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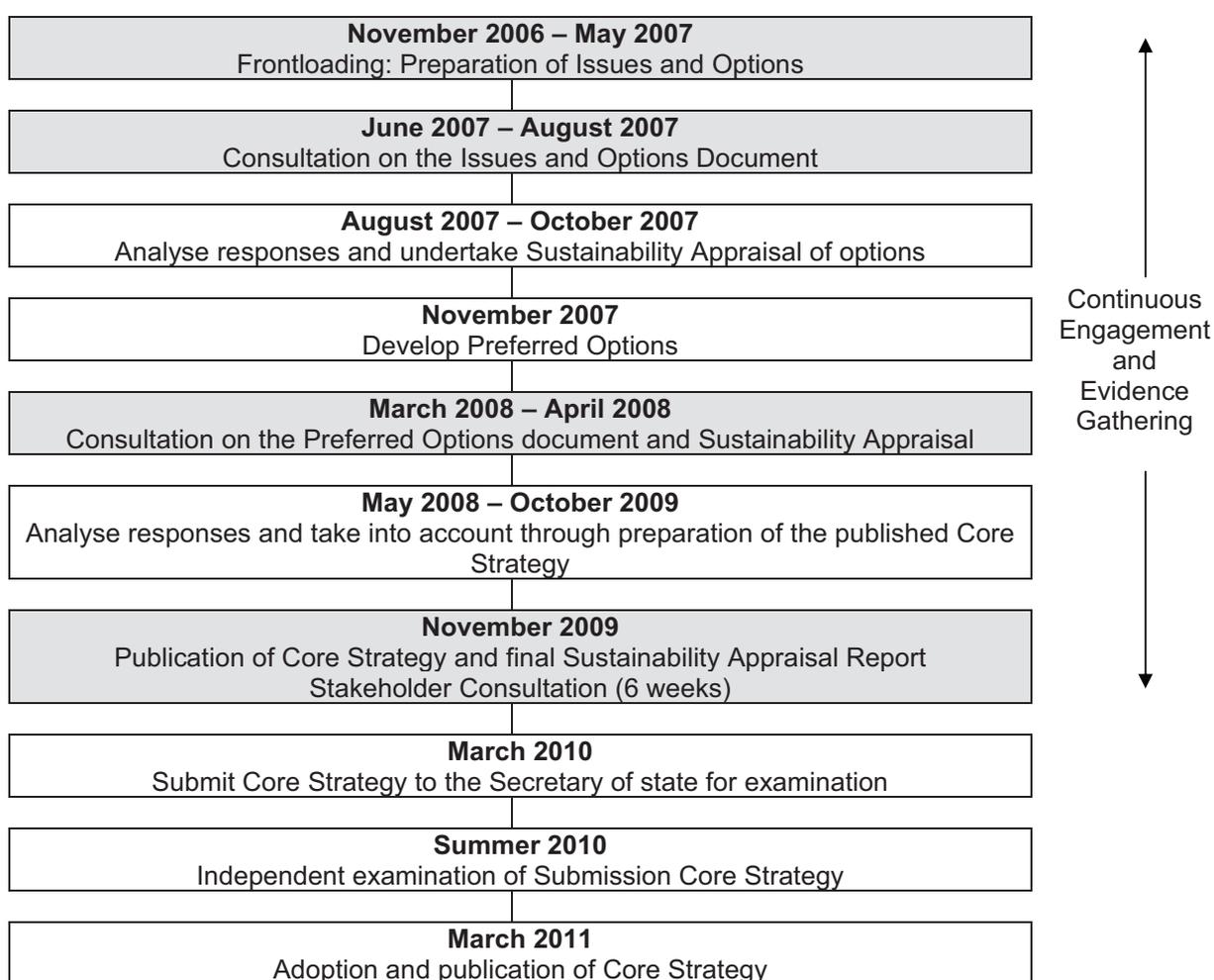
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report reviews the consultation undertaken during the production of the Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS) between September 2006 and November 2009. This period covers the following key consultation stages undertaken so far:
- Frontloading (November 2006 - May 2007)
 - Issues & Options (June - August 2007)
 - Preferred Options (March - April 08)
- 1.2 The report also reviews the continuous consultation undertaken between these key stages and includes, within the extensive Appendices, who were consulted, details of how the consultation was delivered and a summary of the outcomes arising from the consultation activity.
- 1.3 During the production of the JCS; the Town & Country Planning Regulations were amended in June 2008 to remove the requirement for a formal period of consultation both at Preferred Options stage and during the submission process. The new Regulation 25 provides authorities with more discretion to involve communities in the preparation of Core Strategies as they think appropriate, whilst regulations 27 and 30 now relate to the Publication and Submission of Development Plan Documents.
- 1.4 As the JCS had undertaken a preferred options consultation (in March 2008) prior to the publication of the revised regulations, the authorities have been allowed to follow a 'transitional route'. This means that the consultation undertaken in accordance with the 2004 regulations, prior to the publication of the new regulations will be used as a proxy for satisfying the new Regulation 25.
- 1.5 The published (June 2008) revisions to the Town & Country Planning Regulations (Regulations 27 and 30) places a requirement for Local Planning Authorities to produce and publish a Consultation Statement setting out who was invited to be involved in the JCS preparation, how they were involved and a summary of the issues raised and how they have been addressed. It is the intention that this report (once updated following the post publication consultation) will form the basis of this statement.

