

4.1 SWDP 1: Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy

Reasoned Justification

4.1 The Development Strategy is based upon the vision and brings together land use, development and transport considerations and reflects the various environmental, economic and social characteristics of the area.

The Hive under construction in Worcester. (Library and History Centre)



4.2 The following principles establish a Development Strategy for South Worcestershire up to 2030.

1. Ensure that there is balanced portfolio of employment sites and job creating opportunities available to provide a continual supply of employment opportunities to meet the varying requirements of existing businesses and inward investment.
2. Direct development to locations which help to reduce the need to travel and maximise opportunities for journeys to be made by public transport and other sustainable transport modes.
3. Focus development at settlements where maximum use can be made of existing infrastructure services and facilities or enhancement of existing infrastructure can be achieved during the plan period and development will support the retention or provision of services and facilities.
4. Development will be infrastructure led where new development is infrastructure dependent.
5. Development, with respect to its scale and type, will always be commensurate with, and appropriate to, the size and characteristics of the host settlement and its capacity to assimilate change in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.

6. Where appropriate capacity exists, priority will be given to the use of brownfield land within and adjacent to existing settlements in advance of the release of greenfield land.
7. Worcester city will act as the sub-regional focus for housing and employment development needs in the longer term and the principal settlement with respect to meeting retailing, leisure and commercial needs.
8. Development beyond Worcester, the main and other towns will be limited to that necessary to meet local needs associated with the rural areas.
9. The open countryside will be protected from sporadic and inappropriate development.
10. The Green Belt will be maintained and protected through the Plan period. In other locations a 'Significant Gap' policy will prevent coalescence or the loss of the special pattern and character of free standing settlements. The introduction of Significant Gaps does not guarantee long term i.e. beyond 2030 protection from future development.
11. The release of sites will be subject to the phasing plan to ensure the pace of land releases is consistent with changing circumstances and the provision of essential infrastructure.
12. All development will be required to be located and designed so as to reduce the impact of climate change, particularly flooding, on the development itself, existing communities and the infrastructure upon which it is dependent.

Houses under construction at Malvern Vale



4.3 Figure 2 outlines the process of the review of evidence influencing housing requirements up to 2030. However, the above principles will be applied to the identification and release of sufficient land to enable the construction and completion of around 20,000 dwellings and around 309 hectares of employment land in the period up to 2030, which are set out as follows:

Table 2 Requirement for dwellings and employment land to be provided between 2006 and 2030

	Requirement for dwellings to be provided between 2006 and 2030	Requirement for employment land to be provided between 2006 and 2030
Worcester City	8,402 Dwellings	124 hectares
Wychavon District	7,803 Dwellings	146 hectares
Malvern Hills District	4,156 Dwellings	39 hectares
Total for South Worcestershire	20,361 dwellings	309 hectares

4.4 In order to deliver the Development Strategy specific additional allocations will be made to meet needs associated with retailing, office development and other specific land uses. These requirements are detailed in specific policies.

4.5 Policy SWDP 1 focuses the largest allocations for employment and housing at Worcester as the sub-regional focus for development. It also focuses development towards the other urban areas, which is supportive of the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. Some development is directed to those rural settlements (Category 1, 2 and 3 villages) which have a reasonable range of local services and where available land has sufficient planning merit as drawn from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment process.

4.6 The villages and hamlets across South Worcestershire are characterised by close knit communities that in many places retain links with the traditional rural economy as well as providing varying ranges of services to their local communities. The specific role of each settlement in the settlement hierarchy is based on a detailed assessment (Village Facilities and Rural Transport Study) of the services and facilities that are available.

4.7 Keeping the individual identity and integrity of settlements is important. This is achieved to the north and north east of Worcester, within Wychavon District, by the West Midlands Green Belt designation. Green Belt policy, as set out in Planning Policy Guidance note 2:Green Belts, serves a number of purposes. These include the prevention of urban sprawl and the coalescence of settlements as well as preserving their existing character. Green Belt also encourages the regeneration of urban areas. Locally the West Midlands Green Belt continues to serve all the purposes of national policy and the boundaries are considered strong and enduring. Where the Green Belt is narrow, between Fernhill Heath and Worcester it is particularly important to ensure that the land remains open as otherwise its ability to function as Green Belt would be compromised

4.8 There are a number of Significant Gaps shown on the Proposals Map. The purpose of these is to provide additional protection to open land which either serves as a buffer/visual break between rural settlements and adjacent urban areas or protects the character of settlements. These areas are subject to development pressures and it is important to maintain a clear separation between settlements and urban areas to retain their individual identity. Acceptable development proposals may include the re-use of rural buildings, agricultural and forestry related development, home based businesses, playing fields, other open land uses and minor extensions to existing dwellings.

4.9 The implementation of Policy SWDP 1 is essential to achieving Sustainable Development and the delivery of economic prosperity.

Factory Floor, Wychavon District



SWDP 1: Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy

New development proposals will be assessed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy as set out below.

Table 3 South Worcestershire Settlement hierarchy

Category	Retail Hierarchy Position /Role(Planning Policy Statement 4 definition)	Settlements Included	Role	Implications for the South Worcestershire Development Plan
City	First (City Centre)	Worcester	The administrative centre for the County of Worcestershire, it provides the greatest range of services. Worcester is the main destination for employment for Malvern Hills and Wychavon. Its role is a sub regional focus for strategic employment, housing and retail development. The city's success will benefit South Worcestershire as a whole.	In the interests of Sustainable Development, both for Worcester and South Worcestershire, it is crucial that investment in strategic infrastructure is made, in particular education, hospital services, sewerage treatment and transportation is a pre-requisite of the full quantum of development proposed. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out the infrastructure requirements (see Policy SWDP 50).

