

## Introduction

**5.1** Worcester City is the county town and administrative centre for South Worcestershire and beyond with a population of 94,700 (2009 Mid-Term Population Estimates). It is a historic centre based on the cathedral that dominates the skyline. Despite the major expansion at Warndon Villages and St Peter the Great, the city still maintains the image of being a city within a rural setting that is distinctive to South Worcestershire. This distinctive setting, in part is provided by many villages within the countryside beyond the city boundary, on whom the city has a major influence.

### View of Worcester from the Cathedral



**5.2** The South Worcestershire Development Plan Strategy recognises that Worcester is a city with a dynamic local economy with high levels of economic success, knowledge based industries, connectivity and communications, with an active university benefiting the area and businesses through its research activities. Worcester's success in attracting and holding employers and attracting major shopping chains will have a direct impact on the economic success of South Worcestershire as a whole being the dominant employment, shopping and tourist centre.

### 5.1 Worcester Urban Capacity

#### 5.1.1 SWDP 6: Worcester City Allocations

#### Reasoned Justification

**5.3** The evidence gathered through the Retail Study, Employment Land Review and Housing Needs Study together with the results of the Issues and Options and Preferred Options consultation show support for Worcester to maintain and enhance its role at the top of the settlement hierarchy as the county town and city centre.

**5.4** The intention for Worcester over the plan period is that of sustained investment in economic development, aligned with successful advances in sustainable travel, leading to a vibrant and diverse city. It is:

- Driven by a high skill, high value-added knowledge economy;
- Home to a growing and academically excellent university that makes a strong contribution to the local economy;
- A prestige tourist destination, offering a range of experiences to shoppers, day trippers, holiday makers and business visitors;
- Famous for its historic and well managed city centre;
- Served by integrated and high quality transport infrastructure;
- Play a part in delivering housing growth in South Worcestershire in a sustainable and environmentally sensible way; and
- Provides a range of services, facilities and employment opportunities which meet sub-regional needs and support the economic growth of South Worcestershire as a whole.

### High Street and Market, Worcester



**5.5** As such the city and its environs are the focus of future development and the preferred location for any national or regionally significant developments in South Worcestershire. It is the centre of the Development Strategy for South Worcestershire and its prosperity will be reflected across the area. However, it is recognised that the delivery of key infrastructure (see Implementation Phasing and Monitoring chapter) is vital if the overall strategy is to be achieved.

**5.6** The Development Strategy (Policy SWDP 1) allocates approximately 8400 dwellings, about 124 hectares of employment land including approximately 55,000 sq m of offices in the city centre and a minimum of 10,000 sq m of non-food retail development. There is an identified need to deliver affordable housing to satisfy outstanding and projected demand and this will need to be addressed as part of the development of the 8,400 dwellings. This figure has been derived from the reductions

in Office for National Statistics household and migration projections; the limited brownfield capacity of the City and wider area and that jobs and appropriate infrastructure will also need to be provided to support such housing growth for which there is a significant cost and deliverability implication.

**5.7** Evidence demonstrates that there is insufficient suitable land within the city boundary to deliver its development needs and therefore some expansion will be necessary immediately outside the city boundary.

**5.8** An important first step is to assess the present urban capacity of the city.

**5.9** At 31st March 2010 the Housing Land Monitor reveals the following:

**Table 5 Dwelling completions and commitments**

Completions since 2006	1563
Commitments i.e. sites with Planning permission	1463
<b>Total</b>	<b>3026</b>

**5.10** Based on past trends there needs to be a 2% discount on the commitments figure to allow for unimplemented permissions. Therefore, there is a need for provision of approximately 5,400 dwellings within the Worcester area phased over the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2030 in order to meet the overall requirement of around 8,400 dwellings.

**5.11** The allocated sites (5 dwellings or over) identified within the city boundary should deliver approximately 1,176 units. This would mean approximately 4,200 dwellings should be accommodated within the city boundary through past completions (since 2006), present commitments and proposed allocations.

**5.12** A windfall allowance is only allowed for the last seven years of the plan period, and it is estimated that this may deliver approximately 34 dwellings per year up to 2030.

**5.13** On this basis approximately 4,025 dwellings would still need to be provided outside the city boundary. This has taken account of evidence relating to the Green Belt, Local Green Network, existing employment sites and the need for sports, health, education and other community facilities - not to mention the aspirations of creating a dynamic, successful, attractive and vibrant city centre - essential to create a sustainable balanced city.

**Water fountain and St Andrew's Spire**



**5.14** In addition, sites for around 27 hectares of new employment land have been identified. An assessment of all sites including those put forward through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment can be found in the background paper – 'Worcester Site Allocations'.

### **SWDP 6: Worcester City Allocations**

Within Worcester City the following sites are allocated for the following uses, and shown on the Proposals Map. They should be developed in accordance with the criteria identified in respect of each site and all general policy requirements, including any necessary contributions towards the provision of recreation, education and other community.