2.0 Background to Joint Core Strategy

- 2.1 The four Black Country local authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton are currently preparing new planning documents to replace their current Unitary Development Plans. The JCS will be the key document in the portfolio of planning documents (the Local Development Framework) for each local authority. It will be a spatial planning document that will set out the vision, objectives and detailed spatial strategy for future development in the Black Country up to 2026, and contain specific strategic policies and targets. The document will not just consider land use, but also a comprehensive range of environmental, economic and social issues.
- 2.2 The timetable for the production of the JCS is set out below. Key consultation stages are highlighted:



- 2.3 The delay between Preferred Options and Publication was due to a number of reasons, including uncertainty over the RSS Phase 2 review over regional growth, the need to commission further technical studies and to be able to incorporate emerging best practice and experience from other Core Strategy Examinations into the JCS.

3.0 Consultation Arrangements

Management of Consultation

3.1 Responsibility for managing and delivering the consultation process for the JCS rests with the Core Strategy Consultation Group which consists of officers from the four Black Country Local Authorities. The Consultation Group's agreed Terms of Reference is included within **Appendix A**.

3.2 Consultation has been developed and delivered in accordance with the four Black Country Local Authorities' Adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCIs) Documents. These documents set out the standards to be achieved by each local authority in involving the community in the preparation of the Local Development Framework. The JCS's 'soundness' will be tested at an independent examination. One of the 3 tests of soundness relates to the need for the JCS to be 'justified' i.e. founded on a robust and credible evidence base. Paragraph 4.37 contained within the revised PPS12 (published in June 2008) states that the evidence base should contain evidence of the views of the local community and others who have a stake in the future of the area.

3.3 The Core Strategy Consultation Group has overseen the consultation with statutory organisations (i.e. national, regional and sub regional organisations). This has involved delivering the following key tasks:

- Ensuring the approach to consultation conforms with the statutory requirements in terms of consultation timescales, content and number of documents produced and their distribution
- Preparing and managing a JCS database as the basis for information mail outs including invitations to events and notification of key consultation stages
- Producing and managing a dedicated JCS website as the 'host' of a Core Strategy library of related documentation and contact information along with the route for the submission of electronic consultation responses
- Procuring external support, including independent facilitators, for consultation activity and specialist consultancy support to input and analyse consultation responses
- Support JCS Theme groups to consult with specialist consultees
- Organising Black Country wide JCS stakeholder events
- Producing promotional material including exhibition stands, leaflets, questionnaires, articles and press releases.

3.4 Consultation with communities at the individual local authority level has been organised and delivered by each of the four individual authorities in accordance with the requirements of their respective SCIs. Details of the individual local authority consultation, including a review of the consultation techniques used and the participants recorded is set out in Appendix B.

The Consultation Process

3.5 Government guidance on preparing Local Development Documents emphasises the importance of 'frontloading' and 'continuous involvement of stakeholders and communities when producing a Core Strategy. The consultation has complied with these principles; to ensure that anyone with an interest in the planning of the Black Country can receive real, sustained opportunities to influence and develop a sense of ownership of the JCS from the outset. There was a significant focus on the early engagement of people and organisations in this process.

