

Open

Cabinet

Agenda

**6pm
Monday, 17 July 2023
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster**



Wyre Forest District Council



Cabinet

The Cabinet Members and their responsibilities:-

Councillor M Hart	Leader of the Council & Strategy
Councillor I Hardiman	Deputy Leader & Housing, Health and Well-being
Councillor B Brookes	Operational Services
Councillor D Morehead	Economic Regeneration, Planning & the Green Agenda
Councillor T Onslow	Culture, Leisure, Arts & Community Safety
Councillor D Ross	Finance & Capital Portfolio

Scrutiny of Decisions of the Cabinet

The Council has one Scrutiny Committee that has power to investigate policy issues and question members of the Cabinet who have special responsibility for a particular area of the Council's activities. The Cabinet also considers recommendations from this Committee.

In accordance with Section 10 of the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, and Standing Order 2.4 of Section 7, any item on this agenda may be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committee if it is "called in" by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and any other three non-Cabinet members.

The deadline for "calling in" Cabinet decisions is 5pm on Thursday 27 July 2023.

Councillors wishing to "call in" a decision on this agenda should contact Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Urgent Key Decisions

If the Cabinet needs to take an urgent key decision, the consent of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman must be obtained. If the Scrutiny Committee Chairman is unable to act the Chairman of the Council or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council, must give consent. Such decisions will not be the subject to the call in procedure.

Disclosure of Interests

Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, they are required to consider in ADVANCE of each meeting whether they have a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI), an other registrable interest (ORI) or a non-registrable interest (NRI) in relation to any matter on the agenda. If advice is needed, Members should contact the Monitoring Officer or other legal officer in good time before the meeting.

If any Member or co-opted Member of the Council identifies a DPI or ORI which they have not already registered on the Council's register of interests or which requires updating, they should complete the disclosure form which can be obtained from Democratic Services at any time, copies of which will be available at the meeting for return to the Monitoring Officer.

Members and co-opted Members are required to disclose any DPIs and ORIs at the meeting.

Where the matter relates to a DPI they may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not stay in the meeting unless granted a dispensation

Where the matter relates to an ORI they may not vote on the matter unless granted an advance dispensation.

Where a Member or co-opted Member has an NRI which directly relates to their financial interest or wellbeing, or that of a relative or close associate, they must disclose the interest at the meeting, may not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not stay in the meeting unless granted a dispensation.

Where a matter affects the NRI of a Member or co-opted Member, the Code of Conduct sets out the test which must be applied by the MEMBER to decide whether disclosure is required. Again please ensure you have spoken in ADVANCE to the relevant legal officer and determined whether it is appropriate to declare the NRI and leave.

For further information

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information you should contact Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Documents referred to in this agenda may be viewed on the Council's website - www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/meetings/main.htm

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If you have any queries regarding this, please speak with the Council's Legal Officer at the meeting.

* Unless there are no reports in the open session.

Wyre Forest District Council

Cabinet

Monday, 17 July 2023

Council Chamber Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI), an other registrable interest (ORI) or a non-registrable interest (NRI) in relation to any matter on the agenda. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
3.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 13 June 2023.	7
4.	CALL INS a verbal update will be given on any decisions which have been "called in" since the last meeting of the Cabinet.	
5.	Items Requiring Urgent Attention To consider any item which, in the opinion of the Chairman requires consideration at the meeting as a matter of urgency.	
6.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Cabinet, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 10 July 2023. (See front cover for contact details). No requests for public participation were received by the deadline.	

7.		
7.1	<p style="text-align: right;">Councillor D Ross</p> <p>Internal Audit Service Review</p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of Resources and Section 151 Officer that seeks approval to secure a new delivery model for the internal audit service to secure long term resilience in meeting the Council's regulatory obligations to undertake an internal audit.</p>	10

8.		
8.1	<p style="text-align: right;">Councillor D Morehead</p> <p>Wyre Forest District Council Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)</p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of Strategic Growth on the Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), following the recent consultation exercise.</p> <p><i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically.</i></p> <p>To also consider recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 6 July 2023.</p>	<p>33</p> <p>To follow</p>

9.		
9.1	<p style="text-align: right;">Councillor I Hardiman</p> <p>Localism: Stourport Sports Club and Bewdley Museum</p> <p>In light of the new administration's approach towards localism, to consider a report from the Chief Executive to take steps to revoke the previous decisions in respect of Stourport Sports Club and Bewdley Museum.</p>	38
9.2	<p>Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2023 - 2040</p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of Strategic Growth that outlines the Worcestershire Housing Strategy that has been developed in partnership with councils and partners across the county.</p> <p><i>The appendix to this report has been circulated electronically.</i></p> <p>To also consider recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 6 July 2023.</p>	<p>42</p> <p>To follow</p>
9.3	<p>Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)</p> <p>To receive a report from the Head of Strategic Growth to consider how to proceed in order to deliver the commitments that the Council has made in respect of the Local Authority Housing Fund.</p>	45

9.4	Redevelopment of 8A Bridge Street, Stourport To consider a report from the Head of Strategic Growth to support proposals to redevelop this locally listed building which has been vacant for a considerable period.	51
10.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
11.	Exclusion of the Press and Public To consider passing the following resolution: “That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

12.		
12.1	Councillor I Hardiman Agenda item 9.4 - Redevelopment of 8A Bridge Street, Stourport EXEMPT Appendix 1 – Business case	

13.		
13.1	Councillor D Morehead Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) To consider a report from the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) to seek decisions in respect of an FHSF project.	To follow
14.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

13 JUNE 2023 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), B Brookes, D Morehead, T L Onslow and D Ross.

Observers:

Councillors: J F Byng, N Martin, F M Oborski MBE and C Rogers.

Observed remotely: Councillors: L Carroll and G Connolly.

CAB.01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor I Hardiman (Vice-Chairman).

CAB.02 Declarations of Interests by Members

In respect of exempt agenda item 10.1 – Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) – connectivity project, and any discussions around Kidderminster town centre and Bromsgrove Street, Councillor T Onslow declared that she owned a property, what was not part of the project, in that street.

The declaration was made for transparency and was neither a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI), nor other registrable interest (ORI) nor a non-registrable interest (NRI).

CAB.03 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.04 Call Ins

No decisions had been called in since the last Cabinet meeting.

CAB.05 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.06 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

CAB.07 Budget and Performance Monitoring Fourth Quarter 2022-23

A report was considered from the Head of Resources and s151 Officer that briefed members on the Council's financial and other performance at the end of quarter 4 ending 31 March 2023. The report also presented the provisional draft (pre audit) outturn position for the 2022-23 financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Cabinet Member gave a summary of the background and key issues detailed in the report. With reference to external income, he explained that as would be expected, the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the external income, including revenue received from the management agreement with Wyre Forest Leisure Centre. He added that, in general, income had recovered well, although not all commercial activity had returned to pre-pandemic levels.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member advised that the council tax collection rate for 2022-2023 was 97.02%, which was in line with the previous year's. However collection rate for businesses was 97.99%; previous year's was 99.02%. He added that the difference was attributed to the difficulties faced by businesses.

The Leader of the Council seconded the proposals. He thanked the Head of Resources and s151 Officer, and her team for all their hard work, and particularly the revenues team in terms of the collection rate figures.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor N Martin, presented the recommendations from its meeting on 8 June 2023.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 8 June 2023:

1.1 The Cabinet NOTED:

1.1.1 The projected budget variations and comments within the report and appendices 1 to 6.

1.1.2 The performance against measures and actions as set out in the report and appendix 7.

CAB.08 Exclusion of Press and Public

Decision: "Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB.09 Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) - Connectivity project

A report was considered from the Head of Economic Development &

Regeneration, North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) to agree how to proceed with the project in light of a significant projected funding gap.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda presented the confidential report and formally moved the recommendations for approval.

The Cabinet Member gave a summary of the background and key issues detailed in the confidential report.

He outlined the rationale for proceeding with the project as envisaged. He explained that the project was designed to accelerate the attraction of the Town centre to drive investment and make it accessible for all residents. He added that not proceeding with the project may result in the authority losing over £2m of Government funding. Any delays would increase the cost of the project, and there was not enough time to redesign the scheme to reduce costs within the grant time lines.

The Leader seconded the proposals.

Decision: The Cabinet:

- 1.1 a) **RECOMMEND to Council that the 2023-24 capital programme allocation for Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) should be increased to the amount set out in the confidential report.**
- b) **RECOMMEND to Council that the funding for the increase in the capital programme for the FHSF should be as set out in paragraphs 5.3 and 5.5 of the confidential report.**
- c) **AGREED that the procurement for the construction contract for the FHSF connectivity project, estimated at the amount set out in the confidential report, should commence and APPROVED the evaluation criteria in Appendix 2;**
- d) **DELEGATED authority to award the construction contract to the Head of NWEDR in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda, the Head of Resources and the Solicitor to the Council, but that no such contract may be awarded until after Council has approved the recommendations in respect of the increase in the capital programme for the FHSF and the funding arrangements for that.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.35pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
17th JULY 2023

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE REVIEW

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor David Ross, Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Helen Ogram, Head of Resources and Section 151 Officer
CONTACT OFFICER	As above
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Summary 2023-24 Internal Audit Plan Appendix 2 – Evaluation criteria and scoring methodology

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to secure a new delivery model for the internal audit service to secure long term resilience in meeting the Council's regulatory obligations to undertake an internal audit and to seek authority to tender for the services required together with the evaluation criteria.
- 1.2 Approval of the Cabinet is required by the Contract Procedure Rules to enter into a procurement exercise where the value of the purchase is over £175,000

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 **AGREE** that the procurement of a service contract to secure delivery of the approved 2023-24 audit plan should commence and to **APPROVE** the evaluation criteria in Appendix 2, in order to provide an internal audit opinion for 2023-24.
- 2.2 **DELEGATE** authority to award the services contract to the Head of Resources and s151 officer in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and the Cabinet member for Finance and Capital Portfolio.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Internal Audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation to accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.
- 3.2 The Council is required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control

and governance processes. An effective internal audit service is also a requirement of the Council's Corporate Governance framework.

- 3.3 The UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards have been formally adopted by the Audit Committee. The Internal Audit Team work in consideration of the Standards which are mandatory for all internal auditors working in the public sector. The standards require an external assessment of the Internal Audit Service, the next external assessment is due to be commissioned during 2023-24. The standards also require the Council to have an Internal Audit Charter; the Internal Audit Charter formally defines the purpose, authority and responsibility of the internal audit activity. The current Charter was approved by Audit Committee in July 2018 following the formal external assessment. A refresh of the Charter is being considered by Audit Committee on 20th July 2023.
- 3.4 The Audit Committee provides independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and governance processes and oversees both internal and external audit. The Audit Manager (Chief Audit Executive) reports to the Audit Committee providing periodic updates of internal audit work to include matters arising from internal audit reviews, progress on delivery of the audit plan and delivering an Annual Assurance Report to ensure the independence of the internal audit service and include an overall opinion of the control environment.
- 3.5 The s151 officer is responsible for establishing an adequate and effective system of internal audit and making sure that it is adequately resourced (The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015).
- 3.6 A comprehensive review of how the service is provided was undertaken in 2014-15, this included consideration of the following options:
- Continuation of in-house provision with a reduced establishment to achieve cost savings
 - Joining the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service (WIASS)

The outcome of the review was a decision to continue the provision of Internal Audit services through an in-house team (i.e. not to join WIASS) based on cost as this was the primary driver for the review.

- 3.7 Internal Audit provides a range of service, which currently includes:
- **System/Risk Based Audits** – examination of the system's integrity and control, compliance with legislative requirements, as well as with the Council's constitution. For example corporate financial systems including payroll, creditors.
 - **Regularity/Annual Assurance Audits** – examination of transactions for accuracy, validity and compliance with financial regulations and standing orders.
 - **Advice and Consultancy** – providing advice on:

- ◆ Financial and non-financial procedures of the Council
 - ◆ New systems developments
 - ◆ Training on best financial practices
 - **Computer Audit** – Internal audit of all I.C.T. policies, procedures and systems. Input into the development of I.C.T. systems and associated procedures.
 - **Contract Audit** - Review of contract procedures (capital and revenue) ensuring compliance with the law, specifications and internal regulations.
 - **Fraud and Irregularity Investigations** – Investigation of instances of suspected financial malpractice, fraud or irregularity to include the national fraud initiative.
- 3.8 Having a strong internal audit service has contributed to improved performance, better managed risk and delivery of a timely external audit opinion.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The current establishment is 2.4 FTEs. The small size of the team causes issues of resilience with provision based solely on in-house resources.
- 4.2 The core structure of the Internal Audit Team remains fit for purpose, but both the position of Senior Auditor and Auditor became vacant during 2022-23 and the Internal Audit Manager has indicated her intention to retire later this year. Despite looking at both direct recruitment and use of agency temporary appointments, both positions remain vacant. Local audit delays and the resourcing issues being faced by the sector have been well publicised, this has undoubtedly impacted upon the availability of suitably qualified candidates for internal auditor positions.
- 4.3 To ensure that a robust Audit Plan could be delivered in 2022-23, a temporary senior auditor provided some limited resource and the 2 CIPFA trainee accountants were seconded to Internal Audit for part of the year. There is very limited scope to extend the secondments further due to staff turnover within Accountancy and the temporary senior auditor has indicated that she is no longer available for assignments.
- 4.4 The Annual Audit Plan 2023-24, approved by Audit Committee on 22nd March 2023, is based on 259 available audit days reduced from 394 in 2022-23. As part of the review and preparation of the 2023-24 plan the service was benchmarked against the respective internal audit plans of the other Districts within Worcestershire. An objective risk based approach was adopted to produce an overall needs assessment. The Internal Audit Manager was able to provide an internal audit opinion in 2022-23 based on completion of 180 Audit days by focussing available resource on key systems.
- 4.5 Reducing the size and scope of the Audit plan to this extent reduces the value of the Internal Audit team to the authority. The size and shape of the internal audit function should provide not only a review of key systems, but also the resources to audit all identified risks and provide management with an opinion of the control environment

and governance arrangements and be available to contribute to system redesign and other value for money reviews.

- 4.6 A fresh approach to resourcing for 2023-24 and future years is required, and alternative service provision has been examined.
- 4.7 **Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service (WIASS)** is hosted by Worcester City Council. The service is a collaboration between Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. The shared service has also provided contracted services to Worcestershire County Council. WIASS has been operating since June 2010 on a non-profit making basis and the governance is by means of a joint management board of the partner s151 Officers.
- 4.8 The s151 Officer at Worcester City Council tabled an outline request at the WIASS joint management board in May for this Council to join the shared services. The board has agreed to collaborate via a service contract with the Council. The management board require collaboration on a day rate basis for a minimum period of 2 years before they will consider a request from the Council to join the shared service as a partner. The suggested composite day rate for 2023-24 is £376.00. The number of days currently available to contract is constrained and subject to successful recruitment of additional staff by WIASS.
- 4.9 **Crown Commercial Services (CCS)** is an executive agency, sponsored by the Cabinet Office. The framework enables the public and third sector to access a wide range of services at competitive rates without having to run a full tendering exercise. CCS agreement (framework) RM6188 Audit Assurance Services (A&AS) gives access to 17 suppliers able to provide Internal Audit and Assurance and Counter Fraud and Investigation Services. CCS commercial agreements use collective purchasing power to increase quality and value. Buying through CCS complies with procurement regulations but simplifies the process. There is no fee to using the CCS framework. Suppliers are required to pay a small commission on the value of sales they make through the agreement.
- 4.10 To access services, we will need to seek expressions of interest (once service requirements are scoped) then execute a mini tender exercise.
- 4.11 **The UK labour market** has been very tight over the last 12 months which has contributed to the recruitment problems. There are some signs that the labour market is starting to ease in the internal audit sector which may lead to greater success in attracting suitable candidates. As work continues on the council's employment offer, making Wyre Forest District Council the local employer of choice, there is greater chance of recruitment success.
- 4.12 The 2022-23 plan was delivered, in part, through the secondment of the CIPFA trainees for part of the year. The secondments were very successfully, both trainees produced excellent field work and gained a greater understanding of the internal control environment and our governance framework. The placements also contribute to professional studies (certificate stage module on audit and assurance) and creates

a more rounded training pathway for our apprentices. Requirements for mentoring support in turn provides development opportunities for our middle and senior managers.

4.13 The current audit plan covers a variety of types of work. It would be possible for different resourcing options to be adopted for some aspects of the work. For example, if the resources were available (casual or permanent), the Contract Audit work could be delivered from an expanded accountancy control role within the Accountancy Team. Similarly, the fraud awareness and NFI work could be a standalone provision.

4.14 The following four delivery options have been considered:

1. Join the Worcestershire shared audit service (WASS) hosted by Worcester City Council for all or some of the audit plan
2. Procure Full Internal Audit services via a framework agreement
3. Work with WASS to secure Management and some operational capacity via a Services contract and either appoint on a permanent or casual basis or secure additional operational capacity via a suitable framework. This could include appointing a third CIPFA trainee to enhance the internal control role to undertake part of the plan, as well as direct delivery of audit field work.
4. Continue to seek to recruit to some or all positions either as an interim solution prior to transferring staff to WASS in two years under TUPE arrangements or as a permanent solution and retain an in house internal audit team.

4.15 The table below shows the advantages and disadvantages of each option considered.

	Description	Cost	Advantages	Disadvantages
1.	Join WASS as a full partner	££	<p>Greater service Resilience</p> <p>Anticipate lower cost than framework/Agency resource</p> <p>Specialist local government experience</p> <p>Public to Public collaboration should be considered ahead of public to private (per transformation plan)</p> <p>Local relationships</p> <p>All districts within Worcestershire would be part of the same service delivery programme.</p>	<p>2 year interim arrangement required prior to joining as a full partner – longest timeframe</p> <p>Higher cost than in-house provision</p> <p>Less flexible</p> <p>Reduced corporate knowledge/political awareness</p> <p>Least delivery risk (in 2 years time)</p>

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2.	Procure full service via CCS framework	£££	<p>Improved resilience</p> <p>Contracted service, service not impacted by availability of resource</p> <p>Broader experience from wider client base</p> <p>Sharing of best practice</p>	<p>Cost unknown until procurement</p> <p>Quality control/contract management (reduced control)</p> <p>Time scale – some delivery risk</p> <p>May have few, if any expressions of interest</p> <p>Lack of flexibility (COVID grant certification work)</p> <p>limited corporate knowledge/political awareness</p> <p>Lack of local relationships</p> <p>Public to private collaboration</p>
3.	Work with WIASS and develop a hybrid delivery model with option to join WIASS as a full partner in 2 years	£££	<p>Chance to test whether culture is a good fit</p> <p>Greater service Resilience</p> <p>Anticipate lower cost than framework/Agency resource</p> <p>Specialist local government experience</p> <p>Public to Public collaboration</p> <p>Local relationships – WFDC have worked with Worcester City pre WIASS and the Head of Service does have prior knowledge of the council</p> <p>Development opportunity for CIPFA trainees</p>	<p>Capacity/availability of staff currently uncertain</p> <p>Delivery risk</p> <p>More expensive than joining as a full member of WIASS</p>
4.	Recruit in-house team – permanent or agency staff	£	<p>Cost</p> <p>Flexibility</p>	<p>Resilience</p> <p>Probability of success uncertain</p> <p>Greatest risk of being unable to deliver sufficient audit days to support annual assurance report</p>

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below details the current budget for Internal Audit services and is based on 394 available audit days. The composite day rate for an in-house team in 2023-24 is £286.

Internal Audit	2023-24 Base Budget £	2024-25 Projection £	2025-26 Projection £
Employee Related	112,670	118,320	124,140
Transport	50	50	50
Supplies and Services	980	980	980
Sub Total	113,700	119,350	125,170
Professional and Business Service Recharge	38,540	37,760	37,260
Depot Recharges and Revenue Allocations	1,380	1,450	1,490
Gross Expenditure	153,620	158,560	163,920
External Income	-1,530	-1,560	-1,590
Internal Recharges	-152,100	-157,020	-162,380
	-10	-20	-50
Equivalent day rate	£286		

- 5.2 The current approved plan is based on 259 days and the 2022-23 audit opinion was provided on a reduced plan of 180 audit days.
- 5.3 The day rates quoted by Opus for internal auditors is between £350 and £450 per day depending on experience. The rate provided by WIASS is £376, although they have indicated that a higher charge would apply for attendance at committee meetings. The table below provides early indicative costs based on both the current approved audit plan (259 days) and, as a comparison a reduced plan sufficient only to provide an internal audit annual assurance opinion (based on 180 days). Costs available via the CCS framework will not be known until we run a mini competition.

	Approved plan (259 days) £	Reduced Plan (180 days) £
In-House	74,098	51,496
Agency - £400 composite day rate	103,600	72,000
WIASS - £376 composite day rate	97,384	67,680

Whilst it is apparent that the alternative delivery options are more expensive than in-house provision, following the decision to reduce the scope of the Audit Plan for 2023-24, it is probable that the service can be delivered within the existing budget provision.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The duty to approve the authority's statement of accounts, income and expenditure and balance sheet is a responsibility reserved for full Council (i.e. not a responsibility of an Authority's Executive) under The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 Misc functions, (para 8 in schedule 1). No other matter relating to audit are referred to in the schedule.
- 6.2 Part 2 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires that a relevant authority must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control and must undertake an effective internal audit.
- 6.3 The s151 officer has a statutory duty under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to administer the Council's financial affairs and is responsible for establishing an adequate and effective system of internal audit and making sure that it is adequately resourced.
- 6.4 The Council's Contract Procedure Rules require Cabinet approval for procurements where the value of the purchase (over all years) is estimated to be more than £175,000.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This is a financial report and there is no requirement to consider an Equality Impact Assessment.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1

Risk description	Risk Score	Mitigation
Delivery risk – insufficient resource to support internal audit opinion/assurance statement and satisfy regulatory requirement for an adequate Internal Audit Service	R	Option 2, where service provision is secured under a contractual relationship is the only option that mitigates the risk to an acceptable level.
Poor corporate governance – failure to comply with Corporate governance framework	G	Securing provision under all of the options proposed ensures adequate arrangements to fulfil compliance with the corporate governance framework. Arrangements are reviewed quarterly by CLT and reported bi-annually to Audit Committee
Ineffective risk management	G	As above
Weakened internal control environment and loss of integrity of accounting statement	G	As above.

Escalation of occurrence of fraud and financial irregularity	A	Arrangements are reported annually to Audit Committee. A fraud risk assessment will be commissioned to provide additional assurance during quarter 2.
Noncompliance with UK Public Audit Standards – poor corporate governance	G	Securing provision under all of the options proposed ensures adequate arrangements to fulfil compliance.

CONCLUSION

- 8.1 It is essential that the Council secures a sound system of internal control and must undertake an effective internal audit.
- 8.2 The options available are outlined in section 4 of the report. Option 1 – joining WIASS as a full partner is not available as a means of delivering the 2023-24 and 2024-25 audit plans, so whilst it maybe a long term ambition it fails to address the immediate risks. Options 3 and 4 have unacceptable delivery risk, since each is predicated on the ability to recruit and retain suitably experienced staff; we have had 4 failed recruitment attempts during 2022-23. Seeking an external contract (option 2) is the only viable solution in the short term.
- 8.3 Buying through CCS complies with procurement regulations but simplifies the process. The framework gives access to services at competitive rates without having to run a full tendering exercise.
- 8.4 Therefore, it is proposed that that we implement Option 2 and seek to procure the service via the CCS framework.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)
- 9.2 Chair of Audit Committee
- 9.3 Procurement Officer/Procurement partner
- 9.4 Contracts Solicitor

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Internal Audit Plan 2023-24
- 10.2 Appendix 2 – Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Methodology



INTERNAL AUDIT

“Enabling Others To Do What They Need To Do”

INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN

2023~24

Wyre Forest District Council affects the whole community and therefore aims to deliver public services to meet the needs of the Community and provide value for money. This includes identifying smarter ways of working to ensure delivery of services the community want as underpinned by the principles of systems thinking, ensuring the Council can meet its outcome priorities and purposes as identified in the Corporate Plan.

Wyre Forest District Council

Corporate plan 2021-23



Our vision:

Wyre Forest is a network of thriving and confident communities, which minimise their impact on the environment, where people have a decent and affordable home, feel safe and enjoy a good quality of life.



Our priorities:

**A safe,
clean and
green living
environment**

**Supporting
a successful
local
economy**

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2023~24

		<u>2023~24</u>
		<u>Days</u>
Systems and Probity Risk Reviews	NOTE 1	174
Computer Audit {ICT Governance & Advice}	NOTE 2	15
Contract Audit {Procurement}	NOTE 3	10
Sub-total Planned Work		199
Specific Service Duties	NOTE 4	20
Consultancy and Advice {Audit Resource Set Aside}		
→ Provide professional advice on emerging risks and issues		20
{Continuing Covid19 Assurance Work}		
→ Management Requests for ad-hoc commissioned work		20
Irregularity Contingency {Audit Resource Set Aside}		
→ Provide advice and assistance on required investigations		
WORKLOAD/AVAILABLE DAYS		259

NOTES

- 1 The days per service area are shown on Pages 4-8
- 2 An analysis of the areas covered is shown on Page 9-10
- 3 An analysis of the areas covered is shown on Page 11
- 4 A breakdown of the specific service duties follows on Page 12

OVERALL COMMENTS

The areas in this plan have been identified by an objective risk assessment as denoted by “**RA**” in the attached pages.

The Audit Risk Assessment uses a number of factors to calculate a risk score and to provide a weighted assessment.

The resulting scores are branded into three risk categories and ranked to identify determine the audit universe for Wyre Forest District Council.

- **High (Scores 61-100+)**
- **Medium (Scores 26-60)**
- **Low (Scores up to 25)**

AUDIT COVERAGE	RA	2023~24 Days	AUDIT SCOPE
Annual Assurance Reviews			
FAILURE OF THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT/UNABLE TO DELIVER A SUSTAINABLE BUDGET			
Treasury Management {Strategy; Reporting & Reconciliations} {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems} The daily process is well managed; the audit review considers a more strategic approach. NB: There is no change to the service provider. <i>A hybrid methodology of working was implemented during 2021~22, therefore, it is acknowledged that remote working arrangements enhance risks due to the change in working arrangements and processes for this key area.</i>	29	6	Assurance Historically, good governance. Reviewed as impact of failure is significant. Scope will capture changes to the systems and procedures in place to manage the Council's Cash Flow and investments within the approved Treasury Management Strategy and consequent risk appetite. To review and ensure borrowing is managed in accordance with the Capital Strategy/ Medium Term Financial Strategy. Incorporating the Council Policies for the Capital Portfolio Fund; and the increase in the capital programme arising from the Future High Street Funding and Levelling Up Funding; with regard to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance {2021 Edition} Have regard to all guidance on Local Government Investments and the Code of Practice {TM in the Public Services} ~ 2021 Edition
Budgetary Setting, Control & Monitoring {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems to support an effective internal control environment and ability to set a balanced budget} Budgets are approved by Council in February; review will consider budget monitoring by Service Managers.	33	8	Assurance Historically, good governance. Reviewed as impact of an unsustainable budget will result in failure to meet the Corporate Priorities. Scope will capture changes to systems and procedures around the Budget Cycle; review the setting of financial goals, forecasting future financial resources to include the monitoring of budgets to feed into the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy. financial records and the final accounts.
Accounts Receivable: Corporate Debtors {Compliance & Reconciliations} {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems to support an effective internal control environment} To include Property Debtors. The audit review will consider income generation, costing of work to ensure income streams are meeting their targets; pre-payment for services as the Council looks to a more commercial approach to the delivery of services.	51	8	Assurance Historically, good governance. Reviewed as an element of the general ledger supporting the annual statement of accounts; to provide a sound control environment process must operate effectively. Scope will capture changes to the systems and procedures in place for the raising of accounts for services provided by the Council in respect of Miscellaneous Debts to include the monthly reconciliations and aged debt reports. → Including follow up on change processes as part of the transformation programme. → Including work in relation to channel shift/digitalisation to generate increased external income. → Income generation linked to the commercialisation agenda.
Benefits {Compliance & Reconciliation} {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems; to support an effective internal control environment. This Service continues to be subject to significant change imposed by DWP and is under continuous review to align processes/systems. 2022~23 saw a significant reduction in staff resource, as team changes/ staffing restructures continued to meet the changing business need and the Councils transformation programme} This is a critical system and well managed. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme as amended due to the cost-of-living crisis and the increase in the level of support provided to low-income households for the 2023~24 financial year.	55	18	Assurance Historically, good governance. Reviewed with regard to the rules covering entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support being complex and administrative errors have the potential to lead to under/overpayments. Scope will capture changes to the systems and procedures to ensure entitlement to and payments in relation to Housing Benefit. → To include Payments, Overpayments, Rent Referrals, Statistical and Subsidy Returns. Changes to the Benefits System under the Welfare Reform Act, Universal Credit, Single Fraud Investigation Service and the WFDC Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. → The review will have regard to the impact of the cost-of-living and impact on the level of support to low-income households.