#### **A. Housing.**

**Table 6 Sites for housing**

<b>Policy Reference</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Indicative no. of dwellings</b>
SWDP6/1	Land south of Lyppard Hill	100
SWDP6/2	Gregory's Bank Industrial Estate	140
SWDP6/3	Masonic Hall Site	50
SWDP6/4	Cedar Avenue Depot	45
SWDP6/5	Rear of 2-32 Ribble Close and Gas Holder Site	40
SWDP6/6	Old Northwick Farm	40
SWDP6/7	Wyvern Service Station	6
SWDP6/8	Moor Street Clinic	20
SWDP6/9	Post office Sorting office Westbury Street	20
SWDP6/10	Land at Albert Road	20
SWDP6/11	Sansome Walk Swimming Pool	40

**B. Mixed Uses.****Table 7 Sites for mixed use development**

Policy Ref.	Site	Indicative	
		No. of dwellings	Employment (Hectares)
SWDP6/12	Claines Recreation Ground and adjacent Land (Housing, British Legion Club House, sports facilities and Super Play Area)	15	
SWDP6/13	Former Ronkswood Hospital (Care Home, Care Village, and residential)	200	
SWDP6/14	Worcester Woods Business Park, Newtown Road (B1, B2 employment, Care Home, Hotel, Car/motor bike showroom, hospital expansion)		11
SWDP6/15	Government Buildings, Whittington Road. (B1 office and residential)	120	4
SWDP6/16	Church Farm Claines (Park and Ride and Cemetery)		
SWDP6/17	Grove Farm. (Medical Centre, Business Innovation Centre, Research and Development, University Campus)		11

**C. Employment.****Table 8 Sites for employment**

Policy Ref.	Site	Employment (Hectares)
SWDP6/18	Midland Road	1

**D. Other uses.****Table 9 Sites for other development**

Policy Ref.	Site	Indicative	
		Dwellings	Employment (Hectares)
SWDP6/19	Perdiswell (Leisure uses)		
SWDP6/20	School of Art and Design, Barbourne (Care Home)		
SWDP6/21	Former Hallow Road Tip (Open space/Leisure/Super play area)		
SWDP6/22	Warehouse, Portland Street (Community Uses)		
SWDP6/23	Offerton Lane Gypsy and Traveller site (Redevelopment to increase by 10 pitches)	10(pitches)	

All development will need to contribute as appropriate (N.B. Section 106 Developers contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy) to the range of Infrastructure required in order to make growth sustainable.

**5.1.2 SWDP 7: Worcester City Centre****Reasoned Justification**

**5.15** The City Centre forms a vital element as its economic performance is intrinsically linked with the wider success of the City, and South Worcestershire. Worcester Alliance, with Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council are pursuing a Master Plan (to be developed through the City Centre Supplementary Planning Document) for the central area which will provide a framework for development, regeneration and investment up to 2030. Stage one was establishing a Vision for the central area and David Lock Associates undertook this work. This work identified several locations where development and intervention can occur in order to bring about regeneration and improvement (see City Centre Diagram). The Document will develop ideas about design, land use, transport and access, and public realm.

### Masterplan image of Cathedral Plaza



**5.16** The issues and Options and Preferred Options consultations supported the approach of directing major retail development to the city centre which is consistent with evidence from the retail study.

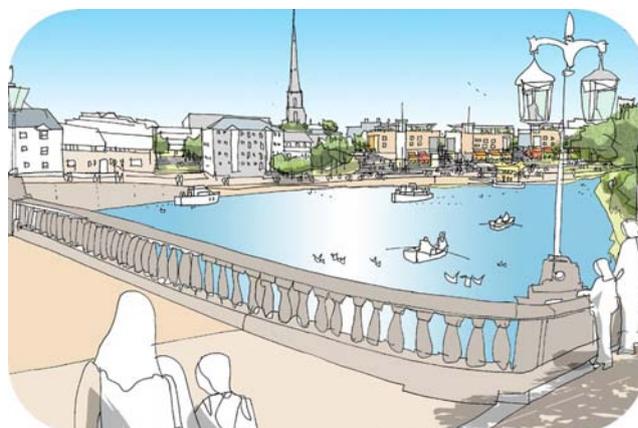
**5.17** All options to promote the city centre have been supported at the consultation exercises particularly recognising its strategic significance in South Worcestershire and beyond. However, the protection of existing leisure, office, education and retail uses also received significant support.