Consultation Methods

3.6 The consultation group's approach to consultation is based on achieving the following objective:

'to deliver meaningful opportunities for stakeholders and communities to get involved from the outset and identify the issues to take forward, therefore developing foundations for real and sustained influence in its development throughout its subsequent stages of production'

3.7 Consultation has been delivered in accordance with this objective, utilising the consultation techniques envisaged appropriate for the different stages of producing Development Plan Documents such as the Joint Core Strategy.

3.8 It is important to note that this approach to consultation has recognised the need to try and engage 'hard to reach groups' i.e. those groups which have not traditionally been involved in planning decisions including young people, BME communities, faith based communities, disabled groups and individuals, small businesses, older people and people on low incomes. Consultation has been delivered with the support of external organisations, including West Midlands Planning Aid and Walsall Community Empowerment Network (CEN), to reach 'hard to reach' groups and individuals. This has proved extremely useful in terms of providing additional resources and independent advice to improve the delivery of consultation activity through outreaching to groups, applying appropriate visual techniques and the content of publicity material. In the case of Walsall CEN, the support extended to having access to a database of organisations and individuals considered as being 'hard to reach'. Likewise, the JCS consultation group has worked with the Black Country Chamber of Commerce to access Black Country landowners and businesses and have attended events and included articles in their publications to engage such groups in the production of the JCS.

3.9 Wherever possible, opportunities were identified to align consultation on the JCS with other consultation activity being undertaken at the local level. In particular, consultation has been linked with local, area specific regeneration proposals or delivered in partnership with the four Black Country Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) on their respective Sustainable Community Strategies. The latter approach was intended to ensure that the objectives and priorities of the SCS are aligned, and therefore delivered through the JCS.

3.10 To avoid community consultation fatigue, opportunities to combine consultation with other local consultations and groups have been exploited. For example, Wolverhampton used the networks and contacts in the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNP) to engage local residents in the Preferred Options consultation. The focus was mainly on the LNP's within the Regeneration Corridors and the Strategic Centre, and the consultation helped to identify future priorities and change needed in each area. This proved successful as communities were able to influence and identify not only JCS long-term strategic priorities but also local issues through further consultations carried out by the LNP in establishing a vision for their area. The outcomes of this work has strengthened the partnership working of the Planning Policy and Area Plans Team, the LNP's and local residents, as well as informing the development of the Core Strategy.

3.11 Consultations on the production of other LDD's carried out during the

preparation of the JCS also support this consultation strategy. These have mainly contributed by conducting joint consultation events covering the JCS and another LDD, or by the LDD consultation expressly making reference to the JCS. Further details on these are available on request. The relevant LDD's are:

- Brierley Hill AAP
- Stafford Road Corridor AAP
- Sandwell Sites Allocation DPD
- Willenhall AAP

3.12 Specifically in Dudley, the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan has followed a similar timetable to that of the Core Strategy. This Plan has involved extensive consultation and every opportunity was taken to publicise and consult on the Core Strategy at the same time. It is also worthy of note that significant RSS Phase 2 consultations occurred during the production of the JCS which have also helped influence the final content of the policies in the JCS.

3.13 Each SCI sets out the appropriate technique and intended audience for the key stages of the document's production. A range of consultation techniques have been used to deliver the following three levels of involvement. Although it is recognised that although where possible level 3 should be aimed for, not everyone is able to give up their time or wish to be involved in lengthy exercises, and local communities are often only interested in commenting on proposals that directly affect them. It is therefore often difficult to engage with local communities on strategic issues.

1. **Tell people what is planned** (communicating information)
2. **Consultation – offer a number of options, listen and act on feedback received** (questionnaires and discussions)
3. **Deciding together – encourage others to provide some additional ideas, options and join in deciding the best way forward** (participatory exercises)

3.14 Regardless of which level is adopted, it has been intended that the outcome of the consultation has been the same i.e. that it has created opportunities for those taking part to have their say and influence this stage of the process. This has required adhering to the following principles:

1. Targeting communities

- The different techniques used have outreached to communities where they are and the visual techniques have involved some hard to reach groups i.e. young people and certain BME communities.
- Working with partner organisations to arrange and deliver joined up consultations, for example Walsall Community Empowerment Network (CEN) and the four Black Country LSPs has reduced costs, shared expertise and experience.
- Monitoring the background of participants has assisted in identifying who was being consulted and which groups and communities were being excluded. This has resulted in a more focused approach being devised to target specific groups at subsequent consultations. The work of Walsall CEN as a 'critical friend' has proved invaluable in this process.