Payroll (Including Mileage & Subsistence claims) {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems to support an effective internal control environment; Significant proportion of expenditure, provided as part of a Shared Service with Redditch BC. HMRC IR35 requirements specific to the public sector} NB: Redditch BC moving from Frontier system, Officer Decision on 4 th June 2020 to remain with RBC and develop their new service solution with for possible implementation in	51	12	Assurance Historically, good governance. Reviewed as a service delivered via a service level agreement. Scope to capture changes to systems and procedures in place at Wyre Forest DC and Redditch BC to ensure accurate payments to bonafide employees. Validation of all payments, to include those to HMRC including the changes in respect of IR35, Pensions and other deductions and allowances are correct and authorised and that all payroll transactions are accurately recorded in the financial accounts, to incorporate detailed testing of both staff and member mileage & subsistence claims. Act as a critical friend on the review of the payroll arrangements and the service level agreement. With any implemented hybrid/remote working arrangements taking into account the confidential nature of data held for payroll and HR Management
NNDR {Business Rates} {Parameters/Compliance & Reconciliations} {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems to support an effective internal control environment} <p>→ Business Rate reform continues and with the continuation of a Herefordshire & Worcestershire Business Rates Pool agreement for 2023~24</p> <p>→ Potential for additional Government reliefs add complexity to the administration systems for this key income stream.</p>	21	8	Assurance Historically, good governance. Reviewed as a key financial process with an annual rateable value in excess of £34million Scope will capture changes to the systems and procedures in place to calculate liability, raise bills, collect income and monitor arrears; review process for the Business Rate retention including contributions to/from the Worcestershire pool. NNDR 3 return. Have regard for any Valuation Office changes and “Check Challenge Appeal” process for appeals. Provide assurance that appropriate notifications have been received advising of the NNDR multipliers and transitional relief rates for the current financial year, and that these have been accurately transferred to the Civica system for the billing process. → Ensuring Government funding for NNDR Business Grant Schemes and any Rates Reliefs are delivered in accordance with the Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. Detailed post assurance payment checks will be undertaken as appropriate on grant monies received relating to the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure they are paid/distributed to businesses within the Wyre Forest district accurately and timely and that all payment runs are reconciled. → The impact in maximising income collection in consideration of the cost-of-living/energy crisis.
Council Tax {Parameters/Compliance & Reconciliations} {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems to support an effective internal control environment}	21	8	Assurance Historically, good governance. Reviewed as a key financial process, with an annual property charge in excess of £85m. Scope will capture changes to the systems and procedures in place to calculate liability, raise bills, collect payment and monitor arrears. To provide assurance that Council Tax charges have been correctly calculated, and parameters validated for an accurate billing process. Review changes to the system for the detection/prevention of fraud on Single Person Discounts. The review will have regard to the impact of the cost-of-living on the level of support to low-income households.
Accounts Payable: Corporate Creditors {Compliance & Reconciliations} {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems to support an effective internal control environment} Accounts Payable is a stable system, and audit reviews will consider those applications that interface with Agresso, the Financial Management System.		12	Assurance Historically, good governance. Reviewed as an element of the general ledger to support the annual statement of accounts and provide a sound control environment process. Scope will capture changes to the system and procedures in place for the payment of invoices for services and supplies across the Council to cover all aspects including the weekly reconciliations of BACS; Purchase Order Processing (requisition to invoice payment); journal transactions Including follow up on change processes as part of the on-going transformation programme including channel shift and digitalisation.

	44		<p>The review will have regard for any transactions for the Future High Street Fund and Levelling Up Fund increased sample sizes will be the substantive part of the detailed compliance testing to cover any emergency payments for orders/goods services placed to ensure payments were genuine, realistic and not fraudulent.</p> <p>The review will acknowledge the implementation of hybrid/remote working on this service area.</p>
<p>Procurement Cards {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems to support an effective internal control environment {Failure to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code\monitoring of Contactless Functionality}</p>			<p>Assurance Reviewed as part the transparency process for procurement, Scope will review a sample of procurement activities across all service teams to evaluate the level of compliance with legal, transparency and constitution requirements. Including reviewing the controls in place for the use of the Council's purchasing cards and the recording and verification of purchases via this method.</p>
<p>Debt Recovery Procedures {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems to support an effective internal control environment} → To include Corporate & Property Debtors. Property Debts to include new Property Acquisitions and noting the role of BNP Paribas Estate Advisory & Property Management UK Ltd.</p>	67	5	<p>Assurance Historically, good governance. Reviewed as a key system across all services. Well managed as evidenced from the work of the Corporate Debt Recovery Officer within the Finance Team Scope will capture changes to the systems and procedures for the recovery of outstanding debts having regard to the Legal requirements for Court Action (exc. Council Tax and NNDR). Have regard for the management of debt recovery within the Property Management Teams and the BNP Contract for managing the Capital Portfolio properties. → The impact in maximising income collection in consideration of the cost-of-living/energy crisis</p>
<p>Accounting (Income& Bank) {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems to support an effective internal control environment} → Stable processes in place with no issues identified. As systems continue to become more digital, future audit reviews will ensure WFDC procedures remain fit for purpose.</p>	40	5	<p>Assurance Historically, good governance. Reviewed as a key financial process, underpinning internal and external reporting by reconciliations to the General Ledger. Scope will capture changes to the systems and procedures around the Council's General Ledger to record financial transactions and produce the final accounts. To include Bank Reconciliations, collection of income via all mediums crosscutting across all Service Teams. Including follow up on change processes as part of the on-going transformation programme and having regard to the digital first agenda.</p>
<p>Employee Establishment {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems to support an effective internal control environment} → Remains an area of concern as the process is captured across Service Teams.</p>	82	10	<p>Assurance Scope will continue to work with the HR Team to formalise systems and procedures for the maintenance of the WFDC Establishment database; and the process for updating staff details. Without an establishment, ghost employees cannot be identified, or salary budgets managed.</p>
Cross Cutting Continuous Reviews			
<p>Information Governance Council misses important issues and/or is in breach of a requirement. {Risk: Breach of the Data Protection Act leading to penalties up to £500k – Note report commissioned as part of long-term agreement from Council's insurers Zurich Municipal on Information governance risk} → Review will be broken into different elements and reviewed on a rolling basis year on year, reviews will examine the way information is received, managed, and stored.</p>	~	8	<p>Continuous review to support the work of the ICT Strategy Board/Information Governance Group; work with the Data and Project Management Officer in reviewing procedures, processes including the training and awareness of relevant policies and guidelines. To provide assurance on controls implemented to manage information {including disposal} within the Council; to include not just ICT but manual records and information.</p> <p>Confirm compliance with data protection legislation with regard to the General Data Protection Regulation {GDPR} May 2018 to include mapping data protection processes to ensure that the personal information is collected and collated as appropriate. Continuing focus around cyber security to ensure the cyber environment maintains pace with current threats addressing the risks of financial loss, disruption or damage to the Council considering the increased remote {Hybrid} working across all service teams implemented from Autumn 2021.</p>

Agenda Item No. 7.1 APPENDIX 1

Ethics and Governance {Risk: Reputational Damage; Failure to meet Statutory Requirements; Ineffective governance; unsatisfactory audit opinion}	44	8	Continuous review to determine whether the Council's has effective governance arrangements and ethical framework in place. To include Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategies; Data Protection; Freedom of Information; Contract Procedure Rules; Financial Regulations; Constitution; Code of Conduct; Gifts & Hospitality; Members Allowances; Data Quality/Performance Management. Arrangements with third party sections, partnerships and localism arrangements. Standards Management: Definition: An expectation that members and staff will operate to the highest standards of conduct, encouragement to do so, acknowledgement that, on occasions, some may fail to do so and a willingness to address this.
Risk Management {Risk Reputational Damage; Ineffective risk management; unsatisfactory audit opinion} → Review will be broken into different elements and reviewed on a rolling basis year on year,	~	8	Continuous review of the Council's Risk Management arrangements to support the annual audit opinion, and reports to Audit Committee on review of the Corporate Risk Register including work towards embedding Cipfa's Financial Resilience Index. → Select Key Risks from the Corporate Risk Register and review mitigating actions to support the annual audit opinion. → Continue to work with the S151 Officer and the Corporate Leadership Team in respect of emerging risks to review the implementation of the Business Continuity Plans and maintenance of the Corporate Risk Register.
TOTAL DAYS		124	

Cyclical Reviews {Rollover}

AUDIT COVERAGE	RA	2023~24 Days	AUDIT SCOPE
Development Management {Risk: Reputational Damage; Failure to meet statutory requirements; customer expectation; income threshold} → Several Staffing Changes during 2022~23	54	15	Cyclical review of the systems and procedures in place for processing and approval of planning applications to include the collection and banking arrangements for fee income.
Electoral Registration & Elections {Risk: Reputational Damage; Failure to meet statutory requirements} → Change of elections Team during 2022~23	50		Cyclical review of the systems and procedures for the maintaining of the Electoral Register and administration of the Elections with regard for the potential increase in postal voting considering following the Covid19 pandemic and implementation of Voter ID from 2023.
Asset Management/Fixed Asset Valuations {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems} → Audit Reviews will have consideration for the Localism Agenda. Delivery of the Future High Streets Funding Programme of initiatives.	~		Continuous review of the system and arrangements in place to record, manage and maintain the Council's physical assets and property portfolio. Review of the systems and procedures in place in respect of the arrangement for leases, licenses, and rental agreements; calculation of income due, collection and banking of income and the monitoring and recovery of arrears. Checks will be made to ensure localism transfers are appropriately reflected in the asset register and e.g., removed from the Council's insurance policy. Have regard for the capital funding to grow the Council's portfolio of capital assets to support economic, regeneration and/or housing priorities.
TOTAL DAYS		15	

Corporate Plan Priorities {Allocations}

AUDIT COVERAGE	RA	2023~24 Days	AUDIT SCOPE
North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration Economic Growth:	~	15	Corporate Plan Priority Banner: Supporting a Successful Local Economy → A shared service between Wyre Forest District Council/Redditch Borough Council/Bromsgrove District Council. → Overview of Future High Street Funding and Levelling Up Funding to support the S151 assurance statements
TOTAL DAYS		15	

Wyre Forest Forward Programme {On ~ Going Corporate Interventions}:

Internal Audit to support the Council with Interventions/Continuous Improvement Work

AUDIT COVERAGE	RA	2023~24 Days	AUDIT SCOPE
Garage ~ Vehicle Maintenance/Stores & Stock Control to include PPE & Garage Hive {Risk: Failure to Maintain adequate controls over Key Financial Systems}	54	20	Continued support to the Depot as part of the Interventions to include ongoing review of the arrangements in place for the maintaining and servicing of Council Vehicles, to cover Driver responsibilities, stock control and issue of fuel with the implementation of the Garage Hive software application.
Income Generation {Commercial Work} to capture current and new council service income streams {Risk: Reputational Damage, Customer expectations; Failure to Generate External Income}	~		Review of the systems and procedures in place for the provision of commercial activities. Continue to review, develop and refine systems to support the commercialisation of services being delivered by the Depot.
TOTAL DAYS		20	
TOTAL AVAILABLE AUDIT DAYS		174	

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2023~24

ICT Audits and Assistance (10 Days Per Annum)~ Continuous Programme of Review

~Implementation of ICT Strategy

~Unable to ensure a secure network which would make ICT vulnerable to attacks/threats

Areas	Reason
IT Governance~ Physical Security	To ensure that physical security is in place and that protocols are adhered to. Ensure that there is effective management of assets throughout to manage changes and restructuring.
IT Governance ~ Public Services Network	To ensure actions from penetration testing are implemented to allow for continued connectivity to government systems and any vulnerabilities identified are addressed.
IT Governance ~ Access Control Applications as detailed in the WFDC ICT User Security Policy ~ Updated June 2021	To ensure that system access is recorded and appropriately granted. To ensure that System administrators are appropriately trained. To ensure Roles and Permissions are monitored To ensure employee starter, leaver and transfers access right set up and amendments are controlled and recorded.
IT Governance ~ Upgrade/Security & Patch Management	To ensure there is a system in place for upgrading software and applying security and other supplier patches.
IT Governance ~ Back up	To ensure system back-ups are controlled and secure. To ensure back-ups are tested and the tests are recorded. To ensure back up equipment is working appropriately.
IT Governance ~ Audit Trails	To ensure Audit trails are switched on, show an accountable trail, are retained for an appropriate length of time and the time stamps are accurate. To ensure significant events have been recorded.
IT Governance ~ Contingency Plans (Monitoring of Cyber Risks)	To ensure contingency plans are in place and include security arrangements (including physical). To ensure off site arrangements have been tested. To ensure that the cyber environment is reviewed to maintain pace with current threats, addressing the risk of financial loss, disruption or damage to the reputation of the Council. To ensure there is a Corporate Cyber Response Plan in place.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2023~24

Assistance & Advice {5 Days Per Annum} ~ Continuous Programme of Review

Implementation of ICT Strategy

Unable to ensure a secure network which would make ICT vulnerable to attack/threats

Areas	Reason
Social Media to include: {Risk: Reputational Damage; information not managed; feedback not monitored} Facebook Twitter Press Releases	The Council regularly updates the pages to ensure the Content is current and accurate. The sites are monitored with regard to mitigating risks in respect of branding and/or reputational damage The sites are accessible to all. Compliance with Data Security under: - ~a privacy policy, ~social media policy, ~ risk policy ~Freedom of Information and Data Protection policies. Ensure an internal policy include the employees use of social media.
IT Governance ~ Inventories {Risk: Misappropriation/misuse of Assets; Reputational damage should data on council assets be lost/misused; financial penalties for loss/misuse of data if hardware not manage}	To ensure inventories are in place for both computer software and hardware. To ensure inventories are regularly reviewed and updated including in relation to homeworking/remote equipment
Payments on Line ~ Procurement/Paypal {Risk: The continuing use of procurement cards and introduction of contactless functionality from 2019}	To ensure that the Council procurement cards are secure and appropriately used. To ensure that the procurement cards are being used in line with Council policies when used online. To ensure that purchases and payments are appropriately controlled.
Payment Card Industry Data Security (Risk: Financial Penalties or withdrawal of payment facilities)	To ensure that appropriate processes are in place for adherence to industry standards in relation to the use of payment card technology. Particularly for increased payment processes to support external income generation.
BACS {Banks Automated Clearing System} {Risk: Reputational Damage should payments/income collection not be actioned promptly, failure to deliver services}	To work with the ICT Manager and Finance Team on the implementation of any industry changes to the BACS software to ensure effective arrangements in place for processing BACS bank to bank transactions.
ICT Strategy Board/ICT Security {Cyber} Group	To attend and provide consultative advice and support on information governance and appropriate internal controls.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2023~24

The Council undertakes a variety of procurement activities to help deliver services and meet its Corporate Plan Priorities. There are a number of key contracts and in order to mitigate the Council's exposure to commercial, contractual and reputation risk these should be effectively managed.

Contract Audit to include Procurement (10 Days Per Annum)
Unable to effectively improve the Council's Reputation

Contract/Procurement Audit includes:

- Contract Specifications
- Tendering Process including opening & recording
- Award of Contract
- Contract Monitoring
- Contract payments
- Contract register
- Final accounts as appropriate
- Service Level Agreements
- Due regard to Home Office Guidance on fraud and organised crime.

On contracts selected from the approved Revenue & Capital budgets.

Current Examples Include:-

- Disposal of Council Assets
- Unity Park {Frenco Site} Project
- Capital Portfolio

Government Funding

Unable to improve the economic prosperity of the district}

- Future High Street Funding ~ £20.5m Programme
- Levelling Up Funding for projects in the district

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2023~24

Specific Service Duties – (20 Days Per Annum)

CONSTITUTION~GOVERNANCE

- Continuous review of Financial Regulations to ensure updated for the policies for the Capital Portfolio fund//Contract Procedure Rules/Corporate Fraud Policies and others that may arise.
 - ➔ Implications of Brexit and impact on procurement and contracts.
 - ➔ Changes to Constitution introduced as a result of migration to hybrid working and remote meetings.

ARRANGMENTS FOR THE PREVENTION/DETECTION OF FRAUD

- To continue to coordinate the statutory requirement for the Cabinet Office National Fraud Initiative Data Matching Exercises.
 - ➔ Participation by management and coordination in mandatory data matching exercise across public bodies to identify anomalies which may signify fraudulent transactions. Matches are investigated promptly and thoroughly.
- Counter Fraud Arrangements
- Participation in national surveys for Fraud to demonstrate actions in Protecting the Public Purse.

SPECIFIC ROLES

- Grant certifications where the contractual arrangement requires Internal Audit to confirm that expenditure is in line with grant terms and conditions including the drawdown of funding by Kidderminster Town Council of grant from the Levelling Up Fund
- Recommendation Monitoring
 - ➔ To support the Audit Opinion
 - ➔ Allow for Internal Audit to monitor Management's progress with the implementation of recommendations.
- Internal Working Groups ~ Critical Friend Role
 - ➔ To provide for a representative on working groups to advise on risk and control.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING METHODOLOGY

All Tenders will be evaluated on a 60/40 split in favour of quality over price.

Price

The Tenderer with the lowest tender price will score the maximum score of 40%. The other tenders will be scored pro rata as a percentage of their tender sum compared with the lowest

$$\frac{\text{Lowest submitted total price}}{\text{Tenderer's submitted price}} \times 40$$

Quality Assessment

The quality element of submissions will be evaluated based on responses to the Quality Questionnaire.

The Quality Questionnaire requires all tenderers to:

- **Outline their approach to delivery**
Set out the methodology for undertaking the commission, based on the section within the ITT entitled 'deliverables', and outline what they see as the key challenges in delivering the commission. Tenderers should set out the arrangements within their firm for ensuring that quality exists throughout the internal audit process and how capacity and resilience are addressed. Reference should be made to the relevant Internal Audit Standards, your approach to audit fieldwork, including input that you would expect from Council staff. Please provide an example of your standard report template(s).
- **Technical merit, including competence, skills and experience**
Provide the CVs of their proposed team setting out their relevant experience for undertaking this commission and provide the comparable experience of the project director (or Partner) and Audit Manager that will be responsible for delivering the commission on a day-to-day basis. The lead for the work should have experience of working in a local authority.
- Provide three comparable case studies and references from work undertaken in the last 3 years, where the leading members of their proposed team played a leading role in those commissions.

The Council reserve the option of undertaking a pre-tender briefing session with potential bidders and the right to hold a clarification meeting should one be required. The submissions will be assessed based on the following quality criteria:

Criteria	Percentage
Approach / Methodology	30%
Direct and Relevant Experience (3x case studies)	15%
Proposed Resourcing model (evidenced by CVs)	15%

Social value will not form part of the quality assessment but the Council reserves the right to explore opportunities during the term of the contract.

The following matrix illustrates how responses to questions will be assessed. The scores for each question will be used to calculate a percentage weighting based on the percentage weightings listed above.

Performance	Judgement	Score
Exceeds all expectations	Exceptional	10
Exceeds almost all expectations	Outstanding	9
Exceeds most expectations	Very good	8
Above Expectations	Good	7
Slightly exceeds expectations	Fair	6
Meets expectations	Average	5
Satisfactory but below expectations	Below average	4
Below expectations	Poor	3
Well below expectations	Weak	2
Almost Unacceptable	Very Weak	1
Unacceptable		0

- 5.2 The evaluation process will consider all relevant submitted evidence and written information provided by each tenderer, in relation to the specific requirements as set out within the ITT and the supporting documentation. There will be an initial check of all tenders for completeness and compliance with the tendering instructions (including a check that the tender is a “compliant tender”). Any submissions that in the opinion of the Council do not meet the requirements set out in the ITT may be rejected as non-compliant and will not be evaluated further. Each question for quality will be assessed by a panel. The panel will agree a single overall score up to the maximum score for the question. This score will be multiplied by the weighting for that question (as set out in the above table) to give the weighted score. The following formula will be used to calculate weighted scores:

$$\text{Weighted Score} = \frac{\text{Awarded Score}}{\text{Maximum Score}} \times \text{Weighting}$$

For example, if a score of 6 is awarded for Question 1 (weighting 10%) the weighted score will be 6 (6/10 x10).

At the sole discretion of the Council, Tenderer’s may be invited to present their proposals at clarification meeting and demonstrate details of their submission. The meeting may be used to validate the provisional scores for the Tenderer’s written submissions in relation to quality. The Council’s tender evaluation panel may therefore reduce a Tenderer’s provisional score for their written submissions in relation to quality where the meeting indicates that a Tenderer’s provisional score on the basis of their written submission cannot be justified. Conversely, the evaluation panel may increase a Tenderer’s provisional score where it considers their written submissions in relation to quality did not sufficiently reflect the quality of their actual delivery proposals for the Contract.

The Quality score will be added to that obtained for Price and the bidder with the highest overall score will be awarded the contract

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
17 July 2023

Wyre Forest District Council Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Dan Morehead, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey, Head of Strategic Growth
CONTACT OFFICER:	Sally Horne, Senior Planning Policy Officer
APPENDICES: The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically.	Appendix one: WFDC Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document Appendix Two: WFDC Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document Scoping Paper Appendix Three: WFDC Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document Consultation Statement

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present a report on the Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), following the recent consultation exercise.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1 CONSIDER the amended Health and Wellbeing SPD and consultation statement following the public consultation responses AND

2.2 AGREE that the Health and Wellbeing SPD be adopted.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Health and Wellbeing SPD is required to support the implementation of policies in the WFDC adopted Local Plan 2016-2036, specifically policies SP.16 Health and Wellbeing and DM.18 Hot food takeaways. The SPD logically has to make provision about these matters because of the content of the adopted Local Plan but the SPD cannot vary the policies in SP.16 and DM.18 set out in that Plan.

- 3.2 The process for writing and adopting an SPD is set out in the WFDC Statement of Community Involvement (February 2013), which was published following the issue of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The process includes publishing and consulting on a scoping paper, holding consultation events where necessary, reporting on any consultation responses received and how they have been incorporated into the SPD.
- 3.3 The Health and Wellbeing SPD, attached to this report, has been prepared in partnership with the Strategic Growth Planning Team and the Public Health Team at Worcestershire County Council as well as with other colleagues in WFDC.
- 3.4 Officers undertook a public consultation on the scoping document for the Health and Wellbeing SPD in October 2022. The document set out the proposed contents of the SPD and the process for consultation and adoption. There were no comments received.
- 3.5 A report was taken to Overview and Scrutiny on 2nd February 2023, seeking approval for the draft SPD to be consulted on for a period of 6 weeks. It was agreed but members requested that officers return once the consultation ended and a final draft was prepared.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The SPD went out for consultation from the 13th February 2023 to the 20th March 2023. The responses to that consultation are summarised in the Consultation Statement, appended to this report. However, the table below, summarises, the main issues raised and the officer response to those points.

Issue raised	Response
The need to refer to active travel links to existing facilities as well as movement corridors in the public realm chapter.	An additional bullet point (1.7) was added to the Design and Public Realm table to address the comment.
Amend reference to green infrastructure to green and blue infrastructure.	The wording in the SPD has been amended to incorporate blue infrastructure.
The need to provide definition of terms used within the SPD.	A glossary has been added to the SPD.
Ensuring that the SPD covers opportunities to address the needs across all communities and backgrounds.	The SPD addresses various needs in the different chapters and case studies of the SPD already.

Ensuring linkages to other policies and plans, for example Neighbourhood Plans.	Once adopted officers will ensure that the linkages are made, where relevant.
The definition of hot food takeaways should be revisited as some provide healthy food.	<p>The SPD cannot change policy DM.18 Hot Food Takeaways of the Local Plan, which provides the definition.</p> <p>Paragraph 008 Reference ID: 61-008-20190315 of the NPPG on Plan Making states that:</p> <p><i>“Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) should build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan.”</i></p> <p>Furthermore, when determining planning applications, an applicant applies for a use class. An application is not determined on food served.</p>
A list of contaminated land should be provided for the applicant to tick.	It is better to leave this open ended as different sites/uses may have different contaminants.
The possible introduction of 15-minute neighbourhoods and opposition to such by the consultee	Concerns noted. The 15-minute neighbourhood is not part of the Local Plan policy for this area.
Issues around public transport	Public transport is beyond the remit of this SPD, which only focuses on providing more details to policies SP.16 Health and Wellbeing and DM.18 Hot Food Takeaways of the Local Plan.

- 4.2 The amendments that have been made to the SPD, as a result of the consultation, are tracked on the final draft of the SPD, attached in Appendix A.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The costs of adopting the SPD are minimal and mostly relate to staff time. These will be met by existing budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Policy Guidance states that Local Planning Authorities have a duty to produce policies and make decisions that achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places.
- 6.2 Part five of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 sets out the process for the adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents. This includes the duty to publicly consult on an SPD prior to its adoption and the status of an SPD, in relation to the Local Plan.
- 6.3 Once adopted, the Health and Wellbeing SPD will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and it has been found that there are no negative impacts because of the Health and Wellbeing SPD.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The Health and Wellbeing SPD will provide guidance to applicants prior to an application and will help to reduce demand on officer time.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document has been prepared to provide further detail to policies contained within the adopted Local Plan. It will assist applicants completing a Health Impact Assessment, if required to do so.
- 9.2 As required by part five of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 WFDC has consulted on the SPD for a period of 6 weeks prior to finalising the document.
- 9.3 The SPD has been amended to incorporate comments of the respondents and is now being presented to members for adoption.
- 9.4 Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 CLT
- 10.2 Worcestershire County Council Public Health Team
- 10.3 Worcestershire County Council Strategic Planning Team
- 10.4 Principal Health and Sustainability Officer, WFDC
- 10.5 Planning Manager, WFDC

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix One: WFDC Health and Wellbeing SPD

Appendix Two: WFDC Health and Wellbeing SPD Scoping paper

Appendix Three: WFDC Health and Wellbeing SPD Consultation Statement



Wyre Forest
District Council

Supplementary Planning Document

Health and Wellbeing consultation document

February 2023

Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council recognises that health and well-being are key issues at both national and local level. Health is not simply about access to medical facilities; it is also about lifestyle and environment. The built environment can impact on the factors that are known to influence a person's health status and lifestyle, including economic, social and environmental conditions.

The design of the built environment can have a significant impact on both physical and mental wellbeing. Well-designed built environment can help to reduce health inequalities in Wyre Forest; while poor environmental quality, housing conditions or pollution can exacerbate them.

Planning can have a positive influence on health in a number of ways:
Planning can:

- help address the issue by ensuring that public open space, recreational facilities and sports pitches are accessible to encourage both children and adults to be active and use outside space.
- encourage the inclusion of active travel routes in developments
- promote the development of sustainable and healthy housing that provides secure and sustainable accommodation for people at different stages of their lives
- promote good quality work environments that encourage a productive and healthy workforce
- help to restrict the location and concentration of hot food takeaways.
- help facilitate access to affordable, nutritious food and maintain, enhance or develop opportunities for local food production such as allotments and community orchards or other community projects
- help mitigate the effects of climate change through sensitive and sustainable development

This SPD therefore aspires to:

- promote opportunities for healthier lifestyles, encourage healthier choices and reduce the demand on the NHS, health professionals, councils and individuals across the district;
- to inform communities and provide guidance to aid with the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans

- Inform pre-application advice of any potential health-related issues
- Be a material consideration to be taken into account in determining applications, where relevant; and
- to provide information and guidance that can be used to support an efficient HIA Screening and positive HIA;

1. INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Status and Purpose

The Wyre Forest District's Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides more detailed advice on the health and wellbeing related policies contained in the Wyre Forest Local Plan. It has been prepared in partnership with Worcestershire County Council's Strategic Planning Team and the Public Health Team.

The SPD focuses on how matters of health and wellbeing should be positively addressed through the development planning process in the district. It sets out how the applicant/developer will be expected to demonstrate their proposals reflect the principles set out in the SPD, through the use of Health Impact Assessment Screening or a full Health Impact Assessment. The document is aimed at local authority planning officers, applicants, developers, relevant organisations and the wider community involved with delivering healthier developments.

Planning Policy Context

Section 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised in 2021, sets out the Government's planning policies, including a specific requirement to promote healthy communities and to draw on evidence of health and wellbeing need. The NPPF is supported by National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) which further outlines the importance of health and wellbeing in planning.

The SPD provides detailed guidance on the two key policies in the Wyre Forest District Local Plan, SP.16 Health and Wellbeing and DM.18 Hot Food Takeaways.

Health Context

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 made public health one of local government functions. This provided an opportunity for local authorities to address the links between planning and health.

The Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy 2022-32 sets the context for other health and wellbeing plans and for commissioning of NHS, public health, social care and related children's services. The Strategy is a basis for the public to hold local organisations to account for achieving its outcomes.

This SPD aims to contribute to the Strategy's key priority, which is:

- Mental health and wellbeing throughout life

Supported by ensuring:

- Healthy living at all ages
- Quality local jobs and opportunities

- Safe, thriving and healthy homes, communities and places

The Strategy and this SPD are based on the findings of a Worcestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The JSNA is a continuous process which provides information on health and well-being in order to inform decision making. It is used to determine what actions local authorities, the NHS and other partners need to take to meet people's health and social care needs and to address the wider determinants that impact on their health and well-being. Undertaking the JSNA is a duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Key Aims

The SPD aspires to:

- promote opportunities for healthier lifestyles, encourage healthier choices and reduce the demand on the NHS, health professionals, councils and individuals across the district;
- to inform communities and provide guidance to aid with the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans
- Inform pre-application advice of any potential health-related issues
- Be a material consideration to be taken into account in determining applications, where relevant; and
- to provide information and guidance that can be used to support an efficient HIA Screening and positive HIA;

As the emphasis of the report is to guide applicants through the Health Impact Assessment, the structure of the report reflects this. The next chapter provides detail on what a Health Impact Assessment is, when it is required and the process that will be followed by WFDC when dealing with applications. The following sections then provide guidance about the principles stated in the HIA template.

1. HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

A Health Impact Assessment is a tool to help deliver the Local Plan policies and the guidance outlined in this SPD and ensure that the effects of development on both health and health inequalities are considered and addressed during the planning process. It tends to draw on existing knowledge and information and does not generally require specific new research on health impacts.

An HIA should aim to enhance the positive aspects of a proposal through assessment, while avoiding or minimising any negative impacts, with particular emphasis on disadvantaged sections of communities that might be affected.

What Applications will need a Health Impact Assessment?

Not all proposals will necessitate HIA; the HIA screening process will determine whether a HIA is needed for the particular scheme

A **HIA screening** will need to be undertaken for the development types specified below (as per policy SP.16 Health and Wellbeing) to determine whether a full assessment should be completed.