**5.18** The City Centre Masterplan Vision document highlights several locations within or close to the city centre where development and intervention can occur in order to bring about regeneration and improvement .These are

- **Shrub Hill.**(Shrub Hill Station, Cromwell Street, Padmore Street, Tolladine Road, Shrub Hill Road and Lowesmoor Wharf). Commercial office space and a limited amount of housing could be developed, exploiting the opportunity of the canal side location and proximity of the station. The redevelopment should embrace the historic and Listed Buildings, but should also retain some of the less 'attractive' businesses which survive in part due to lower rents. These business should not be lost as they are vital to the economy of the city. If they cannot remain in this area they should be re-located, possibly to Midland Road. The redevelopment of Cromwell Street could provide a mix of uses enabling the opportunity to connect Lowesmoor, the canal and the station together. Sandwiched between Rainbow Hill and Tolladine Road is an area of low density uses which is an important gateway into the city from the railway line. A mixed use development focussed around a new canal basin would create a new active quarter for the city. It is estimated that, although not residential led that an element will be included to deliver approximately 200 dwellings.
- **Riverside.** Significant improvements are already being made to the riverside, but opportunities could be taken for locating a hotel and creative industries as well as enhancing the riverside space at Quay Head. Improving links and connections will need to be created particularly across Deansway.

- Retail Core.** The retail study indicates that it would be appropriate for Worcester to expand its city centre shopping floorspace, to accommodate the needs of the catchment population and to retain its position in the regional hierarchy. Several key sites, including Crown Gate (re-configuration and expansion onto adjacent land e.g. fire station site, The Butts and Angel place); Cathedral Plaza (re-configuration of the existing floorspace) and the former Co-op building and adjacent land (re-development) that have potential with the aim of delivering an improved retail offer in the city centre.

**Worcester riverside masterplan**



- Blockhouse/Carden Street.** This gives the opportunity for a network of intimate shared surface streets which can provide access to a mix of good quality city centre housing (approximately 120 dwellings), and smaller business premises.
- Cathedral Quarter and Sidbury.** The opportunity exists to improve the point of arrival at Sidbury, with the development of a hotel on the former Royal Worcester Porcelain Site and involving the re-development of King Street car park. An area to encourage creative industries to cluster together around the Royal Worcester Porcelain museum would be beneficial.

**SWDP 7: Worcester City Centre**

A. The following sites are allocated for retail development (as shown on the Proposals Map):

**Table 10 Sites allocated for retail development**

Policy Reference	Sites
SWDP7/1	Cathedral Plaza to allow for re-development, refurbishment, expansion of the existing shopping centre and to provide greater connectivity with the Cathedral.
SWDP7/2	Fire Station/Crown Gate/Angel Place/The Butts to allow for re-development, refurbishment, expansion of the existing shopping centre and to provide greater connectivity with the riverside and the University Campus.

<b>Policy Reference</b>	<b>Sites</b>
SWDP7/3	Former Co-op building/Cornmarket to allow for re-development for retail purposes and the creation an important open space giving improved connections to the Lowesmoor Development and Shrub Hill Station.

B. In addition the following Opportunity Zones shown on the Proposals Map have been identified as follows:

**Table 11 Opportunity Zones**

<b>Policy Reference</b>	<b>Opportunity Zones</b>
SWDP7/4	Shrub Hill (approx 200 dwellings)
SWDP7/5	Blockhouse/Carden Street (includes approx 120 dwellings)
SWDP7/6	Sidbury

Re-development proposals for the listed Opportunity Zones will be supported providing they:

- Incorporate a genuine mix of land uses.
- Make a contribution to achieving the development strategy objective for new B1 office space in Worcester City Centre;
- Are not predominantly residential in nature;
- Offer genuine sustainable travel choices;
- Do not result in new retail or leisure destinations as retail and leisure elements should be clearly ancillary to other land uses within the zone;
- Enhance views over the historic city centre;
- Secure the refurbishment and future of Listed Buildings and structures within the zone;
- Encourage existing businesses to remain or provide suitably re-located opportunities.

Proposals for single uses will be evaluated for their contribution and effect on the overall mix of uses in the area. All new development will be expected to contribute to the enhancement of infrastructure, Travel Plans, public realm, streets and open spaces, and Community Infrastructure Levy in respect of strategic infrastructure

Further detail on appropriate uses for Opportunity Zones and other specific sites will be provided through the City Centre Supplementary Planning Document:

### Links to the Objectives

**5.19** The Preferred option policies for Worcester City meet the following objectives:

- Economic Success That is Shared By All objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4;
- Stronger Communities objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5;
- A Better Environment objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5;
- Improving Health and Well Being objectives 1, 2 and 3;
- Communities that are Safe and Feel Safe objectives 1 and 2.

### Machinery Operation at Mazac, Worcester



### Alternative Options Considered

**5.20 Dispersed Worcester** – a pattern of dispersed growth and continued heavy reliance on the motor car to access jobs and services around the city's periphery, to the detriment of the health and vitality of the city centre.

**5.21 Dormitory Worcester** – Jobless growth, with new housing focussed on existing employment sites and the periphery, but residents dependent on jobs and services in other locations, and therefore commuting greater distances. This would favour the well off, and reduce the need for a growing service industry within the city centre, leading to even fewer jobs and city centre decline.