Category	Retail Hierarchy Position /Role(Planning Policy Statement 4 definition)	Settlements Included	Role	Implications for the South Worcestershire Development Plan
Main Towns	Second (Town Centre)	Droitwich Spa, Evesham, Malvern	These settlements provide a comprehensive range of local services for their residents and also serve the surrounding rural areas. They offer numerous employment opportunities. Malvern and Droitwich Spa also lie within the Worcestershire A38 High Technology Corridor along with Worcester. To underpin these roles and reflecting their Sustainability Appraisal credentials, a number of the larger allocations for employment and housing are proposed.	The urban extensions will need to secure a range of local infrastructure as set out in Policies SWDP 10, 12, 14, 15 and 17 in order for them to continue to be the focus of balanced growth in Malvern Hills and Wychavon Districts.
Other Towns	Third (Town Centre)	Persnore, Tenbury Wells, Upton upon Severn	Smaller than the Main Towns with fewer high level services. They do still provide a range of services and employment opportunities for their rural hinterlands and act as local service centres.	Due to the extent of the floodplains surrounding Tenbury Wells and Upton Upon Severn, an urban extension is only proposed for Persnore. The necessary local infrastructure requirements are set out in Policy SWDP 50.

Category	Retail Hierarchy Position /Role(Planning Policy Statement 4 definition)	Settlements Included	Role	Implications for the South Worcestershire Development Plan
Rural Areas (1)	Fourth (District Centre, Neighbourhood Centre)	Category 1, 2 and 3 villages, village clusters	These villages provide varying ranges of local services. However, the larger settlements generally tend to provide the greatest range of services and facilities. They are therefore suited to accommodate market and affordable housing needs alongside limited employment to meet local needs.	To be supportive of the Sustainability Appraisal. The scale of development is significantly less than that proposed for the urban areas. It is predominately aimed at meeting locally identified housing and employment needs and supporting local services and infrastructure. Non-allocated 100% affordable exception sites are encouraged on suitable land in accordance with Policy SWDP 32.
Rural Areas (2)	Fifth (Not defined)	Lower category villages	These villages tend to be very small and at best offer one or two local services. Their role in providing additional future development is relatively limited (within their development boundaries).	This Development Plan does not allocate any development for these settlements as this would not be supportive of the Sustainability Appraisal. However, affordable exception sites may be acceptable in accordance with Policy SWDP 32.

With regard to non-allocated development proposals the scale must be proportionate to the needs and size of the settlement and the availability of the community and service infrastructure to accommodate it in a sustainable manner. The scale of development proposals must also be in keeping with the local landscape character.

The open countryside is defined as land beyond any Development Boundary (as shown on the Proposals Map). In these areas development will be strictly controlled and normally limited to small scale employment, house extensions, replacement buildings and renewable energy projects which satisfy the Overarching Sustainable Development Requirements set out in Policy SWDP3.

Significant Gaps, as identified on the Proposals Map, must maintain the openness of the land. Any development proposals should ensure the retention of their open character. They serve several important functions such as preventing the coalescence of built development, protect the setting of settlements, protect an important characteristic of the townscape.

The Green Belt as identified on the Proposals Map will be safeguarded and only appropriate development as defined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 will be permitted unless 'very special circumstances' can be fully demonstrated.

Within Development Boundaries preference is given to the re-development of Brownfield sites before bringing forward Greenfield Land. Beyond Development Boundaries the preference will also be to re-develop Brownfield sites in the first instance although their accessibility to local services will be an important consideration.

Links To The Objectives

4.10 The Preferred Option policy for the development strategy and settlement hierarchy policy supports the following objectives:

- Economic success that is shared by all objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4;
- Stronger communities objectives 1 and 4;
- A better environment for today and tomorrow objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5;
- Improving health and well being objective 1 and 3.

Alternative Options Considered

4.11 Do not base policy on settlement hierarchy. The settlement hierarchy is a clear way of assessing the relative sustainability of settlements. Without the hierarchy, a consistent approach to dealing with the location of development in terms of clear evidence of sustainable locations would be more difficult.

4.12 Only cater for Worcester's housing and employment needs within Worcester city's boundary. This would result in 'town cramming' in Worcester to meet the amount of housing and jobs, jeopardising the open space, character and setting of the city and the ability to offer a range of dwellings at different densities. It would also increase air pollution and congestion for existing residents.

4.13 Spread Worcester's growth throughout South Worcestershire. This would not be meeting housing needs where they arise, and would not address the opportunity for more sustainable extensions to the city, with the benefits of using public transport, shorter commuting to job opportunities, and supporting the city centre economy.

4.14 Put more development in an Eco Town beyond Worcester city's boundary. The option at Middle Quinton has not been supported by the Government, and it is not considered that an Eco Town option will make the best use of existing infrastructure, and produce the most sustainable option.

4.15 Extensions of the Green Belt to the South and West of Worcester. These have previously been considered by the Planning Inspectorate and most recently by the Panel Report on the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Examination in Public. The conclusion of these previous reviews was that there was insufficient planning justification for extending the Green Belt and that it is also the conclusion of the Nicholas Pearson Associates Green Belt Review (2010).

4.2 SWDP 2: Employment, Housing and Retail Supply

View of Malvern Vale under construction



Reasoned Justification

4.16 The proposed levels of development are based upon technical evidence and other relevant factors. The recent lengthy recession and subsequent slow pace of economic growth has resulted in a significant reduction in the availability of public funding and a lack of capacity in the building industry to deliver previous levels of housing supply. The struggling economy is also reflected in the 2008 Household Projections which shows a 20% drop in the demand for housing both locally and between the regions. In order to achieve sustainable development a wide range of infrastructure needs to be delivered. The ongoing uncertainty in funding infrastructure is reflected in the level of housing supply proposed and its phasing.