- Restaurants and cafés
- Drinking establishments
- Hot food takeaways (see policy DM.18 Hot Food Takeaways)
- Residential Institutions
- Non-residential institutions
- Leisure facilities
- Betting shops and pay-day loan shops

Depending on the outcomes, a full HIA may be required. In addition, the following will require a **full HIA**;

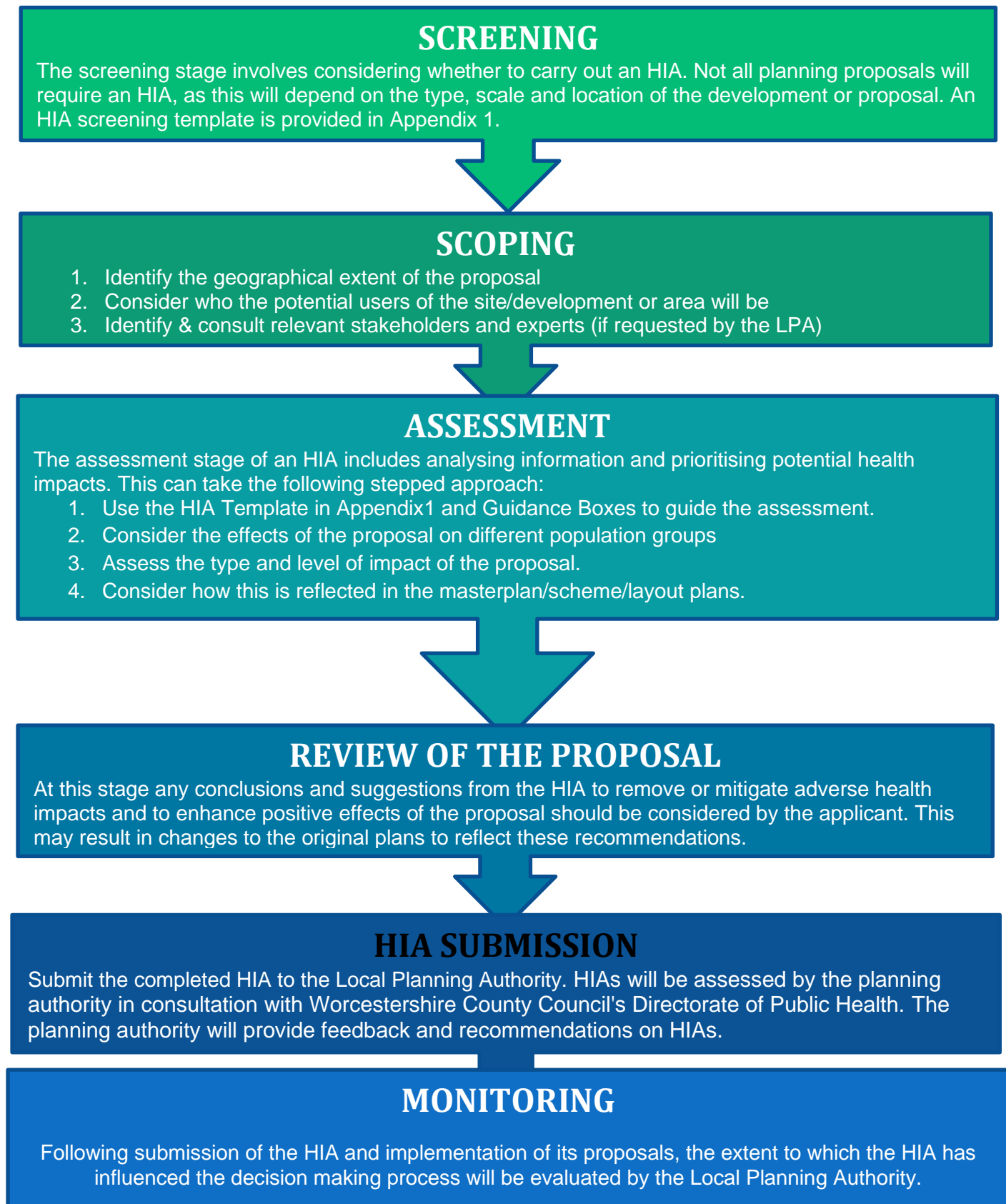
- Residential and mixed-use major development sites
- Employment sites of 5 ha or more
- Retail development of 500 square metres or more.

The Full HIA Process

The HIA, where relevant, will assess whether the proposal meets the health and wellbeing policies in WFDC's adopted Local Plan 2016 to 2036, where relevant. In completing an HIA, the applicant should follow **Template in appendix 1**, which contains both the screening and full HIA templates. This SPD also provides guidance and design principles, which have been drawn from policies contained in the 2016-2036 Local Plan.

The potential for significant impacts from a scheme, as identified thorough an HIA, will vary according to the size and scale of the proposal. In addition to an HIA, the Local Planning Authority may therefore request a targeted stakeholder consultation to be undertaken for those schemes where significant health impacts are identified.

As with HIA screening, HIAs themselves will be assessed by the planning authority in consultation with the WCC Public Health Team. The planning authority will provide feedback and recommendations on HIAs, as appropriate. Findings of the final HIA should be reflected in the proposals. There are five stages to the HIA process, which are described in the diagram 1.1.



2. HEALTH AND WELLBEING PRINCIPLES

DESIGN AND PUBLIC REALM

The design of the built environment can have a significant impact on physical and mental health and how people perceive their environments. There is need to 'design in health' into development to create healthy environments which in turns will have a positive impact on the population.

Planning will look to support the design of environments that promote and encourage physical exercise and psychological wellbeing and improve cognitive functioning. This can include the overall quality of public spaces, from street layouts and connectivity, green infrastructure/landscaping, and traffic calming measures, to a person's interaction with the surrounding cultural and historic environment. The quality of the public realm is vitally important for both mental and physical health.

When proposing new public spaces, it is important to consider all potential users and how they might use the space with the aim in mind of building healthier places and environments that support independence at all stages of life. In particularly the needs of the elderly and vulnerable people should be considered through design.

The table below, outlines the principles taken from policy SP.16, Health and Wellbeing in WFDC's adopted local plan, that will need to be addressed in the HIA.

Health and Wellbeing Principles: Urban Form – Design and the Public Realm	
HIA template reference ¹	Where relevant, proposals must comply with policy by:
1.1	Ensuring public spaces are designed to enable formal and informal physical activity, recreation, and play, and should consider all members of the public including older people and those living with dementia or disabilities.
1.2	Providing safe and attractive public realm and green infrastructure including green spaces, footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes that encourage active travel opportunities.
1.3	Providing easily navigable routes which cater for the needs of all age groups, in particular the elderly, through the provision of benches, shading and simple, clear signage.
1.4	Providing innovative public realm design solutions which prioritise people over motor traffic, allowing for convenient, safe and attractive routes, in particular for walking and cycling.
1.5	Providing opportunities for community cohesion through the creation of permeable environments that will encourage people to get outdoors for recreation, social interaction, and

¹ The HIA template is on page 32 of this SPD

	moving around by non-vehicular means through active travel measures.
1.6	<p>Proposals for new community facilities or the enhancement of existing facilities which offer an increased overall provision will be supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• where they are demonstrated to meet an identified local need• in accessible locations that serve a wide community• where they promote the opportunities to travel by sustainable modes
1.7	<p>The design of the public realm should maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cycle linkages within the development and to the surrounding area including nearby local services, facilities and amenities and provide links to existing public rights of way (PROW).</p>

Case Study: Kidderminster Town Hall Square (Exchange Street)

Kidderminster Town has benefitted from a £2 million public realm project which was completed during 2016. This has provided a new look public realm with performance space, bespoke street furniture and a new shared space outside the historic Town Hall.

Several challenges were addressed in the design including traffic conflicts between bus operators, taxis and private vehicles. The needs and movements of pedestrians and cyclists were prioritised. Prior to this there was an excessive range of furniture and paving that was inconsistent in its specification and positioning in the town centre. It was described as an outdated and tired public realm. The new design was simple and included minimal clutter improving the quality and quantity of space available to pedestrians.



ACTIVE TRAVEL

Car travel had been replacing short journeys for decades as it can be seen as more convenient. In addition, people now tend to travel longer distances. This has been a trend for 40 years and is connected to a decline in physical activity².

This decline in physical activity is a factor in health outcomes for Wyre Forest residents. Life expectancy is 7.4 years lower for men and 4.7 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Wyre Forest than in the least deprived areas (2018-2020 data, Source: Fingertips).

Building walking or cycling into daily routines are the most effective ways to increase physical activity and are a sustainable form of travel.

The table below, outlines the principles that will need to be addressed in the HIA.

Health and Wellbeing Principles: Active Travel	
HIA template reference	Where relevant, proposals must comply with policy by:
2.1	Recognising that active travel is an achievable way to improve health and encourage daily physical activity
2.2	Utilising planning guidance to make active travel an attractive and viable option and therefore reduce dependency on car travel
2.3	Ensuring connectivity between new development and more established active travel routes including cycle routes and canal towpaths

² [Public Health England *Working Together to promote Active Travel, a briefing for Local Authorities, May 2016*]

2.4	Providing more opportunities for active travel to take place by ensuring that active travel enables access to wider transport hubs prioritising connectivity to train and bus stations.
2.5	Ensuring that new development values the significance of active travel and makes it an appealing option, for example by offering secure bike storage and ensuring routes are well maintained and lit.

Case Study: Active Travel

Wyre Forest District has many opportunities for active travel due to its river and canal network including the River Severn, River Stour and Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal that connects the District's towns of Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn.

An example of active travel in Wyre Forest, is the canal towpath between Wolverley, Kidderminster and Stourport Town Centre. The tow path provides pedestrian and bicycle friendly travel routes between leisure and employment, urban and rural areas. It also brings tourism to the towns via the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal, which benefits the local economy.



GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Green and blue infrastructure (GI) can be defined as the planned and managed network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. GI comprises of many different elements including biodiversity, the landscape, the historic environment, the water environment and publicly accessible green spaces and informal recreation sites³.

GI can increase community resilience to a range of climate-related impacts, including air pollution, noise and the impacts of extreme heat and extreme rainfall events. Access to well-designed green spaces can increase levels of physical activity which in turn improves people's physical and psychological health⁴.

GI within new developments will need to be publicly accessible and capable of being managed long term. Therefore, Wyre Forest District Council will not accept private residential plots including domestic gardens or private shared permeable driveways when calculating the total GI provision within new developments.

Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework 3: Access and Recreation document states that the distribution of informal accessible recreational assets in the county is not uniform. Spatial analysis of sites across the county highlights clusters of larger sites in the north of the county in Wyre Forest District, with several smaller community sites such as Blakedown and Wribbenhall. Wyre Forest District Council manages a range of formal parks and green spaces within Stourport, Bewdley and Kidderminster and several large and small nature reserves within the urban areas. The Public Rights of Way network in the district is relatively dense and is well-used for commuting and leisure, with many circular routes in and around the Wyre Forest itself⁵.

Health and Wellbeing Principles: Green and Blue Infrastructure and Spaces Principles	
HIA template reference	Where relevant, proposals must comply with policy by:
3.1	Retaining, enhancing and providing Green Infrastructure networks and assets in terms of their quality and quantity as per SP.28 - Strategic Green Infrastructure
3.2	Providing multifunctional green spaces which perform environmental roles whilst serve the residents to support their physical and mental health
3.3	Ensuring that green spaces are accessible and serve all groups of the population
3.4	Ensuring that the quality of the green spaces is maintained in perpetuity
3.5	Providing quality open space, sports pitches and outdoor community uses in housing development

New development should consider and deliver green infrastructure on their site in line with Policy SP.28 - Strategic Green Infrastructure.

³ Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013-18

⁴ Forest Research (2010) Benefits of green infrastructure

⁵ Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework (2020) Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework 3: Access and Recreation

In considering green infrastructure in development, multifunctionality should be at the forefront of the considerations. As well as encouraging physical activity and thereby reducing obesity, access to green space, sports and other recreational facilities promotes relaxation and reduction in stress and can also bring about social interaction within communities.

Access to high-quality and well-maintained green space promotes physical activity, positive mental wellbeing and healthy childhood development. Children with access to safe green spaces are more likely to be physically active and less likely to be overweight. Outdoor play encourages healthy brain development and promotion of wellbeing through adulthood. Natural play areas can allow for adventurous play helping them to develop useful skills through play. New play areas should also consider play facilities for girls (as promoted by Make Space for Girls) and play provision for people with disabilities and for elderly people.

The Fields in Trust recommends a hierarchical approach to planning for play based on: Local Areas for Play (LAPs); Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP); and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP). The recommendations are for provision related to age, distance and diversity of opportunity. The NPFA also referred to the need for local facilities on the basis of accessibility. It recommends a 20-minute travelling time to specialist facilities such as an artificial turf pitch or athletics track is acceptable, and that a 10-15 minute journey to local sports facilities is reasonable. In this context the NPFA recommends that playing fields (or sports and recreation grounds or other local outdoor facilities) should be within three-quarters of a mile (1.2km) of where people live⁶.

In terms of children's play, the distances considered reasonable to travel from home to public open space are set out below:

- Local Area for Play (LAP) - within 100m.
- Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) - within 400m.
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) - within 1km.

Case Study: Springfield Park, Kidderminster

Springfield Park is a large park of 16.95 hectares situated in the Broadwaters area of Kidderminster. The site is adjacent to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and has good links from many parts of Kidderminster. The park has attractive walking and cycling routes. A health walk takes place regularly from one of the local GP practices and utilises the park as part of the route. The park also has a marked and measured trail, an ornamental pool, wooden sculptures and a woodland.

⁶ www.fieldsintrust.org



AGE/DEMENTIA FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS

People are living longer, and life expectancy is increasing but the numbers of years spent in poorer health is increasing. Wyre Forest District, like many areas in the UK has seen an increase in the ageing population. The physical and social changes associated with ageing need to be compensated for, to provide supportive and enabling living environments. Reduced mobility, physical disability, and chronic diseases, and psycho-emotional concerns such as stress and isolation are changes that can impact on the ageing population. The prevalence of dementia also increases significantly with age. Wyre Forest District Council has a higher proportion of older people than the national average, inevitably meaning that the sheer numbers of dementia cases will be higher.

To address the above issues, the following principles need to be addressed in an HIA:

Health and Wellbeing Principles: Age/Dementia Friendly Environment Principles	
HIA template reference	Where relevant, proposals must comply with policy by:
4.1	Incorporating dementia-friendly design into all proposals to help those affected residents now and in the future, to continue their everyday lives. This includes buildings that incorporate flexible and adaptable designs and address access to public open space.
4.2	Providing safe and walkable environments in parks, open spaces and community areas with shading, benches, and other facilities. These areas/routes should be clearly signposted with appropriate materials, and consideration should be given to the design of surfaces and street furniture.
4.3	Providing crossing facilities appropriately located (e.g., next to a bus stop) to minimise travel distances for the elderly, as well as public transport links with bus stops which are within walking distance of homes.
4.4	Providing a range of home types which cater for the needs of the elderly to allow an element of choice to older people to stay within the community as long as possible and provide opportunities to downsize.
4.5	Providing adaptable homes which cater for needs at every stage of people's life (for example build to Lifetime Homes standard).
4.6	Delivering housing for elderly including bungalows, supported living and care homes in line with SP.9 - Housing Density & Mix.

The District Council will require all major housing development proposals to contribute towards providing 20% of the total housing requirement to meet the higher access standards of Part M Building Regulations (Access to and use of buildings), (Category 2 M4(2), accessible and adaptable dwelling) of the Building Regulations

(2010); and a further 1% of the overall number of housing units to meet Category 3 M4(3) of the Building Regulations (2010), wheelchair user dwellings standards in properties where the Council has nomination rights.

Well-designed development should include accessible public transport links, such as bus stops within walking distance from people's homes. The Inclusive Mobility guidance published by the Department for Transport is used to help establish appropriate measures for public transport infrastructure to meet the needs of all population groups. For major housing developments and residential care institutions (C2), it is likely that a financial contribution towards Community Transport Services will be sought and secured through a Section 106 Agreement.

Well maintained and safe routes and walkways, accessible open spaces and walkable neighbourhoods would encourage and facilitate increased physical activity amongst the elderly. These walkways and paths need to be:

- Well-lit.
- Evenly surfaced.
- The transition should be gradual where there are changes in ground levels.
- Where steps are unavoidable, the provision of railings is necessary.
- Should include seating areas in strategic places, such as at crossroads that are particularly useful for people living with dementia as it gives them time to rest and gather their thoughts.
- Circular routes can also encourage physical activity amongst people living with dementia as they allow them to return to the start of their walk despite some potential moments of confusion.
- The design of street furniture should be kept simple and familiar to avoid it being mistaken for some other object.
- By placing street furniture such as benches under street trees, allows shading during hot weather.
- When using paving and tarmac it should be plain and non-reflective and should contrast with walls in colour and texture. Because, dementia can affects people's perception of their surroundings and different surfaces. Dark areas might appear to them as a hole in the ground, whilst glaring/shining surfaces can look like water or slippery surfaces, this can be very disorientating and scary.
- Sites should be well signposted using a tonal contrast of colours with a clear and simple font.

Case Study: Berrington Court

Berrington Court comprises 165, 1 and 2 bed flats, located on the Silverwood's mixed-use estate in Kidderminster. The scheme provides independent accommodation alongside communal facilities such as a restaurant, hair and beauty salon and provision of 24-hour care, if needed. The scheme neighbours the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre, a supermarket and is in closer proximity to public transport and pedestrian routes along the canal to Kidderminster and Stourport.



HOUSING

The condition of the housing that we live in can affect both our physical and mental health. Inadequate housing can cause or contribute to many preventable diseases and injuries these include diseases of the respiratory system, the nervous system, cardiovascular disease and cancer. Some groups are more vulnerable to the conditions that they live in such as babies, children, the elderly, those with a disability, those with health conditions and those that spend much of their time inside their house. A house that is warm and dry can have a positive effect on our health and specifically reduce respiratory health conditions. A house that is poorly designed, poorly constructed or has been constructed of unsuitable materials can lead to mould that can have an effect on those with asthma, allergies or respiratory disease.

There are different ways that housing affects the health of its occupants.

- An unhealthy home can have issues such as cold, damp or hazards that affect health.
- Homes that are unsuitable for meeting the needs of the occupants due to overcrowding or a lack of appropriate adaptations
- Insecure tenancies where the occupant may be living with the risk of eviction especially in the private rented sector.
- Lack of outdoor amenity space or accessibility to nearby public open space

Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty is defined as the inability to keep your home adequately heated. In England, fuel poverty is currently measured by the Low Income, High Cost definition (LIHC). This states that a household is in fuel poverty when energy costs to heat to adequate levels are above the national average and, if they were to heat to this level, the residual income would leave the household below the poverty line. Fuel poverty

data is released annually by central government; in 2017 (the latest available data) 11.2% of Wyre Forest households were living in fuel poverty. The key factors influencing whether a household is fuel poor are the energy efficiency of their home, household income and energy costs.

According to the NEA 15.7% of people in Wyre Forest live in Fuel Poverty⁷ . compared to a national average of 13.23%. In the 2019 Local Authority Health profile, Wyre Forest has an incidence of 32.9% winter deaths compared to a West Midlands regional average of 30.8%⁸

Therefore, the following principles must be considered when designing new residential schemes.

Health and Wellbeing Principles: Housing	
HIA template reference	Where relevant, proposals must comply with policy by:
5.1	Providing safe, comfortable, affordable housing that caters for the needs of the occupants throughout the different stages of life (lifetime homes principles)
5.2	Providing different size and style of dwellings to cater for the needs of all members of society.
5.3	Housing should be constructed of suitable materials and design, that ensures high quality and energy efficiency.
5.4	Improvements to energy efficiency in existing stock is encouraged.
5.5	Ensuring layout design of new developments maximise the opportunity for accessibility to green spaces, local facilities, public transport and services.
5.6	Maximise the opportunities for walking and cycling routes.
5.7	All new developments and where possible redevelopment of existing buildings should consider location, design, siting and orientation to maximise the use of natural heat (Policy DM.24)
5.8	All new dwellings should incorporate the energy from renewable or low carbon sources equivalent to at least 10% of predicted energy requirements unless demonstrated that this would make the development unviable (Policy DM.24)
5.9	Providing an area outside for drying washing which will reduce drying washing indoors that can add to moisture in the air and damp which can exacerbate health conditions.
5.10	Providing new development with superfast broadband or alternative solutions

⁷ www.nea.org.uk

⁸ www.fingertips.phe.org.uk

EMPLOYMENT

Being in work is better for your health than not being in work. One of the important determinants of health inequalities within society is the availability and nature of employment. Employment matters because:

- It helps to prevent social exclusion.
- Paid employment has the potential to protect health and contribute to reduced health inequalities.

Wyre Forest District Council needs to ensure that enough employment land is allocated within the district to achieve sustainable growth, creating opportunities for people to work. The district's economy is vital to the prosperity, health and quality of life of its residents. The Council aims to ensure that the right amount of suitable land is available to attract new business to the district and enable existing businesses to expand and adapt to changing markets in both urban and rural environments. If there are a wide range of employment opportunities within the district many residents will not need to travel far to work, this has benefits including encouraging travel to work by walking and cycling, reducing traffic movement, and helping the environment by reducing the carbon footprint.

Therefore, the following principles need to be considered as part of an HIA.

Health and Wellbeing Principles: Employment	
HIA template reference	Where relevant, proposals must comply with policy by:
6.1	Incorporating green space in the surrounding areas wherever possible.
6.2	Providing well ventilated and lit areas that maximise natural sunlight
6.3	Designing layouts that maximise the opportunities for pedestrian and cycle linkages and minimise the demand for travel
6.4	Incorporating flexible designs, addressing access to open space and enabling adaption for future needs and use of internal spaces or extensions
6.5	Providing new development with superfast broadband or alternative solutions
6.6	Providing the generation of energy from renewable or low carbon sources equivalent to at least 10% of predicted energy requirements. Large scale developments should consider the potential for a decentralised energy and heating network

Case Study: Wyre Forest House

Wyre Forest House was built in 2011 and is the headquarters for a number of companies, including Wyre Forest District Council. The building provides a versatile and flexible space, which has been adapted to meet the requirements of its tenants

over the years. It has courtyard areas and outside space for staff to sit, is near to active travel routes such as the canal tow path, is near a bus stop and provides bike parking. Heating is provided by ground source heat pumps and the natural light is maximised through the incorporation of windows and sky lights in the offices.



HEALTHY FOODS

Obesity is a significant public health concern, it can lead to long term ill health, poor quality of life or a reduced life expectancy. Being overweight or obese increases the risk of many health conditions including diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Furthermore, obesity can deprive an individual of an extra 9 years of life, preventing some older people to not reach retirement⁹

Planning can have a positive influence on the provision of healthy foods in several ways:

- Planning can help address the issue by ensuring that public open space, recreational facilities and allotments are accessible to encourage both children and adults to be active and use outside space.

⁹ Public Health England (2017) Health matters: obesity and the food environment; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-obesity-and-the-food-environment/health-matters-obesity-and-the-food-environment--2>

- Planning also can help to restrict the location of hot food takeaways. Policy DM.18 Hot Food Takeaways in the Wyre Forest District Local Plan Submission Version states that

Outside of designated centres, hot food takeaways will not be permitted where the proposal is within 400m as the crow flies of any boundary of a school.

- Planning can help development maintain or enhance opportunities for food production such as allotments and community orchards.

This is reflected in the following principles in the table below:

Health and Wellbeing Principles: Healthy Foods	
HIA template reference	Where relevant, proposals must comply with policy by:
7.1	Ensure there is access to healthy and nutritious food which can help to improve the diet of the local community and prevent long term conditions related to obesity, such as diabetes and heart disease.
7.2	Use good practice in planning to support a localised food system, including local food production such as allotments, orchards, and other community projects ensuring a variety of healthy, affordable food is available, especially to those who are on a low income.
7.3	Take positive action to change the food environment to increase the diversity of local food shopping opportunities and limit the number and concentration of hot food takeaways generally serve foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

Wyre Forest District Council considers that the location of hot food takeaways in close proximity to schools would lead to children consuming a greater amount of unhealthy food which would undermine initiatives to promote healthier diets, particularly in schools. Therefore, outside of designated centres, hot food takeaways (sui- generis) will not be permitted where the proposal is within 400m of the boundary of a school (see DM.18 Hot Food Takeaways) and proposals for hot food takeaway uses should not result in two or more hot food takeaway uses adjacent to one another in all the District's centres.

A hot food takeaway is defined within the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) as falling within sui generis (r) and being for the sale of hot food where consumption of that food is mostly undertaken off the premises.

Over recent years individuals and communities have become more interested in growing fruit and vegetables as the health and environmental benefits are further recognised. This resurgence has meant that local authorities are increasingly unable to meet demand for allotment plots across the country and in Wyre Forest.¹⁰ There is also now national and local recognition that access to fresh and healthy food is

¹⁰ Local Government Association (2009) Growing in the Community

something that should be encouraged within the planning process to improve health and wellbeing¹¹

The provision of allotments can improve community wellbeing, providing a source of fresh food and opportunities for healthy outdoor exercise and social interaction. Other schemes providing opportunities for food growing include community gardens orchards and other community-managed projects in urban areas. Vertical gardening and the use of green walls should also be encouraged as a means of local food production to householders who may not have access to allotments. Community orchards can help to revive an interest in fruit growing, provide a way of sharing knowledge and horticultural skills and encourage the local community to grow food for themselves.

The location of new allotments, orchards and other food growing areas is important to minimise their exposure to exhaust emissions. Any edible planting should grow in areas away from busy roads.

Case Study: Growing Routes Community Allotment

The Growing Roots Community Allotment is a project which aims to bring people in the community together and use the grounds of St Peter's Community Church Birchen Coppice in a productive and ecologically friendly way.

There are a number of different areas within the grounds, including individual allotment plots, shared community growing spaces and garden, shared fruit bushes and fruit trees, herb garden, wildflower meadow to encourage bees and butterflies, cob oven and BBQ area.

Members of the community are encouraged to help on the allotment for free. They can have their own small plot or can just work on shared spaces. The area is inclusive with a raised bed for wheelchair uses and a secure children's play area.

¹¹ Town and Country Planning Association (July 2015) Public Health in Planning - Good Practice Guide



ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Climate change and carbon emissions

Our climate is changing and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future due to carbon emissions already emitted and locked into our climate systems. The more that is done to reduce carbon emissions, the less extreme the future impacts are likely to be. Worcestershire's climate has changed over the last century, with changes including an increase in average annual temperature and with winters becoming wetter relative to summers. Predictions for our future climate include increasing temperature and changes to precipitation patterns and an increase in extreme weather events such as heat-waves and flooding.

The potential impacts of climate change upon health include the increased risk of sunburn / skin cancer, increased numbers / types of pests, agricultural impacts such as changes to food growing patterns, overheating in buildings affecting living and working conditions and the physical and mental health impacts of flooding.

The types and amounts of fuel we use to generate energy determine the amount of carbon emissions released into the atmosphere, which in turn impacts on climate change. Heat and power provision from fossil fuels such as coal and gas contributes significantly to our overall carbon emissions. This can be reduced by generating energy from renewable sources through use of systems such as solar panels and air and ground source heating. Whilst clean energy technology and markets continue to develop, new development in the near term will still rely upon fossil fuel generated heat and power to some extent. Whatever source of fuel is used, it is important economically, as well as environmentally, to use energy generated as efficiently as possible.

Air Quality

Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues, because areas with poor air quality are also often the less affluent areas.

Two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared by WFDC for exceedances of the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). These are at Welch Gate in Bewdley and in the Horsefair and Coventry Street area of Kidderminster.

Health and Wellbeing Principles: Environmental Hazards	
HIA template reference	Where relevant, proposals must comply with policy by:
8.1	Recognise that development can lead to an increase in environmental hazards that impact upon health and wellbeing. These include poor air quality, noise pollution, increased carbon emissions and climate impacts such as increased flooding frequency.
8.2	Ensure that the impact of individual developments, as well as the cumulative impact, is considered.
8.3	Ensure that steps are taken throughout the planning process to identify, minimise and mitigate potential environmental hazards caused by new development.

Through the Climate Change Act, 2021, the UK has set a legally binding target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's Energy Strategy 2019-2030 aims to reduce carbon emissions by 50% from 2005 levels by 2030, to double the size of the low carbon sector by 2030 and triple energy production from renewable generation by 2030.

The potential impacts of climate change are far reaching and it is vital that new development considers the impacts and includes measures to adapt accordingly. Climate impacts must be considered in development of the built environment, including buildings, roads, drains and utilities, which are designed for the long-term – 50 to 60 years or longer. Structures designed now will need to cope with the climate of the 2070s at least and development built to withstand the likely impacts of climate change. Houses built today will be there way beyond 2050 and ensuring they are built as efficiently as possible will help to minimise carbon emissions as well as the risk of fuel poverty. Retrofitting of existing properties is also very important in tackling fuel poverty and various schemes are in place to help upgrade heating and insulation in these homes.

Noise Pollution

Noise can impact upon health, productivity and quality of life, particularly at home. However, there are a number of design and layout principles that can reduce the adverse impacts of noise. The mitigation of noise, particularly in residential development, needs to be carefully designed into new development using building design and internal layout. Developers should take into consideration existing sources of noise and overall ambient noise levels. This will be particularly relevant where new development is located near a busy road, railway lines or other noise-generating infrastructure. Additionally, the transmission of noise between dwellings such as flats and terraced properties can be a problem. The appropriate use of measures such as sound insulation, bunds and noise barriers can mitigate disturbances from noise.

Case study idea: Bewdley Medical Centre

The new Bewdley Medical Centre opened to patients in 2016. The site is located within easy reach of the town centre, enabling access by bus, foot, bicycle or car. Bicycle parking and showering/ drying facilities are provided.

The centre was built to BREEAM 'very good' standard. The materials used were locally sourced with low embodied energy, recyclable and long lasting. The building was constructed based on the principle of lower resource demand, with low energy use being an essential feature. The building features solar photovoltaic panels and efficient lighting. Natural ventilation is in place where possible and high efficient heat recovery units are in place in rooms where mechanical ventilation is necessary.



