

SWDP 44: Worcester City Centre

A. The sites in Table 16 below, as identified on the Policies Map, are allocated for retail-led development:

Table 16: Sites Allocated for Retail-Led Development

Policy Reference	Sites	Site area (ha)
SWDP44/1⁽¹²⁶⁾	Cathedral Square: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To allow for redevelopment, refurbishment, expansion of the existing shopping centre To provide greater connectivity with the Cathedral Protect and enhance the setting of Worcester Cathedral and neighbouring listed buildings 	1.23
SWDP44/2⁽¹²⁷⁾	Fire Station / CrownGate / Angel Place /The Butts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To allow for redevelopment, refurbishment, expansion of the existing shopping centre To provide greater connectivity with the rest of the city centre, the riverside and the University Campus 	2.85
SWDP44/3⁽¹²⁸⁾	Trinity House / Cornmarket: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To allow for redevelopment for retail and other uses with the creation of an important open space, giving improved connections to St Martin’s Quarter and Shrub Hill Station 	0.98

126 The foul drainage from this development is expected to connect to the mains system and be treated at Worcester Bromwich Road sewage treatment works. The 2014 South Worcestershire Water Cycle Study (WCS) Addendum Report has identified that there is limited spare capacity at these works and there could be constraints in the receiving sewerage network. Developers should consider these issues early in the planning process in consultation with Severn Trent Water and have particular regard to the WCS and policies SWDP7 and SWDP30.

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B. In addition the Opportunity Zones in Table 17 below, as identified on the Policies Map, have been identified:

Table 17: Opportunity Zones

Policy Reference	Opportunity Zones	Site area (ha)
SWDP44/4^{(129)&(130)}	Shrub Hill: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 750 dwellings – including student accommodation and extra care units • Plus other mixed use / commercial development 	19.72
SWDP44/5⁽¹³¹⁾	Blockhouse / Carden Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include approximately 120 dwellings 	3.9
SWDP44/6^{(132)&(133)}	Cathedral Quarter and Sidbury: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural facilities 	1.91

C. Redevelopment proposals for the Opportunity Zones will be supported providing they:

- i. Incorporate a range and variety of land uses to create a truly mixed-use development.**
- ii. Make a contribution to achieving the SWDP objective for new B1 office space in Worcester.**

129 The Opportunity Zone lies east and west of the railway line. About 550 dwellings including student accommodation and residential care housing should be located east of the railway line. Mixed use / commercial development should be developed both east and west of the railway line.

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132 There will be no built development in the parts of the site liable to flooding, as defined in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and / or a site specific Flood Risk Assessment, and safe access and egress will be incorporated.

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- iii. **Will not result in residential development being the predominant use across the Opportunity Zone as a whole.**
- iv. **Offer genuine, sustainable travel choices.**
- v. **Do not result in retail or leisure dominating the other land uses within the zone.**
- vi. **Enhance views over the historic city centre.**
- vii. **Secure the refurbishment and future of listed buildings and structures within the zone.**
- viii. **Encourage existing businesses to remain or alternatively provide suitable relocation opportunities.**

D. Proposals for single uses in an Opportunity Zone will be evaluated for their contribution and effect on the overall mix of uses in the area.

Reasoned Justification

1. The city centre forms a vital element of the SWDP, as its economic performance is intrinsically linked with the wider success of the city and south Worcestershire. Worcester Alliance, together with Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council, published a city centre Masterplan, which provides a framework for development, regeneration and investment up to 2030. The Vision for the city centre is of a dynamic, successful, attractive and vibrant place with a strong economy and recognised by businesses as a desirable place to invest and grow. The Vision is also of a central area where educational achievement is high and an adaptable and proficient workforce can be found. It will also be a place where visitors will be attracted to shop, dine, stay and spend their leisure time. The Masterplan identifies locations where development and intervention could occur to bring about regeneration and other improvements and includes ideas about design, land use, transport and access and the public realm. For planning purposes the City Centre is defined as the core Central Shopping Area, the City Centre Masterplan however has considered a much larger area of central Worcester and how this area functions to inform plan-making and planning decisions.
2. An illustrative plan accompanies the city centre Vision and Masterplan, showing those locations where development and intervention can occur. The SWDP provides a mechanism that enables these ideas to take shape. The area covered by the masterplan is identified in Annex H.
3. For the purposes of SWDP 9 and 10, the Worcester central shopping area boundary is the same as the town centre boundary, as shown on the Policies Map for all other

