁰⁴ .	WMCA Regional Air Quality Framework ²⁰⁵
	West Midlands Strategic Employment Sites Study 2024 ²⁰⁶	WMCA Employment and Skills Strategy 2024-27 ²⁰⁷	West Midlands Nature Delivery Plan (2026-2029) ²⁰⁸
	West Midlands Theory of Growth April 2025 ²⁰⁹	Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Strategy 2023-2033 ²¹⁰	West Midlands State of Nature report ²¹¹
	West Midlands Drivers of Growth May 2025 ²¹²		Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines: Arden (1993) ²¹³
	West Midlands Growth Plan ²¹⁴		Severn Trent Water Resource Management Plan (2025) ²¹⁵
	Economic Impact Assessment of Climate Change on the Economy of the West Midlands Combined Authority Region August 2024 ²¹⁶		Humber River Basin Management Plan (2022) ²¹⁷

²⁰³ <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/who-we-are/our-strategy/local-transport-plan/>

²⁰⁴ <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/siteassets/home/0-about-us-new/01-policies-and-reports/01.08-sustainability/sustainable-conservation-strategy.pdf>

²⁰⁵ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/documents/environment-energy/air-quality-framework-reference-document/>

²⁰⁶ https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/29999/west_midlands_strategic_employment_sites_study_2024

²⁰⁷ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/documents/productivity-skills/employment-and-skills-strategy-2024-2027/employment-and-skills-strategy-2024-2027/>

²⁰⁸ https://cloucdn.wmca.org.uk/documents/wmca/pdf/west-midlands-nature-delivery-plan-2026-29-reduced.pdf?_ga=2.16477174.1581390982.1767843845-908949884.1767843845

²⁰⁹ https://cloucdn.wmca.org.uk/documents/wmca/pdf/the-west-midlands-theory-of-growth-reduced.pdf?_ga=2.232938524.309744298.1767840414-371776585.1767840414

²¹⁰ <https://www.birminghamsolihullics.org.uk/about-us/our-integrated-care-partnership/our-integrated-care-strategy-2023-2033>

²¹¹ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/5zwkzhmj/state-of-nature-report.pdf>

²¹² https://www.publicfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/West-Midlands_-Drivers-of-Growth-and-scenario-analysis-of-opportunities-by-2035-May-2025.pdf

²¹³ https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Planning_LDF_Arden_Landscape_Guidelines.pdf

²¹⁴ <https://growth.wmca.org.uk/>

²¹⁵ <https://www.severntrent.com/about-us/our-plans/water-resources-management-plan/wrmp24-final-documents/>

²¹⁶ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/zw5dfb2k/economic-impacts-assessment-executive-summary.pdf>

²¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/humber-river-basin-district-river-management-plan-updated-2022>

Policies/ Plans	Economic	Social	Environmental
	West Midlands Spatial Development Strategy (early stages) ²¹⁸		RBMP 2025 Interim Progress Report ²¹⁹
	West Midlands Local Aggregate Assessment (2023) ²²⁰ .		Humber River Basin District Flood Risk Management Plan (2021-2027) ²²¹
			WMCA Circular Economy Routemap (2021) ²²²
			Warwickshire Subregional Green Infrastructure Strategy 2024 ²²³
National	UK 10-year Infrastructure Strategy ²²⁴	NPPF (2025) ²²⁵	National Planning Policy for Waste ²²⁶
	UK Plan for Change ²²⁷	Indices of Deprivation 2025 ²²⁸	National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) ²²⁹

²¹⁸ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/housing-property-regeneration/west-midlands-spatial-development-strategy/>

²¹⁹ <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/river-basin-management-plans>

²²⁰ Figure 2 of West Midlands Aggregates Working Party Annual Report 2023 [2022 Data]

Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65c107e2704282000d752251/2022_-_WMAWP_Report.pdf

²²¹ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/638099ed8fa8f56eb302c6f8/Humber-FRMP-2021-2027.pdf>

²²² <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/5134/wmca-circular-economy-routemap-final-full-document.pdf>

²²³ <https://www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/doc/213175/name/SUB%20REGIONAL%20GREEN%20INFRASTRUCTURE%20STRATEGY%202024%20final.pdf>

²²⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6853c5db99b009dcdb73649/UK_Infrastructure_A_10_Year_Strategy_Web_Accessible.pdf

²²⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

²²⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ef594e5274a2e8ab4946c/141015_National_Planning_Policy_for_Waste.pdf

²²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/missions>

²²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025>

²²⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems-suds>

Policies/ Plans	Economic	Social	Environmental
	Planning and Infrastructure Act ²³⁰	English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill ²³¹	Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework 2023 ²³²
	Decarbonising Transport Strategy ²³³	Social Housing (Regulation) Act ²³⁴	National Clean Air Strategy ²³⁵
	Critical Minerals Strategy (2025) ²³⁶	Public Health Strategy 2020-2025 (2019) ²³⁷	The Environment Act (2021) ²³⁸
	The Agriculture Act 2020 ²³⁹	Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment, Historic England Advice Note 8 (2016) ²⁴⁰	446. Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 ²⁴¹
		The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 ²⁴²	Defra 'Air Quality Strategy - Framework for local authority delivery' ²⁴³
		Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ²⁴⁴	Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 ²⁴⁵