**5.22 Urban Worcester** – building on the green open spaces particularly around the edge of the city would be detrimental to the character of the city and the healthy living environment of its residents.

**5.23** In regard to specific allocations the following alternatives were considered:

- **Swimming Pool – Re-developing on the same site.** This would be the most sustainable in relation to the city centre, but the narrowness of the site would make design difficult, and economic viability would be questionable. The city would also be without a pool during the construction period.
- **No Provision.** The Sports and Leisure evidence (Nortoft Report) indicates that a 25m pool together with diving and teaching facilities are required.
- **Stadium.** This has proved to be non-deliverable without an unacceptable amount of enabling development in the green network and M5 Protection Corridor.

## 5.2 Worcester Urban Extensions

### 5.2.1 SWDP 8: Directions for growth outside the City boundary

#### Reasoned Justification

**5.24** Once the urban capacity of the city is taken into account, it is estimated that approximately 43 hectares of employment land and approximately 4,025 dwellings would need to be provided around the urban edge of the city within the districts of Malvern Hills and Wychavon.

**5.25** The emerging evidence regarding the direction of growth for Worcester is proving to be contradictory. The Highways Agency is concerned that the M5 junctions 6 and 7 cannot cope with the additional journeys likely to occur if development is focused to the east of the city. However, the economic business community, wishing to utilise the motorway, have a preference for the east. The overall consultation response marginally favoured east of the city, with west of the city, north outside the Green Belt and south of the city all gaining relatively equal support. To the north, within the Green Belt, had little support. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment indicates that there are potential sites within all the possible directions for growth.

**5.26** Employment development principally being located at Worcester was favoured by stakeholders and consultees. This supports the evidence emerging from the employment land reviews and consultations with the business community. Advantage West Midlands supported the provision of a Technology Park associated with the approved Bosch development. All of the emerging evidence from stakeholders, consultees and employment land reviews concurs with the need to protect our existing employment sites if local employment is to be available and meet the sustainable principles in Policy SWDP 3.

**5.27** In determining the most suitable locations for development the evidence gathering exercises, consultations, and studies undertaken indicated four issues that should play a significant role in defining how and where Worcester should grow to meet its economic and housing growth requirements. These are:

### Accessibility

**5.28** Providing access to jobs and essential services is a key part of delivering sustainable, economic led, and inclusive communities. Developing at locations where these can be accessed by means other than the private car reduces carbon emissions. It can also improve the local environment, quality of life and promote social inclusion. A safe, efficient and integrated transport system is important to supporting a strong and prosperous economy in Worcester. Worcestershire County Council has assessed:

- the highway capacity of the city network as a whole;
- the potential development locations, and
- the likely impact on the existing road system and the environment.

**5.29** The County Council's transport assessment looked at all aspects of transport including public transport, cycling and walking which gained substantial support in the Issues and Options consultation. All these had also featured options considered including the dualling of the Southern Link Road and completing the North West Link Road both receiving substantial support

**5.30** It will be vital that areas of growth link into this sustainable transport network and this can be achieved through the principles of sustainable development identified in Policy SWDP 3. This would bring benefits in terms of accessibility, economy, environment, air quality, health and overall quality of life. However, every component is essential to make the whole strategy work. The Highway Agency has looked at the capacity of junctions 6 and 7 on the M5 motorway. These assessments involved detailed computer modelling, and indicated that significant improvements would be needed to Junction 6 to accommodate any major development to north or east.

### Preserving the Historic Character and Setting of Worcester

**5.31** Evidence from the the Green Belt review suggests that regardless of the extent to which the city may have to identify further land to meet its development requirements and needs, there would be areas of land outside the built up areas of the city that should be retained as open land. This will be important in avoiding the coalescence of villages whose individual identity and separation contribute to the distinctive rural setting of the city. The boundaries of the Green Belt are robust and defensible. Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 states that one purpose of the Green Belt should be to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. It is therefore important to recognise Worcester as being a county town within a rural setting, which is locally distinctive. Protecting important views and defining local character were considered to be very important. In this respect much of its distinctive historic character is maintained through the conservation areas and listed buildings within the city, the Local Green Network protecting the urban open spaces, and significant strategic views that will be protected.

## Nature Conservation

**5.32** The protection of areas with nature conservation value is viewed as a key element in ensuring sustainable development. Planning Policy Statement 9 on biodiversity states that plans should seek to promote sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development. Worcester's Green Network is well established and valued, and the Green Infrastructure study, which has been carried out, supports this approach, and promotes a similar approach in the development areas. Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' also highlighted the importance of natural and semi-natural open space so vital to improving biodiversity, protecting and enhancing habitats and protect, enhance and conserve local distinctiveness. All these had overwhelming support in the consultations.

