

## Place & Physical Environment

### Summary

#### **Place Profile**

- Dudley Borough is situated at the heart of the Black Country and is located on the western part of the West Midlands conurbation.
- Dudley Borough is home to 306,600 people, which is the sixth largest local authority area in population size in the West Midlands region and the 25<sup>th</sup> largest in England.
- Dudley Borough has 4 town centres - Dudley, Brierley Hill, Halesowen and Stourbridge. Brierley Hill is the borough's strategic centre. There are 16 district and local centres in the Borough.
- The areas in the Borough that are most affected by deprivation are Castle and Priory ward and St Thomas's ward.
- Dudley Borough plays an important role in the West Midlands economy, with around 10,000 businesses and a workforce of 117,000.
- Dudley Borough is home to a number of prominent visitor destinations including the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley Zoo & Castle, Dudley Canal Trust and Limestone Mines and the Stourbridge Glass Quarter.
- Dudley Borough has 107 DMBC maintained schools, made up of 79 primary schools, 21 secondary schools and 7 special schools. There are 2 private schools in Dudley Borough - Old Swinford Hospital School and Elmfield School.
- The Borough offers three general further education colleges - Dudley College, Halesowen College and Stourbridge College - and one sixth form college - King Edward VI College in Stourbridge.
- The universities of Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Aston, and Birmingham City are all within easy commuting distance of Dudley Borough.

#### **Economic Geography**

- The Borough's economy has a large degree of 'self containment' with its strongest link being the Black Country sub-region.
- 70.6% of the Borough's resident population also work in the borough; whilst 17.6% work in neighbouring Sandwell and 6.6% work in Wolverhampton.
- Merry Hill is the second most important retail centre in the West Midlands region and is 68% contained in terms of the loyalty of its local residential customer base.

#### **Place Competitiveness**

- Dudley Borough's place competitiveness ranking is 326 out of 379 localities (2010).
- 70% of businesses in Dudley Borough are satisfied with the local area as a place to do business (Dudley Borough Business Survey 2010).
- Most businesses surveyed in 2010 reported that the area has not changed much over the last 12 months (47%) or that it has got worse a place to operate a business (42%).
- Dudley Borough ranks 8<sup>th</sup> out of 30 local authority areas in the West Midlands on the Community Resilience Index (1 being the least resilient).
- 77% of residents in Dudley Borough are satisfied with their local area (i.e. the area within a 15-20 minutes walk from their home).

#### **Infrastructure & Physical Environment**

- Dudley Borough has strong accessibility links to Junctions 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the M5 and excellent rail services to Birmingham City Centre and beyond. The Borough also has an extensive bus network.
- There are 131,879 dwellings in Dudley Borough housing around 305,000 people (2008/9).
- 71% of housing stock in the Borough is owner-occupied. The private rented sector accounts for 4% of the housing stock in the Borough, which is less than half of national average levels.
- Dudley Borough's housing stock is dominated by 3 bedroom semi-detached houses.
- Dudley Borough has a total employment land stock of 827 hectares (2009 figures). The current supply of Local Quality Employment Land is 669 hectares.
- There is a limited number of high quality employment land sites located around Pensnett, Peartree Lane, Castlegate and Coombeswood, Halesowen.