planning policy purposes. The central shopping area is at the heart of the wider area covered by the Masterplan.

4. The evidence and consultation outcomes support directing major retail development to the central shopping area. The strategic significance of the city centre and its retail position in relation to south Worcestershire and beyond is recognised. However, leisure, office, education and cultural uses are key to its long-term success and this is recognised in the city centre Masterplan.

Retail-Led Development Allocations

5. 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 retail hierarchy. The following site allocations provide the opportunity to meet this need.

Cathedral Square

6. The opportunity exists to provide additional retail or leisure floor space that is capable of securing anchor tenants to ensure the southern end of the High Street remains as a functional and successful part of the primary shopping area. A scheme to regenerate the cathedral Plaza shopping centre has been approved (P14D0253) and this is expected to be fully implemented by September 2016. To ensure consistency with SWDP 10, the secondary retail frontage to numbers 3 to 8 High Street has been deleted. Other retail frontages are retained as primary and secondary retail frontages, as identified on the Policies Map.
7. The site provides a significant opportunity to create a new high quality public realm and flexible civic space suitable for holding public events and celebrations, works to remodel the roundabout in Cathedral Square commenced in April 2015 and when complete will more than double the car free space in the Square. Future development could maximise the opportunity for new tourist facilities and complement existing ones such as the Cathedral. Such development should not only enhance the setting of the Cathedral, but also make significant improvements to the skyline of the Historic City Conservation Area.
8. Redevelopment should also help reconnect the Cathedral, the Sidbury Opportunity Zone and the riverside with the High Street and provide an additional pedestrian route between the High Street / Cathedral Square and Friar Street. The opportunity to improve circulation through the square for all modes of transport will be delivered by the works currently under way and provide an enhanced public transport interchange.

Angel Place / CrownGate / The Butts / Fire Station

9. The redevelopment of this area would provide an opportunity for the addition of significant amounts of retail floor space and to increase the range of goods available from retail outlets within the city centre. Furthermore, the site offers an opportunity to provide a mix of uses, making the best use of land by incorporating residential, office or leisure uses on floors above or below the primary retail frontage.

10. Redevelopment of the area would provide the opportunity to enhance the role of Angel Place as a market and public square, improve pedestrian linkages throughout the city centre and enhance connectivity of the area with the rest of the city centre, the riverside, The Foregate and the University. A public realm refurbishment scheme was implemented in 2014 and a new market format and operator have rejuvenated the street market in this location.
11. Consistent with SWDP 6, SWDP 21 and SWDP 24, the redevelopment provides the opportunities to sustain and enhance the setting, appearance and skyline of the Historic City Conservation Area and improve access to and interpretation of historic and archaeological features.

Cornmarket

12. Cornmarket is seen as an area of opportunity that has the potential to create an impressive gateway development that will attract people to the city centre and improve connectivity on the important east-west access between the city centre, St Martin's Quarter and the Shrub Hill area. A public realm improvement scheme was completed in the summer of 2015.
13. Redevelopment of the area should secure the future of, and improve the setting of, heritage assets such as the City Wall and St Martin's Gate. The removal of unsightly structures and buildings would have a positive impact on the character and setting of the Historic City Conservation Area and improve the setting of listed buildings.