Delivering Development

4.17 The main focus of this Development Plan is to provide development which first supports the area's economic prosperity. The Plan seeks to promote a sustainable development pattern for the future which will maximise foreseeable Brownfield capacity within the urban areas to aid the regeneration of the city and town centres and minimise the requirement for Greenfield releases.

4.18 In order to implement Policy SWDP 1 the South Worcestershire Authorities need to develop a strategy for the long term growth of Worcester, as it cannot meet its long term employment and housing needs within its own administrative boundary. Additional work on urban capacity for the city has demonstrated that the number of dwellings to be accommodated within the city boundary can be increased to approximately 4,200 homes. This has consequently significantly reduced the scale of Worcester's residential development to be met from urban extensions to 4,025 in order to address the revised requirement for 8,400 dwellings between 2006-2030.

4.19 To meet the development needs of Wychavon and Malvern Hills Districts, the majority of development is to be focused within the towns of Droitwich Spa, Evesham, Malvern and Pershore. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment process has identified a number of urban capacity sites within these towns. However Brownfield urban capacity is relatively limited and therefore to meet the proposed levels of development a number of urban extensions are necessary for Droitwich Spa, Evesham, Pershore and Malvern. The remaining development will be accommodated through smaller site allocations within the development boundaries of the towns as set out in the Site Allocations - Urban Areas chapters.

4.20 For the rural areas the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identifies sufficient capacity in the category 1, 2, 3 villages to meet the development levels set out in this policy. These housing sites are identified in the Site Allocations - Rural Areas chapters.

Employment – creating job opportunities

4.21 A comprehensive portfolio of employment land, is vital in securing economic prosperity. New employment provision (land and commercial premises) will be primarily located within or adjacent to the main urban areas. In order to meet the needs, further job opportunities will be provided in the urban extensions which will help to reduce commuting distances and ensure new work places are accessible by a range of travel modes.

Morgan Factory in Malvern Link. Copyright Rob Rait



4.22 Employment development at WorcesterTechnologyPark Phase 2 will help to maximise the potential job generation provided by Phase 1 (Worcester Bosch), which represents a significant sub-regional employment site within the area.

SWDP 2: Employment, Housing and Retail Supply

This Development Plan will deliver the following levels of employment and residential development for the period to 2030. Worcester urban extensions are to be delivered on land abutting the administrative boundary and not elsewhere within Malvern Hills or Wychavon.

The employment land contained within the table provides a 5 year rolling supply of employment land and is phased accordingly within Policy SWDP 50 Implementation and phasing Plan.

Table 4 Employment, Housing and Retail Supply (01/04/2006 to 31/03/2030)

	Employment (hectares)	Homes	Retail (Square metres)	
Worcester			Food	Non-Food
Completions ⁽¹⁾	9	1,563	2,600	
Commitments ⁽²⁾	47	1,434	10,000	6,000
Windfall Allowance ⁽³⁾	N/A	204	N/A	
Urban capacity allocations ⁽⁴⁾	43	1,176	0	10,000
Urban Extensions ⁽⁵⁾	25	4,025	See footnote 5	
Total Supply	124	8,402	28,600	
Five year rolling employment land supply	26	N/A	N/A	
Malvern Hills				
Completions	9.5	1,097	1,248	536

1 Total number/amount of homes/employment space completed for the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2010.

2 Total number/amount of homes/employment space either with planning permission or carried forward from the Local Plans. A discount of 2% for planning permissions not being implemented has been applied.

3 Windfall is unallocated housing development. An allowance for Windfall is not included in the first 10 years of the proposed housing supply. There is also no Windfall allowance for the final year of the Plan. The annual Windfall allowances for Malvern Hills, Worcester and Wychavon are 60, 34 and 87.5 respectively.

4 These allocations are all within the defined Development Boundary and are set out in the Site Allocations - Urban Areas chapter This includes Technology Park.

5 These allocations are beyond the current Local Plan Development Boundary. If allocated, the Development Boundary will be adjusted to include the allocation. The Urban Extensions are set out in the Site Allocations.

	Employment (hectares)	Homes	Retail (Square metres)	
Commitments	10.9	792	400	0
Windfall Allowance	N/A	360	N/A	
Urban capacity allocations	9	505	1,011	3,724
Urban Extensions	10	700		
Village Allocations ⁽⁶⁾	N/A	622	0	
Tenbury Wells	N/A	30	18	302
Upton-upon-Severn	N/A	50	17	214
Total Supply	39.4	4,156	7,470	
Five year rolling employment land supply	8	N/A	N/A	
Wychavon				
Completions	38.5	877	7,142	
Commitments ⁽⁷⁾	89.2	2,566	4,200	
Windfall Allowance	N/A	525	N/A	
Urban capacity allocations	N/A	517	500	750
Urban Extensions	18.5	2,140	0	
Village Allocations	N/A	1,178	0	
Total Supply	146.2	7,803	12,592	
Five year rolling employment land supply	30.5	N/A	N/A	
South Worcestershire				
Total Supply	309.6	20,361	48,662	

6 Village allocations are set out in the Site Allocations - Rural Areas chapter.

7 In order to meet the 5 year housing land supply, Wychavon District Council has granted planning permission for 3 major housing proposals which are departures from the adopted Wychavon District Local Plan. These housing schemes are Offenham Road, Evesham (508); Cheltenham Road, Evesham (158); and Three Springs Road, Pershore (135).

Links To The Objectives

4.23 The Preferred Option policy for the Employment, Housing and Retail policy supports the following objectives:

- Economic success that is shared by all objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4;
- Stronger communities objectives 1, 4 and 5;
- A better environment for today and tomorrow objective 1;
- Improving health and well-being objective 1.