APPENDIX ONE

HIA SCREENING FORM

HIA IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Health Impact Assessment Screening Sheet: Residential institutions, Non-residential institutions and leisure facilities						
A short description of the proposal:						
Impact Category	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown	Recommendation HIA required?	
Design and the Public Realm					Yes	No
<i>Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced</i>						
Active Travel					Yes	No
<i>Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced</i>						
Green Infrastructure and Spaces					Yes	No
<i>Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced</i>						
Age and Dementia friendly environments					Yes	No
<i>Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced</i>						
Housing					Yes	No
<i>Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced</i>						
Employment					Yes	No
<i>Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced</i>						
Community Health Services and Facilities					Yes	No
<i>Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced</i>						
Healthy Foods					Yes	No
<i>Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced</i>						
Environmental Hazards					Yes	No
<i>Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced</i>						
Date Completed:						
Contact Details:						

Health Impact Assessment Screening Sheet – Hot food takeaways, Restaurants and cafes, Drinking establishments, Betting shops and Pay-day loan shops						
A short description of the proposal:						
Impact Category	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown	Recommendation HIA required?	
Noise					Yes	No
Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced						
Odour					Yes	No
Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced						
Contaminated land e.g. disposal of oil					Yes	No
Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced						
Air Quality					Yes	No
Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced						
Litter					Yes	No
Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced						
Anti-Social Behaviour					Yes	No
Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced						
Working Conditions					Yes	No
Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced						
Healthy Foods					Yes	No
Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced						
Accidental injury and public safety					Yes	No
Brief description of potential impacts and how these will be mitigated or enhanced						
Date Completed:						
Contact Details:						

Health Impact Assessment Template					
Planning Application reference:					
Description of the project:					
Date completed:					
Contact details:					
Socio-economic make-up of the area:					
Consultation evidence (if relevant):					
Questions to inform the assessment	Guidance Box Reference	Assessment	Details/evidence/policy compliance (where relevant)	Potential health impacts	Recommended mitigation or enhancement options
Does the proposal improve social, economic, and environmental conditions and reflect the NPPS's presumption in favour of sustainable development?	1.5, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 3.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.6-5.9, 6.4, 6.6, 8.1 - 8.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal contribute towards the provision, maintenance, improvement and connectivity of green infrastructure?	1.2, 2.3, 3.1-3.5, 4.2, 5.5, 5.6, 6.1, 6.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal integrate effectively with its surroundings, reinforce local distinctiveness and enhance cultural and heritage assets and there surroundings where appropriate?	1.1-1.6, 2.3, 3.1, 5.5,	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal provide opportunities for community cohesion and human interaction through the creation of permeable environments, provision of green space and outdoor community uses which encourage incidental human interaction?	1.1-1.6, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	

Questions to inform the assessment	Guidance Box Reference	Assessment	Details/evidence/policy compliance (where relevant)	Potential health impacts	Recommended mitigation or enhancement options
Does the proposal provide well-designed, safe, accessible, attractive and well-maintained public realm areas and open/green spaces, children's play areas and other outdoor community uses that support active travel and prioritise people over motor traffic?	1.1 -1.6, 2.1-2.5, 3.1-3.5, 4.2, 5.5, 6.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the site layout maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cycle linkages to the surrounding area and local services and provide links to existing public rights of way (PROW) and improvements to PROW and cycle networks where possible?	1.2, 2.3-2.5, 4.3, 5.5, 5.6, 6.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal demonstrate how the layout will minimise demand for travel by offering appropriate infrastructure which supports sustainable travel choices including public transport, walking, and cycling?	1.2-1.6, 2.1-2.5, 4.2-4.3, 5.6, 6.3,	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal encourage physical activity and healthy eating, and (for employment/academic developments) support positive mental health and wellbeing?	1.1, 2.1-2.5, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.2, 5.5, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1-7.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	

Questions to inform the assessment	Guidance Box Reference	Assessment	Details/evidence/policy compliance (where relevant)	Potential health impacts	Recommended mitigation or enhancement options
Does the proposal provide an environment which caters for the needs of all age groups, in particular the elderly and people with dementia? Is the proposal future proofed by incorporating inclusive/adaptable design, addressing access to open space, and enabling adaptation to an individual's changing needs, such as ageing or disability?	1.1, 1.3, 3.3, 4.1-4.6, 5.1, 5.2, 6.4	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal provide safe and valuable environments in parks, open spaces and community areas with shading, benches and other facilities? Does it consider pathways in parks that are circular parks that are clearly signposted, and which use appropriate materials and designs for surfaces and street furniture?	1.1-1.5, 3.2-3.3, 4.1-4.3,	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the development provide appropriately located pedestrian crossing facilities to minimise travel distances for the elderly, as well as public transport links with bus stops, which are within walking distance to homes?	4.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	

Questions to inform the assessment	Guidance Box Reference	Assessment	Details/evidence/policy compliance (where relevant)	Potential health impacts	Recommended mitigation or enhancement options
Does the proposal ensure that homes are warm, dry and efficient?	5.3, 5.7	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal follow the technical planning standards in the nationally described space standard when dealing with internal space?	5.1- 5.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal provide new development with superfast broadband or alternative solutions?	5.10, 6.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal avoid any significant adverse pollution impacts, including cumulative impacts on human health and wellbeing, the water environment, the effective operation of neighbouring uses, biodiversity of any Air Quality Management Area?	8.1-8.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal minimise the impacts of and from all forms of flood risk, including site drainage and run off?	8.1-8.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	

Questions to inform the assessment	Guidance Box Reference	Assessment	Details/evidence/policy compliance (where relevant)	Potential health impacts	Recommended mitigation or enhancement options
Does the proposal ensure adequate water supply and water treatment facilities will be in place to serve the whole development?	8.1-8.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal mitigate the air quality and noise impacts of construction activities?	8.1-8.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the development consider mitigation measures for any light pollution that could result from the development?	8.1-8.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the building design within the proposal minimise public exposure to air and noise pollution sources and maximise energy efficiency and the use of low-polluting systems?	8.1-8.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal contribute to healthy food and drink provision?	7.1-7.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Does the proposal demonstrate how any potentially negative impacts of the surrounding environment and existing neighbours will be minimised or mitigated?	8.1-8.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	

Questions to inform the assessment	Guidance Box Reference	Assessment	Details/evidence/policy compliance (where relevant)	Potential health impacts	Recommended mitigation or enhancement options
Is the proposal supported by sufficient and accessible health care provision?	1.6	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Summary of the HIA findings					

GLOSSARY

Active Travel: Means making journeys in physically active ways, for example by walking, using a mobility aid, cycling or scootering.

BREEAM: Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method is a method for assessing, rating and certifying the sustainability of buildings.

Built Environment: This refers to man-made structures, features, and facilities viewed collectively as an environment in which people live and work.

Climate Change: Long Term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind and all other aspects of the Earth's climate. Often regarded as a result of human activity and fossil fuel consumption. It is part of national government policy that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future.

Community Facilities: Facilities which provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community.

Green Infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA): A tool used to predict the health implication of a planning proposal on a population. It ensures that the effects of development on both health and health inequalities are considered and addressed during the planning process.

Infrastructure: Basic services necessary for development to take place; for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA): The JSNA is a continuous process which provides information on health and well-being in order to inform decision making. It is used to determine what actions local authorities, the NHS and other partners need to take to meet people's health and social care needs and to address the wider determinants that impact on their health and well-being. Undertaking the JSNA is a duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Local Plan: The collective term given to all statutory documents that form the Development Plan for the District.

Local Planning Authority (LPA): Refers to Wyre Forest District Council in this SPD.

Major Developments: Major developments include;

- Residential development comprising at least 10 dwellings or a site area of at least 0.5 hectare if the number of dwellings is not specified.
- For non-residential development where the floor space to be built is greater than 1000 square metres of the site area is at least 1 hectare in size.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): The document which sets out the Governments planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The revised NPPF was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in July 2021.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG): Web based resource of planning practice guidance, launched and maintained by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to enable practitioners to implement the content of the NPPF. The NPPG is currently being updated to reflect the changes from the revised NPPF.

Neighbourhood Development Plans: Neighbourhood Development Plans allow local people to come together to decide how they want their area to develop. They can be developed by Town and Parish Councils or by Neighbourhood Forums outside of Parished areas.

Open Space: All space of public value, which can offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can also act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife. Areas of open space include public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas, and also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs.

Public Realm: Is defined as publicly owned places and spaces that belong to and are accessible by everyone.

Section 106 Agreement: A legal agreement between developers and a local planning authority made in accordance with Section 106 (s106) of the 1991 Planning Act, usually to secure benefits for local residents without which a planning application would be refused (see also Planning Obligations).

Sui Generis: Is a term used to categorise buildings that do not fall within any particular use class for the purposes of planning permission.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs): Provide additional information to guide and support the Development Plan.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The NPPF sets out a definition of sustainable development and sets how it is to be identified and delivered.

Scoping document for the Wyre Forest Health SPD

Introduction

The Wyre Forest District's Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides more detailed advice on the health and wellbeing related policies contained in the Wyre Forest Local Plan. It has been prepared in partnership with Worcestershire County Council's Strategic Planning Team and the Directorate of Public Health.

The SPD will focus on matters of health and wellbeing and how they should be positively addressed through the development planning process in the district. It is aimed at local authority planning officers, applicants, developers, relevant organisations, and the wider community.

We are inviting your comments on this Scoping Report to help us identify the key health issues that need to be addressed through the Health and Wellbeing SPD for Wyre Forest District.

Policy Context

National and Local Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> sets out how Government Planning Policy should be applied. The NPPF requires each council to have robust and comprehensive policies across a broad range of areas to support the delivery of high-quality sustainable and inclusive development. Section of the NPPF, sets out the Government's planning policies, including a specific requirement to promote healthy communities and to draw on evidence of health and wellbeing need. The NPPF is supported by National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) which further outlines the importance of health and wellbeing in planning.

Wyre Forest District adopted their Local Plan in April 2022. The Local Plan is essential in order to successfully plan for development and to enable the Council to make good decisions on planning applications. The proposed SPD will provide detailed guidance on two key policies from the Wyre Forest Local Plan, Policy SP.16 Health and Wellbeing and DM.18 Hot Food Takeaways. There are also general policies applicable across the whole Local Plan which the SPD can help support due to its overarching nature. The SPD will also support any made Neighbourhood Plans in the District.

What is a SPD

SPDs build upon and provide more detailed guidance about policies in the Local Plan. Legally, they do not form part of the Local Plan itself and they are not subject to independent examination but they can be accorded significant weight as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications, providing a tool in the interpretation and application of policy.

It is intended that this SPD will identify health and wellbeing principles based on the up to date evidence base and good practice and local health and wellbeing needs and issues current at the time of producing the SPD. The proposed SPD will set (out for certain types of

development) the detail the applicant/developer will be expected to provide, to show that their proposals reflect health and wellbeing principles set out in the document.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

National planning policy indicates that a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are not required for an SPD unless it is considered that there are likely to be significant environmental effects or exceptional circumstances.

This SPD builds upon policies in the adopted Local Plan for Wyre Forest, all of which have been subject to SA and SEA and detailed scrutiny at the Examination. If you believe an SEA is required, please set out what the exceptional circumstances are requiring one to be undertaken as part of your response.

Table One: Topics to be covered by the Health and Wellbeing SPD

The table below sets out what is proposed for each section, including the principles, the scale of the issue, how it will be addressed and examples of good practice.

Topic	Details
Design and the public realm	How individuals live their lives is influenced by the location, density and mix of land uses around them. The SPD will recognise that the design of the built environment has a significant impact on the physical and mental health of individuals. and demonstrate how good design could be planned into development.
Active travel	The SPD will highlight, promote active travel and detail measures that can be taken to secure its inclusion into developments.
Green infrastructure and green spaces	This section of the SPD will detail the benefits Green Infrastructure and greens spaces can bring to health and wellbeing as well as how it will be expected to be preserved and included in new developments.
Age/dementia friendly environment	Age/dementia friendly environment will be taken account of within the SPD by first identifying the associated issues and how they should be addressed through planning.
Housing and employment	This section will address the issues associated with impact on health and wellbeing from poor quality housing and work environment and how planning might seek to address these issues.
Community and health services and facilities	This section will address the issues associated with the provision of community and health services and facilities and the impact on people's health and the benefits of addressing it.
Healthy foods	The SPD will acknowledge the impact of a healthy diet on a person's health and how to address this through planning.
Environmental hazards	The SPD in this section will look at the issues of climate change, fuel poverty and air quality on human health and wellbeing and how they need to be addressed.
Health Impact Assessment	Health Impact Assessment (HIA) ensures that the effects of development on both health and health inequalities are considered and addressed during the planning process. The SPD will detail how HIA should be used to demonstrate how a proposal has taken account of health and well being in its production

Table 2 Timetable for production

Process	Date
Scoping Report Consultation	28/09/22 – 26/10/22
Preparation of The SPD and Evidence	September – end of November 2022
Cabinet	December 2022
Consultation (6 Weeks Statutory)	January 4 – February 15 2023
Preparation of Final SPD	February /March 2023
Adoption	March 2023

**Health and
Wellbeing
Supplementary Planning
Document**

Statement of Consultation

April 2023



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This consultation statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) 2012. The statement sets out who was consulted, when and how, and summarises the representations received and how they have influenced the Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2. Name and Purpose of the SPD

- 2.1 Health and Wellbeing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- 2.2 The SPD sets out how the District Council's health and wellbeing policies should be interpreted. This will provide certainty and clarity for those bringing forward development within the District. Wyre Forest District Council's Local Development Plan was adopted in April 2022.

3. Who was consulted on the SPD?

- 3.1 A collaborative approach was undertaken during the preparation of the SPD. Colleagues within WFDC and Worcestershire County Council Public Health Team were directly involved with the writing of the SPD.
- 3.2 In addition to this, there was a two-stage consultation process.
- 3.3 A scoping paper was consulted upon in October 2022. The aim of the document was to identify the key issues to be addressed in the SPD. There were no responses to the scoping paper.
- 3.4 A further consultation was conducted on the draft SPD between the 13th February and the 20th March 2023. The responses to that consultation are in Appendix B of this document.
- 3.5 Appendix A lists those organisations consulted at both stages, including the statutory consultees set out within Regulation 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

4. How Were People Consulted?

- 4.1 The scoping paper and the draft SPD was sent with a covering letter to those consultees listed within Appendix A. Both documents were also posted on the District Council's web-site, advertised on social media and in the local press. Copies of the documents were placed at Wyre Forest House and the libraries in Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley.
- 4.2 Face to face engagement was also offered during the consultation and officers attended a planning agents forum to discuss the SPD in October 2022.

5. Summary of Responses

- 5.1 A total of 11 representations were received from 5 respondents.
- 5.2 All of the responses were either in support of the SPD or raised comments in relation to its

proposed content. No objections to the SPD were received.

- 5.3 Summaries of all representations received and the District Council's response to each can be found in Appendix B.

6. Summary of the Main Issues Raised

- 6.1 The main issues raised were:

Issue raised
The need to refer to active travel links to existing facilities as well as movement corridors in the public realm chapter.
Amend reference to green infrastructure to green and blue infrastructure.
The need to provide definition of terms used within the SPD.
Ensuring that the SPD covers opportunities to address the needs across all communities and backgrounds.
Ensuring linkages to other policies and plans, for example Neighbourhood Plans.
The definition of hot food takeaways should be revisited as some provide healthy food.
A list of contaminated land should be provided for the applicant to tick.
The possible introduction of 15-minute neighbourhoods and opposition to such by the consultee
Issues around public transport

7. How have those Issues been addressed in the SPD?

- 7.1 The table at Appendix B sets out how each of the comments made has been considered within the Draft SPD.

Appendix A: List of Consultees

National Bodies

Canal & River Trust
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Homes & Communities Agency
Highways Agency
Inland Waterways Association
Natural England
Network Rail
Office of Rail Regulation
The Coal Authority

Neighbouring Authorities

Bromsgrove and Redditch
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Sandwell Council
Malvern Hills District Council
Shropshire County Council
South Staffordshire District Council
Staffordshire County Council
Wychavon District Council
Worcestershire County Council

Parish Councils

Bewdley Town Council
Broome Parish Council
Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council
Churchill & Blakedown Parish Council
Kidderminster Foreign Parish Council
Kidderminster Chartered Trustees
Rock Parish Council
Rushock Parish Council
Stone Parish Council
Stourport-on-Severn Town Council
Upper Arley Parish Council
Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council

Local Agents/Architects

Tetlow King
Savills
Bromford
Community Housing
Oakleaf
Sanctuary
Platform Housing
WM Housing
Apse Building Design
A1 Arch
Addison Rees

Wyre Forest District Council

Health and Wellbeing SPD – Consultation Statement (April 2023)

Bau studio architecture
Ashley House
BM3
Big small space
Central Building Design
David Wall Architects
ENG Building Design
Eldnar Consultancy
Pondstart
Moule and Co
Painter Architects

Appendix B: Draft SPD Consultation - Summary of Representations Made and Officer Responses

Respondent/ Response No	Support/ Object/ Comment?	Summary	Officer Response
Canals and River Trust	Comment	<p>Public Realm</p> <p>The table and text does not mention the need, when designing new spaces, to link into existing Green infrastructure beyond the site, although it is noted that this is in the HIA template at page 32 does mention this by asking the question ‘ Does the site layout maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cycle linkages to the surrounding area and local services and provide links to existing public rights of way (PROW) and improvements to PROW and cycle networks where possible?’</p> <p>This need to link to existing is mentioned in the Active Travel section but the need to link covers more than just movement corridors. Should there be mention of the need to look beyond the site and link to existing facilities be included in this section too?</p>	Added in bullet point 1.7 in the Design and Public realm table to address this comment.
Canals and River Trust	Support	<p>Active Travel</p> <p>It is wonderful to see canal towpath used as an example of Active Travel.</p>	

Agenda Item No. 8.1 Appendix 3

Canals and River Trust	Support Comment	<p>We are pleased to note that water environments are mentioned. We suggest the term green and blue infrastructure should be used rather than green infrastructure as the river and canal plays such an important role in the district in providing the variety of benefits described in the first two paragraphs of this section. As just one example 'access to well-designed green and blue spaces' would recognise the importance of the water environment.</p> <p>The table states (3.1) Safeguarding, retaining, protecting, and enhancing Green Infrastructure networks and assets in terms of their quality and quantity as per SP.28 - Strategic Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>As mentioned above this should be amended to refer to the need to provide, protect, retain, and enhance links to and between GBI assets. This is covered in the questions in the HIA template on page 32 but not in the text of the document.</p>	<p>Noted. The wording has been amended to refer to green and blue infrastructure.</p> <p>The wording in 3.1 has been amended.</p>
The Coal Authority	Comment	<p>It is noted that this current consultation relates to a Health and Wellbeing SPD and I can confirm that the Planning team at the Coal Authority have no specific comments to make on this document.</p>	Noted.
Natural England	Comment	<p>Whilst we welcome this opportunity to give our views, the topic of the Supplementary Planning Document does not appear to relate to our interests to any significant extent. We therefore do not wish to comment.</p>	Noted.

Agenda Item No. 8.1 Appendix 3

Corporate Policy Officer	Comment	<p>There are some sentences that would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need more an explanation such as build environment (maybe some examples) • some sentences can be shorter such as encourage both children and adults (why not to say for everyone)? • need to add extra information to include everyone such as People at different stages of their lives (maybe and with different income, accessibility)? • need some examples of Natural play spaces and spaces for girls. • some of the information would need a link to policies and plans for example for the Neighbourhood Plans. 	<p>A glossary of terms has been added to the SPD.</p> <p>Noted. The document has been reviewed to make improvements to the language where appropriate.</p> <p>The SPD addresses various needs in the different chapters and case studies of the SPD.</p> <p>There are no current examples that can be used in the SPD. However, reference is made to Made for Girls, where guidance can be sought re: design of places.</p> <p>Noted. Will discuss with Neighbourhood Plan groups going forward.</p>
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Agenda Item No. 8.1 Appendix 3

Corporate Policy Officer	Comment	<p>About the hot food takeaways, I am actually surprised that it is a problem because when I am looking for a hot takeaway there are only fries and chips or burgers and hot dogs and no other options. Instead of forbidding them, maybe better solution would be providing a healthier, alternative ways, such different hot food – soups.</p>	<p>Noted. However, the SPD can not change policy DM.18 Hot Food Takeaways of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Paragraph 008 Reference ID: 61-008-20190315 of the NPPG on Plan Making states that:</p> <p><i>“Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) should build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan.”</i></p> <p>When determining planning applications, an applicant applies for a use class. An application is not determined on food served.</p>
Corporate Policy Officer	Comment	<p>About HIA there are 3 requirements to do a full HIA for example employment sites of 5ha or more. But what is about those that works 4 hours, do they need to do HIA?</p>	<p>Noted. 5 ha refers to hectares not hours.</p>

Agenda Item No. 8.1 Appendix 3

Corporate Policy Officer	Comment	HIA screening is easy to understand and good planned, but it doesn't give a sense on how long it takes. Maybe someone needs to add some information on how long each stage could take.	Noted. The length of time the completion of the HIA will take will vary case by case so it would be difficult to give an estimate.
Corporate Policy Officer	Comment	For the Health Impact Assessment Screening Sheet – Hot food takeaways, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments, betting shops and pay-day loan shops is section about contaminated land. Maybe someone would need to make a list of how they contaminated land and people can just pick from the list?	It is better to leave this open ended as different sites/uses may have different contaminants.

Agenda Item No. 8.1 Appendix 3

Local Resident	Comment	<p>I have read with interest some of the Planning Documents for Health and Wellbeing for Wyre Forest.</p> <p>We are particularly interested in the sections regarding Active Travel</p> <p>"Utilising planning guidance to make active travel an attractive and viable option and therefore reduce dependency on car travel."</p> <p>While everyone would welcome viable alternatives to using the car, we are disturbed by the various plans around the country to bring in zones / 15 minute cities where the proposed plans impact negatively on residents, essentially fining people for visiting relatives / friends, if the journey happens to cross a zone unless they undertake far longer journeys around the towns/cities in the name of 'going green' when in fact all it seems to do is control people and become a cash cow for the local authority. We hope this is not something Wyre Forest proposes to do...</p> <p>However, we do support improving public transport... our suggestions are as follows:</p> <p>a) Proper affordable reliable public transport is essential for all our communities to thrive. if public transport is reliable and affordable then people are much more likely to use it voluntarily.</p> <p>It would need to run much later into the night than it does currently, to make it a genuine alternative to using a car.</p> <p>Bus stops need to be well maintained and more comfortable, with proper seating for elderly people or young children.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour on public transport needs to be addressed and the safety of our towns and streets needs to be looked into, as waiting at bus stops, sitting on buses when surrounded by aggressive behaviour is intimidating and puts people off using any form of public transport.</p> <p>Much of the rest of the document does address some of the needs in Wyre Forest, we could do with some major consultations to really make permanent positive changes.</p>	<p>Concerns noted. The 15-minute neighbourhood is not part of the Local Plan policy for this area.</p> <p>Public transport is beyond the remit of this SPD, which only focuses on providing more details to policies SP.16 Health and Wellbeing and DM.18 Hot Food Takeaways of the Local Plan.</p> <p>With regards to consultations, details of how WFDC will consult on planning related consultations can be found at Statement of Community Involvement Wyre Forest District Council (wyreforestdc.gov.uk)</p>
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
17 JULY 2023

LOCALISM: STOURPORT SPORTS CLUB AND BEWDLEY MUSEUM

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Ian Hardiman, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ali Bakr, Community and Environment Strategic Manager Ext 2970
APPENDICES:	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 In light of the new administration's approach towards localism, to take steps to revoke the previous decisions in respect of Stourport Sports Club and Bewdley Museum.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet is recommended to **REVOKE** the decisions on Stourport Sports Club taken by the Cabinet on 13 July 2022 (minute CAB.13) and the decisions on Bewdley Museum taken by the Cabinet on 10 November 2020 (minute CAB.43).
- 2.2 The Cabinet is recommended to **RECOMMEND** to Council that it should rescind its decision in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022-25 which involved exiting the Council's involvement in the Stourport Sports Club Limited.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The localism strategy adopted in 2019 is being reviewed by the Cabinet and a report will be brought forward in September to adopt a new strategy. The Cabinet expects the focus of the new strategy to be on the District Council working collaboratively and proactively with town and parish councils and other groups, to enhance and improve the offer, and also to encourage and empower volunteering to support local assets and services, building on existing arrangements. The strategy will retain the option of town and parish councils and other bodies asking to take over an asset or service: that is a legal requirement in respect of certain services as a result of the community right to challenge in the Localism Act 2011. However asset transfers are not expected to have the same prominence as they have done over the last four years.
- 3.2 The new administration elected in May 2023 does not support exiting involvement in the Stourport Sports Club. That outcome was agreed by full Council as part of the medium term financial strategy in February 2022 and the detailed approach was put into effect by the then Cabinet in decisions taken in July 2022. The full background is set out in the report to that Cabinet meeting. Twelve months after the previous

decision, the parties to the management agreement have not agreed the July 2022 proposals.

- 3.3 While establishing an independent trust to take over ownership and operation of Bewdley Museum was actively pursued and a trust was established, in June 2022 the trustees decided that they did not wish to progress with the transfer. Subsequently discussions have been held with Bewdley Town Council about the possibility of a transfer to the Town Council, but no conclusion was reached. The Cabinet has informed the Town Council that it will not be pursuing the discussions further. For good governance and transparency, it is appropriate formally to revoke the extant Cabinet decisions so that there is clarity for members of the Council, staff and the public about the future.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Every council is politically led and, in the event of political control changing at an election, it is often the case that a new administration may not wish to see through all the projects and processes that have been approved by its predecessor. This is the case in respect of Stourport Sports Club and Bewdley Museum.
- 4.2 The July 2022 report referred to concerns about the operation of Stourport Sports Club and those concerns remain relevant: "In recent years, the arrangements for day-to-day and long-term management of this important multi-use facility have not operated successfully. In particular there has been concern about whether adequate investment in repairs and refurbishment of facilities has been made under the existing management agreement which provides for a sinking fund; and the Club has struggled with its small team of staff to discharge the full range of functions that are necessary, including asset maintenance." Consultants appointed by the Club are currently reviewing a new business model.
- 4.3 Revoking the previous decisions is certain to lead to the following impacts for the Council:
- 1) The revenue savings that were scheduled to be achieved by exiting involvement would not be achieved and therefore the financial gap for WFDC will grow by £14k a year;
 - 2) WFDC would be exposed to at least a share of future liabilities in respect of maintenance and replacement of infrastructure at the site, which cannot be quantified. The significant section 106 monies from planning approvals at Pearl Lane and Lea Castle remain available to be used for various areas on site including the netball courts. There are other facilities that will need such replacement or refurbishment over time, with no guarantee that Sport England or other sources of funding will be available to cover 100% of the cost.

There is no impact on WFDC's free usage of the site – although no such usage has happened since before the outbreak of the pandemic, when the sports development officer was still in post – or on the "Wyre Forest Wild" project on adjacent land owned by WFDC.

- 4.4 Any savings that might have been achieved by transferring ownership and operation of Bewdley Museum would have been scored against the savings target for localism only if agreement about a transfer had been achieved. As no such transfer will happen, WFDC will continue to be exposed to 100% of the net revenue costs and any costs in respect of maintenance and refurbishment of the buildings. The Cabinet expects to focus on growing commercial income in the period to 2025, to reduce net cost to WFDC, and realistic targets will be agreed separately.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The recommendations in this report have direct and probable financial implications for the Council. WFDC's revenue contribution to Stourport Sports Club of £14k a year will continue. This will be reflected in the Quarter 1 budget monitoring report as an overspend (because the Cabinet cannot amend in year the targets for localism savings set out in the agreed MTFS other than by way of virement, which is not being proposed).
- 5.2 The report identifies other certain but unquantifiable financial implications for the Council in future years related to investment at the Sports Club site: the funding for any such investment would have to be addressed at the time.
- 5.3 There are no direct additional financial implications of the decision in respect of Bewdley Museum although the Council will continue to be exposed to 100% of revenue and capital expenditure needs at the site. The Council spent £50k on preparations for a potential transfer, £37k of which related to building and collection surveys and business planning – these are of value to the Council in understanding its present and future liabilities and in identifying opportunities for reducing net costs.
- 5.4 To provide a full financial picture, the Council receives income of about £9k a year, excluding VAT, for grass cutting and litter/refuse collection at Stourport Sports Club to off-set costs incurred. This service has been provided for many years under a commercial agreement with little or no profit margin. As with all other commercial income generated by the Council, there is no guarantee that it will continue. This contrasts with the legal commitment for the Council to provide revenue funding for the Sports Club as set out above.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposed transfer of the Stourport Sports Club to the Severn Academies Educational Trust, and the discussions with Bewdley Town Council in respect of Bewdley Museum, were being progressed under the localism strategy that was adopted in 2019. A revised strategy will be brought to the September meeting of Cabinet.
- 6.2 The Council has various powers to continue its involvement in and funding for the Stourport Sports Club including section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 6.3 The Stourport Sports Club provides district residents with accessible sports facilities, many of which are not available elsewhere (e.g. athletics track, cycle track, netball dome, high quality hockey astro turf surface). However, the contribution from WFDC

Is the only example of such a direct financial subsidy: the Council provides no funding to other sports clubs or sports associations in the district.

- 6.4 The Bewdley Museum includes the Guildhall and a significant area of public open space in the guise of the QEII Jubilee Gardens. The Council has various powers to provide such facilities, including section 12 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 in respect of the museum element.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This report revokes previous decisions that relate to disposal of land etc: it is not considered that an equality impact assessment is required.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The proposal from Severn Academies Educational Trust would have seen it take on the strategic, financial, and operational management of SSC. The current arrangements are not perceived to be operating in the most effective way and it is uncertain how revoking the previous decisions will improve the complex arrangements that govern the management of the site. The bodies involved in the management agreement have already been notified of the Cabinet's intention to revoke the previous decisions, as set out in the report. It is hoped, but cannot be guaranteed, that the consultants supporting the Club to look at a new business model will provide a positive outcome that all parties support.

- 8.2 No significant new risks are perceived with continuing to operate Bewdley Museum as the Council has done for many years.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Cabinet is invited to agree the recommendations set out above.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Cabinet
10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Report to Cabinet "Localism: Stourport Sports Club", 13 July 2022
11.2 Report to Cabinet "Establishment of Independent Museum Trust", 10 November 2020
11.3 Localism strategy (2019) [Localism strategy | Wyre Forest District Council \(wyreforestdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/localism-strategy)

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET 17 JULY 2023

Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2023 - 2040

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Ian Hardiman Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey Head of Strategic Growth
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kate Bailey Head of Strategic Growth
APPENDICES:	Appendix One – Worcestershire Housing Strategy (circulated electronically)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to outline the Worcestershire Housing Strategy that has been developed in partnership with councils and partners across the county.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1 NOTE the Worcestershire Housing Strategy AND

2.2 AGREE that a local action plan should be developed for Wyre Forest and brought back through the committee process to a future Cabinet meeting for approval

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Whilst there is no longer a legal requirement to have a Housing Strategy many of the elements contained within the housing strategy, such as housing needs assessments and stock conditions surveys are still requirements (Housing Act 1985).
- 3.2 In 2016 the Council approved the development of the Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan which commenced in 2017. The Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2023-2040 is the replacement document to the Partnership Plan.
- 3.3 The strategy was commissioned by the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove and Redditch councils on behalf of the county partners and developed by the consultants Arcadis. The development was overseen by a project group of senior managers and the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove and Redditch and consultation was undertaken with stakeholders including the respective Cabinet Portfolio Holders at the time.
- 3.4 Partners to the seven councils and involved in the strategy included the Integrated Care Board and Health and Care Trust representatives, Public Health, Registered Providers and Local Enterprise Partnership.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The strategy identifies the unique role housing plays in people's lives including influencing their life chances. The strategy focuses on how housing can impact on economic growth, jobs, health and wellbeing as well as how housing can contribute to meeting climate change ambitions.
- 4.2 The strategy sets out a joint vision for housing up until 2040 and a series of shorter term actions that will help to deliver on the vision. The vision is as follows;
"Worcestershire will be known for excellent housing. Everyone will have choices about how and where they live. Local homes will be warm, healthy and will lead the way towards Net Zero. Worcestershire housing will add to a better quality of life"
- 4.3 The strategy is in four main sections covering; vision; context; priorities and action plan. The four strategic priorities are;
- 4.3.1 Economic Growth and Jobs
 - 4.3.2 Quality and standards
 - 4.3.3 Health and Wellbeing
 - 4.3.4 Net Zero Carbon and Climate Change
- Within each priority there is a vision statement or objective for 2040 and an outline of what needs to be done to achieve this vision, who is involved and what the outcome will be.
- 4.4 Within the action plan section there are proposed actions for the first 100 days including gaining political support for the strategy, developing individual action plans, agreeing areas of collaboration and developing governance arrangements.
- 4.5 The officer governance arrangements have been established with a Worcestershire Housing Strategy Board, comprising of Chief Executives of the relevant organisations including the seven councils, a Worcestershire Housing Board, comprising of Heads of Service of Directors of relevant organisations and then the proposal to establish working groups to further develop and oversee delivery of actions.
- 4.6 Further work on the county level actions and the working groups will be facilitated by a further stakeholder event (date to be confirmed) and further work on District specific action plans to commence in tandem and brought back to Cabinet for approval.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Any financial implications arising from the action plan will be identified in the report for Cabinet when the plan is brought forward for approval.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no additional legal or policy implications in the noting of the Worcestershire Housing Strategy and the development of a district specific action plan.