2. Open and transparent information to all

- Information has been made available in a range of formats including on the Core Strategy website, newsletters, displays and leaflets
 - Consistent contact information in terms of named officers and dedicated telephone numbers and emails were included on all formats.
3. Opportunities for people to put forward ideas and comments
- A range of techniques were used from information giving to participatory techniques. These were delivered after careful consideration of the needs of the intended audience.
 - The suitability of the techniques were also monitored which lead to several techniques being refined in light of comments and suggestions being received.
 - There has also been ample opportunity for people to comment outside the formal consultation exercises and events and officers have met with stakeholders on a one-to-one basis where appropriate and where meetings have been requested.
4. Provision of feedback
- Feedback reports from the various consultation exercises were produced and made available on the Core Strategy website and in physical formats and circulated on request. Notes of meetings with external stakeholders and focus groups are also available in most cases.

4. Details of the Consultation Undertaken

- 4.1 In terms of promotion and publicity, the JCS Consultation Group produced a portable Core Strategy display panel to be erected within key local authority offices and for display at events. Summary leaflets to accompany the frontloading, issues and options and preferred options consultation were produced. A newsletter supplemented these; 'Core News' which was designed to update key partners and elected members of progress to date. Simultaneously a dedicated JCS website was established and hosted by Dudley Council. It acted not only to promote the JCS but also as a source of information as documents and information on consultation arrangements were placed on the website for downloading. Consultees were encouraged to utilise the website to access updated information on the JCS including consultation material and technical evidence to assist their representation.
- 4.2 The JCS consultation group was responsible for notifying organisations (both statutory and non-statutory) of key JCS consultation opportunities. Letters, and where appropriate physical copies of the relevant documentation, were distributed to organisations. Otherwise letters or emails were sent informing people of the publication of consultation material and directing them to use the JCS website to download the information. Press releases and articles for Black Country media sources were also produced by the group to raise awareness of the JCS and opportunities to get involved in the consultation.
- 4.3 The JCS Consultation group organised a series of Black Country wide events to engage sub regional organisations and stakeholders. These Included:
- **A JCS Launch event.** This was a half day event that was held on the 6th December 2006 at The Hawthorns Football Ground, West Bromwich. It included a series of presentations from JCS Officers, a Black Country Local Authority Leader and representatives from the Black Country Chamber of Commerce along with several issue workshops and discussions. Its purpose was to raise the profile of the JCS and commence discussion on the issues that the JCS should be addressing.
 - **A Spatial Options event.** This was held on 17th April 2007 at The Bethel Centre, West Bromwich. The event's format included a presentation on the emerging spatial options followed by an opportunity for participants to discuss particular issues with JCS officers. The objective was to seek the views of participants on work in progress in developing the spatial strategy for the JCS.
 - **An Issues & Options event.** This took place on 11th July 2007 at The Lighthouse Centre, Wolverhampton. It coincided with the 6 week consultation on the JCS Issues & Options document and included presentations on the Issues and options contained within the document followed by a question and answer session.
 - **A Spatial Strategy Delivery workshop.** This was a half day event held on 19th October 2007 at Bescot Stadium, Walsall. It was facilitated by external consultants with the objective of refining and enabling key delivery stakeholders to comment on the emerging JCS spatial options.
 - **A Preferred Options event.** This took place on 9th April 2008 at The Black Country Living Museum, Dudley. It coincided with the 6 week consultation on the JCS Preferred Options document and included presentations on the options contained within the document followed by both a question and answer session and an opportunity for participants

to discuss particular issues with JCS officers.

- **A JCS Infrastructure Event.** This was a half day event held on 21st April 2009 at The Public, West Bromwich. It was aimed at infrastructure and service providers to discuss viability and deliverability issues in the Black Country and to ensure we have the infrastructure to support the spatial strategy.