Alternative Options Considered

4.24 Additional growth at Worcester. This would be in conformity with regional planning policy but given the significant constraints, particularly in relation to transportation, further major investment in infrastructure would be required. In addition, the increased rate of growth required over the period after which strategic infrastructure could reasonably be expected to be provided (2016-2026) would make the new communities difficult to integrate with the city as a whole.

4.25 Additional growth in the main towns/other towns. To be supportive of strategic planning policy, the amount of development would have to be much less than for Worcester. Notwithstanding this the spatial strategies in this document identify significant barriers to effectively deliver additional sustainable development. Further housing units could be delivered at Droitwich Spa and Evesham although this would require significant new transport infrastructure for which there are viability and deliverability issues.

4.26 Additional growth in Category 1 and 2 villages. This would not be supportive of strategic planning policy and if implemented would result in a significant increase in car trips given the relative lack of services. Only by increasing development by several hundred in any one settlement could a new service e.g. shop become viable. Such growth would clearly not be in keeping with the scale/character/function of the villages.

4.27 Growth at Mitton. This land, immediately to the north of Tewkesbury but within Wychavon District, is being promoted by a consortium of landowner(s)/agent within the reviews of the Regional Spatial Strategies for the West Midlands and the South West. At this stage the Examination in Public Panel for the South West Regional Spatial Strategy have rejected the need for cross boundary development. The process has not been concluded and the Department of Communities and Local Government may decide that there is a need. Whilst the site has some planning merit being accessible to Tewkesbury and outside areas of medium/high flood risk, it is not clear how much of the 1,000 unit capacity would actually be meeting the needs of the South Housing Market Area.

4.28 A freestanding settlement. This is not supported in the policies of the Regional Spatial Strategy or through the Issues and Options consultation. This is not considered to be a sustainable option and would not bring any benefit to other communities. It would take time to establish and would inevitably be a commuter village with little hope of being a sustainable community.

Forklift and Distribution, Wychavon District



4.3 SWDP 3: Overarching Sustainable Development Requirements

Reasoned Justification

4.29 Sustainable Development remains at the core of national planning policy. Developments which are badly designed will not only impact on the amenity of local residents but will also severely compromise the potential to help reduce local carbon emissions. All development proposals must satisfy policy SWDP3 below. This will help to ensure that development remains sustainable and is constructed to high quality.

4.30 The policy emphasises the need for high environmental standards in order to reduce the impact of Climate Change modelling; to reduce the impact of development on the amenity of local communities and ensure highway safety and to safeguard and enhance South Worcestershire's unique historic environment and landscape character.

View of Worcestershire County Cricket Club from the Cathedral



4.31 Policies SWDP 4, 5, 26 and 30 provide further details on specific requirements relating to Green Infrastructure provision, accessibility, design and housing mix requirements. This policy should be read in conjunction with these for further information:

Policy SWDP 3: Overarching Sustainable Development Principles

All development proposals must:

1. Deliver buildings to the highest possible sustainable design standard, incorporating energy saving, renewable energy, water and waste management measures to reduce the risks arising from climate change. Specifically:

- Residential development from 2011 to be built to a minimum Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 (Level 5 with respect to water use) increasing to Level 6 by 2016;
- Non residential development from 2011 be constructed to British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'very good' standard, increasing to 'excellent' by 2016;

- Meet 'Building for Life' Silver Standard (minimum 14 points) for major residential development proposals or achieve a minimum score of 14 points for minor developments of less than 5 units;
- All developments on Greenfield land will be required to maintain current surface water run-off rates. For Brownfield land a minimum 20% improvement is required;
- Ensuring that development includes the use and maintenance of sustainable drainage systems.

2. Incorporate flexible designs for buildings and their settings, including access to amenity space, enabling them to be adapted to future needs and to take into account the needs of all users;

3. Have a satisfactory means of access and provide for parking, servicing and manoeuvring of private and public vehicles in accordance with the adopted local standards;

4. Ensure both the strategic and local road network will be capable of safely, without undue environmental consequences, accommodating the type and volume of traffic likely to be generated;

5. Ensure appropriate utilities and community infrastructure are provided in accordance with the Implementation Plan.

6. Safeguard and enhance the landscape character and conservation characteristics specifically:

- Create a strong sense of place by strengthening the distinctive historic and cultural qualities and townscape of the towns and villages through its design, landscaping and use of public art;
- Safeguard and enhance features of landscape, ecological, geological, heritage, archaeological and amenity value as set out in the Historic Landscape Characteristics report⁽⁸⁾;
- Protect designated assets and nationally, regionally and locally important historic buildings, structures, monuments, landscapes and sites of archaeological significance;
- Respect the setting and views from Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, historic parks and gardens, significant historic or buildings/structures and public places and ensure development does not obstruct or detract from the important views of these features;

- Protect and enhance overall landscape character taking into account key characteristics, distinctiveness and sensitivity of the landscape setting of settlements⁽⁹⁾;
- Ensure that development does not have an adverse effect on skylines and prominent views of hill features.

7. Reduce the impact of the development on local communities by:

- Ensuring that the location and nature of the proposed development, including its relationship to, and impact on, its immediate setting, the locality and local communities is appropriate;
- Not resulting in unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties or the wider area, by reason of noise, vibration, smell, light and/or air pollution, loss of daylight or overlooking;
- Not adversely impacting on an identified Air Quality Management Area;
- For residential developments exceeding 10 units comprehensive consultation on the draft design proposals with the local community and interested parties in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

Links to the Objectives

4.32 The preferred option policy for the overarching sustainable development principles supports the following Objectives:

- Stronger Communities objective 1;
- A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow objectives 1, 2, 4 and 5;
- Improving Health and Well Being objective 2.