- 6.2 The Worcestershire Housing Strategy does include an action around homelessness under priority three – health and wellbeing. Members will be aware of the recently adopted Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategy that incorporates this action. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategy is a legal requirement under the Homelessness Act 2002.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken and this indicates there are no adverse effects of this decision on any groups with protected characteristics so a full EIA is not required.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The Strategy and countywide action plan needs to be committed to and delivered by all the partners within the Worcestershire Housing Strategy board otherwise there will be a failure to tackle key issues around housing, health and social care in Worcestershire. Getting corporate and political support for the plan is therefore key to its success.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Worcestershire Housing Strategy has been developed by the seven councils and a number of key stakeholders across the county to deliver on a vision and priorities until 2040.
- 9.2 The priorities are far reaching and seek to prepare Worcestershire for the future considering the important role housing can play in the economy, health and social care as well as climate change.
- 9.3 More detailed countywide and District specific action plans will be developed based on the four key priorities.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 CLT

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan
<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/media/q4pdmhs5/worcestershire-strategic-housing-partnership-document-final.pdf>
- 11.2 Housing Needs Study 2018
<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/media/xqsm1mkl/cd9-8-wyre-forest-housing-needs-study-2018-extract.pdf>
- 11.3 Stock Condition Survey
<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/media/rfzeu3ov/wyre-forest-integrated-housing-stock-modelling-database-report-v1.pdf>

Worcestershire Housing Strategy

2023 - 2040



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Foreword

Housing has always been an important consideration for the people of Worcestershire. Our towns and villages are attractive places to live, and many people aspire to move to the county. However, the challenges associated with ensuring that there is enough high quality, suitable housing to meet the needs of all citizens have been critical issues for many years. The cost-of-living crisis in 2022 and a continuing shortage of housing across all tenures has helped to highlight the importance of the role that housing plays in determining life chances in the county. However, there is room for improvement. By thinking of housing as one of Worcestershire's strategic assets, we can plan more effectively to deliver better outcomes, including health, well-being, and our low-carbon futures.

Local authorities play an important part in planning for future housing as well as providing services alongside housing including social care. In Worcestershire, these services are provided by the six District Councils and the County Council, all of whom are locally accountable. This arrangement ensures that local concerns are addressed in connection with housing and that new development respects local character. Looking forward, the role of local authorities in connection with housing can only become more extensive and more influential. Social care delivered in the home alongside other services for example is set to become an important enabler of independent living for our older residents. Work to improve the condition and performance of our homes will also play a key role in our meeting the UK's net zero carbon objectives.

To meet these expanded, long-term expectations, we need a long-term perspective. We will also need a joined-up approach. Whilst most of the work in connection with housing will continue to be undertaken by individual district councils, it will make sense to approach many of our challenges in a consistent and collaborative way. Whilst we value the unique character of Worcestershire's communities, we also recognise that we can come together across the county to plan and to work together to deliver better outcomes for everyone who lives in the county.

In response to the challenges and opportunities we face, we have developed a long-term housing strategy for Worcestershire. The strategy focuses on key issues associated with how housing affects economic growth, jobs and health and wellbeing in the county as well as how housing can be harnessed to meet carbon and climate change ambitions. In the strategy we set out a joint-vision for housing for the period up to 2040 and a series of medium- and long-term priorities that all bodies interested in housing in Worcestershire can get behind. The benefit of having the strategy in place is that we will have a clear long-term vision for the role of housing in Worcestershire that we can all get behind and for which local authorities can be held accountable.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the process of developing the Worcestershire Housing Vision and Strategy, working with colleagues and stakeholders across the county to develop a flexible and adaptable plan that will equip us to work together to deliver better housing for everyone in the county. I am excited about the vision and the plan proposals and am confident that we can equip ourselves to meet the many complex issues surrounding housing in the county. Worcestershire housing will add to a better quality of life, and that is something that we can all work towards.

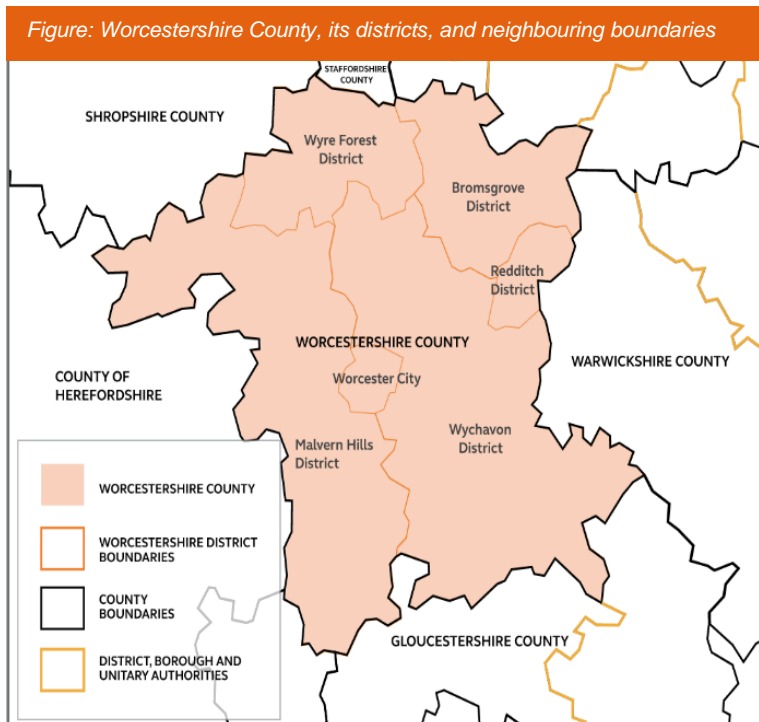


Kevin Dicks, Chair of the Worcestershire Housing Strategy Board

1 Introduction

1.1 Context and Background

Worcestershire benefits enormously from being right in the heart of England. With exceptional links into the UK motorway network, proximity to Birmingham International Airport, and in the medium term, HS2. The County has enjoyed one of the highest long-term economic growth rates outside of the Greater South-East and has real strengths in a diverse range of sectors including advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, cyber security, defence, and IT.



Worcestershire is a great place to live, with a diverse and contrasting choice of characterful urban and rural locations across the six districts. But the county has its challenges. Worcestershire has an older population than the national average, but the working age population is not growing quickly enough. Furthermore, the county's over 65s will grow in number by over 40% by 2040. To achieve its ambitious economic plan through to 2040, Worcestershire needs to build the workforce needed to attract and grow new businesses. To do this it will need to attract new families to live, work and grow in the county and it will need to retain its graduate and young talent. Worcestershire will also need to continue to care for its people, dealing in particular with issues of homelessness and ill-health as well as addressing the long-term implications of an ageing population.

Good quality housing is critical in attracting people to a place, but the Covid pandemic has also underlined the importance of fit for purpose housing in connection with people's health and wellbeing and has further reinforced the link between quality of housing and housing-related services to health and social care. Housing is also responsible for 22% of all UK carbon emissions and policies to accelerate decarbonisation will play a critical role in our fight against climate change.

Local Authorities in Worcestershire have policies and plans in place to manage housing delivery and housing related services in the short and medium term. However, there is the need for a long-term vision and a joined-up plan to enable the two tiers of government in Worcestershire to cooperate and collaborate (with third parties as needed) to deliver the best housing outcomes. Above all, authorities must focus on a range of actions to create and maintain momentum towards the long-term goal.

The 2040 Housing Strategy represents an ambitious, long term and important Vision for the County. It seeks to enable Worcestershire One Public Estate Partnership's (WOPEP) Housing Workstream to 'rebalance the housing market in Worcestershire in support of economic growth'. It sets out steps to support improving physical and mental health and wellbeing, reducing health inequalities, addressing climate change, and taking account of the longer-term impact of Covid-19. In short, it is a strategy that will improve the quality of life for the residents of, and visitors to, Worcestershire.

The starting point is a positive one. The county has a history of collaboration and partnership working across multiple services. Worcestershire developed one of the first One Public Estate (OPE) partnerships and has a very effective integrated care strategy (ICB) underpinned by effective working of local authorities, the NHS

and other health service providers across the county. Building on this well-established pattern, this Housing Strategy proposes further sharing of capability and best practice in a two-tier local authority context. The proposal, designed to ensure that services continue to be delivered in a joined-up way, is unique and has been developed through the collaborative working and engagement of a wide range of public sector partners, private sector businesses including Registered Providers¹ and third sector organisations. It is a Strategy for Worcestershire developed by the partners of Worcestershire.

¹ Registered Provider (RP) is the umbrella term to describe Housing Associations and other third sector housing providers involved in the provision of social and affordable housing. RPs are actively involved in the development of for sale and shared ownership homes as part of a cross-subsidy model which supplements affordable homes grant funding.

1.2 Content, Purpose, and Objectives

The Housing Strategy is focused on the twenty-year period to 2040. During this period, there will be significant changes to the housing market in Worcestershire as well as huge challenges to meet including the net zero carbon transition. Housing in Worcestershire will be very different in 2040 to what it is today.

This means that decisions taken today will have a big effect on the future of housing in Worcestershire, and it is right to plan for this. It is also important that short-term opportunities, that can be taken to improve the experience of housing now, are not missed because of the priorities of a long-term plan.

The 2040 Housing Strategy aims to bring these priorities together, by setting a long-term vision and strategic plan, whilst also identifying suggestions for the tactical 'jobs to be done' that are set out in short-term action plans.

The 2040 Housing Strategy is designed to be read in conjunction with a wide range of other policies and plans. Most importantly, it complements existing development plans and sets out to show how housing development can be well integrated with other aspects of public service focused on health and social care. The Housing Strategy is also aligned to other long-term plans including the Worcestershire LEP Strategic Economic Plan.

The Strategy also complements existing plans aimed at setting the direction of travel for long-term policy in net-zero carbon and for outlining a blueprint for how housing related functions can be most effectively coordinated across Worcestershire.

The 2040 Strategy has five main sections:

- **Vision** – summarising the strategy and the five main challenges to be addressed for Worcestershire.
- **Context** – describing the local social and economic factors that the strategy should address.
- **Strategic priorities** – describing the detailed objectives, actions, and outcomes of the strategy.
- **Strategy review and governance** – setting out the organisation required to implement the strategy.
- **Action plan** – proposing the short and medium-term actions that may follow in the first 5-year period and form the basis of each district's own action plan.

The strategy has been developed by a county-wide team with representation from the 7 local authorities, NHS partners, local housing providers and the Worcestershire LEP, facilitated by Arcadis. We have undertaken extensive consultation across many stakeholders to seek a broad range of Worcestershire focused voices, to understand the challenges and blockers and the opportunities to be addressed by the Strategy. Whilst we cannot take account of all points of view, we are confident that the strategy represents a balanced approach to addressing the many opportunities and challenges that Worcestershire will face between now and 2040.

2 Vision

The Vision Statement

Worcestershire will be known for excellent housing. Everyone will have choices about how and where they live. Local homes will be warm, healthy and will lead the way towards Net Zero. Worcestershire housing will add to a better quality of life.

The Call to Action

The strategy will set out the steps needed to make this happen focused on four priority areas:

- Economic growth and jobs.
- Quality and standards.
- Health, wellbeing, and inclusion.
- Net-zero carbon and sustainability.

Realising the Strategy

To make this vision a reality there are five big opportunities that need to be taken between now and 2040:

- Creating a culture of positive action in connection with housing. This will cover housing services, planning and other services focused on the Home. 'Getting things done' will help to ensure that Worcestershire is dynamic, growing, and a great place for everyone to live. This will be done by planning, by leadership and by everyone involved taking ownership of their role in making Worcestershire a better place to live.
- Reviewing aspects of housing services and planning across Worcestershire and reorganising where it makes sense to do so, sharing resources whilst protecting local accountability. Equipping Districts to take the assertive steps needed to implement the policies and aspirations that are set out in Development Plans.
- Using large scale developments to set the standard for sustainable development including place-based amenities and services. This will include getting the right mix of housing in a scheme and ensuring that services and infrastructure are in place from the outset.²
- Developing and managing affordable and social housing as an integral part of new and existing communities to increase inclusion in Worcestershire. This includes an active role for local authorities as planners, development partners and housing providers.
- Taking a leading role in the promotion of the net zero carbon agenda for housing, including organising and supporting public and private homeowners to meet their net zero targets.

Housing will be better in 2040 because of the active, evidence-led steps that will have been taken to sustain economic growth and housing development and to improve services and delivery. This strategy sets out these active steps and the timetable by which they will be taken. The jobs/actions to be undertaken are outlined in Section 4 – The Priorities.

² Scale in housing development is context dependent. At the largest scale, the strategy describes urban extensions and other strategic developments that will be accompanied by large-scale social and economic infrastructure. However, in the context of rural communities, developments of 100 to 150 homes are also 'large scale' and also create an opportunity and responsibility for local authorities to set challenging targets around housing quality and the quality of wider infrastructure provision.

3 Local, Regional and National Context

3.1 Population and Economics

Worcestershire is situated in the Midlands region of England and the County is home to the six districts of Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester City, Wychavon, and Wyre Forest. The county has a diverse cultural heritage and a high-quality natural and urban environment. The unique character of the place is appreciated by the local community and attracts visitors and in-migration from all over the country contributing to economic growth.

Population

Worcestershire is home to 598,070 residents (mid-2020 ONS estimate)³ of which circa 60% (354,064) of residents are of working age (16-64). The working age population has grown by less than 1% since 2015. The County has a higher median age of population (45.3) than the regional (39.6) and national median age (40.2). 23% of the population is over the age of 65 which is higher than the West Midlands and England average. The growth rate of the older population is expected to increase steeply with the number of over 65's expected to grow by 42% by 2040 (with a particularly high rate of growth in 80+ year group) against the population growth of 30-45's which is expected to be 10% to 2040.

The number of households in Worcestershire is expected to grow by 20% by 2043. This growth is largely due to an increase in one-person households (over 50%). The number of such households is projected to rise by almost 21,000 over the 25-year period from 2018 to 2043⁴. By 2035, the number of people living alone in Worcestershire is expected to rise by 36%. Both trends are linked to the ageing population.

Different rates of growth in the working-age and later living cohorts are prominent issues for the housing strategy.

The strategy must deliver enough housing to accommodate families to support the growth ambitions of the county.

Similarly, it is important that housing supply and housing related services anticipate demand that will come from an ageing population.

Migration into and out of the County, as well as between districts within Worcestershire, conforms to the established national pattern of migration, with most movement being from rural to urban areas (urbanisation). Worcestershire tends to experience a net gain in almost all age groups. A high inflow of persons aged 75-plus and 60-64 is also prominent as people move into the County after retirement or early retirement.⁵

In Worcestershire, just over 70% of people are defined as living in larger urban areas, with 20% of the population living in rural villages, hamlets, or isolated dwellings. This illustrates that Worcestershire is "less urban" than either the West Midlands region (in which almost 85% of the population live in urban areas) or the whole of England (80% living in urban areas). Over 50% of people living in Wychavon and Malvern Hills live in a rural area, whereas Redditch and Worcester City are almost entirely urban.⁶

Worcestershire residents generally have good levels of health, with life expectancy being better than the national average. Some areas of lifestyle require improvement when compared to the national average. These include excess weight in adults, smoking at time of childbirth, breastfeeding initiation, and early years

³ONS, Mid-Year Population Estimates, UK, June 2020

⁴ONS, 2018-based household projections for local authorities and higher administrative areas within England

⁵Worcestershire Demographic Report – Census 2011

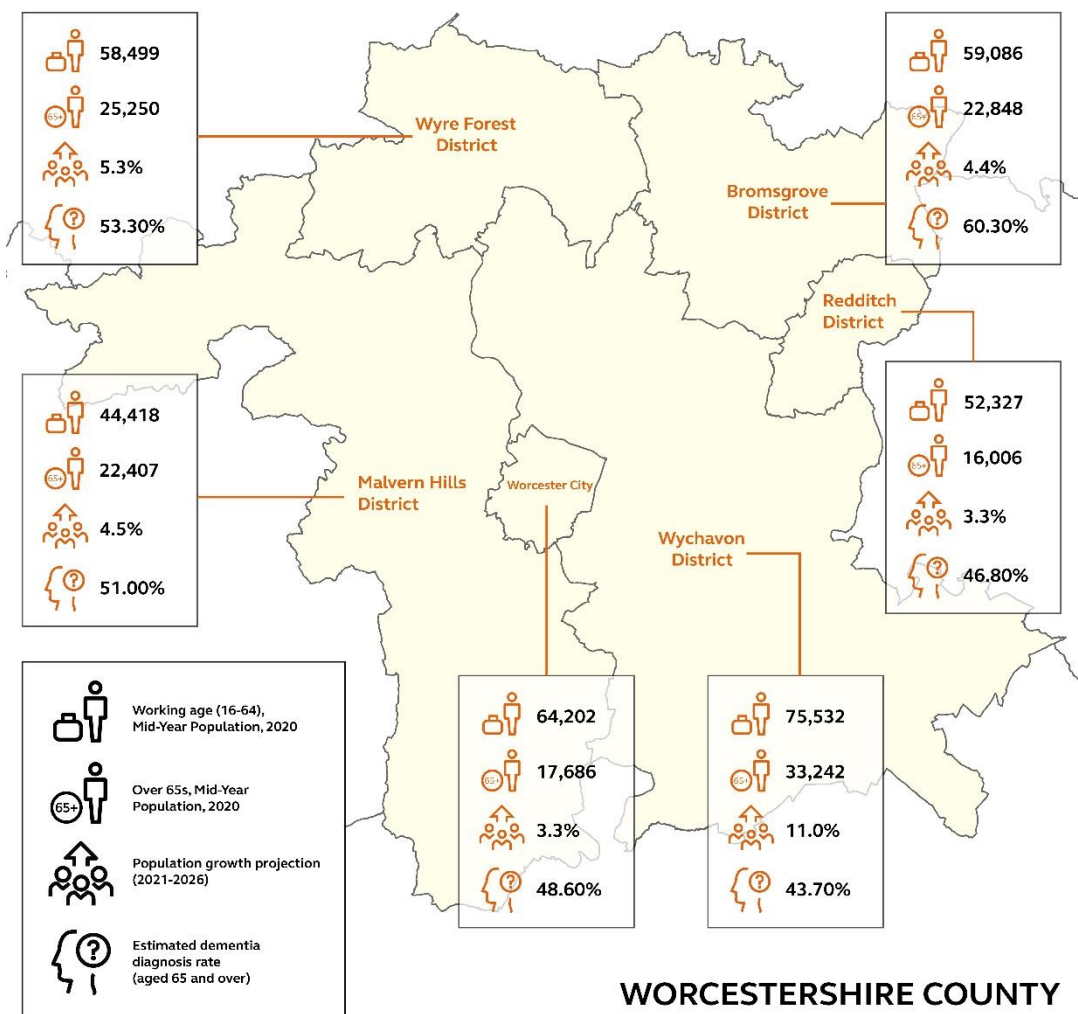
⁶Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Annual Summary September 2019

development for children eligible for free school meals.⁷ Dementia will be a significant issue in future years as the population in the oldest age groups grows. The number of people with dementia in Worcestershire is forecast to increase by 56% between 2019 and 2035 from 9,560 to 14,905.

The requirement for a long-term plan for the reshaping of later-living provision in the county is highlighted in the strategy. This will not only provide a wider range of housing options for the healthy later living cohort but will also support better provision of care services to older clients.

Worcestershire's population does not reflect the ethnic diversity of the wider West Midlands region. The 2011 Census shows that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Persons (those not of White British origin) stand at around 7.6% of Worcestershire's average. The estimate of 7.6% in Worcestershire compares to estimates of 20.2% in England and 20.8% in the West Midlands region.⁸ We anticipate that this gap will close over the period of the strategy which may have some implications for future service delivery.

The graphic below summaries key population statistics across Worcestershire:



⁷ Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2020, Executive Summary, Health Impacts of COVID-19

⁸ Worcestershire Demographic Report – Census 2011

Economic Performance

There has been good GVA growth in Worcestershire in the last five years, with one of the highest rates of any LEP in England. £14.1 billion GVA was generated in 2018 which is more than 10% of West Midlands total.

Currently there are 290,000 people in employment in Worcestershire, with good growth over the last five years. 3.5% of Worcestershire's economically active population are unemployed and perhaps as challenging, 1 in 18 of working residents have no qualifications. Worcestershire overall, however, performs well when compared to the region and country.

Median gross weekly earnings by residence in Worcestershire is £537 which is approximately 3% less than in the West Midlands and 10% less than in England. (This figure is significantly reduced by the gross weekly earnings in Redditch which is £460/week). Major infrastructure projects such as HS2 and private housing development are expanding at pace and will draw down from the labour supply. There will be a growing labour requirement from repair, maintenance, and improvement work, as for the demand retrofitting existing buildings to meet net zero emissions targets becomes more important. Covid-19 appears to have had little long-term impact on employment in the West Midlands based on latest data⁹ from ONS. Employment levels between May-July 2021 were above pre-Covid levels, and unemployment at 5.1% was significantly below the 5.9% unemployment recorded between December 2020 and February 2021.

Skills development in Worcestershire is addressed in the 2019 to 2024 Education and Skills Strategy, which brings together a county-wide Education and Skills Strategy Board and the WLEP Education and Skills Board. Adult education is likely to be subject to significant development with the announcement of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee in September 2020. This is likely to channel training resources to many skills that are relevant to the Housing Strategy.

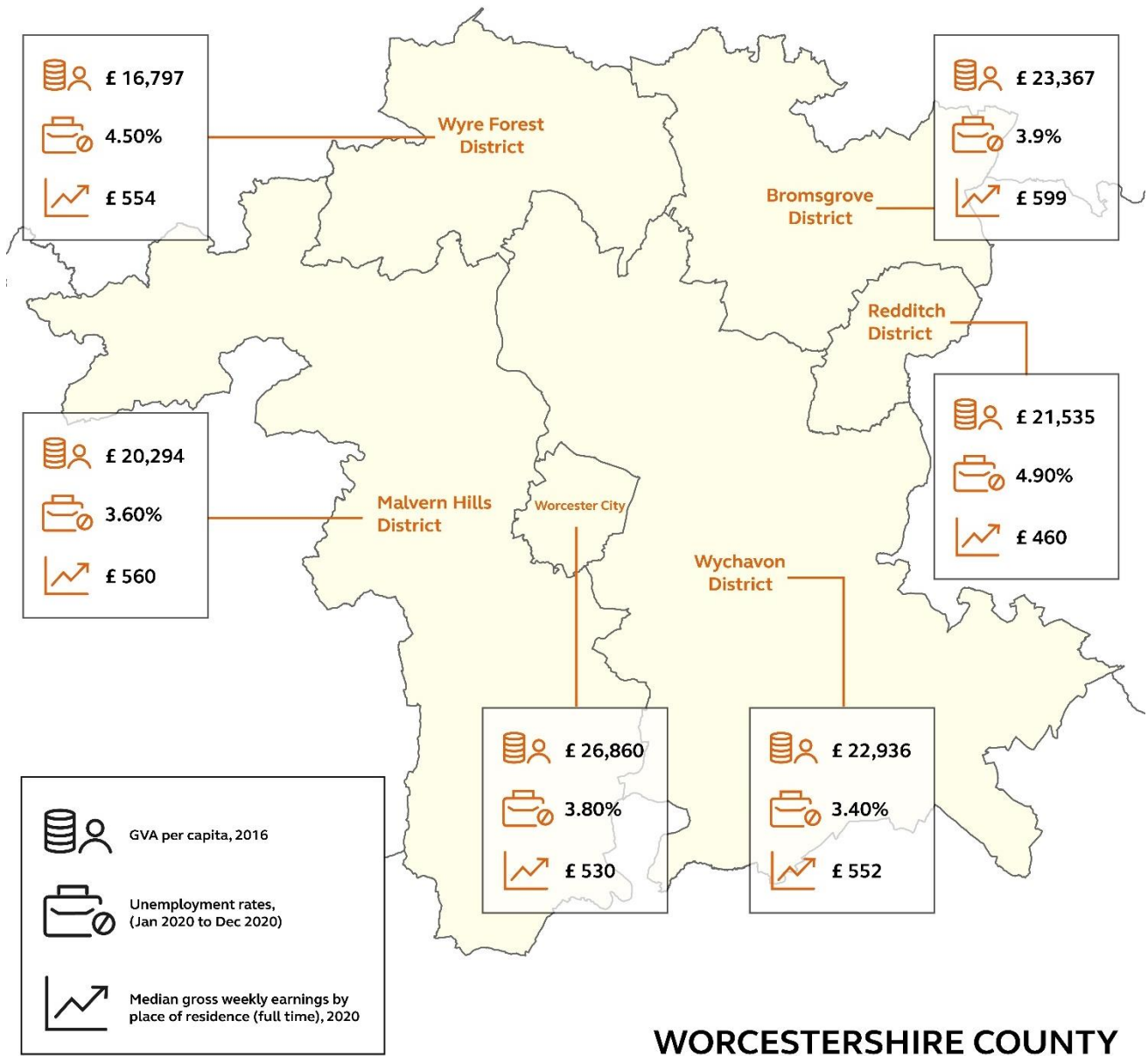
The link between employment and the housing market will be increasingly significant over the next 20 years.

The Strategy highlights the requirement to develop low carbon retrofit supply chains in Worcestershire aligned to national demand for decarbonisation.

These supply chains will potentially be developed to take advantage of existing capability and expertise in the County.

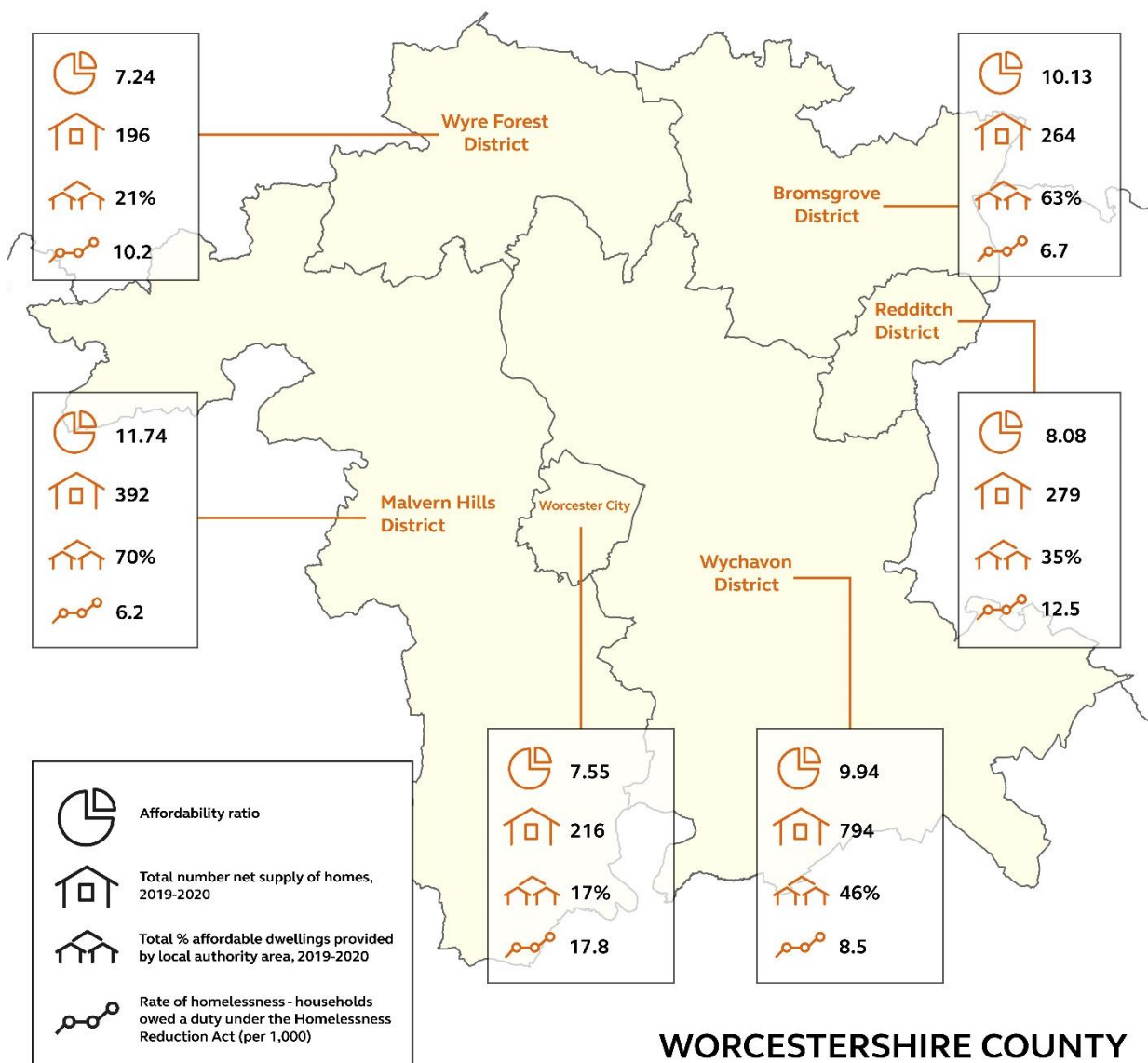
⁹ HI05 Regional labour market: Headline indicators for the West Midlands, published September 2021.