## Flooding

**5.33** To reduce further damage to property and infrastructure and to maximise public safety, areas liable to flood were ruled out of any locational search for future development sites. These sites were identified through the use of the most up to date maps provided by the Environment Agency. The South Worcestershire authorities have published a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to help ensure that future development does not increase the potential for buildings to flood.

## The Preferred Development Strategy

**5.34** The analysis of the evidence indicates that the best prospect for achieving a sustainable pattern of development is by creating four new urban extensions. This will enable high quality design concepts to be pursued via future Masterplans. These would include, extension of the existing Green Network, together with open space, sporting and recreational facilities, educational provision, community facilities, including primary health care, housing of mixed size and tenure, and targeted local employment opportunities. The city successfully accommodated growth at Warndon Villages in the 1990s and the objective is to use the best examples of that area, together with the advancements of design and Green Infrastructure that have emerged, to create high quality places to live and work. By allocating development in a number of strategic locations around the city rather than in a single location the potential to enhance public transport services to and from the surrounding villages is maximised. New or improved bus services will be provided to service the new housing areas and link to the existing settlements beyond the city. Similarly by linking the local green network extensions with walking and cycling routes opportunities for walking and cycling will be spread into the wider Worcester area.

**5.35** The four locations are:

- South of Worcester (Broomhall Community and Norton Barracks Community)
- West of Worcester (Temple Laughern)

- East of Worcester (Kilbury Drive)
- North of Worcester (Gwillams Farm)

**5.36** The only two areas which could reasonably accommodate major development are located to the south of the city and to the west. Both will deliver (at different scales) economic benefits through the provision of new employment opportunities in line with market demand; provide a balance of new housing; support the need to improve links from east to west and particularly to the M5 motorway, and both are linked into the City through the provision of improved pedestrian and public transport links. The Background Paper, Assessment of broad locations for development growth and Site Allocations gives the analysis undertaken between the two areas.

**5.37** The greater proportion of development will go to the south (20h of employment development and approximately 2,450 dwellings) and the lesser amount (5h of employment and approximately 975 dwellings) to the west.

### **Broomhall Community and Norton Barracks Community (Policy SWDP8/1)**

**5.38** In assessing the development to the south there were some important objectives that would need to be fulfilled as part of the master plan. These are:

- The Broomhall development must be physically and visually separated from the Norton Barracks community by a linear park (minimum width 100m) acting as a biodiversity corridor and recreational space which allows direct pedestrian and cycle movements between the two communities but not car borne journeys;
- To create an environment to attract business investment, including high technology, manufacturing, and knowledge based services;
- To create a sustainable, balanced mix of uses and distinctive new community at Broomhall which is self-sufficient in its local needs;
- To ensure that the most important views across the area of the Malvern Hills from the east are not impeded by the new development
- To enable appropriate improvements to the A4440 (Crookbarrow Way, Broomhall Way and Teme Way) together with associated junction improvements by 2016 which will include two pedestrian cycle bridges (east and west);
- Reducing car dependency by enabling efficient public transport, walking and cycling movements within the development whilst providing two way opportunities for access to services within the existing city as well as out to the countryside.

**5.39** Although further detailed design work needs to be carried out an initial assessment would indicate that the development can be achieved utilising the following boundaries. The western boundary of the development will be the River Severn. Close to this boundary is the A38, the major north – south route which will give access to the city centre for a rapid transit bus route into the city.

**5.40** The northern boundary will be Broomhall Way and Crookbarrow Way (as far east as the railway). Particular thought will need to be given to grade separated pedestrian/ cycle links into and out of the city across this busy road both from Broomhall and Norton barracks. Allowance for possible dualling of the carriageway will need to be made on its southern side.

**5.41** The eastern boundary is physically defined by the Worcester – Oxford railway line and the M5 motorway. The latter should retain a Significant Gap adjacent to it to retain the rural setting of any development.

**5.42** The southern development boundary would be Broomhall Lane, within a well wooded corridor (minimum width 50m) to the north so that the lanes rural aspect remains, and no development visually noticeable from Kempsey village. This will form a Significant Gap (See Policy SWDP 1) in between Broomhall Lane and the northern limit of Kempsey village to ensure physical separation.

### **Temple Laughern (Policy SWDP 8/2)**

**5.43** The smaller development to the west would relate closely to the existing city, but certain critical objectives would need to be achieved. These are:

- Provision for modern high technology and knowledge based services, including links with the University of Worcester and the opportunity to provide business start-up units;
- To create a sustainable, balanced mix of uses which will be an extension to the existing city area;
- There will be a Significant Gap which physically and visually separates the development from the surrounding villages of Crown East and Lower Broadheath so that they retain their unique characters and the setting of the city;
- To ensure that the existing views across the area of the skyline of the city are not impeded by the new development;
- Reducing car dependency by enabling efficient public transport, walking and cycling movements within the development whilst providing two way opportunities for access to services within the existing city as well as out to the countryside;
- To create a cohesive place which relates to the existing city but recognising the landscape setting to provide an attractive living environment for a wide range of household types. Managing the transition between urban and rural will be essential in enabling the countryside to flow naturally into the development area from north and west.