- 4.4 These Black Country wide events were supplemented by a number of JCS theme workshops and meetings covering issues relating to housing, transport, economy, waste and minerals, the environment and centres at both local and area wide levels. Proforma including details of these events are included in the table and Appendix D
- 4.5 Throughout the preparation of the JCS, there has been ongoing contact with neighbouring authorities and other key stakeholders through forums such as the West Midlands Metropolitan area Principal Assistants' Group (PAG) and Chief Engineers and Planning Officers' Group (CEPOG), the West Midlands Technical Advisory Body for Waste (RTAB) and the West Midlands Regional Minerals & Waste Officers' Group (RMWOG).
- 4.6 The intended audience to consult with during the production of Core Strategies is set out in each of the four SCIs, government guidance and legislation. Statutory organisations (including national, regional and sub regional organisations and bodies, adjoining authorities, businesses and voluntary and community organisations) are included within a JCS database which was produced and managed by the consultation group to distribute information and invitations to events.
- 4.7 Key organisations were targeted throughout the production of the Black Country JCS in order to obtain their input. Not only did these organisations receive regular updates and invitations to events and key consultation stages, but they were invited to be represented on stakeholder working and advisory groups in addition to being invited to attend JCS Theme Groups. One such group is the Environment Focus Group, comprising key stakeholders such as Natural England, English Heritage, Environment Agency and Forestry Commission. Regular meetings were held to discuss emerging work on the Environmental Infrastructure Guidance and other key issues leading to policy formulation.
- 4.8 During the production of the JCS, government guidance on who should be consulted and when was changed. These changes were set out in the revised PPS12: '*Creating strong, safe and prosperous communities through local spatial planning*' (published June 2008) and the amended Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008. The former sets out a revised list of statutory consultees; focused around key delivery agencies. The tables within Appendix C set out how and when these organisations were involved.
- 4.9 Further amendments are due to come into force via the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009, although these changes are limited and the organisations to be included have already been involved in the production of the JCS.
- 4.10 Although most of these agencies had already been involved in producing the JCS from its inception; consultation undertaken since June 2008 has ensured that these agencies have had opportunities to become involved and indeed

delivery events have been held to secure their involvement. For example, there was a meeting with the Coal Authority in September 2008 to discuss the emerging JCS policies on minerals. This was followed up by email/ telephone correspondence seeking advice on specific issues (see Minerals Pro-forma in Appendix D).

- 4.11 The JCS Consultation group collectively produced the summary leaflets and questionnaires to accompany consultation with Black Country communities. However, a considerable amount of discretion exists in terms of who was consulted at the local authority level to reflect local circumstances and organisational structures. Each local authority has a local LDF database of local organisations, businesses and interested individuals who receive information and invitations to local events.
- 4.12 The results of the consultation undertaken on the Core Strategy at every stage of the process can be found on the dedicated website <http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/>.
- Frontloading consultation – From the above web link follow; ‘previous engagement/summary of frontloading consultation responses’
 - Issues and Options consultation – From the above follow ‘issues and options/summary of consultation responses’ together with individual topic consultation responses.
 - Preferred Options consultation – ‘preferred options/preferred options consultation: analysis of responses’ and ‘preferred options/preferred options event report’.
- 4.13 A summary of the representations to the Preferred Options and the responses made by the local authorities can also be found on the above website.
- 4.14 The following tables depict the consultation carried out at each stage, the techniques used, the number of participants involved and the groups or organisations they represented and where feedback is available. Each Local Authority has also produced reports summarising the consultations which have taken place under each key stage. Further details are available on the website.

Review of Consultation undertaken at the Frontloading stage - December 2006 to June 2007										
ACTIVITY	TECHNIQUES USED	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	Type of Stakeholders 1. Statutory bodies and 2. Businesses, developers and landowners 3. Community 4. 'Hard to reach' groups				Levels of involvement 1. Tell people what is planned 2. Consultation 3. Deciding together			Feedback available
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	
Establishing Core Strategy Website	Website containing news on its progress, information to download	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N/A
Producing and distributing combined Leaflet and questionnaire explaining the remit and process and questionnaire for respondents to identify main issues	Leaflet and questionnaire distributed to Core Strategy database Copies available at Planning Reception Areas and Libraries	Distributed to local groups and organisations across the Black Country 26 returned	Y	Y	Y (partly)	Y (partly)	Y	Y	N	Yes – summary of all frontloading responses on website.
Producing and distributing 'Core News Newsletter'	Distributed to selected organisations and elected members during May 2007 Copies available at Planning Reception Areas	200	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N/A
Core Strategy Launch Event (6/12/06)	Presentations and facilitated theme workshops. Q&A session.	120	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Yes - report available via website
Spatial Options Event (17/4/07)	Presentations, Q&A session, issues and options staffed discussion tables	48	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Comments available on request