²³⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/34/enacted>

²³¹ <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/4002>

²³² <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/greeninfrastructure/home.aspx>

²³³ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/610d63ffe90e0706d92fa282/decarbonising-transport-a-better-greener-britain.pdf>

²³⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/36>

²³⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019>

²³⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-critical-minerals-strategy>

²³⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-strategy-2020-to-2025>

²³⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents>

²³⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/21/contents>

²⁴⁰ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/heag036-sustainability-appraisal-strategic-environmental-assessment/>

²⁴¹ <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/pm25targets/targets-development>

²⁴² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46>

²⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-air-quality-strategy-for-england>

²⁴⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>

²⁴⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/2238/contents>

Policies/ Plans	Economic	Social	Environmental
			National Policy Statement on Noise in 2010 ²⁴⁶
			State of the environment: Soil (2019) ²⁴⁷
			Environment Improvement Plan (2025) ²⁴⁸
			Climate Change Act (2008) ²⁴⁹
			Great Energy Act (2025) ²⁵⁰
			Climate Change Committee – Progress in reducing emissions (June 2025) ²⁵¹
			Making Space for Nature – the Lawton Report (2010) ²⁵²
			Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) ²⁵³
			Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) ²⁵⁴
			The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 ²⁵⁵
			Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 ²⁵⁶

²⁴⁶ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7956e0ed915d0422067947/pb13750-noise-policy.pdf>

²⁴⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment/summary-state-of-the-environment-soil>

²⁴⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan-2025/environmental-improvement-plan-eip-2025#:~:text=It%20sets%20clear%20goals%20and,actions%20needed%20to%20deliver%20them.>

²⁴⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

²⁵⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-british-energy-bill-factsheets/great-british-energy-bill-overarching-factsheet>

²⁵¹ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/progress-in-reducing-emissions-2025-report-to-parliament/>

²⁵² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-space-for-nature-a-review-of-englands-wildlife-sites-published-today>

²⁵³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

²⁵⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents>

²⁵⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>

²⁵⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

Policies/ Plans	Economic	Social	Environmental
			English Heritage 'Sustainable Conservation Principles' ²⁵⁷
			National Framework for Water Resources ²⁵⁸
			Water Environment Regulations 2017 ²⁵⁹ (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales)
			The Water (Special Measures) Act 2025 ²⁶⁰
			Flood and Water Management Act (2010) ²⁶¹
			447. National Waste Management Plan (2021) ²⁶²
			Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (2023) ²⁶³
			Part L Building Regulations (2021) ²⁶⁴
			Third National Adaptation Programme (Climate Change) (2023) ²⁶⁵
			The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (2020) ²⁶⁶

²⁵⁷<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/siteassets/home/0-about-us-new/01-policies-and-reports/01.08-sustainability/sustainable-conservation-strategy.pdf>

²⁵⁸<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-framework-for-water-resources-2025-water-for-growth-nature-and-a-resilient-future/forewords-executive-summary-and-structure-national-framework-for-water-resources-2025>

²⁵⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/407>

²⁶⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/5/contents>

²⁶¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

²⁶² Fig 1, p.4 of WMP for England: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60103f71d3bf7f05bc42d294/waste-management-plan-for-england-2021.pdf>

²⁶³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carbon-budget-delivery-plan>

²⁶⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conservation-of-fuel-and-power-approved-document-l>

²⁶⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/third-national-adaptation-programme-nap3>

²⁶⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/904/contents/made>

Policies/ Plans	Economic	Social	Environmental
			State of Nature Report (2023) ²⁶⁷
			National Design Guide (2021) ²⁶⁸
			The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 ²⁶⁹
			The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 ²⁷⁰
			The Air Quality Standards (Amendment) Regulations 2016 ²⁷¹
			Groundwater (England and Wales) Regulations 2009 ²⁷²
			The Environmental Protection Act 1990 ²⁷³
International		2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) ²⁷⁴	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive ²⁷⁵
			Convention on Biological Diversity ²⁷⁶
			Council of Europe Landscape Convention (2016) ²⁷⁷

²⁶⁷ <https://stateofnature.org.uk/>

²⁶⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

²⁶⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/978011176573>

²⁷⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

²⁷¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ksi/2016/1184/contents/made>

²⁷² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2009/9780111480816>

²⁷³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/43/contents>

²⁷⁴ <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

²⁷⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

²⁷⁶ <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/convention-on-biological-diversity/>

²⁷⁷ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape>

Policies/ Plans	Economic	Social	Environmental
			2022 Convention on Biological Diversity – COP15 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) ²⁷⁸
			United Nations Declaration on Forests and Land use (COP26 Declaration) (2021) ²⁷⁹
			The United Nations Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015) ²⁸⁰
			The International Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) (1971) ²⁸¹
			The European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) (1979) ²⁸²

²⁷⁸ <https://www.unep.org/resources/kunming-montreal-global-biodiversity-framework>

²⁷⁹ <https://unfccc.int/news/cop26-pivotal-progress-made-on-sustainable-forest-management-and-conservation>

²⁸⁰ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>

²⁸¹ <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/convention-on-wetlands/>

²⁸² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention>

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