**5.44** It will be important to ensure there is a smooth transition from the open countryside into the urban area so there can be no compromise on ensuring that the green corridors are sufficiently wide (minimum 40m) to allow the countryside to flow into the area. Where possible development is defined by natural physical boundaries, but in places, particularly the western boundary has been guided by landscape and topographical evidence.

**5.45** The eastern edge of the development will be the city boundary with the Laughern brook valley being a particular feature down to Oldbury Road. From this point south the designed edge will need to recognise and blend with the existing development within the city, and the proposed development at Earls Court Farm. Particular thought will need to be given to pedestrian/ cycle links into and out of the city so that existing facilities can be easily accessed e.g. the University of Worcester (Henwick and City Centre campuses), and the Dines Green Neighbourhood Centre and primary School.

**5.46** The southern boundary, with the exception of a portion of Grove Farm, is physically defined by the A44/Bromyard Road which will serve as the major vehicle access to the city centre, as well as access to Malvern, M5 and the east via the western and southern link roads. The Bromyard Road is being significantly improved to provide a rapid transit bus route into the city from the park and ride site. The primary road network through the development will extend the A4440 up to the Oldbury Road but should allow for the construction of a North West Link Road in the longer term.

**5.47** The northern development boundary would be north of Oldbury Road but there will need to be an area to allow for appropriate landscape management to ensure that there is not a hard urban edge at this point and to mitigate the views across the area from Hallow in particular.

**5.48** A similar situation is evident on the western boundary where areas of land outside the built area require to be included within the area. This would allow the appropriate landscape management to ensure that the rural nature of the area is maintained and allowed to flow into the built up area via the green corridors.

**5.49** The two smaller extensions are referred to as Kilbury (to the east) and Gwillams Farm (to the north). Both sites consist of approximately 300 dwellings each.

**5.50 Kilbury (Policy SWDP 8/3)** is located to the east of the city on land sandwiched between Kilbury Drive and Swinesherd Way. It is well linked to the city and has good access to local facilities. However, the development of this site would need to meet the following objectives:

- The creation of a sustainable and distinctive extension to the urban area providing an attractive living environment for a variety of household types.
- The sensitive higher ground to the north will be a bio-diverse open space including recreational space serving the development.
- Reducing car dependency by enabling efficient public transport, walking and cycling movements within the development whilst providing opportunities for access to local shops, employment areas, local schools and other services within the existing city as well as out to the countryside;
- Ensure appropriate visual, physical and noise attenuation measures to the boundary with Swinesherd way.

**5.51** The boundaries of this small urban extension to the city are well defined being Swineherd Way to the east, Walkers Lane to the South and the rear boundaries of properties in Kilbury Drive to the west and properties at the end of Staplow Road and Spetchley Road, and Spetchley road itself to the north.

**5.52 Gwillams Farm (Policy SWDP 8/4)** lies immediately to the north of the city boundary, west of the green belt. It is more sustainable than sites in Fernhill Heath and relates well to the city. However, being close to the Bevere conservation area does make it sensitive and certain objectives would need to be met. These are:

- the creation of a sustainable and distinctive extension to the urban area providing an attractive living environment for a variety of household types;
- the sensitive area to the west and north close to the Bevere Conservation Area will be a managed woodland planting open space and recreational space serving the development;
- reducing car dependency by enabling efficient public transport, walking and cycling movements within the development whilst providing opportunities for access to local shops, employment areas, local schools and other services within the existing city as well as out to the countryside.

**5.53** The boundaries of this small urban extension to the city are well defined being Green Lane to the south, the A449 (Ombersley Road) to the east, Bevere Lane to the north and Northwick Road to the west.

### **Worcester Technology Park (Policy SWDP 8/5)**

**5.54** Although provision has been made for local employment opportunities within the city and the urban extensions there is evidence to support a sub regional employment site close to the M5 motorway. This has been supported by Advantage West Midlands and the Local Enterprise Partnership. Part of the site (46h) has been granted planning permission for Bosch Thermo-technology for distribution and production buildings, offices, research and development facility, and subject to a successful bid from the Growth fund to enable it to proceed. This would leave 16h to be developed as a technology park which would consist of new environmental technologies complementing Worcester Bosch.

**5.55** The site will be designed and landscaped as one total business park. Main vehicular access to the Bosch development will be via Pershore Lane whilst the Technology Park will be accessed from Newtown Road. Public transport will service the site, and an independent network of pedestrian and cycle routes will be developed taking advantage of the Trotshill motorway bridge to access Warndon Villages and the city centre.

**5.56** The treatment of the site boundaries will also be key to assimilating the development into its countryside location being sympathetically designed using natural features where possible and bolstered by new planting, particularly acting as a buffer to the M5 motorway. The Barbourne Brook will create a strong environmental connection between the proposals on site and existing natural environment.