Stakeholder meetings and Workshops	Workshops with representatives of key organisations and bodies, including Members and internal consultations. Black Country Chamber of Commerce Event (Walsall Academy - 6/3/07)	See Appendix D 30	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	See Appendix D for details Comments available
Articles in newspapers and other publications	Future Living in the Black Country', Dec 06, 'Walsall Pride' Article on JCS in both 'Dudley Together' and 'Dudley Matters' (January 07)	Distributed to all households across the borough	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N/A. Copies available on request.
Local Core Strategy Road Shows/Drop in Sessions and Exhibitions	Held across the boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell & Wolverhampton Use of display boards and visuals and questionnaire Consultation Bus in locations across Walsall using displays, questionnaires and visualisation using proximity game'	Dudley-270 Sandwell- 141 Walsall-350 Wolverhampton-237	N	N	Y	Y 17% BME, 6% disability 22% BME, 5% disability	Y	Y	N	Yes-reports available on website. Lists of events / meetings in Appendix B

Review of Consultation undertaken at the Issues & Options Stage - 29 th June to 10 th August 2007										
ACTIVITY	TECHNIQUES USED	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	Type of Stakeholders				Levels of involvement			Feedback available
			1. Statutory bodies and organisations 2. Businesses, developers and landowners 3. Community 4. 'Hard to reach' groups				1. Tell people what is planned 2. Consultation 3. Deciding together			
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	
Updating Core Strategy Website	Website containing news on its progress, information to download	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N/A
Producing and distributing Issues & Options Document and Summary Leaflet explaining the remit and process	Material distributed to Core Strategy database Copies available at Planning Reception Areas and Libraries Other local consultees sent letters highlighting availability of PO report and how comments could be made.	Distributed to Core Strategy database. 140 respondents 1697 representations	Y	Y	Y (partly)	Y (partly)	Y	Y	N	Yes – summaries of responses on website
Core Strategy Issues & Options Launch Event	Presentations Q&A session	56	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Yes - report available on website
Stakeholder meetings and Workshops	Workshops with representatives of key organisations and bodies, including Members and internal consultations	See Appendix D	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	See Appendix D for details
Articles in newspapers and other publications	Central Newsletter (Walsall CEN Newsletter) July 07: 'Black Country Core Strategy'	N/A	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N/A. Copies available on request.
Local JCS Meetings, Road Shows/Drop in Sessions and Exhibitions	Held across the boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall & Wolverhampton Use of display boards and visuals and questionnaire. Picture competition used to involve young people.	Dudley-88 Sandwell- 232 Walsall-176 Wolverhampton-150	N	N	Y	Y: 11% BME Y: 10% BME	Y	Y	N	Yes-reports available via website. Lists of events / meetings in Appendix B

Review of Consultation undertaken at the PO stage - 17th march to 28th April 2008

ACTIVITY	TECHNIQUES USED	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	Type of Stakeholders				Levels of involvement			Feedback available
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	
			1. Statutory bodies and organisations 2. Businesses, developers and landowners 3. Community 4. 'Hard to reach' groups				1. Tell people what is planned 2. Consultation 3. Deciding together			
Updating Core Strategy Website	Website containing news on its progress, information to download and statutory notices and documentation	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N/A
Distributing Preferred Option Document, Summary Leaflet, Representation Form, Sustainability Report	Leaflet distributed to Core Strategy database Copies of documents and reports available at Planning Reception Areas and Libraries Other local consultees sent letters highlighting availability of PO report and how comments could be made.	Documents distributed to statutory organisations and groups. Leaflets and letters to 1200 groups and organisations, plus other local consultees. 165 respondents submitted 1176 representations.	Y	Y	Y (partly)	Y (partly)	Y	Y	N	Yes – summaries and individual of responses available via website
JCS Preferred Options Launch Event	Presentations and facilitated theme workshops, Q&A session and staffed corridors and strategic centres tables	67	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Yes-Report available on website
Stakeholder meetings and Workshops	Workshops with representatives of key organisations and bodies, including Members and internal consultations	See Appendix D	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	See Appendix D for details

