

SWDP 14: Market Housing Mix

- A. All new residential developments of five or more units, having regard to location, site size and scheme viability, should contain a mix of types and sizes of market housing. The mix will be informed by the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment and / or other local data, for example, Neighbourhood Plans, Parish Surveys, Parish Plans and developers' assessments.**
- B. Worcester and the main / other towns will be the focus for housing to help meet the needs of residents with specific housing requirements, such as people with disabilities. Elsewhere, proposals to help meet these specific needs should demonstrate that the scheme has good access to public transport, healthcare, shopping and other community facilities.**
- C. Permission for the sub-division or multiple occupancy of dwellings within the city boundary or development boundaries, including changes of use to hostels and guest houses, will be granted provided that the property has four or more bedrooms and is no longer suitable for single family occupation. In the case of hostels, the property must be detached.**
- D. An application for change of use to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) will only be permitted where it does not lead to, or increase an existing over-concentration of such uses in the local area. The use of Article 4 Directions to control changes of use will be considered.**

Reasoned Justification

1. This policy is intended to secure the provision of market housing to support mixed and balanced communities and to ensure that a range of household demand and needs continue to be accommodated. Policy SWDP 15 deals separately with the mix, type and tenure of affordable housing. The Framework requires local planning authorities to plan for a mix of housing based on evidence and to identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required. If it is not possible to secure a mix of housing types, in terms of size, scale, density, tenure and cost that reflects the overall need, some households will be forced to satisfy their housing demand and needs beyond the Plan area.
2. House sizes required to address identified needs range from one- to five-bed properties of different types e.g. flats, houses and bungalows. They can also include custom build homes. The 2012 Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies that the substantial projected growth in one-person households suggests a rising demand for smaller properties, many of which will need to be suitable for people of retirement age. The rise in couple households, a large proportion of which are also made up of older persons, further supports the need to deliver attractive smaller properties in locations with good transport linkages (see SWDP 20: Housing to Meet the Needs of Older People). However, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment reveals that there is also a sustained demand for larger family homes.
3. South Worcestershire's housing needs will be regularly monitored and reassessed through either full or partial updates of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Regard should be had to the most up-to-date version of the Assessment to determine the relevant housing needs. Developers' assessments of market housing demand will also be taken into account in the consideration of an appropriate market housing mix, along with specific local needs assessments where these are available.
4. Proposals for housing must take account of identified housing demand and needs in terms of size and type of market dwellings. This will include appropriate provision for all sectors of the community, for example, to meet the needs of older people – covered by SWDP 20. To enable access to essential facilities and services, Worcester and the towns will be the focus for housing to help meet those with specific needs, such as people with disabilities. Elsewhere, proposals may be acceptable if on sites with good access to public transport, healthcare, shopping and other community facilities.
5. There is an ongoing demand and need for a range of different forms of accommodation, such as bedsits and hostels, to be made available for students and other people with shorter-term housing needs. Much of this type of accommodation can and should be provided within Worcester and the main towns close to educational establishments and appropriate support services and facilities. In many cases the conversion of existing large dwellings offers an opportunity to do this. It will be important to consider each planning application for conversion to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) against SWDP 14 in order to protect against the significant loss of large family housing, which itself forms part of the balanced housing mix throughout south Worcestershire⁽³⁶⁾. Hostels will only be allowed in detached properties because of the increased potential nuisance to amenity arising from party walls.

36 For the purposes of this policy, dwellings in use as Class C4, mixed C3 / C4 and HMOs in sui generis will be considered to be HMOs.