### **SWDP 8: Development Around Worcester**

Within the areas defined on the Proposals Map four sustainable, well designed developments in accordance with individual master plans and a well designed Technology park. These are:

SWDP8/1 Broomhall Community and Norton Barracks Community (Worcester South urban extension).

- Following improvements to the A4440 (southern Link Road) phased delivery of approximately 20 hectares of employment land and around 2450 dwellings of which 40% will be affordable.
- The provision of a park and ride facility on the A38.
- The inclusion of 10 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.
- Neighbourhood Centre incorporating local shops
- Social and physical infrastructure (including the provision of a new primary school and secondary school, together with children's centre and youth facilities).
- The provision of a local Green Infrastructure network
- An open space 'buffer' to maintain separation between Broomhall community and Norton Barracks community, and substantial buffer adjacent to the A4440 to mitigate noise but also provide separation from St Peter the Great to the north.
- A substantial wooded buffer immediately to the North of Broomhall Lane.
- The enhancement of the sports and social facilities at Norton barracks.
- Improvements to the A4440 shall include measures to improve accessibility by non- car modes to Worcester city centre including at least two grade separated pedestrian/cycle crossings.
- Safeguard land on the Souther side of A4440 for dualling of the road.

SWDP8/2 Temple Laughern (Worcester West urban extension).

- Phased delivery of approximately 5 hectares of employment land.
- Phased delivery of around 975 dwellings, of which 40% will be affordable.
- The inclusion of 10 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.

- Small local shops with a contribution to enhance Dines Green Neighbourhood Centre.
- A network of open space including play facilities, sporting and informal recreational facilities including allotments.
- The development of local Green Infrastructure network.
- Measures to maintain separation from Crown East and Lower Broadheath.
- Contributions to Transportation, Education, sporting and recreational facilities.
- Measures to improve accessibility by non- car modes to Worcester city centre including a Park and Ride facility close to the A4440.

#### SWDP8/3 Kilbury (Worcester East urban extension)

- Delivery of around 300 dwellings, of which 40% will be affordable.
- Contribute to enhanced local shopping provision at Baynham Drive.
- Measures to maintain a physical and visual separation from Swineherd Way, apart from access to the pedestrian crossing.
- A network of open space including play facilities, informal open space and allotments.
- Measures to improve accessibility by non-car modes to Worcester city centre, local employment areas, schools, Sixth Form College, sports centre, hospital and Worcester Woods country Park.
- Contributions to transport, education, sporting and recreational facilities.
- A traffic calmed central spine road linking Spetchley Road to Whittington Road with appropriate public transport movements and facilities.

#### SWDP8/4 Gwillam's Farm (Worcester North urban extension).

- Phased Delivery of approximately 300 dwellings of which 40% will be affordable.
- Enhanced local shopping provision based on the existing farm shop.
- Measures to maintain a physical and visual separation from Bevere, apart from pedestrian/cycle access to the River Severn.

- A network of open space including play facilities, informal open space and allotments.
- Contributions to transport, education, sporting and recreational facilities.
- Measures to improve accessibility by non-car modes to Worcester city centre, local employment areas, schools, leisure centre, and Claines Park and Ride site.

SWDP8/5 Worcester Technology Park.

A sustainable, well designed Technology Park (Phase 2, Worcester Technology Park) will be delivered for environmental and new technologies or associated businesses.

### Links to the Objectives

**5.57** The Preferred Option policies for Worcester growth support the following objectives:

- Economic Success that is Shared By All objectives 1, 2 and 3;
- Stronger Communities objectives 1, 2 and 3;
- A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow objectives 1, 2, 4 and 5;
- Improving Health and Wellbeing objectives 1, 2 and 3;
- Communities that are Safe and Feel Safe objectives 1 and 2.

## 5.2.2 Alternative options considered

### Alternative Options Considered

### Christmas market in Worcester

#### More Housing in the City

**5.58** This would result in 'town cramming' involving high rise development jeopardising the character and setting of the city and the ability to offer a range of different dwellings at different densities. It would also increase air pollution and congestion for existing residents.

**5.59** The Green Belt review completed in 2010 has confirmed that the existing boundaries are robust and defensible.

It is considered that there are no exceptional circumstances to justify any building within the Green Belt area. Furthermore, the City's Green Network has been in place since 1998, and has provided a wide range of environmental benefits, including flood storage, sustainable drainage, urban cooling and access to shady outdoor space. It also provides habitats for wildlife, and through the creation of 'green corridors' aids the natural migration of more species responding to the changing climate.