Articles in newspapers and other publications	<p>Walsall Advertiser, Thursday April 10th 2008 'Public encouraged to have say on plans'</p> <p>Walsall Observer, Friday April 4th 2008 'Residents urged to air their views'</p> <p>Walsall Observer, Friday March 28th 2008 'have your say on area's future'</p> <p>Birmingham Mail, Friday March 28th 2008 'Walsall 2026 is in your hands'</p> <p>Birmingham Mail Wednesday March 26th 2008 'Visions of Black Country's future'</p> <p>Express & Star Tuesday March 18th 'Consultations Key to forging future' and associated advertisement for the JCS: 'It's your Core strategy' (available to download from their website during the PO consultation period)</p> <p>Formal Advert Monday March 17th in Express & Star and Evening Mail (see Appendix E)</p> <p>Article on BC published on Aldridge, Streetly, and Walsall people websites</p> <p>Express & Star Tuesday April 8th "60,000 new homes to stop the exodus" in paper edition and online.</p> <p>Wolverhampton LSP - One City News Spring 2008 Edition (released March) "Deadline set for comments" Available in paper edition and online</p> <p>Sandwell Herald Spring 2008 "Help shape the Black Country"</p> <p>Sandwell and Great Barr Chronicle Thursday April 3rd "Your chance to have say on the future of the borough"</p> <p>Sandwell and Great Barr Chronicle Thursday April 24th "Mapping out the future for borough"</p>	Distributed to households across the Black Country 100 'hits' on article Express & Star website	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	<p>N/A. Copies available on request.</p> <p>Wolverhampton Citizens Panel – 1in 7 had heard of JCS with just over a 1/3 of those hearing about it from the local press.</p>
Local Core Strategy Road Shows, Drop in Sessions, Exhibitions and Workshops	<p>Held across the boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall & Wolverhampton</p> <p>Use of display boards and visuals and questionnaire</p> <p>Consultation Bus in locations in Walsall using displays, questionnaires</p> <p>Wolverhampton targeted hard to reach groups, e.g. young people, small businesses</p>	<p>Dudley-Not recorded Sandwell - 155</p> <p>Walsall-445 Wolverhampton-118</p>	N	N	Y	<p>Y 18% BME, 5% disabled</p> <p>8% BME, 8% disabled</p>	Y	Y	Y (partly)	Yes-reports available via website. Lists of events / meetings in Appendix B

Review of Continuous Engagement Consultations - August 2007 to November 2009										
ACTIVITY	TECHNIQUES USED	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	Type of Stakeholders				Levels of involvement			Feedback available
			1. Statutory bodies and organisations 2. Businesses, developers and landowners 3. Community 4. 'Hard to reach' groups				1. Tell people what is planned 2. Consultation 3. Deciding together			
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	
Updating JCS Website	Website containing news on its progress, information to download and copies of representations received to the Issues & Options and technical evidence produced to date.	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N/A
Delivery Event (19/10/07)	Presentations and facilitated corridor and strategic centre workshops	46	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Yes-Report available via website
Stakeholder meetings and Workshops	Workshops with representatives of key organisations and bodies, including Members and internal consultations	See Appendix D	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	See Appendix D for details
Articles in local newspapers and publications	Article on JCS in 'Prosper' (magazine of Black Country Chamber of Commerce) (August 2007) Article in Oxley & Bushbury North LNP newsletter Summer 2008 Sandwell Travelwise Today Newsletter Autumn 2008	Distributed to all members of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce Distributed to all local residents in LNP area Distributed in Sandwell	N	Y	Y	Y (small businesses)	Y	Y	N	Copies available on request
Local JCS Meetings – use local events list. Ask people if they have any info e.g. numbers of people?	Requested Presentations and Q&A sessions with 9 Walsall Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs), as requested by members across Walsall Ongoing liaison with LNP's and other local groups / organisations in Dudley, Wolverhampton and Sandwell. This in part covered prearranged meetings which were held outside the consultation periods.	Walsall - 218 Wolverhampton: Not recorded Sandwell – 34 Dudley: Not recorded	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Yes-Comments available on request. Lists of events / meetings in Appendix B

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Overall the Consultation Group is proud of the consultation that has been delivered throughout the production of the Core Strategy. Having a Core Strategy which covers such a wide and diverse area, with so many relevant and varying issues has proved very challenging. Embedding consultation within the process of production has significantly helped its delivery. This is shown in the summary tables in section 4 just how much has been done to try to engage people effectively in the Core Strategy. Whilst comprehensive monitoring figures were not systematically collected, the following highlights as a minimum what has been achieved at each formal stage:

- Frontloading - 998 people involved in local consultation events
- Issues & Options – 140 respondents gave comments on the Core Strategy with 646 people involved in local events.
- Preferred Options – 165 respondents submitted representations on the Core Strategy, with 798 people involved in local events.