Alternative Options Considered

4.33 Do not include sustainable development requirements for new development. This would not be in accordance with national planning policy and the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It would also run contrary to the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.

4.34 Include more stringent requirements for new development. The Development Plan must focus on delivering new development and needs to be mindful of development viability issues. It is considered that the Preferred Options are mindful of the realistic delivery of high quality development and offers some opportunity for flexibility in appropriate circumstances.

9 As informed by Worcestershire County Council Landscape Character Assessment.

4.4 SWDP 4: Moving Around South Worcestershire

Reasoned Justification

4.35 Worcester city centre is the largest destination in terms of the number of vehicle trips in South Worcestershire and this is reflected in levels of traffic congestion both within and around the city. Its location is supported by a wider strategic transport infrastructure and access to the national motorway network. The River Severn constrains east/west movements through South Worcestershire and is a significant contributor to congestion on the A4440 Southern Link Road around Worcester, which is one of only two vehicle crossing points within the vicinity of the city. If the travel needs of the area's existing residents, businesses together with Worcester's planned growth are to be addressed, the city will require investment in an integrated rapid transit network for bus and rail and improvements to the strategic road network. This Development Plan provides the main opportunity for the District Councils to contribute to the implementation of these improvements.

4.36 The rural nature of most of South Worcestershire means that travel is highly diverse in terms of the origin and destination of trips, although most commuting takes place within South Worcestershire itself. Rural residents are more reliant on the use of cars than those in the urban areas and the needs of the ageing population in the rural areas will be increasingly difficult to meet as the numbers of residents without access to personal transport rises. More demand responsive forms of public and community based transport such as community buses will be required if the needs of these residents are to be met. This Development Plan should aim to improve transport choice to enhance rural accessibility in the area.

4.37 Worcestershire has a mature economy with well established transport networks and connectivity between economic centres already in place. Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan 3 suggests that investment should be focused on enhancing the performance of existing transport networks, particularly where journey times are increasing. There are some areas in South Worcestershire where investment in transport infrastructure and services has been insufficient to deal with rising demand and unless addressed this will have an even greater impact on the area's future growth and competitiveness.

4.38 There are a number of major roads where congestion is particularly bad, resulting in journey time unreliability and delay:

- Droitwich – Ombersley – Tenbury Wells (A443);
- Evesham – Pershore – Worcester (A44);
- Malvern – Worcester (A449/A4440);
- Worcester – Droitwich Spa (A38).

Sustainable travel

4.39 Traffic congestion is a major cost to the local economy and negatively affects air quality within urban areas. A significant change in travel patterns and travel behaviour is therefore necessary in order to meet the required reduction in carbon emissions as set out in the Climate Change Act 2008 and the World Health Organisation Air Quality Standards. This will not be achieved unless new homes are accompanied by increased investment in local services, employment opportunities and improvements to walking, cycling and public transport facilities.

4.40 There is a growing need to adopt policies that ensure the closer integration of land use and transportation planning to manage demand on the local transport network. This will help to minimise the impacts of new development and make full use of existing transport infrastructure and services. The Plan's overarching development strategy seeks to focus new development largely within the urban areas and in villages and settlements that have good access to local services, or where services can be enhanced through development (See Policy SWDP1), in order to minimise transport movements.

4.41 Worcestershire County Council has developed Requirements for Transport Assessment Guidelines ⁽¹⁰⁾ which major development proposals should take full account of. Developers will be required to submit a technical note alongside their application to set out how the Assessment Guidelines have been considered.

4.42 Travel Plans will be required for all major developments and should set out targets and monitoring arrangements to ensure sustainable travel patterns are maintained. Travel plans should be seen as an integral part of the wider implementation of an areas sustainable transport strategy. Plans must be robust and enforceable to ensure that development is delivered sustainably in transport terms. All Travel Plans must involve the development of agreed explicit outcomes linked to

Great Malvern Train Station



¹⁰ <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/transport-and-streets/transport/local-transport-plan/transport-guidance.aspx>

an appropriate package of measures. As set out in the Local Transport Plan 3, Worcestershire County Council will commit to using bonds to enforce the delivery of effective Travel Plans for residential, commercial and industrial development sites.

Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 3

4.43 This provides the policy and strategy context for major transport projects to enable Worcestershire County Council to bid for additional Government funding. It also provides the context to guide developer contributions.

4.44 Detailed plans for the implementation of transport infrastructure will come forward during the lifetime of the Local Transport Plan 3 and these will be developed so that the proposals taken forward have strong business cases and thereby represent value for money.⁽¹¹⁾

4.45 The Worcester Transport Strategy provides the Local Transport Plan 3 with the short, medium and long term Transport Strategy for the city. Without increased transport capacity across all modes of transport, Worcester's ability to grow and remain a key economic centre for the sub-region is significantly constrained. The full package of schemes within the Worcester Transport Strategy has been split into phases to ensure that an appropriate Major Scheme Bid submission can be prepared, which is compatible in types of schemes, timescales for delivery and funding requirements of the Department for Transport.

4.46 The first phase of the Worcester Transport Strategy, a proportion of which is subject to a Major Scheme Business Case, addresses Worcester's existing transport problems and comprises of the following:

- Junction capacity enhancements on the A4440, Southern Link Road
- Junction capacity enhancements along five key corridors in Worcester.
- Upgrades to Worcester Foregate Street and Malvern Link stations.
- Improvements to walk, cycle and passenger transport infrastructure along five key corridors in Worcester.
- Implementation of an Intelligent Transport System Scheme.
- Additional Park and Ride sites.
- Smarter choices measures.