**5.60** Open space, whether part of the green network or not serves as a vital focal point for community activities – bringing together members of communities and providing opportunities for social interaction. It plays a vital role in promoting healthy living and in the social development of children through play, sporting activities and interaction with others. The M5 Protection policy has been successfully protecting the edge of the city since 1988, and allowing a transition from development to countryside. This approach is proposed to be extended to the south outside the city boundary. Finally, 96% of respondents to the information gathering exercise were supporting the protection of the local green network. The review has revealed two areas that have potential for development, but no further greenfield areas should be developed without detriment to the landscape character, biodiversity and healthy living environment of the residents. It is possible that when details are drawn up of the city centre development sites further dwellings may be achieved but a significant increase would be to the detriment of establishing a balanced and sustainable community.



### **Location of majority of development in an urban extension to the West of Worcester**

**5.61** This would represent a large scale, self contained community, with good links via alternative modes of travel to the City Centre. However, detailed analysis and consideration of the alternatives alongside the Sustainability Appraisal have demonstrated that landscape character constraints are a key issue in relation to the scale of development required under this alternative and more likely to bring about coalescence with peripheral settlements. In addition, the emerging strategy has the central aim of contributing towards economic prosperity. Initial assessment suggests that this location is less suited to meeting strategic employment needs than growth to the South of the City and therefore it is less likely to deliver balanced growth at this scale. In addition infrastructure provision and links to the wider road network are key constraints to the desirability of this location for employment. It is therefore considered that concentrating more development to the South of Worcester will provide development that helps to bolster economic prosperity and increased ability to deliver strategic infrastructure.

### **Location of the majority of Development in an Urban extension to the South of Worcester**

**5.62** This would require a larger area of land to be considered for development, where the current boundaries shown on the proposals map are considered to be robust and enduring. This larger allocation would encroach more upon the communities of Norton Barracks and Kempsey and would not allow any significant 'buffers' or Significant Gaps to be developed to allow them to maintain individual identity, which was an important local and political issue during the evidence gathering process.

### **Concentration of Development to the East Crossing the M5**

**5.63** Although those who responded to the questionnaire favoured this, and an employment site has been allocated subject to significant landscaping and links back into the Warndon Villages housing area, it is evident that the addition of housing would be a very unsustainable community with direct access to the M5. It would be difficult to link effectively back into the city and therefore any residential development in this location would effectively be a separate settlement. This would require significant infrastructure investment that could be more effectively invested in the identified growth areas. Junction 5, 6 and 7 would be unable to cope with the additional traffic that would be generated. More importantly the character and setting of the city would be dramatically changed in a detrimental way. One of the valued elements of distinctiveness would be lost forever.

### **Concentration to the North**

**5.64** Similar reasons apply to development in this direction with the added constraint of the Green Belt which is particularly narrow between the city and Fernhill Heath. This was also the least favoured with only 20% of respondents supporting it. Furthermore, the introduction of a sports village would double the size of Fernhill Heath and the village community would be lost.

### **Community Sports Village at Hindlip**

**5.65** This is being supported by several national sporting bodies including Sport England, for a new concept of a 'community sports hub' on the northern edge of Worcester in the Hindlip area. Various elements of the scheme are of local, sub regional, regional and even of national significance and important in the delivery and implementation of educational and skills training through sport. The site is predominantly within the Green Belt, and the requirement for 2000 dwellings in this location in order to deliver the facility is not acceptable. It would also prejudice the development of facilities at Perdiswell which is a more sustainable location.

### **Specialist Criminal Justice Park at West Mercia Police Headquarters at Hindlip**

**5.66** The site is within the Green Belt, and there are more sustainable sites which could accommodate this use within the city.

### **Sub Regional Employment Site Adjacent to Junction 7**

**5.67** The lack of the Worcestershire Parkway, and the approval of Bosch Thermo-technology expansion at junction 6 as an anchor tenant made this option unsustainable.

### **A Freestanding Settlement**

**5.68** This is not considered to be a sustainable option and would not bring any benefit to other communities within the city. It would take time to establish and would inevitably be a commuter village with little hope of being a sustainable community. The significant infrastructure cost required for this option makes it undeliverable in the present plan period.

### **Development in the Worcestershire Parkway Area**

**5.69** The three South Worcestershire authorities are fully supportive of the principle of a Worcestershire Parkway development at Norton but it remains uncertain as to when the development would be brought forward due to circumstances outside the control of the authorities. It will not be in the early phases of the plan period and may be further delayed. In such circumstances it is inappropriate to rely on such speculative development at this stage, especially as it would effectively become a freestanding location that would be unacceptable for the same reasons as identified in para. 5.61.

### **Reduced Employment Land Allocations**

**5.70** Once allocations in the adopted Local Plan, completions and commitments since 2006 have been taken into account, the Employment Land Review and Advantage West Midlands advocate additional supply and this is addressed through this strategy. An alternative however would be to reduce the amount of employment land. The implications of this approach would be to put at risk the economic prosperity led principles on which the strategy is based by providing insufficient land to provide the variety of employment opportunities need to attract the businesses into the area or allow existing businesses to expand.