Riverside

14. The riverside is an underused asset for the city and could potentially represent a significant benefit to the city's economy.
15. Significant improvements are already being made to the riverside, but opportunities could be taken for locating a hotel in the area and encouraging the growth and establishment of creative industries, as well as enhancing the riverside space at Quay Head. An improved public realm, increased riverside activity and the creation of flexible civic space could help foster better links between the city and the riverside.
16. The riverside plays an important role for pedestrians in linking the north and south of the city, especially between Diglis Basin and the Racecourse. The area is also important as a link between the west of the city (St John's) and the wider area. Improved east-west links will need to be created to increase connectivity throughout the city and to better link places such as the University, The Hive, the Cathedral, South Quay and the city centre.

Opportunity Zones

17. Further detail on appropriate uses for opportunity Zones and other specific sites will be provided through masterplans, concept statements and site appraisals.

Shrub Hill

18. This area encompasses Shrub Hill Station, Cromwell Street, Pheasant Street, Tolladine Road and Shrub Hill Road west of the railway, Tolladine Road, Sherriff Street and Newtown Road east of the railway. The proximity to Shrub Hill Station and the city centre, which are both within walking and cycling distance, make this a highly sustainable location for a wide range of land uses.
19. Significant amounts of new or refurbished commercial office space and housing could be developed; city centre developments that are too large for sequentially preferable sites could be accommodated here, thus exploiting the opportunity provided by the canalside location and its proximity to the railway station. A mixed-use development focused around a new canal basin would create a new neighbourhood in the city.
20. It is estimated that, although not residential led, an element of housing development will be included that could deliver approximately 750 dwellings. Development that would be less car-dominated (including clustered student flats and extra-care accommodation) is appropriate, provided that housing does not become the dominant land use. Smaller-scale neighbourhood leisure and retail outlets, such as local convenience stores and A3, A4 and A5 uses serving the local community, are appropriate subject to impact and design considerations.
21. The redevelopment should conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets, putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. There is an opportunity to provide a sustainable future for listed buildings and to remove structures and buildings that have a negative impact on views into and out of the area as well as preserving existing views of listed or other landmark buildings.
22. The existing businesses within the Opportunity Zone should not be lost as they are important elements of the economy of the city. All re-development proposals should afford the opportunity for existing business to remain or relocate to suitable alternative premises.
23. The redevelopment of Cromwell Street could provide a mix of uses, providing an opportunity to connect Lowesmoor, the canal and the station together. 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.
24. Redevelopment should improve access to Shrub Hill station by all modes and provide a high-quality public transport interchange, while reconnecting the two sides of the railway corridor. Pedestrian connectivity between Shrub Hill Station, the canal, Lowesmoor and St Martin's Quarter can be greatly improved to contribute towards the creation of an identifiable and cohesive regeneration zone. Improvements to the public realm in front of Shrub Hill station will create an attractive first impression of the city to visitors arriving by train.

Blockhouse / Carden Street

25. This provides an opportunity to create a network of intimate shared surface streets, which can provide access to a mix of good quality city centre housing (approximately 120 dwellings), smaller business premises and live / work opportunities.
26. Development on the site could improve pedestrian access between the city centre and Fort Royal and help transform City Walls Road into an attractive gateway to the city.
27. The removal of unattractive buildings and structures would enhance the skyline and have a positive impact on the Canal Conservation Area and other heritage assets.

Cathedral Quarter and Sidbury

28. The opportunity exists to create a high quality gateway to Worcester City Centre at Sidbury and improve pedestrian links between College Street, the canal, the Diglis / Waterside developments and the city centre.
29. There is potential for the development of a cultural quarter on the former Royal Worcester Porcelain site, the redevelopment of King Street car park and the provision of live / work opportunities.
30. Development should include the removal of buildings that have a negative impact upon the Sidbury and Canal Conservation Areas, securing the future of listed buildings and buildings of local significance and safeguarding views into and out of the area.
31. An area designed to encourage creative industries to cluster together around the Royal Worcester Porcelain museum would be beneficial and would create vital jobs for the city.