4.47 Phase 1 package of measures will not, on their own be sufficient to deliver the levels of developments set out in this plan. However, its implementation is essential for the further investment in transport infrastructure and services needed

¹¹ The LTP3 Scheme Appraisal Framework (SAF) will guide Worcestershire County Council's capital spending which includes Section 106 funding and grant allocations to optimise value for money

to accommodate the increased travel demand associated with future development levels. Subsequent phases of the Transport Strategy will include further significant investment in:

- The strategic highway network, including the A4440, A38 and A449 and the North West Link Road;
- The local highway network as part of the key approach corridor;
- Walk, cycle and passenger transport infrastructure and services along additional key corridors;
- Additional smarter choices measures;
- Further enhancements to City Centre public realm;
- Worcestershire Parkway Station;
- Shrub Hill station enhancements.

4.48 Worcestershire Parkway is considered to be a Strategic Transport Scheme with benefits that extend well beyond the South Worcestershire area. The poor quality rail service between Worcestershire stations and locations served by the Birmingham - Cheltenham - Gloucester - Bristol and Cardiff main lines is exacerbated by the lack of direct access to cross country services. The proposed Worcestershire Parkway would help to address this issue and improve access to the national rail services, significantly improving local economic competitiveness.

4.49 The Local Transport Plan 3 South Worcestershire Rural package covers the key inter-urban links across all modes of transport. The key corridors include:

- A44 (Oxfordshire) - Evesham - Pershore - Worcester - Herefordshire
- A443/A4133 Tenbury Wells - Worcester (M5 Junctions 5 and 6)
- A449/A4440 Herefordshire - Malvern - Worcester (M5 Junction 7)
- A38 Wychbold (M5 Junction 5) - Droitwich Spa - Worcester - Gloucestershire
- A422 Worcester - Alcester - Warwickshire

4.50 It will also set out urban transport packages for the main towns in Worcestershire - Malvern, Tenbury Wells, Upton-Upon-Severn, Evesham, Pershore and Droitwich Spa, which will be defined in more detail during 2012.

4.51 New developments are expected to contribute a significant amount towards the funding of the Worcester Transport Strategy, which is considered essential to deliver sustainable growth.

Delivering Major Transport Schemes across South Worcestershire

The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership has identified the following transport related priorities:

- To deliver the largest sites and related transport infrastructure needed to secure economic growth and a low carbon economy;
- To deliver the right infrastructure for business – improving access from the M5 to the Malvern Hills Science Park and QinetiQ and creating better access for our strategic businesses and their supply chains.

4.52 The Worcestershire Local Investment Plan has specified that where resources for infrastructure are scarce, then priority will be given to schemes and investment which support the area's economic prosperity. In addition to the Local Transport Plan 3 schemes set out above, regard will also be had to transport priorities which may emerge through the plan period.

Bus collecting passengers



4.53 The County and District Councils will need to continue to work in partnership with organisations such as the Highways Agency, Network Rail, Department for Transport and Train Operating Companies to promote and develop schemes such as Worcestershire Parkway and secure improvements to M5 Junctions 5, 6 and 7.

4.54 The provision of transport infrastructure schemes and improvements associated with new development proposals will need to demonstrate that they have fully considered the risks associated with environmental impact, for example flooding and climate change in accordance with Environmental Impact Assessment requirements. They will also need to demonstrate that they have minimised disruption to the existing strategic transport network and the impact on the area's economy and local communities. However, it is the South Worcestershire Authorities' aspiration

that the majority of strategic infrastructure identified within Local Transport Plan 3 Major Scheme Bids linked to the proposed development of strategic sites should be committed to prior to agreeing a final phasing plan for development.

Parking policy

4.55 Traffic and parking management measures can significantly improve the efficiency of transport networks. Worcestershire LTP3 places an emphasis on working with partners to ensure that parking in city and town centres is biased towards short stay use to encourage high turnover of shoppers which will boost economic activity. Long stay car parking, mainly associated with commuting will be reallocated to Park and Ride sites and peripheral locations wherever practicable.

4.56 Within the rural areas where communities are more reliant upon the private car due to a lack of transport choice, consideration will be given to the more flexible application of parking standards based on site assessment and location.

4.57 The South Worcestershire Authorities will work with Worcestershire County Council to develop locally specific parking standards through the Local Transport Plan 3 and Supplementary Planning Documents. Standards will be based on capacity and pricing reviews which must also carefully consider the impact on the regeneration of Worcester city and the main/other towns as specified in Policy SWDP 1.

4.58 Prior to the adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents, parking standards for new development should be provided in accordance with national guidance as set out in Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport. Parking standards within new developments should take account of the requirements outlined in the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and should make the most efficient use of the site's developable land.

4.59 The appropriate number of car parking spaces required will depend on a number of factors including location, accessibility to non-car transport infrastructure, local on-street car parking capacity and highway safety along with the need to make the best use of land.

Phasing and Implementation of Transport Infrastructure

4.60 The funding to deliver transport infrastructure is likely to come from a variety of sources during the Development Plan period. It is anticipated that a funding gap will be identified for transport infrastructure. It is clear that without substantial funding contributions from alternative sources, including the private sector, many of the strategic transport schemes that are required to underpin new development in the area will not be deliverable.

4.61 The Implementation Plan considers the funding mechanisms to determine how transport infrastructure will be prioritised, phased and implemented. Potential funding sources include:

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);

- Other Developer Contributions;
- New Homes Bonus Scheme;
- Sustainable Transport Fund;
- Local Transport Capital Settlement.

4.62 Local Transport Plan 3 sets out the County Council's position as the Local Transport Authority, which justifies the appropriate levels of financial contributions towards transport infrastructure and services which will be sought from developers.