The diagram below summarises economic performance at a District level across Worcestershire.



Housing Delivery and House Prices

Worcestershire, like many other places is seeing a growing disparity between house prices and income. Worcestershire's affordability ratio, calculated by dividing median house prices by median gross annual earnings, was 8.87 in 2020¹⁰. By comparison, the West Midlands region affordability ratio is 6.78 and England is at 7.84.¹¹ In Worcestershire, the rate of homelessness in terms of households owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act is 10.3 per 1,000, this is lower than the rate in England (12.30 per 1,000) and the West Midlands (11.20 per 1,000)¹². The rate of homelessness since the 2018-2019 financial year as remained steady in Worcestershire. The diagram below summarises the position at district level, of Countywide affordability, housing supply (including affordable housing) and homelessness.



¹⁰ In 2020, the median house price was £242,000 and median gross annual earnings were £27,285.

¹¹ ONS: House price to workplace-based earnings ratio

¹² PHE, Public Health Profiles (indicator source: MHCLG, Table A1, Detailed local authority level tables financial year 2019-20)

Housing affordability is closely related to the supply of new housing delivered through local development plans. Below is a summary of the Housing Delivery Test: 2020 measurement¹³ which is an annual measurement of housing delivery in relevant plan-making authorities. Generally, local authorities have performed well, with 8,103 homes being delivered across the County against a three-year target of 5,640. As a result of below target rates of build-out, Bromsgrove faces the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development and Wyre Forest must produce an action plan showing how they intend to boost delivery and have a 20% buffer on their housing land supply.

During the period 2017 to 2021, 4,115 affordable homes¹⁴ were delivered in Worcestershire, representing over 45% of the total stock delivered in this period.¹⁵

Table 1. Summary of the Housing Delivery Test, DLUHC

Area	Total number of homes required 2018-2021	Total number of homes delivered 2018-2021	Housing Delivery Test: 2021 measurement	Housing Delivery Test: 2021 Consequence
Bromsgrove	1,413	624	44%	Presumption
Redditch	0	881	n/a	None
Wyre Forest	627	618	99%	None
Worcester City }				
Malvern Hills }	3,281*	5,100	128%	None
Wychavon }				

***Local Planning Authorities with Joint plans being measured jointly for Housing Delivery Test: 2020 measurement*

The implication of presumption in Bromsgrove is that developers are free to bring forward housing development sites outside of the scope of the adopted Local Plan in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework. This means that Bromsgrove District Council has much less control over local development than would be the case normally, even though the securing of planning consent in the district has been shown to be very difficult over the past 5 years.

Improved housing delivery in Wyre Forest has resulted in the requirement for a 20% buffer being removed. As a result, Wyre Forest District Council has increased control over land in the development pipeline in the past 12 months.

The effective delivery of new housing is an important foundation for the 2040 Strategy.

The challenge will be that the housing continues to be delivered at rates to meet growth forecasts.

Furthermore, it is essential that new development meets the actual housing need of residents in the County whilst also delivering mixed, sustainable communities.

¹³ MHCLG, Housing Delivery Test: 2020 measurement

¹⁴ Note: Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. It can be a new-build property or a private sector property that has been purchased for use as an affordable home. Data sourced from MHCLG, Live Table 1008c.

¹⁵ MHCLG, Live Table 253.

Quality and performance of existing homes

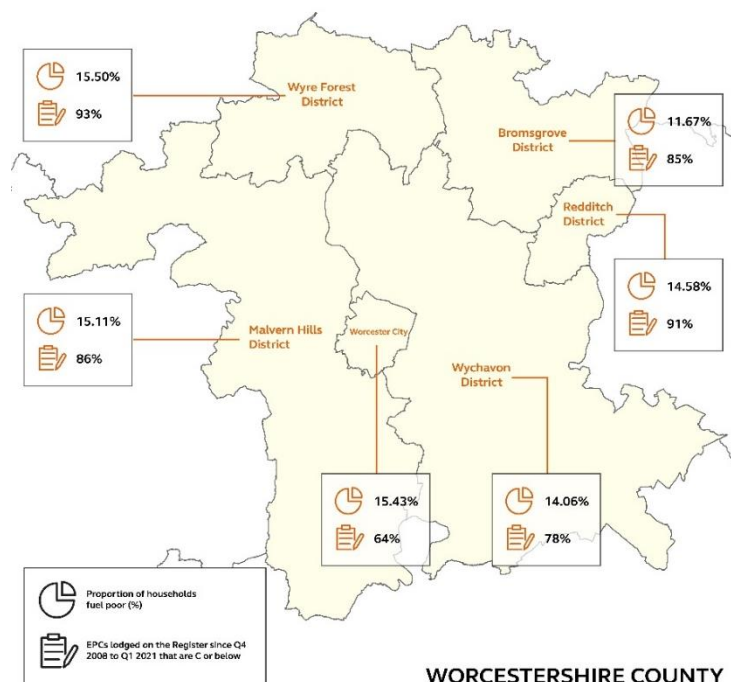
The quality of existing stock is an important consideration with respect to health and wellbeing of residents, and requirements for decarbonisation.

Fuel poverty is a material issue in Worcestershire, affecting around 14.4% of households compared with 13.4% of households in England as a whole¹⁶. A household is said to be fuel poor if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain an adequate standard of warmth. Following significant increases in energy costs in the past 12 months, fuel poverty is expected to affect many more people, and as a result, might further accelerate investment in energy efficiency through programmes such as ECO+.

The health effects of fuel poverty are far-reaching and disproportionately affect older people as there are links between cold homes and respiratory conditions. The five-year average for excess winter mortality index in the County is higher than England's five-year average.¹⁷

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) can be used as a proxy for housing quality and low carbon performance. Data for dwellings lodged on the Register from Q4 2008 to Q1 2021 show that 87% of EPCs issued in the county are C or below (vs 89% in England), whereas 37% of EPCs issued in Worcestershire are for properties in Bands A to C (vs 39% in England) and 6% are for properties in Bands F and G (vs 6% in England). Worcestershire is comparable to the England average.¹⁸

The diagram below summarises the position at district level, of the proportion of households in fuel poverty and the number of EPCs at C or below.



This data highlights the scale of the decarbonisation challenge in Worcestershire and the extent of work that will be necessary to bring homes up to net-zero carbon levels of performance.

¹⁶ ONS: Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2021. This data was collated before the 2022 energy price crisis and reflects the long-term trend.

¹⁷ ONS: Excess winter mortality data, England, and Wales, 2019 to 2020 (provisional) and 2018 to 2019 (final)

¹⁸ Live tables on Energy Performance of Buildings Certificates: Table D1

Connectivity

Worcestershire's central location makes the county excellently connected through a comprehensive multimodal transport network of railways and highways (via M5 and M42), which in turn gives easy access to markets and skills. Birmingham Airport is at the doorstep of the county which provides access to 100 international locations.

Accessibility within Worcestershire is naturally affected by the rural nature of much of the county, where low population densities are associated with a lower-grade road network. This is particularly the case in the North-west of the County. A limited number of road crossings over the River Sever are also a constraint to mobility and a cause of congestion.

Worcestershire is crossed by two nationally important rail lines – the North Cotswold line from London Paddington to Worcester, Great Malvern and Hereford and the Bristol to Birmingham Line. Local services operate to Birmingham along the Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Redditch routes which face challenges of overcrowding, particularly during peak periods.

Cross Country services between South-West England, Birmingham, and the North-West and North-East pass through but do not stop in Worcestershire, and the County's network suffers from various constraints such as mechanical signalling and single line tracks which have a direct impact on train service timetables. The opening of Worcestershire Parkway station in 2020 adds capacity and connectivity to the network and enhances accessibility to the North Cotswold Line and Cardiff – Nottingham Cross Country services.¹⁹

Worcestershire's rail connectivity requires improvement and the critical importance of rail as a key enabler of economic activity and growth is reinforced in the Local Transport Plan.

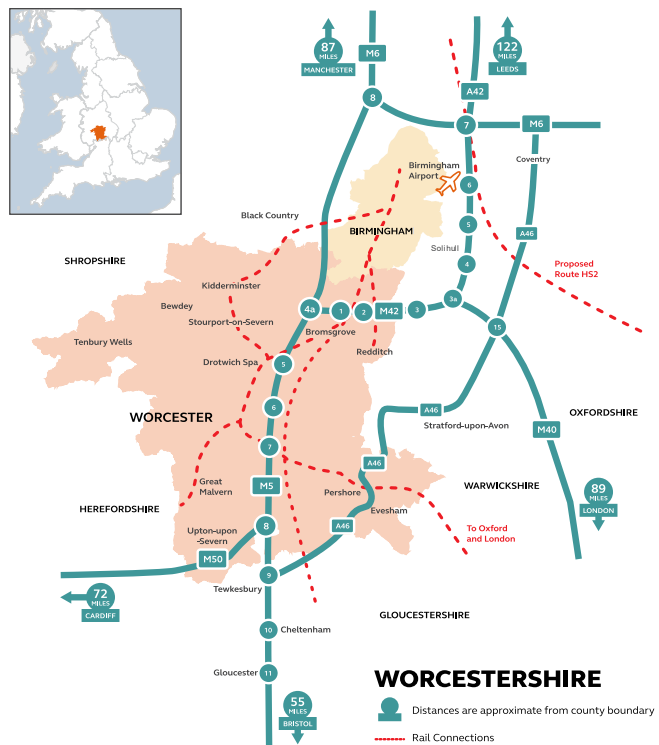


Figure: Location plan (top left) and transport map (bottom right)

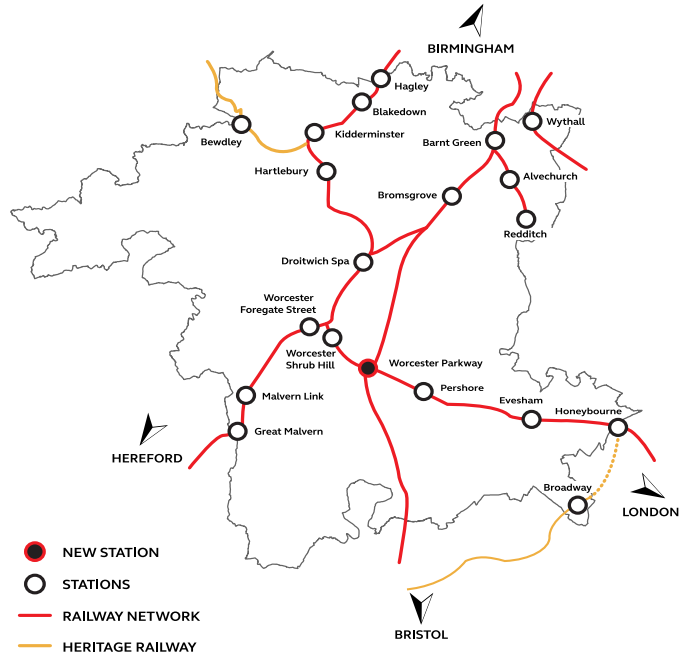


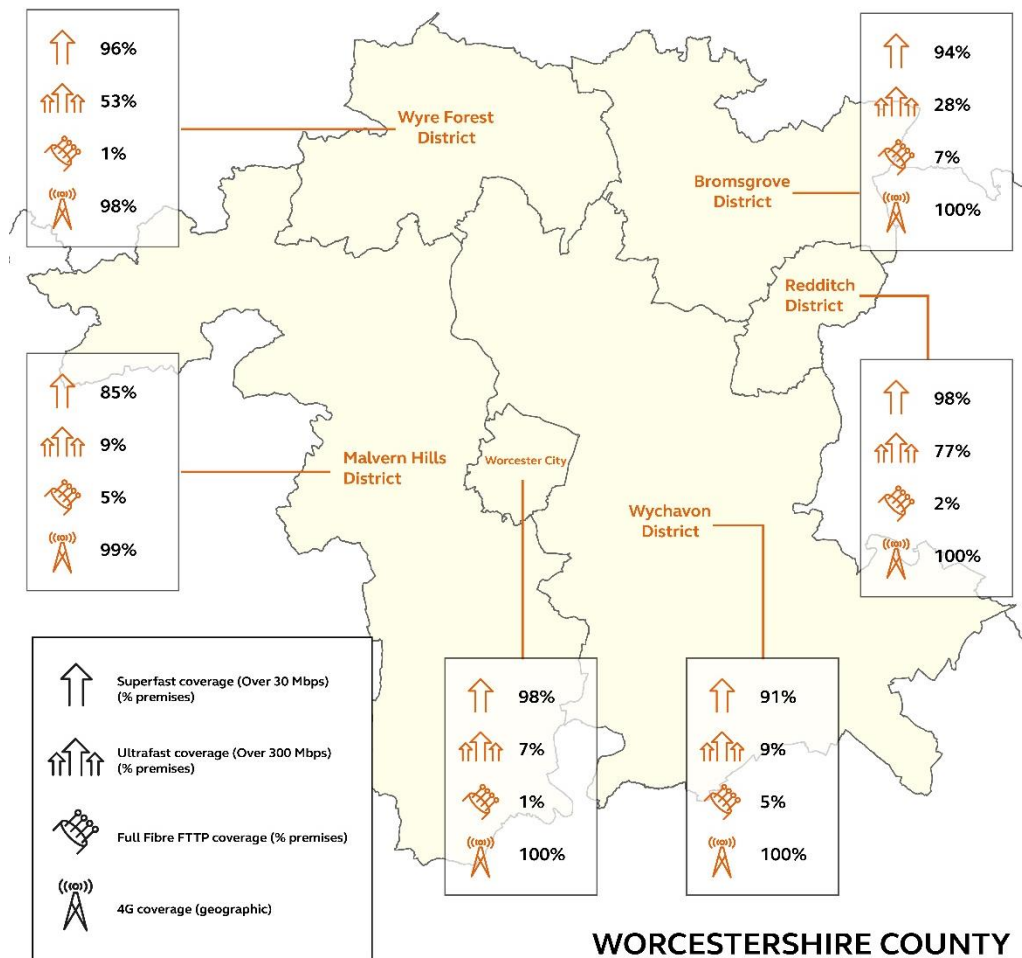
Figure: Rail connectivity plan

The implication for housing development is that much-needed improvements in transport network connectivity are likely to free-up further land for large-scale housing development in future – creating opportunities for the development of sustainable mixed communities as advocated in this Strategy.

¹⁹ Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy, 2017

Worcestershire has good digital connectivity but there is room for improvement. Over 95% of premises have superfast broadband (30Mbps or greater) coverage and over 98% of the geography has 4G signal availability. By contrast, only Redditch and Wyre Forest have more than 50% of premises covered by ultrafast broadband (300Mbps or greater). The Fibre to Premises (up to 1 Gbps) coverage in Worcestershire needs improvement with Bromsgrove having 8% of premises covered (highest in the district) and Worcester City and Wyre Forest having 1% of premises covered (lowest in the district). Worcestershire is nevertheless driving innovation and has one of the first 5G testbed networks in the UK, operating from sites in Malvern and Worcester.²⁰ Worcestershire's digital ambition and continued investment inherently will facilitate both remote working and the delivery of digitally enabled home care and support services.

The diagram below summarises the position at district level, of broadband coverage across the County.



Digital capability will play a significant role in meeting the ambitions of the housing strategy.

Following the creation of the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership, this housing strategy will be important to maintain the close functional relationship between the districts and partners to work together to support the LEP's ambitious Strategic Economic Plan.

²⁰ Worcestershire County Council Digital Strategy 2021-2023

3.2 Organisation, Administration and Strategy

Worcestershire is a 2-tier county formed of Worcestershire County Council and six District Councils. The County Council is responsible for services across the whole of the county such as education, transport, and social care. District Councils are responsible for services such as housing and planning services. The table opposite provides a quick guide to the typical allocation of local authority responsibility for major services in England.

Status of Local Plans

The councils' shared vision for the future of the county is the foundation for the development of the Housing Strategy 2040. All parts of the county have developed their Local Plans and the Housing Strategy 2040 will respect and build on those Local Plans. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) reinforces the need for a plan-led approach to securing infrastructure as well as promoting sustainable development. The status of the Local Plans is listed below:

- Bromsgrove District Local Plan (2011-2030) - review underway, consultation closed.
- Borough of Redditch Local Plan (2011-2030) - review commenced.
- Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016 - 2036) was formally adopted in April 2022.
- The South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016-2030) which is the Local Plans of the partners Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District Council. The development plan is being updated to 2041. A consultation on the review closed in December 2022.

Status of WLEP Plans

The Worcestershire Councils have worked closely with the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) over the last 10 years bringing together a strategic partnership to facilitate the collaboration of the private, public and education sector to deliver meaningful programmes to support economic growth in the county. Significant improvements have been delivered through the Counties Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) launched in 2014. By 2020 this plan had been successful delivered 38,000 new jobs, 15,990 homes and a £2.0bn increase in GVA (Gross Value Added – GVA).

The SEP set up the Game Changer Programme to help meet the first objective. The programme provides investment opportunities by identifying key development and delivery of strategic sites for companies looking

	County Council	District Council
Education	✓	
Environmental health		✓
Highways	✓	
Housing		✓
Leisure and recreation		✓
Libraries	✓	
Local planning		✓
Local taxation collection		✓
Passenger transport	✓	
Public health	✓	
Social care	✓	
Transport Planning	✓	
Waste collection		✓
Waste disposal	✓	

for larger sites, HQs, and state of the art opportunities in some of the best locations in the country. These sites are shown on the adjacent map and include the Redditch Eastern Gateway, South Kidderminster Enterprise Park, Worcester Growth Corridor and Malvern Hills Science Park.

The SEP recognised the challenges with housing affordability in many parts of Worcestershire and recognise its importance to support economic growth. The Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan (WHPP) was developed, setting the strategic direction for housing across Worcestershire. The WHPP recognises that to maximise the health, wealth, and wellbeing of the residents of Worcestershire, and make the most effective use of existing resources, Councils need to work very closely with partner organisations across a range of sectors. The implementation of the national Health and Housing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Worcestershire is an early example of this integrated approach to service delivery. The WHPP aims are:

- Effective partnership working to delivery housing outcomes which will in turn support other strategic objectives, such as improved health and wellbeing, educational achievement of children, employment, crime reduction and sustainable communities.
- Improved collaboration, coordination and integration of healthcare and housing in the planning, commissioning and delivery of homes and services.
- Promotion of the housing sector contribution towards addressing the wider determinants of health, social exclusion, and re-offending.
- Maximising the delivery of housing by co-ordinating the activities of housing developers, providers and support agencies which will support economic growth.
- Addressing the housing needs of specific groups and sectors of the housing market.
- The provision of good quality housing to improve health and wellbeing.
- Integrated health, care and support and housing solutions to make best use of budgets across the NHS, local authorities, and partners to achieve outcomes for less; for example, drawing on the Better Care Fund to support service transformation.
- A co-ordinated response to long term changes in population.
- Better use of existing housing stock.
- Co-ordinated support for vulnerable people.
- Increasing availability of affordable homes.

*This plan has now been refreshed and the WLEP has, in May 2023, outlined an ambitious and exciting 2040 new vision for the county that will create a connected, creative, and dynamic economy for all. The aim is to boost the economic value of the county by £2.5bn per year and create 18,500 extra jobs.

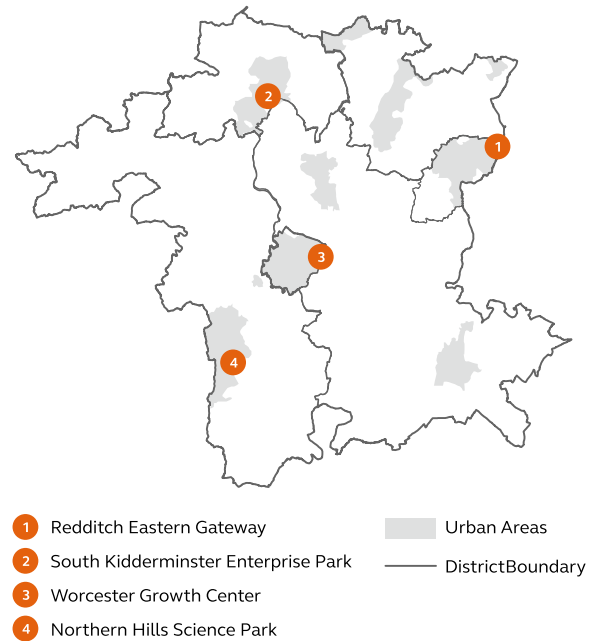


Figure: Economic "Game-Changer" Sites in Worcestershire

3.3 Policy

Housing and housing-related services in Worcestershire are governed by a wide range of policies. Many of these are developed at District level and are set out in Development Plans. They are regularly updated and consulted on and will continue to develop between now and 2040. The purpose of the 2040 Worcestershire Housing Strategy is to establish a common approach where this will improve the experience of residents without reducing accountability associated with local decision making and service delivery.

The 2040 Strategy is also being developed at a time where there will be significant change in housing policy related to planning, regulation and carbon emissions associated with new and existing buildings. There are also likely to be further changes to the management of the health service and the funding and management of social care.

The 2040 Strategy not only accommodates these changes but also sets out plans for a more coordinated Worcestershire-wide response – making better use of resources and in particular equipping authorities to implement changes to deliver the greatest benefit to the people of Worcestershire.

Significant changes to provision of housing and housing-related services include:

- **Social care reform.** The Social Care White Paper was published in December 2021, alongside an initial spending commitment of £5.4 billion for the three-year period to 2024/25. Integrating care with housing is a significant theme in the White Paper, and additional funding totalling £450 million, together with an £210 million extension to the Care and Support Specialist Housing fund (CASSH). Relevant proposals for the housing strategy include:
 - Integration of housing decisions into all health and care decisions
 - Support to the specialist housing market in line with an ambition to create a more diverse range of housing options.
 - Expanded funding for home adaptation.
 - Encouragement of longer-term thinking with respect to lifetime neighbourhoods
- **Housing management reform.** The implementation of the Charter for Social Housing Residents will require a significant change to the relationship between tenants of social landlords. The Social Housing Regulation Bill will further extend the rights of tenants and the powers of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) into areas of consumer issues including complaints handling, and housing decency. Together these will drive actions in connection with building safety, the introduction of consumer regulation for tenants, stronger resident engagement, and improved landlord performance metrics.
- **Building Safety Legislation.** The Building Safety Act was passed in Spring 2022. Secondary legislation will be passed over the next 2 years which will detail practical implementation. Local authorities and their affordable and social housing providers will have new statutory duties in connection with the safe management of higher risk residential buildings including undertaking the duties of the Building Safety Manager. These requirements are likely to be implemented prior to 2025.
- **Planning reform.** The Update was introduced into the House of Commons in May 2022. New provisions will affect Local Plans that are currently under development. Relevant aspects of the legislation include:
 - Removal of the requirement to maintain a rolling five-year supply of development land.
 - A greater focus on local planning issues through the introduction of National Development Management Policies dealing with issues that apply to most areas.
 - Further development in Neighbourhood Planning including a simpler neighbourhood planning tool called the Neighbourhood Priority Statement.
 - Replacement of SPDs with independently examined Supplementary Plans which will be used to create planning frameworks for new opportunities (e.g.; regeneration) or authority-wide requirements such as design codes.

- The introduction of a new Infrastructure Levy (IL), that will replace S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy. IL will be charged on sales value. Levy rates will be set locally and can vary within the boundaries of a planning authority. IL will be introduced gradually.
 - Requirements for planning authorities to produce Design Codes describing requirements for a planning consent to be granted, including the opportunity to produce more local design codes. Design Codes will be informed by the National Model Design Code.
 - Processes for assessing environmental impact assessment will be replaced by a single Environmental Outcome Report process. The level of protection will not be reduced.
 - Increase regeneration power including new CPO powers and the creation of a new form of Urban Development Corporation.
 - Enhanced enforcement powers associated with commencement and compliance with consents.
 - Increased fee levels to support better resourcing of the planning process.
- **Environment Act.** This will require developers to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) on development projects. Local Authorities will have an active role in approving and monitoring biodiversity plans. BNG requirements will be implemented from 2023 onwards.
 - **Net-zero carbon.** Significant progress will need to be taken to improve the energy efficiency and low carbon performance of over 80% of homes in Worcestershire. The Heat and Buildings Strategy was published in October 2021. Relevant aspects of the strategy include:
 - Government has set a target to reduce carbon emissions from buildings by 47 to 62% by 2035. All homes will need to be upgraded to EPC C by 2035.
 - All homeowners, including local authorities will have to replace all fossil-fuel heating appliances with clean-heat technology by 2050.
 - As part of the Clean Growth Strategy, social renters are required to prioritise fuel poor households, meeting EPC C by 2030.

In the 2022 Autumn Statement, the Government also set a target for a 15% reduction in national energy use by 2030.

- **Levelling-up.** Levelling up is a flagship policy of the Government. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill currently passing through Parliament includes a number of provisions to promote the levelling up agenda. These are in addition to the planning reforms noted above:
 - Levelling-up missions. Establish legal duty and powers to set and report on levelling-up missions designed to reduce spatial disparity.
 - Expanded devolution of powers in England to all areas that want devolved powers – e.g., opportunities for bespoke devolution deals, and the creation of a new combined county authority model.

Enhanced regeneration powers including updated compulsory purchase processes described under planning and measures to reinvigorate high streets.

4 Priorities

4.1 Overview – What Are the Priorities?

The Vision for Housing, set out in section 2 is:

The Vision Statement

Worcestershire will be known for excellent housing. Everyone will have choices about how and where they live. Local homes will be warm, healthy and will lead the way towards Net Zero. Worcestershire housing will add to a better quality of life.

The vision will be delivered through four priority areas. Section 4 sets out the actions associated with the priority areas in detail. We describe the four priorities and explain how actions are organised to be delivered over the twenty-year life of the Strategy.

The implications of the current wave of policy development and legislation are firstly that housing functions in Worcestershire will be required to implement notable change across most of their activities. This creates an opportunity to rethink some of the existing delivery models, taking advantage of modern technologies and remote and collaborative working. The new policy landscape also means that local policies will need to be reviewed and updated to take account of new priorities. The 2040 Strategy aims to start this process.

The priorities are the first level of structure of the Strategy. They relate to the greatest challenges facing public authorities in Worcestershire and the policy framework within which they operate. The priorities have played an important role in the development of the Strategy including detailed engagement focused on how housing is affected by activities in each priority area. The priorities are:



- **Economic growth and jobs** describe the relationship between housing and the wider economy of Worcestershire. This priority includes the supply of the right housing for people who live and work in Worcestershire and the creation of employment opportunities close to where people live. *By focusing on this priority, Worcestershire will become a more attractive location for employers and more prosperous, and it will make it easier for people to get to their place of work.*
- **Quality and standards** are about making sure that Worcestershire housing is as good as it can be and that people benefit from changes in how houses are planned, built, and upgraded. This priority will help Worcestershire take advantage of housing innovation whilst respecting the character and quality of the existing housing and communities. *Making this a priority emphasises the need to plan and prepare for changes that are coming to housing markets including forthcoming planning reforms, ensuring that the greatest benefit is secured from these developments as they occur.*
- **Health, wellbeing, and inclusion** focuses on links between healthy housing, places, and well-being for everyone. This priority highlights the importance of affordable healthy housing that supports people at all stages of their lives, whatever their circumstances. It is also about the creation of sustainable communities

that have all the facilities residents need and which are well connected. Making this a priority will focus attention on improving the quality of existing housing, the planning of new development, as well as thinking about how health and social services can be delivered alongside housing.

- **Net-zero carbon, and sustainability** is the essential focus on making sure that housing in Worcestershire is decarbonized in line with national targets whilst also making sure that the places and communities which we create are resilient, self-supporting, and safe. Making sustainability a priority highlights the long-term nature of investment in places and homes and the critical role that housing will play in addressing the climate emergency.

4.2 How Are the Priorities Organised?

Each of the priorities is described at four levels of detail:



- **The Vision.** This describes the high-level outcome in 2040 that the Strategy will deliver if all the actions are taken.
- **Strategic levers.** These are long-term, joined-up multi-party initiatives that will result in a change to the development, operation, or use of homes in Worcestershire.
- **Jobs to be done.** These are medium term actions necessary to make progress and address blockers to progress. The detailed jobs to be done will evolve during the life of the strategy, partly to reflect progress on the agenda and partly to account for new needs or opportunities.
- **Worcestershire's Plans (the outcome – how Worcestershire will be different).** This describes how the experience of housing in Worcestershire will be different when the strategy is implemented.

4.3 Strategy Priorities

Priority Area 1 – Economic Growth and Jobs

Vision Statement or Objective for 2040	
Worcestershire has a competitive housing offer based on thriving communities that attract employers and employees and which support economic growth:	<i>In Worcestershire average full-time earnings are 10% lower than the national average.</i>
Housing of all types is available to meet all needs including affordable housing and housing for later living. New housing is located conveniently for jobs and other amenities.	
Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire housing stock needs to be aligned to local demand as well as the wider market. • Ample affordable stock is needed because earnings in Worcestershire are below the national average. • An expanded Later Living provision is important to deal with the expected growth in the elderly population. • There are wider opportunities to attract a workforce by freeing-up and improving existing housing for use by young families. 	<i>Worcestershire's median population age is over 45 – 5 years older than the median for the West Midlands.</i> <i>The number of over 60's will grow by 85% by 2035.</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Steps taken by Local Authorities in Worcestershire support the viability and delivery of housing across a range of tenures.Worcestershire has made good progress delivering a high proportion of affordable housing, but this does not meet the needs of all residents.By partnering with developers, and actively participating in housing delivery through the release of public land and direct development, local authorities will have greater influence over the housing that is delivered.			<i>Worcestershire's housing affordability ratio in 2020 was 8.87, compared to 6.78 for the West Midlands.</i>
Strategic Levers			
Lever 1 Active use of land in public ownership that is available for development to support mixed community development.	Lever 2 Consistent and joined-up approach to the setting of Infrastructure Levy ²¹ contributions across the county to secure the necessary supply of affordable housing.	Lever 3 Appropriate use of regeneration tools including compulsory purchase and permitted development rights, to support residential development as part of town centre revitalization.	
Jobs to be done			
Job 1 Examine opportunities for coordination and collaboration of planning resources across the county that is compatible with local accountability. Share resources where this will support greater capability or accelerate response to planning reforms.	Job 2 Use large-scale development opportunities including urban extensions as the engine for high quality, mixed-tenure sustainable communities. Actively coordinate or participate in development if needed to secure desired housing outcomes.	Job 3 Equip local authorities in Worcestershire to participate in the development of public land for housing. Consider the establishment of a county-wide development capability in line with proposals for Urban Development Corporations	
Who is involved? <ul style="list-style-type: none">District Council housing, development, and planningCounty Council transport planningOne Public Estate TeamWorcestershire LEPRegistered Providers and other housing providersPartnership housing developersDLUHCGeneral public – through general and project specific consultation			
The outcome – how Worcestershire will be different: <ul style="list-style-type: none">A thriving housing market in the public and private sector, with more choice for everyone.More diverse communities that feature a range of house types and tenures.The joint planning of housing and employment land so that homes are located near jobs.Land values and development models that support the development and maintenance of sustainable communities.			

