

Vision and Objectives

Vision

In 2030 south Worcestershire remains a highly desirable place in which to live and work. The planned growth in housing and employment, supported by the work of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, has created a robust, competitive local economy. This in turn has retained and stimulated significant inward investment and generated numerous job opportunities. Businesses have access to a locally based, highly skilled workforce, thanks to the high quality educational and training provision available in the area. The University of Worcester goes from strength to strength and helps to attract and retain the best and brightest graduates in south Worcestershire.

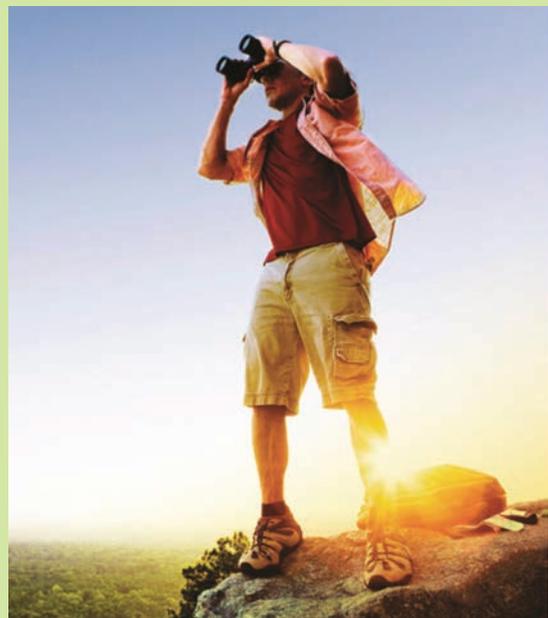
Residents and businesses enjoy better accessibility within and beyond the area through the implementation of major improvements to the highway network, in particular the A4440 at Worcester, the completion of Worcestershire Parkway and improvements to local railway stations. A series of smaller but no less vital infrastructure improvements impact positively on the day-to-day life of the residents of the three districts, including improvements to local roads, junctions, public transport provision, drainage and water infrastructure.

Small-scale businesses have flourished in rural areas through the support offered by the SWDP policies including home-based working and farm diversification opportunities. Farm diversification has enabled farming and horticulture to continue to play an important role in the local rural economy. This has been helped by significant improvements to electronic means of communication, including the roll-out of high-speed broadband and the promotion of live-work development.

Investment in retail and office space has enabled Worcester to compete successfully with the larger centres within and beyond the West Midlands. Worcester also provides high-class and wide-ranging leisure and service facilities.

The main towns of Droitwich Spa, Evesham and Malvern are vibrant, offering a range of employment, shopping and community facilities to their residents and the wider community. The towns of Pershore, Tenbury Wells and Upton-upon-Severn also continue to offer local services and remain at the heart of the area's rural economy. All the towns have benefited from public realm and local transport improvements.

South Worcestershire residents have access to a range of housing types and tenures that help to meet the needs of young families, older people and single households. High quality development has incorporated innovative, environmentally friendly solutions that



have helped to reduce resource consumption, achieve sustainable communities and lessen the effects of extreme climatic impacts, particularly flooding.

Affordable and accessible housing is widely available and helps to secure and sustain local communities, services and facilities.

Residents enjoy a high standard of living, featuring good health and education in an attractive, safe and secure, low-crime environment. The investment in Green Infrastructure has enabled better access to healthy opportunities and lifestyles for residents and visitors alike as well as helping to improve biodiversity interest.

A thriving tourism market is underpinned by a high quality natural and built environment, the highlights of which include the Cotswolds and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the river valleys of the Avon, Severn and Teme, and Worcester Cathedral and the historic cores of the towns and villages. The need to protect these vital and sensitive landscapes and environments as enshrined within the SWDP forms a cornerstone of south Worcestershire's continued success as a place in which to live, work and relax.

The SWDP objectives will help to deliver the Vision. These are set out in the box below. Annex A lists the primary connections between the SWDP policies and these objectives. The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (hereafter referred to as the Sustainability Appraisal or SA) demonstrates how the SWDP objectives accord with and were shaped by sustainability objectives.

Table 1: SWDP Objectives

SWDP Objectives	
A. Economic Success that is Shared By All	
1.	Development that focuses on improving the area's economic prosperity, delivering new jobs, retaining key employers and maximising high value employment opportunities through the right employment sites.
2.	To work with partners, in particular the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, to strengthen the urban and rural economies by enabling local businesses, including farms, to start, grow, adapt and diversify.
3.	To promote the sub-regional role of Worcester as the major leisure, retail, tourist and university centre and support the sustainable growth of the city.
4.	To prioritise the re-development, including mixed uses, of brownfield land within the urban areas in order to aid the regeneration of the city / town centres.
B. Stronger Communities	
1.	To deliver sufficient new homes needed by local communities and which will help support economic growth.