4.63 Developers will be required to demonstrate that they have given appropriate consideration to the potential impacts of development on the strategic highways network, which is managed by the Highways Agency. In particular, the impact on the safe and efficient operation of Junctions 5, 6 and 7 of the M5 Motorway will require detailed consideration.

4.64 The phasing of major highways or sustainable transport improvement schemes have been considered and integrated within the delivery programme as set out in the Implementation Plan. It is acknowledged that it will not be possible to provide all infrastructure prior to new development taking place, due to the limited availability of large scale funding. However, it is the South Worcestershire Authorities' aspiration that the majority of strategic infrastructure identified within Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 3 Major Scheme bids linked to the proposed development of large sites should be committed to prior to agreeing a final phasing plan for development.

SWDP 4: Moving around South Worcestershire

Managing Travel Demand

Proposals must demonstrate that the location for development will minimise demand for travel, offer genuine sustainable travel choices, improve road safety and support the delivery of Local Transport Plan Objectives.

Travel Plans will be required for all sites of 10 or more units⁽¹²⁾. These must set out measures to reduce the demand for travel by private cars and stimulate cycling, walking and public transport through agreed targets and monitoring arrangements.

New developments should accord with the design criteria and principles set out in Manual for Streets, Worcestershire County Council's Highways Design Guide for new developments and the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

¹² For residential uses major is defined as 10 units or more. For all non-residential major is defined as exceeding 1,000 square metres (net). The agreed targets within a Travel Plan will reflect the potential of the end use to offer realistic travel choices.

Providing alternative modes of travel

Priority will be given to improving public and community transport provision, walking and cycling infrastructure during the plan period. All new developments will be expected to contribute to the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure either through direct investment in facilities or by financial contributions.

In order to promote more transport choice in rural areas, community transport and innovative transport projects including those which promote the use of new vehicle technology will be encouraged in conjunction with new development proposals.

All town centre development will need to show that the needs of alternative powered vehicle users have been considered.

Delivering transport infrastructure to support economic prosperity

The following major transport schemes as identified within the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 3 will be prioritised:

- Worcester Transport Strategy Phase 1
- Worcestershire Parkway
- Evesham Abbey Bridge
- Urban transport packages for the towns of Malvern, Tenbury Wells, Upton-upon-Severn, Pershore, Evesham and Droitwich Spa.

Development proposals which are likely to prejudice the future development of these strategic transport schemes; or have an adverse impact on existing or proposed public transport facilities and the implementation of identified highway improvements or traffic management schemes such as those along the A4440 (Southern Link) at Worcester, will not be permitted.

With respect to growth at Worcester the highway authority has indicated that the Worcester Transport Strategy Phase 1 only addresses existing transportation needs at 2010 along with projected background growth on traffic demand. The implementation of 8400 dwellings and 124 hectares of employment land up to 2030 will therefore be dependant upon the development and satisfactory implementation of Worcester Transport Strategy Phase 2 under the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan.

Transport Assessment

When considering development proposals and associated improvements to the local transportation network, a full risk assessment will be required to minimise environmental impact and any resulting disruption to the strategic transport network.

Car parking standards

Locally determined car parking standards will apply to all development proposals, which will be set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.

Implementation

Financial contributions towards strategic transport infrastructure will be secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule. New development will need to be incorporated into a co-ordinated infrastructure and service delivery programme agreed with the South Worcestershire authorities and Worcestershire County Council. Where appropriate site-specific transport improvements may be sought through Section 106, Section 278 and Section 38 Agreements in accordance with Worcestershire County Council's Design Guidance.

Links To The Objectives

4.65 The Preferred Option policy for the moving around South Worcestershire meets the following Objectives:

- Economic Success that is Shared By All objectives 1 and 3;
- Stronger Communities objective 4;
- Improving Health and Well Being objectives 3;
- Communities that are Safe and Feel Safe objective 2.

Alternative Options Considered

4.66 **Seek to provide for the unrestrained growth in travel that will arise as a result of increasing prosperity and level of development.** This approach would increase demand for travel by private car and would increase carbon dioxide emissions, congestion on local transport networks and makes the provision of and accessibility to local services more difficult.

4.67 **Rely on increasing levels of congestion to limit travel demand.** This would have unacceptable consequences for economic development, carbon dioxide emissions and increase social exclusion. This is a highly unsustainable option.

4.5 SWDP 5: Strategic Green Infrastructure

Reasoned Justification

4.68 Green Infrastructure is a network of green spaces and related environmental features that intersperse and connect cities, towns and villages. It incorporates open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage, historic environment and open countryside. Green Infrastructure can deliver an integrated infrastructure and provide multiple benefits for the economy, environment and people.

4.69 Provision of Green Infrastructure is essential to delivering a high quality of life for local communities. It is also an important part of the life support system of an area. Functions and eco-systems services which Green Infrastructure can provide to a community include employment, recreation, physical health and mental well being, social interaction, contact with nature and food production, drainage and flood management, biomass and wood fuel, climate change adaptation and pollution control. Furthermore, it can safeguard and enhance local distinctiveness, help to create a high quality built environment and improve the quality of the built environment and public realm assets.

Bridge over River Avon, Wychavon District



Context

4.70 Biodiversity, geodiversity, open spaces, landscapes and the historic environment together create and underpin the unique character of South Worcestershire. Distinctive features of environmental importance in South Worcestershire include the Severn, Avon and Teme Valleys. Other areas whose special qualities are recognised by statutory designation include the Cotswolds (Including Bredon Hill) and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark. The Green Belt is not of the highest landscape quality as its primary purpose is to prevent settlement coalescence and encroachment into the wider countryside. However because the Green Belt will be kept open it will continue to perform a valuable Green Infrastructure function.