²¹ The Infrastructure Levy (IL) is being introduced as part of a package of planning reforms included within the scope of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill. The IL is planned to be a non-negotiable fixed % fee charged on the development value of a project. Planning authorities will be able to set the level of the levy, which can vary across the area served by the authority. IL will ultimately replace Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy

Making it happen (essential actions):

Strategic Lever 1: Active use of land in public ownership		
Opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public land owned by Local Authorities, Public Bodies and Central Government can be used to increase the delivery of low-cost affordable and social housing. The equity value in public land will enable Local Authorities in Worcestershire to participate as partners in mixed community development. 	Solution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public land can be directly developed by a Local Authority. Partnership arrangements can be used to participate in mixed-tenure development schemes. Land can be developed for the private market to create the capital needed for additional affordable housing development. 	Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital released from public land can be invested directly into affordable housing. Local Authorities have the means to participate in development. Local authorities are in the position to incorporate affordable housing in the scope of mixed-tenure partnership development.
Jobs to be done1: Maximise coordination / collaboration in use of planning resources		
Opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the upcoming planning reforms and the need to plan for the net zero carbon transition, there are more specialist planning jobs to be undertaken. Coordinating common approaches and resources across Worcestershire is the best way to respond to these challenges. This approach builds on the successful collaboration that has already taken place in South Worcestershire. 	Solution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning reform. Where possible Districts should develop a coordinated response to proposed planning reform including plan development processes, digital systems, and design code templates. Specialist resources (e.g., energy network planners) should operate on a cross-boundary basis. Strategic responses to shared, long-term challenges (net zero carbon, ageing population) should be developed on a county-wide basis. 	Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve benefits of scale in the delivery of planning services. Resource-efficient response to major changes in planning such as the development of design code templates. Increase ability of Worcestershire to recruit specialist resources. Joined-up approach to long-term strategic objectives.

Other Strategic Levers:

Consistent and joined-up approach to negotiation. Sharing data and adopting a common approach to negotiation with developers with respect to development standards, contributions and sustainability requirements will reduce opportunities for negotiation arbitrage between districts.

Appropriate use of regeneration powers. Permitted Development Rights (PDR) and Compulsory Purchase (CP) are expected to play a valuable role in facilitating development as a part of town centre revitalization. Districts should be able to actively use the provisions of PDR and CP to achieve a balance of investment, appropriate regeneration, and development quality.

Other jobs to do:

Use large-scale development opportunities to set development benchmarks. The strategy highlights the importance of balanced, mixed tenure communities with appropriate amenity provision. Districts should view large scale housing developments including urban extensions as one-off opportunities to deliver these communities. This may require active development participation to deliver the required tenure mix. Proposed reforms to planning including Supplementary Plans and Urban Development Corporations, will provide Districts with the tools to actively engage with developers.

Establish a development capability. To make best use of publicly owned land assets and to be able to influence development outcomes, local authorities could benefit from creating their own development capability. This might involve direct development or partnership working with housebuilders such as Housing Associations or SME developers. Such a capability could facilitate the optimization of the use of local authority assets by enabling the consideration of a wider range of options including the use of Infrastructure Levy funds as finance for direct development. There may be opportunities to build some shared capability at a county-wide level. Specialist District Council resources and initiatives focused on development, could be shared, particularly if this reduces the overall headcount for a development function. A development function managed on a county-wide basis could still support dedicated, District-level development.

Priority Area 2 – Quality and standards

<p>Vision Statement or Objective for 2040</p> <p>Worcestershire needs to plan and prepare for changes to the way in which housing is built and managed so that the greatest benefit is secured and that the character and quality of existing communities is respected:</p> <p>Local Authorities make it a priority to prepare for changes in how homes are planned, built, and upgraded.</p> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing will be subject to a lot of change during the strategy period, including changes to planning rules, housing management and the wider adoption of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) for both new build and retrofit. Local Authorities in Worcestershire have an opportunity to influence this change but will need to act quickly and consistently to have an impact. Changes to processes and standards are likely to be complex and challenging to implement. Stakeholders must plan to ensure that sufficient resources are available to implement the planned changes effectively, and that opportunities to share expertise and common approaches are taken where appropriate. Local Authorities should be ambitious with respect to the quality and safety standards that they set, particularly in connection with the quality and performance of new-build housing, the safety of existing high-rise housing and retrofit to ensure issues with low energy performance and damp and mould are addressed. 		
<p>Strategic Levers</p>		
<p>Lever 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the wider adoption of housing delivered using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) by collaborating across boundaries to consolidate public sector and Registered Provider demand to support MMC investment in the region. 	<p>Lever 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the planning reforms proposed in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill to encourage great quality development. Develop local standards, design guides and codes as needed to secure high-quality development. Secure that sufficient resource is in place for any changes to the Local Plan process. 	<p>Lever 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare to implement the digital technologies envisaged for planning as part of the reforms to the planning system.
<p>Jobs to be done</p>		
<p>Job 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with local businesses, training providers and other partners to plan for development of supply chain capacity in order to meet changing needs and quality requirements. The housing strategy should consider wider aspects of 	<p>Job 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a common approach to Design Codes across the county. Districts and distinct areas within districts have the opportunity to have their own codes based on a county-wide framework. 	<p>Job 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Fire Safety requirements for existing residential buildings over 11m high. Implement changes introduced by the Charter for Social Housing Residents.

By 2035, the number of people living alone in Worcestershire is expected to rise by 36%.

87% of EPCs for dwellings lodged on the Register between Q4 2008 and Q1 2021 are C or below.

<p>delivery capacity in order to meet expected supply requirements. Key areas including skills for new build and retrofit construction trades, local developer, constructor and housebuilder capacity and access to specialist developers in areas including co-living and extra-care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-developed design code will enable Districts to deliver much needed housing whilst ensuring that the character of Worcestershire is embedded within local housing standards. . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These measures will contribute to a better quality of life for affected residents in the county
<p>Who is involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council – planning, public health, and transport • District Council – housing, management, housing development and planning • Registered Providers and other housing providers • National, regional and SME housing developers • Housing third parties including funders, insurers etc. 		
<p>Worcestershire’s plan – how it will be different:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The safety and quality of housing in the private and public sector will be a top priority evidenced by a proactive response to legislative changes to the management of social housing. The build quality of homes in Worcestershire will be enhanced by the implementation of ambitious design guides and development standards appropriate to place. • The encouragement of a diverse supply chain including local SME developers and investment in MMC capacity related to pooled demand from schemes in Worcestershire. <p>The successful implementation of digital planning systems and other changes will increase popular engagement with planning and other housing related issues. There will be sufficient capable local supply chain capacity to meet all needs of the strategy related to new build and retrofit housing markets.</p>		

Making it happen (essential actions):

Strategic Lever: Support the wider adoption of housing delivered using MMC		
<p>Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional methods of house building are less well suited to the production of high-performance, net-zero carbon homes. • The increase in the capacity of the MMC housing industry will be supported by the consolidation of demand from across Worcestershire. A large visible pipeline of opportunity can be used to attract investment to factories in the county. 	<p>Solution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consolidation of demand for MMC housing will be led by the public sector and by Registered Providers when delivering their own programmes. • A ‘clearing house’ function is required to bring together the demand from multiple programmes, along the lines of those developed for Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Sheffield City Region. • The clearing house will support the procurement of MMC homes from a range of 	<p>Outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to MMC capacity in Worcestershire will be enhanced by the development of a clearing house function that consolidates demand from multiple clients. • The clearing house will simplify procurement and encourage investment. It might potentially encourage the development of MMC factories in Worcestershire. • The most important outcome will be the quality of homes produced which will contribute to reduced carbon emissions.

	suppliers on behalf of local clients.	
Jobs to be done: Plan for the development of supply chain capacity		
Opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment associated with the delivery of the housing strategy will create significant opportunities for business growth and local employment over the next 20 years. New skills in developing areas including low-carbon heat will be needed, whilst traditional skills associated with housebuilding will also be in high demand. Expanded housebuilding, combined with support for SME and self-build housing will encourage the creation of additional housing development capacity. As part of the Housing Strategy, Districts and the County Council should collaborate with the county business and skills ecosystem so that requirements are known and planned for. 	Solution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills requirements specific to the housing strategy should be included in county skills planning including the Worcester Local Skills Plan and other skills initiatives. The Worcester LEP and other stakeholders dealing with skills and industry capability should have a defined role in the delivery of the housing strategy. Planning powers should be used where appropriate to support an SME supply chain and skills development across the county in line with wider economic planning. Skills development should be aligned to the creation of capable and competent low-carbon supply chain (See net zero carbon) 	Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be sufficient business and workforce capacity to meet the opportunities created by the Worcestershire Housing Strategy. Planners, developers, and customers will have confidence that planned developments are deliverable. Local people will have the opportunity to participate in the housing sector including new areas associated with low-carbon construction. The housing sector will be properly integrated into skills and capability markets in Worcestershire and the wider West Midlands region.

Other Strategic Levers:

Use opportunities created by planning reforms to encourage great quality development. The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill contains provisions that should enable Districts to raise the bar in terms of housing quality and infrastructure provision in line with local needs. Measures include 'Build Better, Build Beautiful' provisions, new Supplementary Plans and the funding transparency secured from a locally set Infrastructure Levy. A key objective of the housing strategy will be to encourage Districts to plan, organise and resource to secure the greatest leverage from the reforms to deliver better housing outcomes.

Prepare to implement the digital technologies envisaged for planning. Planning reforms will also accelerate the adoption of digital technologies to increase the level of public engagement with the planning process and to support the consent process. Districts should develop the capabilities to implement the required digital change programme.

Other jobs to do:

Develop Design Codes. Design codes are a well-established means of raising the standard of housing design. All Planning Authorities will be required to develop a design code. Some codes, for example, the Essex Design Guide have played an important role in maintaining the quality and character of housing in a locality. Planning Authorities in Worcestershire presently rely on supplementary planning guidance (SPG) that will also be repurposed as part of proposed changes. Districts should develop and implement a joined-up plan for design codes appropriate for different parts of the county in line with the National Model Design Code. The

design code process is a departure from current practice and will benefit from a common, lessons-learned approach.

Advance preparation for the introduction of new Fire Safety requirements and housing management reforms. Management of public housing will be subject to significant change during the early part of the housing strategy resulting in much more controlled approach to fire safety management and improved rights of representation for tenants. The new safety regime for occupied higher-risk buildings will apply to occupied buildings that are either over 18m or over 7 storeys high²². Housing authorities and public sector providers should aim to prioritise the implementation of these measures as a means of improving housing services. This can be done by securing representative buy-in and by commencing elements of the change programme ahead of the finalisation of primary and secondary legislation. County and District Councils will not have a role in the registration, assessment, or assurance of safety regimes for higher-risk buildings.

²² Details of the new safety regime for occupied higher-risk buildings were published as part of a consultation in July 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-new-safety-regime-for-occupied-higher-risk-buildings/consultation-on-the-new-safety-regime-for-occupied-higher-risk-buildings>

Priority Area 3 – Health and Well-Being

Vision Statement or Objective for 2040		
<p>Housing has a central role in ensuring good Health and Wellbeing for everyone in Worcestershire:</p> <p>Local Authorities and their partners make it a priority to work to ensure that Worcestershire is a great place to live for everyone.</p> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing plays a crucial role in contributing to quality of life in Worcestershire. Secure and warm housing is essential for good health. Avoiding fuel poverty and homelessness is part of this. Worcestershire has pockets of significant need associated with affordability, security of tenure and access to services. The Strategy prioritises reducing health inequalities, improving the life chances of more disadvantaged people alongside the wider population. Local Authorities and health partners in Worcestershire collaborate to deliver great services to citizens, centred around the home. Housing is recognised as having a key role to place in the provision of adult social care. Worcestershire's Integrated Care System provides a well-developed and collaborative approach to health and social care. The housing strategy will integrate with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board. The valuable touchpoints that housing services provide to people with complex care needs will be used to support care pathways. 		
<p><i>By 2035, the number of people living alone in Worcestershire is expected to rise by 36%.</i></p>		
<p><i>The number of people diagnosed with dementia is forecast to increase by 56% between 2016 and 2035.</i></p>		
<p><i>14.4% of households are affected by fuel poverty in Worcestershire compared to the national average of 13.4%</i></p>		
Strategic Levers		
Lever 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the delivery of a diverse range of affordable and social housing to suit the needs of citizens at all stages of life. This will equip Worcestershire to address care issues including acute housing needs, homelessness, and wider provision for later living more effectively. 	Lever 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a role for housing in the delivery of health and wellbeing services. This could potentially include service hubs working out of community facilities developed as part of housing schemes. Alternatively, contact points associated with housing services could be used. Integrate with other services that support wellbeing including leisure services. 	Lever 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt an area-based operating model that integrates the community with public and private housing providers and other service providers including leisure facilities.
Jobs to be done		
Job 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take steps to improve the life chances of people living in poor quality housing. This will include the coordination of Net Zero Carbon retrofit programmes to reduce fuel poverty, tackle damp and mould and deliver improvements to amenities and 	Job 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop later independent living housing products in line with an expected increase in the elderly share of the population, meeting the needs of both locals and inward migrants. The products should include co-living and 	Job 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote mixed communities, with care supported by digital technologies. This will be achieved by working with a diverse range of housing providers, particularly in connection with larger scale development.

public spaces to encourage active lifestyle choices.	extra-care developments to meet market expectation.	
Who is involved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Council – social care and public health District Council – housing, development, and planning Integrated Care System Partners Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust Worcestershire Primary Care Network Registered Providers and other housing providers 		
The outcome – how Worcestershire will be different: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worcestershire has a diverse mix of healthy housing that directly contributes to improved health outcomes. Worcestershire has sufficient housing to need all housing needs. Homelessness and acute housing need are reduced as a result. Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board works closely with providers of housing and housing services to ensure that housing contributes improved health and wellbeing. Social and health services delivery takes place via the home and community, focused on the needs of people. Housing developments are planned to include active travel, community, and social facilities from the outset. 		

Making it happen (essential actions):

Strategic Lever: Increase the delivery of a diverse range of affordable and social housing		
Opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good quality housing plays an important role in quality of life. Affordability is important in Worcestershire due to below average wage levels. Homelessness and acute housing need will only be addressed if additional housing is developed to meet the need. Housing aimed to the needs of different groups including single adults and older residents will help to secure those specific needs can be readily met. 	Solution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A diverse range of housing will be delivered by a partnership approach. It will include the involvement of specialist service providers, housing developers, the public sector and the third sector. New housing will meet the needs of currently underserved groups including families and single young adults at risk of homelessness. The planning system will play a key role in the matching of demand and supply – backed by an evidence-base of need. 	Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More good quality, healthy, affordable housing will improve health outcomes – particularly for people whose choice of housing is limited due to personal circumstances. Levels of measurable deprivation including homelessness will fall. Housing, health, and social care services will be better integrated with some services being accessible through the use of digital technology enabling access to digital consultation and online services in community settings.
Jobs to be done - Take steps to improve the life chances of people living in poor quality housing		
Opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor quality housing is known to contribute directly to health inequality. Fixing problems with 	Solution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net zero retrofit should be prioritised to improve the energy performance of the local 	Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worcestershire's net zero retrofit programme delivers

<p>existing housing through retrofit programmes will result in better health outcomes. Improving accessibility in housing will also increase independence and will improve quality of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness is closely associated with poor physical and mental health. • Worcestershire has an ageing population. Many older residents live in their own homes. Many of these homes also need to be updated to make them warm, dry, secure, and accessible. 	<p>housing stock and tackle issues with damp and mould.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public programmes should prioritise poor quality housing first. • Disposal of 'hard to improve' housing which will slow down improvement works by public bodies should not be permitted. • Housing providers should develop more dedicated accommodation for the homeless, including making use of PDR powers to develop new accommodation in suitable locations. • Independent living housing should be developed to meet the needs of local residents, enabling existing properties to be improved and reused. 	<p>healthy homes to the most-needy residents before 2030.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public retrofit programmes prioritise housing that is in the poorest condition. • Housing provision for the homeless meets the needs of all groups including single people and families. • Elderly homeowners can access help and support to improve their homes or to move to more suitable accommodation.
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Other Strategic Levers:

Develop a role for housing in the delivery of health and wellbeing services. Opportunities include the integration of housing services contact points with other aspects of support for people with additional care and service needs. Use of digital technologies for housing management and for in-home care will also provide new long-term opportunities to integrate pathways associated with housing, social care, and healthcare.

Adopt an area-based operating model that integrates the community with public and private housing providers. Community-based approaches such as the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach should be considered in the County as a means of organizing services in both existing and new communities. The principle should be that services are developed in consultation with local communities and build on the foundations of existing initiatives rather than replacing with new, centralized models. Initial work using the ABCD model has commenced in Worcestershire. These pilot projects should inform the development of a broadly-based strategy for community engagement through to 2040.

Other jobs to do:

Develop Later Living products including co-living, independent living, and extra-care. Support the development of dedicated/ tailored later living accommodation to enable Worcestershire residents to have a wider range of options including downsizing. Enable development at sufficient scale across the county so that it can be operated economically – attracting more investment. Integrate later living developments as hubs into county-wide social and healthcare provision.

Promote mixed communities, with care supported by digital technologies. The strategy recommends that pathways associated with housing should be used to support the delivery of health and social care services. Two opportunities facilitated by the planning system are the provision of communal hub facilities in new development including within co-living and extra-care settings, and the embedding of devices and connectivity to facilitate digitally enabled support and care. Districts should set and meet challenging targets for the delivery of accessibility modifications to increase the independence of elderly residents.

Priority Area 4 – Net Zero Carbon and Climate Change

Vision Statement or Objective for 2040

Climate change is one of the most important challenges that the housing strategy will address. A large share of the housing stock in Worcestershire will need retrofit by 2040 to meet net-zero targets in line with the Heat and Buildings Strategy²³ (HBS):

Specific roles have been identified in the strategy for Local Authorities, including planning for decarbonisation, decarbonising local authority stock, providing information, and raising awareness of support available for the decarbonisation. Above all, Local Authorities must continue to prioritise the tackling of climate change over the extended period to 2050.

In Worcestershire fuel poverty affects around 14.4% of households

Why?

- Government data suggests that 87% of homes in Worcestershire will require substantial retrofit investment to meet net-zero targets. Retrofit investments will create warmer, healthier homes with lower fuel bills helping to improve well-being (by tackling damp and mould issues) and eliminate fuel poverty.
- Local planning authorities in Worcestershire have opportunities and powers under the Environment Act to intervene to promote biodiversity recovery and improvements to air and water quality.
- Energy transition is a big economic opportunity and Worcestershire already benefits from employment created by Worcester Bosch. There is an opportunity to further develop a low-carbon heat eco-system based on consulting, and installation services focused on the local market.

Strategic Levers

Lever 1

- Support the development of local low-carbon supply chains to deliver high-quality, best value retrofit to the public and social and affordable housing sector. This initiative will build on the long-term finance offered by the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund launched in 2021.
- District councils should promote the adoption of PAS2035 on programmes beyond the scope of LAD and ECO²⁴
- Adapt procurement models used for the Decent Homes programme such as Fusion 21 to create local jobs, maximise programme buying power and manage retrofit portfolios. Work with registered providers and other large-scale housing

Lever 2

- Promote the development of sustainable communities based in part on the 20-minute town model. 20-minute towns combine a diverse range of homes in different tenures, employment, social and welfare services, and green space within an area that can easily be accessed using public and active travel options. Sustainable communities should also be designed to be healthy and resilient, with ample green space to support exercise and biodiversity as well as long-term responses to climate change threats. The benefits of promoting a sustainable community's model are that it is a holistic response to all of the challenges

Lever 3

- Develop a coordinated plan for benefits realisation associated with the implementation of the Environment Act in connection with housing development.
- Develop a framework for the agreement of biodiversity net gain investments to enhance public realm and public amenity.
- Consider biodiversity net-gain as an integral part of wider programmes associated with protected and priority species and habitats.

²³ BEIS. Heat and Building Strategy. October 2021

²⁴ Energy Company Obligation Scheme. Under ECO energy providers fund housing improvement programmes for low-income households. ECO4 will commence in April 2022.

<p>owners to create a large-scale retrofit programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop capacity for energy planning and mapping for decarbonisation in anticipation of the introduction of heat network zoning in 2025. 	<p>highlighted in the Housing Strategy.</p>	
<p>Jobs to be done</p>		
<p>Job 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a public engagement strategy aligned to the extended timescales of the HBS. Plan to engage with homeowners through to 2050 to raise awareness of retrofit opportunities. • Design the programme and specification to focus on privately rented and owner-occupied housing aligned to incentives outlined in the HBS. • Raise awareness of existing and planned incentives for decarbonisation so that NZC opportunities are considered when homes are upgraded. Keep the engagement programme under regular review to assess impact and to align to new incentives as they are developed. 	<p>Job 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on decarbonization as quickly as possible targeting the worst performing housing. Prioritise securing funding through ECO, Local Authority Delivery Scheme and Social Housing Decarbonisation. • Develop county-wide strategies and targets in line with the long-term evolution of national decarbonization strategies. Anticipate direction of travel and adjust in response to detail such as the 2026 decision on hydrogen gas heating. This applies to new build and retrofit. 	<p>Job 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an approach to the net-zero carbon retrofit of homes in Worcestershire focused initially on homes in the public sector but with a long-term target to encourage the upgrade of private homes. <p>This will initially build on existing schemes including ECO/ECO+ and over time will expand to cover the wider private sector including the rental sector.</p> <p>This will anticipate the effect of incentives including funding and triggers for improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Worcestershire plan will go beyond the strategy by promoting a common assessment process through an early emphasis on public engagement.
<p>Who is involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council – planning, public health, sustainability, and transport • District Council – housing, management, housing development and planning • DLUHC • Midlands Energy Hub • Registered Providers and other housing providers • Energy generators contributing to ECO. • National, regional and SME housing developers. • Regional construction supply chain • Housing third parties including funders, insurers etc. • Training providers including the Higher Education sector. 		
<p>Worcestershire’s plan – how it will be different:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire will make rapid progress in the development of a decarbonisation plan and will be ahead of programme with respect to decarbonisation of existing public and private sector housing through retrofit by 2040. 		

- New communities developed in Worcestershire will be master planned, designed and built to be sustainable from the outset.
- Worcestershire will have a coordinated approach to the implementation of the Environment Act, which will support enhancements to biodiversity and resilience across the County.

Making it happen (essential actions):

Strategic lever: Develop local low-carbon supply chains to be capacity to deliver the retrofit programme		
Opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net zero carbon retrofit will require the development of a completely new supply chain. • Adoption of the PAS 2035 standard will promote the development of a competent supply chain for the roll-out of retrofit at scale. • The development of the supply chain will require a programme of work, competent assured contractors, trained operatives, and a materials supply network. • Local authorities will have access to Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding and wider programmes in connection with the retrofit of the non-residential public estate to accelerate the development of this local capacity. 	Solution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initiative will rely on the long-term development of funding solutions for net zero carbon retrofit in the public sector building on the platform of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. • Local Authorities have developed locally based supply chains for previous programmes such as Decent Homes. A good exemplar is the Fusion 21 programme developed for the 2008 Decent Homes programme. • Fusion 21 featured a visible pipeline of work, a framework of local contractors, a training programme, a bulk material purchasing programme and a pre-agreed pricing framework. 	Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a local supply chain for retrofit accredited to PAS 2035 is an essential step to ensuring that Worcestershire people fully benefit from net zero carbon – accelerating home improvement and creating local jobs and a local SME retrofit network. • The outcome of the strategy will be made more certain using proven supply chain models. • Expanded capacity for retrofit in Worcestershire will enable the rate of progress to be maintained and may also achieve savings related to scale economies. • The supply chain should be accessible by the public and private sector.

Jobs to be done: Develop a public engagement strategy to encourage private sector decarbonisation		
Opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most homes in Worcestershire are privately owned. The HBS anticipates that most homeowners will undertake their own retrofits in line with heating system upgrades. • Most homes in Worcestershire will require improvement works, so it makes sense to make early progress on 'no-regret' solutions that improve home comfort. • Eventually home-owners will need to install a low-carbon heat source like a heat pump. However, the right solution might not yet be available. 	Solution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HBS is a long-term strategy designed to work with the 'grain of consumer behaviour'. An engagement strategy needs to be similarly long-term. • Actively participate in 'inward engagement' through public consultation by Government, so the needs of Worcestershire are considered in policy development. • Encourage public adoption of existing and future advice sources as highlighted in the HBS including the Simple Energy Advice platform. 	Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised awareness of the importance of homes in tackling climate change. Citizens accept the need for substantial change to buildings and behaviours needed to retrofit / decarbonise housing. • Accelerated adoption of energy and carbon saving measures in line with the long-term trajectory needed to meet net zero targets. • People in Worcestershire are aware of the changes that are coming and have the time to prepare.

<p>Making the right changes at the right time is critical.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of low carbon opportunities for existing homeowners will increase take-up of solutions over the 30-year period of the HBS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote awareness of the availability of support including advice and grants • Promote the awareness of retrofit incentives including upgrades to EPCs and other planned changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing retrofitted to meet NZC principles will be free of damp and mould. • Active participation by Worcestershire in policy formulation relevant to housing decarbonisation.
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Other Strategic Levers:

Promote the development of sustainable communities. Sustainable communities are a product of the people who live in a place and the homes and other facilities that support them. Sustainable communities should be mixed and diverse, readily accessible and should have facilities that meet the needs of all members of the community. These communities should also be designed to be sustainable in the face of climate change and other environmental challenges. Worcestershire will see large-scale housing development over the 20 years of the strategy. One of the most effective ways of meeting the objectives of all four priority areas will be to ensure that the largest-scale developments make a full contribution to climate change mitigation. This will be enabled by ambitious early master planning supported by local authorities, potentially facilitated by Supplementary Plans and development bodies including Urban Development Corporations.

Strategic lever 2.

Develop a coordinated plan for benefits realisation following the implementation of the requirements of the Environment Act in connection with housing development, including biodiversity net gain. Integrate the plan with housing planning and development so as to support the creation of sustainable, resilient communities. Consider joint working across Worcestershire where this will deliver better outcomes for the local environment.

Other jobs to do:

Accelerate progress on decarbonisation as quickly as possible. The HBS is designed to allow for the adoption of decarbonising technologies with the 'grain' of consumer behaviour. The strategy also promotes 'no-regrets' associated with new-build and off-grid homes where measures taken now will deliver benefit. Public sector retrofit should proceed as quickly as possible with initial support from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

Targets to increase adoption of low-carbon technologies are challenging, and work to create momentum in Worcestershire allied to existing low-carbon industries will increase the pace of uptake.

Develop an approach to the net-zero carbon retrofit. Most low carbon retrofit will take place in privately owned homes. Standardised approaches to retrofit based on PAS 2035 will help to improve standards, quality, and confidence for the consumer. This work will be delivered by the private sector, but Worcestershire will play a key role in facilitating a common approach. This is likely to involve working with Central, Regional and Local Government Partners to refine common standards suitable for use in the private housing sector.

5 2023-2025 Action Plan

It will be the responsibility of each district council to consider the ambitions set out in this strategy and develop its own action plan.

This section of the report sets out proposals for consideration in the development of these district-level action plans. As the strategy sets out a 20-year ambition, the proposals are at three levels of detail:

- A 100-day plan to create momentum and to promote awareness of the strategy across affected parties.
- A 5-year action plan setting out key priorities across the four priority areas.
- A twenty-year road map, showing how the components of the strategy will come together to support the delivery of the vision.

5.1 The 100-day plan

The purpose of the Housing Strategy is to deliver a step-change in housing provision in Worcestershire.

Worcestershire will be known for excellent housing. Everyone will have the choice of how and where they live. Local homes will be warm, healthy and will lead the way towards Net Zero. Worcestershire housing will add to a better quality of life.

This is summed up in the Vision for Housing:

As set out in this strategy, this vision will be delivered through coordinated action over 20-years across four broad areas of policy:



**Economic
growth and Jobs**



**Quality and
Standards**



**Health and
Wellbeing**



**Net-zero carbon
and Climate Change**

In order to create momentum in 2023, we propose a simple 100-day plan focused on the creation of momentum and awareness. The plan should act as a call for action around the following major opportunities:

- Creating a culture of positive action in housing and planning authorities to secure that Worcestershire is a dynamic, growing, and great place for everyone to live.
- Organising and actively collaborating in housing and planning authorities across Worcestershire. Taking assertive steps to meet the policies and aspirations that are set out in Development Plans.
- Using large scale development to set the standard for sustainable development including place-based amenities and services.
- Develop and manage affordable and social housing as an integral part of new and existing communities to increase inclusion in Worcestershire.
- Engaging with, organising, and supporting public and private homeowners to meet net zero targets.

Actions during the first 100 days:

We recommend the following key actions:

1. Obtain approvals and political support.
2. Develop individual district-level action plans with consideration being given to the proposals in this strategy.
3. Agree areas of collaboration.
4. Develop governance.

This Strategy serves several purposes:

- It is a vision for housing in the county to 2040.
- It provides a statement of intent focused on specific priorities.
- It provides the foundation of a set of more detailed action plans to cause the necessary changes and actions to happen and be delivered.
- It provides an opportunity to evolve Worcestershire's housing market offer to meet the needs of its citizens and business over the longer term.
improving quality of life.