SWDP Objectives	
2.	To provide a balanced mix of house tenures and types, including extra care provision, to satisfy the full range of housing needs and help create active / inclusive / sustainable communities.
3.	To maximise opportunities to deliver affordable housing.
4.	To allocate most development in locations where there is good access to local services and where transport choice is maximised.
5.	Providing a basis for Neighbourhood Plans.
C. A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow	
1.	To ensure that the scale and type of new development does not compromise landscape character or south Worcestershire's built heritage.
2.	To ensure development is designed to the highest possible environmental standards in order to minimise carbon emissions resource consumption, pollution, flood risk and increase the proportion of renewable energy.
3.	To maintain open landscape and prevent the merging of settlements in both Green Belt and non-Green Belt locations.
4.	To protect the Green Infrastructure Network and take every opportunity to increase its coverage and quality.
5.	To enhance biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape quality, water quality and protect the highest quality agricultural land.
D. Improving Health and Well-being	
1.	To ensure that new development supports the delivery of healthcare provision and accessibility.
2.	To ensure that new development sets out high quality formal / informal recreational opportunities and contributes to enhanced sporting facilities in order to encourage healthy lifestyles.
3.	To promote opportunities and access to a range of skills / vocational training and levels of education for all generations.
E. Communities that are Safe and feel Safe	
1.	All new development to employ 'Secured by Design' and 'Design out Crime' principles.
2.	All new development to contribute to the provision of accessible community infrastructure that increases 'footfall' / pedestrian movements in public places.

Economic Prosperity

4. The economic role is one of the SWDP's three primary areas of focus in seeking to achieve sustainable development. Through its economic role the plan contributes to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. It ensures that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation and it identifies and co-ordinates development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.
5. The Economic Vision and Economic Strategy for south Worcestershire outlined below are at the core of this economic prosperity-led planning strategy. They elaborate on and develop the SWDP's overall vision for south Worcestershire and expand the strategic focus that directs the SWDP's policies and proposals. They also support delivery of the Worcestershire Economic Strategy and the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's Business Plan



Economic Vision for South Worcestershire.

6. The economic vision for south Worcestershire is as an excellent place to do business, with a substantial low-carbon economy, which has diversified so that the overall prosperity of the area can withstand any down-turns in individual sectors. The south Worcestershire economy is increasing output as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA) and becoming more productive (GVA per head). There is sustained growth in jobs, inward and indigenous investment and delivery of infrastructure improvements, particularly improving access for business. Growth has been enhanced by the retention of younger residents, particularly University of Worcester graduates and youngsters who would previously

have had difficulty in finding job opportunities. There are more high-value jobs in the area, leading to reduced out-commuting. Cultural and environmental assets have been enhanced increasing the attractiveness of the area to visitors, residents and businesses.

Economic Strategy

7. The Economic Strategy for South Worcestershire is:
 - a. To create the conditions for sustained economic and jobs growth.
 - b. To ensure south Worcestershire is 'open for business' and able to match the requirements of potential inward investors.
 - c. To ensure a flexible approach is maintained to all opportunities that deliver economic benefits, with a target to return to GVA levels that existed before the downturn in 2008.
8. This will be achieved through:
 - a. Reduced reliance on the public sector and increased output and employment in the private sector, particularly in higher value and skilled occupations.
 - b. Growing and adding value to existing south Worcestershire businesses, including agricultural and horticultural businesses.
 - c. Securing and growing high technology sectors that already have a presence in south Worcestershire.
 - d. Providing the right land and premises in the right location and at the right time to help businesses start, grow and flourish.
 - e. An established and sustained low carbon economy.
 - f. Providing and maintaining an adequate supply of new homes that support economic growth.
 - g. Maintaining a competitive level of infrastructure throughout south Worcestershire – particularly in terms of excellent access, including electronic access.
 - h. Sustain and regenerate Worcester city and other town centres as priority areas for growth.
 - i. Supporting flourishing rural economies, with strong land-based sectors and diversification into higher added values activity, enhanced by greater broadband connectivity.
 - j. Retaining retail spending in south Worcestershire and increasing leisure and tourism related spending / income.
 - k. Ensuring local residents are able to take up increased job opportunities in higher skilled and higher value occupations.

Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy

9. In September 2010, the Worcestershire Partnership approved a single Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Worcestershire. This superseded the multiple strategies previously covering south Worcestershire and provided a single strategic vision for the future of the entire county of Worcestershire, which allowed those organisations delivering services to prioritise delivery in the context of reduced resources. The development of the SCS ran parallel to and interlinked with the development of the SWDP and as such the two sets of priorities that have been developed are mutually supportive of each other.
10. The countywide Sustainable Community Strategy was adopted in 2011. It contains three key cross-county priorities and a statement of the priorities for each of the district-level partnerships and these are reflected at Annex A.
11. Through a mapping of the SCS priorities against the more detailed objectives and associated policies that have emerged through the preparation of this plan, it can be seen that they are mutually supportive at Annex B.