5.2 For an area covering approx 1 million people, these figures may appear low. However the quality of discussion and commitment from members of the public, other groups and organisations, business and developers, stakeholders and local authority officers to consultation delivered a high quality and thought provoking response to the consultations.

5.3 What has worked well

- Communication techniques, including the website and leaflets and letters in addition to newspaper articles and features have proved useful in both raising awareness about the Core Strategy and updating people on its progress. Combining consultation documents and leaflets with a questionnaire asking people for their views on themed issues enabled people to offer their opinions.
- Using a range of consultation techniques has led to the successful engagement of a variety of organisations and communities across the Black Country. In particular, the use of outreaching techniques has enabled officers to target communities and 'hard to reach' groups such as young people and the elderly and some BME communities. Where specified and recorded, approx 14.5% of respondents identified themselves as being from a Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) background and approx 6% of respondents recorded a disability.
- The use of events has facilitated the dissemination of information to key organisations and statutory bodies. This combined with workshops has resulted in useful discussions and a degree of consensus on the important issues for the Core strategy to address and develop through the identification of options and the refinement of issues.
- Monitoring the background of participants has enabled officers to ascertain how representative attendees are of the wider population and to ultimately ensure a representative and inclusive views are obtained.

- The targeting of statutory organisations, whilst time consuming, resulted in a sustained input. This has developed a sense of ownership of the Core Strategy by these organisations which will prove invaluable when compiling a detailed delivery plan to prove that the Core Strategy is deliverable.

5.4 What has not worked so well

- Attempting to align consultation activity has proved problematic, especially in relation to the Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs). Each of the 4 four Black Country LSPs' timetables for producing their respective SCSs was not in accordance with the timetable for producing the JCS. This divergence was made worse by changes to the JCS timetable.
- Alignment with Municipal Waste Management Strategies was also not straightforward as the Black Country is not a Joint Waste Planning Authority. Consequently, there is no joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy in place or in preparation, although there are informal joint-working arrangements. Ongoing engagement with the waste disposal authorities through these arrangements (see Waste Pro-forma in Appendix C) has ensured that key Municipal waste infrastructure requirements and proposals are included in the JCS, and that the JCS waste policies and targets are aligned with existing and emerging Municipal Waste Management Strategies as far as possible.
- Analysis of the monitoring of participants at both the Black Country and local events was difficult and also revealed that certain groups have not been engaged as much as we had hoped. These include certain 'hard to reach' groups; in particular Asian Women. Attempts were made to contact hard to reach groups and progress has been made, for example in Wolverhampton links have been made during the production of the Core Strategy with OneVoice, a local group for people with disabilities.
- Despite the targeted approach, several statutory organisations did not choose to engage with the Core Strategy until the later stages of its production. In particular utility organisations and umbrella bodies did not appear to have the capacity to engage during both the frontloading and Issues & Options stages. Moreover, other organisations, in particular the Equality Organisations, stated their disinterest with the statutory planning process whilst others, including developers and landowners stated a preference to engaging at later stages; preferring to respond to a document and policies therefore echoing the previous approach to plan making.

5.5 The way forward

- The next stage of producing the Core Strategy is the publishing of a document prior to submitting it to the Secretary of State for examination. This was reported to all four local authority Cabinets in November 2009 for approval as a basis for consultation and engagement with key stakeholders.

- Statutory stakeholders and all consultees on the Core Strategy database will be written to, inviting them to make representations as to the soundness of the document. This consultation period will run from 30th November 2009 to 15th January 2010.
- The publication documents will be made available on the dedicated website, at Council offices and main libraries of all four authorities, together with the representation form for comments. Consultees are encouraged to submit their comments online. Further information is available on the Core Strategy website.
- Following receipt of these comments the Councils will determine whether any changes need to be made to the document prior to formal submission.
- This Consultation Statement will be updated to reflect the Publication consultation and will be submitted along with the JCS to the Secretary of State.