5.2 Action Plan 2023-2025

The proposed action plan summarises the series of key next steps to be implemented during the period 2023 to 2025 in order for the strategy to achieve its purpose. These are organised by the four priority areas, together with a series of important enabling actions. The proposed actions need to be developed by Partners, collectively and where necessary at individual organisational level to respond to the items proposed below.

	Proposed Actions	Outcome	Benefits
Enabling actions			
Engagement strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and implement bespoke targeted stakeholder engagement programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligned stakeholders support for the strategy and implementation of its recommendations / next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick and frictionless implementation of strategy delivering early benefits.
Strategy update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree strategy monitoring and evaluation process. Agree strategy review periods - we recommend a review every 12 months and a refresh every 3 years. Develop review and refresh process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constant focus on delivery and evolution of strategy. Maintenance of evidence base of impact and benefits delivered – enabling ongoing stakeholder support. Strategy remains ambitious and future looking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy remains up to date and relevant to Worcestershire, its citizens, and stakeholders. Worcestershire remains the most attractive place to live, work, learn and enjoy leisure time in the UK.
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the effectiveness of existing governance arrangements as part of the strategy roll-out. Consider establishment of housing board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined governance model mobilised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and recognition of linkages between economic / housing / health activity leading to more impactful decision making and greater benefits being delivered. Development of culture of positive action and collaboration – task and finish approach.
Government support & involvement of DLUHC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop key areas from the strategy where Government intervention, support or policy change is required to deliver the best possible outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy outcomes are delivered efficiently and effectively through recognition that support is required and changes in policy are made that positively impact delivery through the life of the strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The type and quality of homes required are delivered in Worcestershire.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate and act on strategic case for Homes England support around key interventions and initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes England resources are deployed to support the Worcestershire agenda. 	
Evidence Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Plan for collecting, measuring, and reviewing data/ to form an evidence base for decision making and policy changes/support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence base to demonstrate to developers that a step change in activity in Worcestershire is required – for example NZC and independent living homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The type and quality of homes required are delivered in Worcestershire.
Economic Growth and Jobs			
Opportunity Pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop 5+ year public sector pipeline of development sites. Review existing known sites for housing and identify new possibilities e.g., WOPEP estate rationalisation, land promotion, change of use. Classification, appraisal, prioritisation of sites; identifying capacity, viability, timescales, and wider benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial programme of sites for development. Increased rate of delivery of social and affordable housing. Visible pipeline for the development of Offsite Manufacture Barriers and enablers to development identified and plans to mitigate prepared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pipeline informs opportunity for alternative housing delivery models. Drives efficiency opportunities through better use of assets and associated cost savings. Underpins confidence in ability to directly influence housing market.
Development of housing delivery capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Local Plans to assess the most appropriate way of bringing the sites forward for development Consider alternatives to land sale including establishment of delivery vehicle(s). Establish a clearing house function to consolidate demand for MMC. Assess alternative delivery vehicles considering a range of factors. Explore potential partners such as Homes England, Registered Providers etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of Delivery Vehicle capacity within district councils or option to sell assets to traditional market - aligned to stakeholder ambitions. Delivery of a diverse range of housing to meet the needs of all citizens. Direct delivery sets standards and expectations for large-scale development including sustainable communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to accelerate delivery of affordable housing (or other tenure) aligned to county's social, economic, and environmental needs. Setting benchmarks on design quality. Opportunity to explore new innovations and drive forward agreed initiatives e.g., net zero carbon, modern methods of construction, healthy homes etc. Best value capital and revenue generation. <p>*See Quality and Standards action</p>

Effective deployment of housing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on (existing) collaborative cross-county working practices between district councils to prepare for additional workload and requirements for new capability that will come from planning reform. • Address / assess in terms of 'jobs to be done' and how best to deliver; recognising the significant opportunities transformation could realise. • Adopt a consistent approach to dealing with development parties to secure the necessary supply of social housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive action and collaboration between the district councils that is able to respond to the Strategy and adapt to the changes and additional workload that will likely result from planning reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency of delivery / lower cost to deliver / greater capacity to deliver / higher quality of delivery. • Joined up consistent approach to market leading to better housing being delivered across the county. • Best practice developed and applied with a 'local lens'.
Quality and standards			
Support the adoption of MMC housing by collaboration across boundaries to consolidate MMC demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector and Registered Provider housing developers to support adoption of MMC solutions at scale. • Clearing house to be established across the county to consolidate demand from multiple programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to MMC capacity in the county is enhanced. • Procurement of MMC housing is simplified for public bodies in the county. • Quality of housing delivered in the county will be enhanced and productivity will increase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased housing delivery capacity in Worcestershire based on a more diverse housebuilder supply chain. • Delivery of better-quality housing
Plan for the implementation of planning reform to encourage great quality development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare to use planning reform to promote great quality development. • Develop local standards, design guides and codes as needed to secure high-quality development. • Building planning capability to manage large scale consents. • Plan for a faster planning process and secure opportunities for participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective implementation of major changes to the planning system. • Better quality development with more amenity for the community. • Improved engagement with stakeholders as part of future housing planning activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth implementation of reform to planning. • A housing offer that underpins / supports economic growth. • Increased volume of house building to meet targeted need. • Better use of planning resources across the county.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare to implement digital technologies as part of planning reform. 		
Develop local supply chain capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for opportunities associated with growth in new build and retrofit markets. • Collaborate with local businesses, training providers and other partners to plan for development of supply chain capacity. • Consider business capacity as well as skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient capacity is planned to meet the requirements of the housing strategy. • Local people have the opportunity to participate in the housing sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing requirements are met. • The housing market supports good quality jobs and local enterprise. • Worcestershire economy benefits from further diversification
Design Codes and Quality Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a common approach to development of localised Design Codes across the county. • Set minimum standards and expectations for large scale development / settlements. • Take a lead on permitted development rights in town centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving the delivery of housing aligned to Worcestershire's economic and community / citizen needs. • Delivery of citizen centric, mixed sustainable communities with high quality placemaking principles as standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housebuilders in Worcestershire deliver beautiful homes that meet the needs of all occupiers. • Worcestershire is the best place to live in England. • Zero carbon communities are developed with increased resilience to climate change and lower cost of retrospective measures.
Advance preparation for the introduction of new Fire Safety requirements for existing residential buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to implement forthcoming building safety legislation in connection with Local Authority and Registered Provider managed housing over 11m in height (where relevant). • Integrate the plan with wider reforms in connection with the management of social housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire will have a county-wide plan to implement building safety management programmes as soon as practicable. • Reforms will be implemented as a single programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living in affected housing will benefit from improved safety management practice.

Health, wellbeing, and inclusion.			
Increase the delivery of a diverse range of affordable and social housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an accurate model to forecast demand for lower-cost housing. • Design of affordable housing requirements in the planning system to meet diverse housing needs. • Wide range of tenures in large-scale developments including urban extensions. • Local authority participation in development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data-led approach to affordable and social housing provision. • Supply of housing aligned to the needs of the local working population. • Greater diversity of housing supply, particularly in larger development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire meets the housing needs of all citizens. • More choice of social and affordable housing increases social mobility. • Homes and jobs are located more closely together.
Tackling homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the findings and recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to align ambition and direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joined-up approach to resolving the challenges of homelessness and rough sleeping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy will seek to deliver a long-term housing solution to the homeless of Worcestershire.
Improve the life chances of people living in poor quality accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise net zero retrofit to deal with poorest quality housing first. • Develop dedicated housing to meet the needs of the homeless. • Prohibit the disposal of hard to decarbonise homes in public ownership. • Promote private sector retrofit schemes to older residents in privately owned homes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire's most needy residents benefit from warm, healthy accommodation. • Public retrofit funding is focused on housing that is in the poorest condition. • Fewer people are homeless. • Elderly homeowners can access support to improve their homes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved health outcomes for Worcestershire's most needy residents. • Greater equality in access to healthy housing. • Greater independence for elderly homeowners who will be helped to improve their homes.
Deliver housing suitable for later living in line with forecast demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate growth following the reform of funding for social care including sector-specific forecasts. • Work with partners to provide evidence base to support and promote the adoption of 'Lifetime Homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned housing supply in line with predicted demand. • Resilient new housing able to meet the requirements of all potential residents. • Increased interest from the development supply chain in the development of age-specific housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire meets the needs of an important and growing housing cohort. • Older residents live in suitable housing. • Family homes are recycled for younger families.

	<p>Standards' to reflect better the demographics of the county.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to provide evidence base to support and promote later living housing through the planning system. Enable private sector operators to achieve scale in the county. • Work with extra-care housing providers to respond to the post-COVID-19 landscape and in raising the quality of existing accommodation to meet market expectation and need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended life of existing sheltered housing stock. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health issues associated with loneliness and fuel poverty etc are addressed.
Develop a role for housing in the delivery of health and wellbeing services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Integrated Care System Partners with the need to identify opportunities to better integrate housing service and healthcare pathways. • Identify opportunities to pilot health and well-being hubs using existing community facilities. • Learn from assisted tech pilot undertaken by Community Housing and current initiatives and commission a single strategy to explore how digital technology can be used to facilitate healthcare in the home (over the long-term). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on existing collaborative initiatives. Make full use of the contact opportunities created by housing services to provide other support as needed. • Develop a partnership-based model for shared community services and activities focused on the shared community facilities delivered by new build housing development. • Accelerate the adoption of digital care services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More joined-up working centred on the home. • Effective use of community facilities to host outreach activities and events. • Early appreciation of the potential of digitally enabled home healthcare ahead of growth of demand in Worcestershire.
Net zero-carbon and climate change			
Public engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop long-term plan for public engagement to increase awareness of the need for home decarbonisation and access to resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire people understand the issues, are engaged and are ready when they need to act to decarbonise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster rate of decarbonisation • Wider base of support for decarbonisation measures • More homes that are healthier, less polluting and free of damp and mould.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer chances to progress decarbonisation are missed because of better knowledge. 	
Healthy, sustainable communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set standards and expectations for the delivery of high quality, mixed-tenure sustainable communities. • Promote the development of sustainable communities based in part on the 20-minute town model. • Carry out feasibility study / pilot project on creating a model of “Worcestershire Healthy Housing”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of sustainable communities that are great places for everyone to live. • Evidence base developed for new model of housing development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier more economically active population. • Places that promote healthy, economically active lifestyles leading to lower costs for public services. • Reduced long-term cost of health and social care to the public sector. <p>Worcestershire is seen as a trailblazing county – the healthiest in England.</p>
Net-zero carbon retrofit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current and planned NZC initiatives in the county and beyond including engaging with Registered Providers to assess size of opportunity / demand / need. • Develop a common approach to the retrofit challenge for both social and private housing based on PAS 2035. • Promote awareness and benefits of Net Zero Carbon retrofit to homeowners. • Prioritise / pilot poor quality housing with multiple issues e.g., high energy costs, risks to health through for e.g., damp and mould. • Develop local low-carbon supply chains to deliver retrofit to the public sector. • Consider the countywide economic model where the public sector takes a proactive/ interventional role in delivering retrofit to the private sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire local authorities have a plan for retrofit and are active participants in discussions about funding and implementation. • A common approach minimises duplication of resources and inconsistent standards. • Homeowners are engaged early, creating awareness. • Worcestershire develops a local supply chain to deliver assured net zero carbon retrofit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early progress and quick wins on the biggest housing challenge affecting Worcestershire. • Consistent implementation minimises operational disruption to Local Authority housing teams. • Capture the economic benefits through local supply chain opportunities. • Accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon county. • Accelerate retrofit programmes to improve quality standards of existing homes with better energy efficiency and being free of damp and mould.

Public engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop long-term plan for public engagement to increase awareness of the need for home decarbonisation and access to resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire people understand the issues, are engaged and are ready when they need to act to decarbonise. • Fewer chances to progress decarbonisation are missed because of better knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster rate of decarbonisation • Wider base of support for decarbonisation measures • More homes that are healthier and less polluting.
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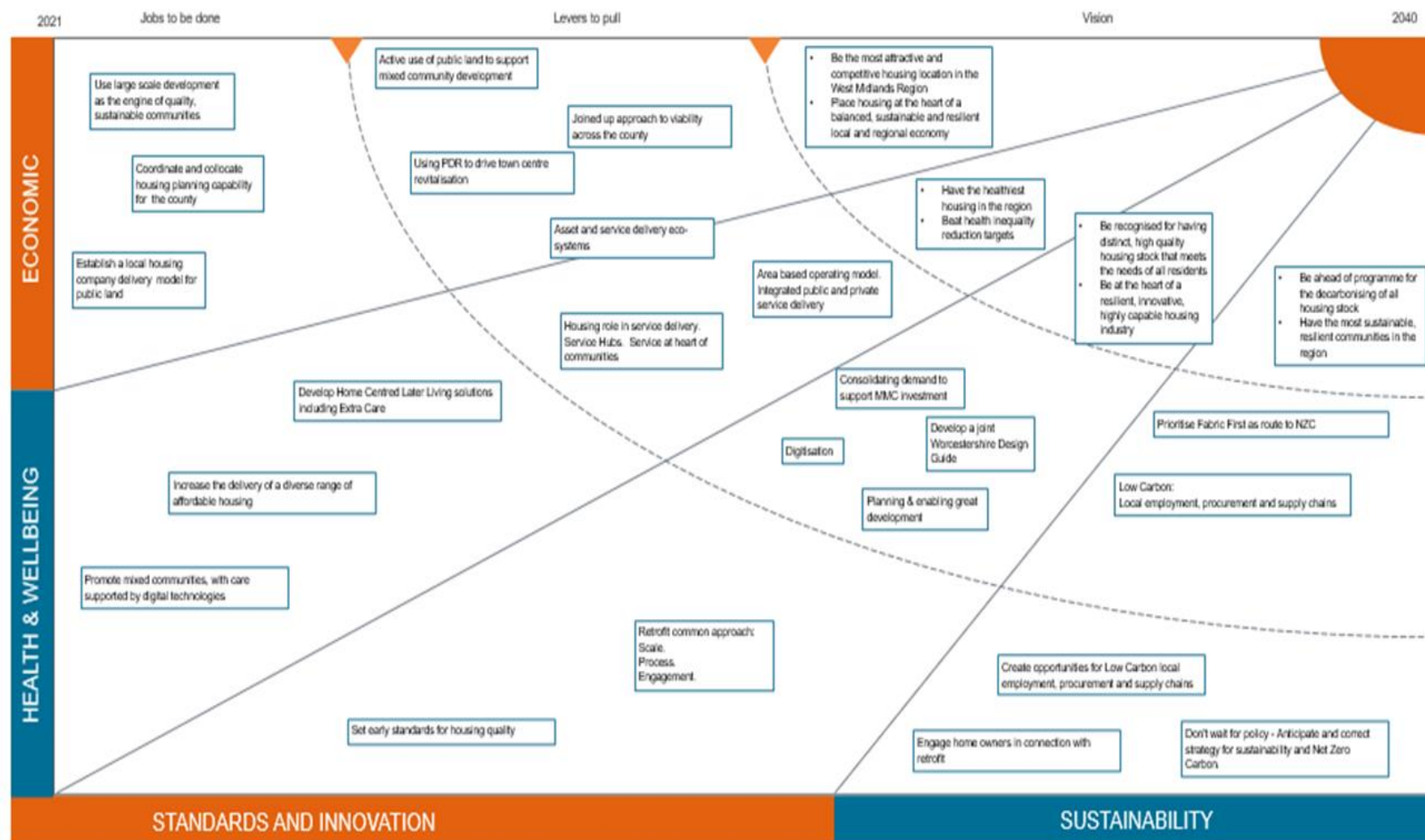
5.3 Long-term transformational road map

The road map summarises the main activities that are described and explained in the priorities section in the sequence required to deliver the 2040 objective.

The road map highlights the integrated nature of the strategy and the long-term nature of the actions required to deliver the expected level of change. This emphasises the importance of the five opportunities highlighted in the strategy:

- Creating a culture of positive action in housing and planning authorities to secure that Worcestershire is a dynamic, growing, and great place for everyone to live.
- Organising and actively collaborating in housing and planning authorities across Worcestershire. Taking assertive steps to meet the policies and aspirations that are set out in Development Plans.
- Using large scale development to set the standard for sustainable development including place-based amenities and services.
- Integrating affordable housing into new development in all communities.
- Engaging with, organising, and supporting public and private homeowners to meet net zero targets.

Transformation Roadmap





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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
17 JULY 2023

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Ian Hardiman, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey, Head of Strategic Growth
CONTACT OFFICER:	Barbara Sarbinowska, Housing Manager Ext 2181
APPENDICES:	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider how to proceed in order to deliver the commitments that the Council has made in respect of the Local Authority Housing Fund.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **The Cabinet is recommended to ALLOCATE £169,924 from the Evergreen Investment Fund to provide match funding to purchase a unit of accommodation for an Afghan household being transferred from bridging hotel accommodation.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following the launch of Government schemes in 2021 to resettle Afghan refugees, including those who had worked to support British forces in Afghanistan, Wyre Forest has accommodated two Afghan families for which it had given a commitment as part of the response from Worcestershire councils. In February 2023, the Council approved participation in what has turned out to be round 1 of the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) as part of the decisions on the Medium term Financial Strategy for 2023-2026: "Approval of the inclusion of the Housing Fund grant offer in the Capital Programme. The grant offer of £706,000 will support capital expenditure in 2023-24 of £876,000. The balance to be met from the Evergreen Investment Fund." The formal application to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities was submitted on 25 April 2023. This committed the Council to providing 6 properties for Ukrainian households and one property for an Afghan household by November 2023. Once the properties are no longer required for rehousing refugees they can become general needs or temporary accommodation stock. The properties for Ukrainian households could be any size to suit needs but the property for an Afghan household had to be a minimum of 4 bedrooms.
- 3.2 DLUHC provided grant of 40% of the capital costs of property for Ukrainian households and 50% for the property for an Afghan household up to a fixed cap

(lower quartile house prices in the district). In addition, there was a further £20k per property for refurbishment costs, fees etc. For WFDC the total funding offered was £705,924. Within this total sum was the offer of £189,924 in respect of a unit for an Afghan household:

£	50% grant	50% match funding	Sub-total	Plus £20k	Total (including all fixtures, fittings, transaction costs, stamp duty etc)
One dwelling	169,924	169,924	339,848	20,000	359,848

- 3.3 The round 1 grant offer was based on lower quartile house prices. The latest year's worth of average house price data for Wyre Forest from the Land Registry is set out in the table.

Land Registry average house price data, Wyre Forest

Date	All property types	Detached houses	Semi-detached houses	Terraced houses	Flats and maisonettes
Mar 2022	£236,760	£375,461	£229,496	£183,054	£121,877
Apr 2022	£236,310	£374,565	£228,846	£183,081	£121,495
May 2022	£241,374	£382,452	£233,940	£187,288	£123,219
Jun 2022	£240,511	£379,951	£233,165	£187,239	£122,774
Jul 2022	£245,229	£386,397	£238,084	£191,246	£125,051
Aug 2022	£248,195	£390,626	£241,052	£193,925	£126,143
Sep 2022	£255,122	£401,972	£247,904	£199,304	£128,861
Oct 2022	£255,531	£403,356	£248,234	£199,376	£128,768
Nov 2022	£255,401	£403,613	£248,023	£199,091	£128,674
Dec 2022	£249,801	£394,077	£242,705	£194,790	£126,381
Jan 2023	£251,913	£397,939	£244,892	£196,077	£127,262
Feb 2023	£251,101	£397,807	£244,008	£194,955	£126,776
Mar 2023	£253,782	£404,006	£246,752	£195,900	£127,826

- 3.4 Initially the Council agreed with Community Housing (CH) to give grant funding to utilise redundant stock that would otherwise be sold for shared ownership, with the Council providing the 40% grant plus £20k and CH providing the remaining funding required. The property for the Afghan household would need to be purchased from the open market as there weren't any suitable properties available through the shared ownership route. These six properties would be in CH ownership and it is anticipated they would be let on an affordable rent. The seventh property would be purchased from CH, owned and managed by the Council and therefore added to the temporary accommodation portfolio.
- 3.5 CH have now confirmed that they are able to sell a unit of their stock for temporary accommodation and utilise five others for the scheme by taking them out of the potential shared ownership route. However they do not have sufficient borrowing capacity to fund the 50% for the property for the Afghan household. The Council is

unable to deliver the Ukrainian element of round 1 without the property for an Afghan household.

- 3.6 Round 2 of LAHF funding of £250m was announced by the Government on 28 March, focussed solely on Afghan households who are being relocated from bridging hotels. DLUHC's grant offer arrived over two months later on 7 June, and WFDC had only until 5 July to confirm whether and to what extent it wished to take up that offer.
- 3.7 The round 2 grant offer was £655.2k for six units with a grant rate of 40% of purchase price plus £20k per property for refurbishment, fit out etc. If the offer were to be accepted in full, it would require match funding of £802,800 as shown in the table below.

£	40% grant	60% match funding	Sub-total	Plus £20k per property	Total (including all fixtures, fittings, transaction costs, stamp duty etc)
Each dwelling	89,200	133,800	223,000	20,000	243,000
Six dwellings	535,200	802,800	1,338,000	120,000	1,458,000

- 3.8 The prospectus for round 2 refers to the grant offer being based on “median property prices”. The latest year's worth of house price data for Wyre Forest from the Land Registry set out in paragraph 3.3 suggest that the amount allowed per dwelling would be enough to buy only an average semi-detached house in Wyre Forest when it is known that demand for most Afghan households is for larger properties (4 beds +).

KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Efforts have been made to find another Registered Provider to see if one would be interested in purchasing a property for an Afghan household on the terms for round 1 outlined above. Those efforts have not been successful. The option of withdrawing from LAHF round 1 has been considered and discounted. Notwithstanding the intended initial use of the properties, they would be retained as permanent additions to the social housing stock which needs to be expanded to meet demand for affordable housing in the district.
- 4.2 The recommendation in this report is that the Council should instead fund the property for an Afghan household directly and retain ownership for the purposes of temporary accommodation in the longer term. This would require committing a further £169,924 from the Evergreen Investment Fund to match fund the 50% grant. That allocation requires a decision by Cabinet.

4.3 Consideration was given to participation in round 2 but was ruled out for the following reasons:

- the experience of round 1 shows that it is unlikely a registered provider would proceed with its own funding;
- therefore match funding of up to £803k would have to be provided by the Council;
- if it was not possible to acquire properties at the price assumed by DLUHC, the risk of any cost overrun would also fall on the Council;
- there is already a significant range of projects being managed by the Housing team, including round 1 of LAHF, the Castle Road temporary accommodation project, development plans for Bridge Street and three potential housing sites in Kidderminster etc. and there were concerns about the capacity to deliver round 2 of LAHF in addition.

Accordingly a validation form has not been submitted and no grant will be claimed from DLUHC.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The financial implications of the proposal for properties to support Ukrainian households is already built into the 2023-26 MTFS and 2023-2033 Capital Programme. Approval has already been granted to provide 60% match funding for the one temporary accommodation unit from the Evergreen Investment Fund (EIF).
- 5.2 Assuming full occupancy, it is likely that, after the revenue implication of the capital outlay is taken into account, that ownership of the property to support Afghan households would be expected to have a modest positive impact for the Council over the term of the MTFS and may make a small contribution to closing the funding gap.
- 5.3 The estimated costs (including loss of investment income) and income associated with the one unit to be purchased for an Afghan household is set out in the table:

Temporary Accommodation Unit Afghan/General	Revenue Impact of Proposal			
	Medium Term Impact			
	Year 1 £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Year 4 £
Expenditure				
Staffing	250	540	560	580
Annual Repairs and Maintenance	1,460	3,120	3,240	3,340
Other Running Expenses	1,170	2,500	2,600	2,680
Void expenses	0	0	0	0
Management O/H	800	1,720	1,790	1,840
Cost of Capital*				
Investment Income foregone on EIF	5,100	8,500	6,800	5,100
Income				
Rental Income	(2,210)	(4,420)	(4,420)	(4,420)
Service Charge	(2,500)	(5,360)	(5,360)	(5,360)
Less: Bad Debt Provision	250	540	540	540
Service Efficiency/Savings				
Reduced Cost of B&B (Subsidy)	(5,280)	(11,300)	(11,300)	(11,300)
TOTAL	(960)	(4,160)	(5,550)	(7,000)
Average Impact				(4,418)

- 5.4 The Evergreen Investment Fund has unallocated resources amounting to £721k prior to the allocation recommended in this report.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has powers to acquire dwellings for various accommodation purposes under the Housing Act 1985. Participation in round 1 of LAHF allows the stock of social housing in Wyre Forest to remain at a higher level than would otherwise be the case. It builds on the commitment that the Council and residents in Wyre Forest have already shown towards welcoming and supporting refugees from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This report relates to acquisition of property for housing purposes: it is not considered that an equality impact assessment is required.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The main risk relates to the ability to purchase a property within the available resource envelope. The funding from DLUHC assumes a price significantly lower than the average detached property price in Wyre Forest, when a property with at least 4 bedrooms is required. It is also necessary to complete the purchase by November 2023 in order to comply with conditions of the grant. The search for a suitable and affordable property has already been put in hand in order to mitigate this risk.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Cabinet is invited to agree the recommendation set out above.

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 Cabinet

10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 MTFS 2023-2026, February 2023

11.2 DLUHC information and prospectuses for Local Authority Housing Fund
[Local Authority Housing Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-housing-fund-prospectuses)

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
17 JULY 2023**REDEVELOPMENT OF 8A BRIDGE STREET, STOURPORT**

OPEN WITH AN EXEMPT APPENDIX	
The appendix to this report is exempt from disclosure because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Ian Hardiman, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Kate Bailey, Head of Strategic Growth
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kate Bailey ext 2560
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: business case (exempt)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To support proposals to redevelop this locally listed building which has been vacant for a considerable period. The proposals would see the first floor refurbished into two, one bed self-contained properties for emergency accommodation, that would be managed by the Wyre Forest District Council's Strategic Growth team, and the repurposing of the ground floor space as an information point/heritage centre that would be leased to Stourport-on-Severn Town Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Cabinet is recommended to **ALLOCATE** funding from the Evergreen Investment Fund to fund refurbishment of the first floor and funding from the Capital Innovation Fund (estimated costs in Appendix One), supported by borrowing, to fund refurbishment and adaption of the ground floor; and to **NOTE** that inclusion of public toilets in the ground floor works would occur only if Stourport on Severn Town Council provides the funding for them;
- 2.2 The Cabinet is recommended to **APPROVE** procurement of a construction contractor to undertake the works and to **DELEGATE** to the Head of Strategic Growth, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being, Head of Resources and Solicitor to the Council, approval of the evaluation criteria based on 70% quality/30% price and award of the contract;
- 2.3 The Cabinet is recommended to **DELEGATE** to the Head of Strategic Growth, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Well-being, Head of Resources and Solicitor to the Council, to enter into a 125 year lease of the ground floor to Stourport on Severn Town Council.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 8A Bridge Street has lain empty for a number of years since the last tenant of the building, a charity which used the ground floor for commercial purposes, left. It forms part of the Bridge Street site, which has been in temporary use as a car park for several years. The proposals in this report for redevelopment of the building do not affect the options for redevelopment of the land used for the temporary car park, which will be the subject of a separate report when costed proposals have been finalised.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Redevelopment proposals have been drawn up that would see 8A Bridge Street brought back into positive use. These include:
- refurbishing the first floor accommodation into two, one bed self-contained units;
 - converting the ground floor so that it can be let on a 125 year lease to the Town Council for the purposes of an information point / heritage centre.
- 4.2 The proposals for the ground floor have been the subject of prior discussion with the Town Council and these suggest that a positive outcome will be achievable and allow the Town Council to meet aspirations for a focus for visits by tourists and others to promote the heritage of the town.
- 4.3 Views have been expressed by others, including the Town Council, that the ground floor should include internal public toilets that could be made available to the public whilst the ground floor unit is open. Town centre toilets are now owned and run by town councils in all three towns and provision for further public toilets at this location should be included only if the Town Council is willing to fund them. It would be possible for the Town Council to install these units if they identify the necessary capital funding. That could happen either at some point in the future or, if the Town Council is quickly able to confirm availability of funding, as part of the refurbishment works proposed in this report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The business case sets out the estimated financial impact of the proposals, overall they are expected to produce a modest positive impact for the Council over the term of the MTFS and may make a small contribution to closing the funding gap. This is based on funding the capital works for the residential units from existing reserves rather than through borrowing and assuming a high level of occupancy of the residential accommodation. The ground floor retail unit will utilise the existing capital approval for the Innovation Fund to be funded from borrowing and assumes an annual rent to cover the associated revenue costs.
- 5.2 The Evergreen Investment Fund has unallocated resources amounting to £551k prior to the allocation recommended in this report, assuming that the Cabinet agrees the earlier recommendation on tonight's agenda about the Local Authority Housing Fund. The balance available in the Capital Innovation fund is £210k. The proposals in this report can be met from the available balances.

- 5.3 The Evergreen Investment Fund and the Innovation Fund are approved schemes within the 2023-33 Capital Programme.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has powers to acquire dwellings for various accommodation purposes under the Housing Act 1985 and other relevant legislation. The Council is able to own and manage emergency accommodation for homeless people under existing legislation without requiring use of the Local Authority Trading Company or re-opening the Housing Revenue Account.
- 6.2 There are no legal implications arising in relation to the project around inadvertently granting secure tenancies or the right to buy. The use of excluded licenses with limited rights (especially for households accommodated under the s188 duties) and the short-term nature of the accommodation should safeguard against any risks.
- 6.3 The proposals do not require planning permission for change of use because the change of use is contained within the same use class categorisation. They do not therefore require consideration by the Planning Committee.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This report relates to redevelopment of property owned by the Council for housing and other purposes: it is not considered that an equality impact assessment is required.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The main risks relate to the ability to deliver the works within the overall funding allocations, and the finalisation of lease terms with the Town Council. This has been addressed by taking external advice on costs and making appropriate allocations for contingencies. The terms of the lease are for final negotiation and, if it is not possible to agree a lease or obtain terms that meet the assumptions in the business case, then the Council can seek an alternative private sector tenant.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Cabinet is invited to agree the recommendations set out above that would see the building brought back into positive and beneficial uses.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Cabinet
10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Not applicable