4.71 There are numerous heritage assets of architectural, archaeological and cultural interest in South Worcestershire which contribute significantly to its distinctive character and settlements. The rich diversity in the historic environment reflects human interaction with the landscape from the earliest prehistoric settlements to the present day. The valued identity of city/town centres, suburbs, villages, hamlets and farmsteads has developed as these settlements have grown and evolved. The historic environment setting for these settlements has evolved into distinctive landscapes; the essence of which has been captured by the Historic Environment Assessment for South Worcestershire.

4.72 It is now widely recognised that Green Infrastructure has a major role to play in providing flood mitigation and adaptation measures, together with protecting enhancing and creating biodiversity. This is seen as particularly important in the South Worcestershire area in the light of recent severe flooding events both fluvial and pluvial.

4.73 In order to meet sustainability requirements and conserve valued components of South Worcestershire's Green Infrastructure Network the physical and visual aspects of new development should be planned to be comprehensive and sustainable from the outset. They should be integrated into the existing landscape and valuable features and settings protected and enhanced.

4.74 The Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework forms the basis for the development of the emerging Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy which will set out a series of actions required to deliver Green Infrastructure improvements.

Malvern Hills an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



4.75 The Green Infrastructure requirements of new development will be informed by the Framework which provides an analysis and interpretation of the environmental assets of the area. The analysis identifies broad character areas based on an assessment of Green Infrastructure quality and vulnerability to change. The most important Strategic Green Infrastructure is shown both on the Context Map and the Proposals Map. The priority areas for Green Infrastructure investment are shown on the Key Diagram and the Proposals Map. It is accompanied by an assessment

of the appropriate strategic approach to be adopted i.e. Very High Quality Green Infrastructure it will be to protected and enhanced; for Low Quality Green Infrastructure the approach will be an equal emphasis on creation and enhancement.⁽¹³⁾

4.76 In considering development proposals all parties should also refer to local evidence documents that include the following e.g:

- Worcestershire County Landscape Character Assessment;
- South Worcestershire Historic Environment Assessment;
- Worcestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation Assessment;
- National and local Heritage at Risk surveys;
- County Historic Farmsteads Study;
- Worcestershire Habitat Inventory;
- Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Conservation Areas, Designation Reports and Appraisals;
- Historic Environments Records;
- Archaeology Strategy for Worcester city;
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans;
- Supplementary Planning Documents;
- West Midlands Regional Forest Framework;
- Worcestershire County Council Local Transport Plan 3;
- Access and Informal Recreation Strategy;
- Geodiversity Action Plan for Worcestershire;
- Local lists compiled by the South Worcestershire Authorities.

13 The Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework includes an Environmental Character Areas map. The map identified areas of strategic intervention and a series of objectives for each given area. The Environmental Character Areas have been weighted in a range from Very High to Low quality Green Infrastructure with differing levels of provision and quality that will require discrete levels of intervention. For example Environmental Character Area 1 (Hallow and Laugherne Brook) is of high quality therefore the strategic intervention is to protect and enhance. Alternatively Environmental Character Area 14 (Kempsey Plateau) is of low quality and therefore requires an equal approach on both site protection and creation. However, there are qualifications to the scope and application of the Green Infrastructure Character Area map, which includes recognising that the boundaries shown on the map are intended to be soft-edged and indicative.

4.77 Policy and associated standards for the provision of open space with a sport, recreation or amenity value, and the protection and enhancement of existing areas, are set out elsewhere in this document (see Policy SWDP 43, 44 and 45).

Worcester riverside - green infrastructure corridor



SWDP 5: Strategic Green Infrastructure

Development proposals will be required to protect and enhance existing Green Infrastructure, and create further provision, in line with the strategic aims and objectives of the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework and emerging strategy. New provision will be required to deliver multifunctional benefits which promote recreation and tourism, public access, education, and protect and enhance biodiversity, geodiversity, the historic environment, landscape character and contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives.

New provision should be well connected with existing Green Infrastructure, be appropriate to the size of the site to be developed, reduce the fragmentation of habitats and strengthen landscape character.

The Worcestershire Sub Regional Green Infrastructure Framework and emerging Strategy will help to inform priorities, such as contributions from funding sources, to the achievement of Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan targets, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, or to adopted local strategies for the historic environment and landscape or biodiversity. Development proposals must set out how on-site Green Infrastructure will be maintained. They will also be required to contribute to Strategic Green Infrastructure.

Links to the objectives

4.78 The preferred option for the Strategic Green Infrastructure policy supports the following objectives:

- A better environment for today and tomorrow objectives 1, 3, 4 and 5.
- Improving health and well-being objective 2.

Alternative Options Considered

4.79 **Development Management decisions could be based upon national planning policy e.g. Planning Policy Statement 9 and Planning Policy Guidance note 17.** This would result in an absence of local planning directions to complement strategies by other organisations e.g. Environment Agency and Natural England.

4.80 This situation could worsen when detailed national planning policies are replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework.

4.81 The Key Diagram illustrates the development strategy. This strategy has evolved over a significant amount of time and much of it has already been subject to extensive consultation. It should be looked at in conjunction with the Context Map (figure 1) and identifies the following:

- Worcester as the focus for development;
- The Main Towns, Other Towns, Category 1 (named), 2 and 3 villages;
- Major allocations at Worcester and the main towns;
- The principal transport network and infrastructure requirements including proposed Park and Ride sites and Worcestershire Parkway;
- The main commuting patterns;
- The Worcestershire A38 High Technology Corridor;
- Strategic Retail Development at Worcester;
- Strategic Green Infrastructure Network Improvements.

4.6 Figure 3 - Key Diagram

Figure 3 - Key Diagram

