

# Worcestershire Housing Strategy

2023 - 2040



# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	Context and Background	4
1.2	Content, Purpose and Objectives	6
<b>2</b>	<b>Vision</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Local, Regional and National Context</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1	Population and Economics	8
3.2	Organisation, Administration and Strategy	17
3.3	Policy	19
<b>4</b>	<b>Priorities</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1	Overview – What Are the Priorities?	21
4.2	How Are the Priorities Organised?	22
4.3	Strategy Priorities	22
	Priority Area 1 – Economic Growth and Jobs	22
	Priority Area 2 – Quality and standards	26
	Priority Area 3 – Health and Well-Being	30
	Priority Area 4 – Net Zero Carbon and Climate Change	33
<b>5</b>	<b>2023-2025 Action Plan</b>	<b>37</b>
5.1	The 100-day plan	37
5.2	Action Plan 2023-2025	39
	Public engagement	46
5.3	Long-term transformational road map	46

## 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.

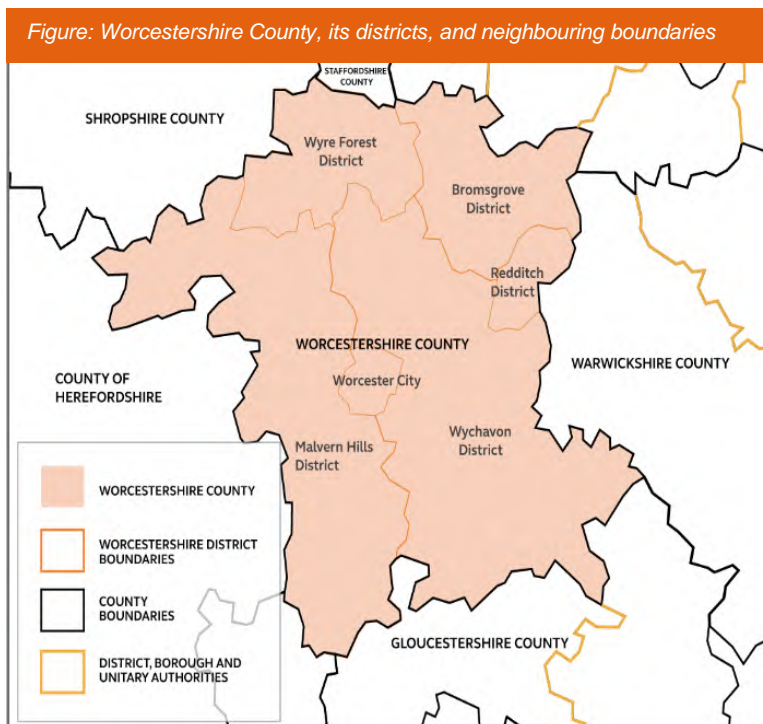


Kevin Dicks, Chair of the Worcestershire Housing Strategy Board

# 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 Providers<sup>1</sup> and third sector organisations. It is a Strategy for Worcestershire developed by the partners of Worcestershire.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>
- 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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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)<sup>3</sup> 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 2043<sup>4</sup>. 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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

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

<sup>3</sup>ONS, Mid-Year Population Estimates, UK, June 2020

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

<sup>5</sup>Worcestershire Demographic Report – Census 2011

<sup>6</sup>Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Annual Summary September 2019

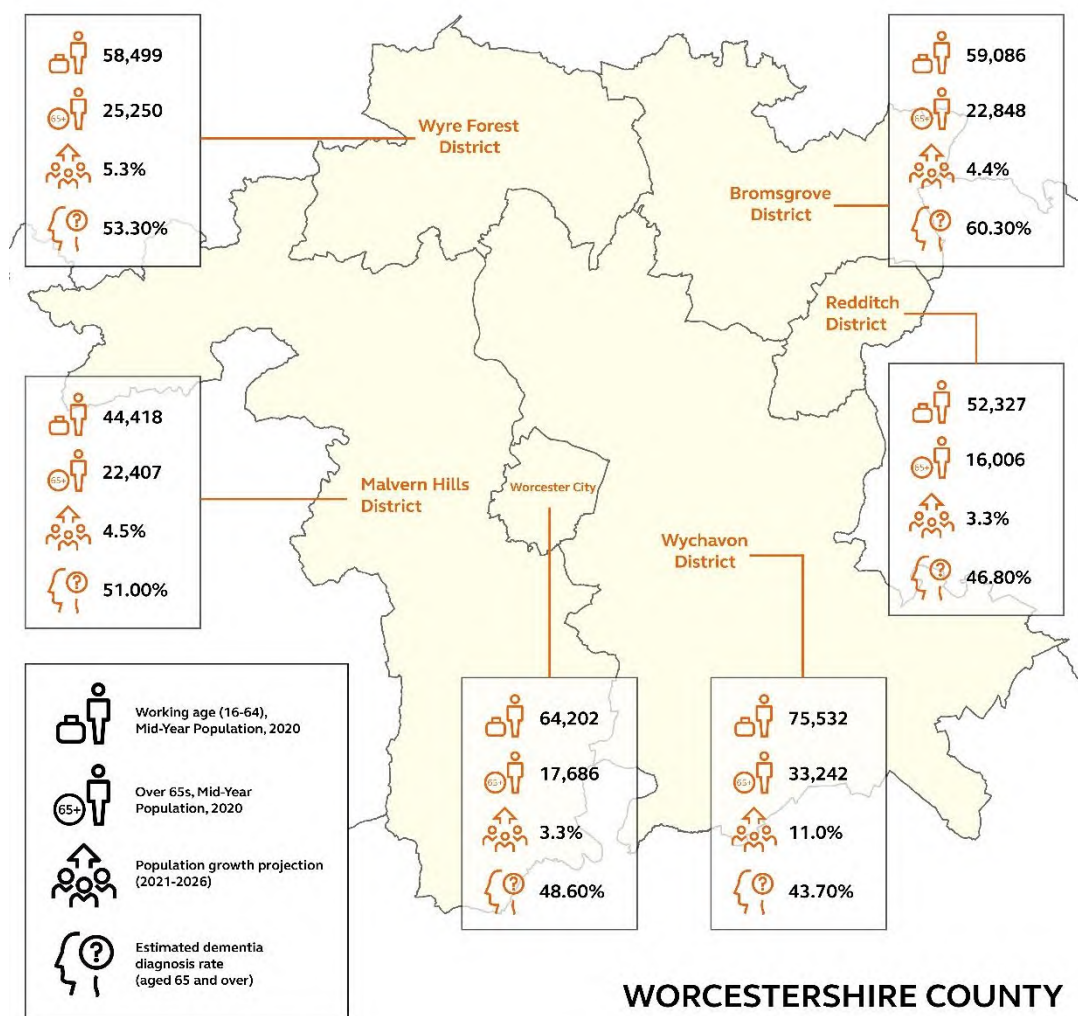


development for children eligible for free school meals.<sup>7</sup> Dementia will be a significant issue in future years as the population in the oldest age groups grows. The number of people with dementia in Worcestershire is forecast to increase by 56% between 2019 and 2035 from 9,560 to 14,905.

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. <sup>8</sup> 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:



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

<sup>8</sup> 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 data<sup>9</sup> 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.*

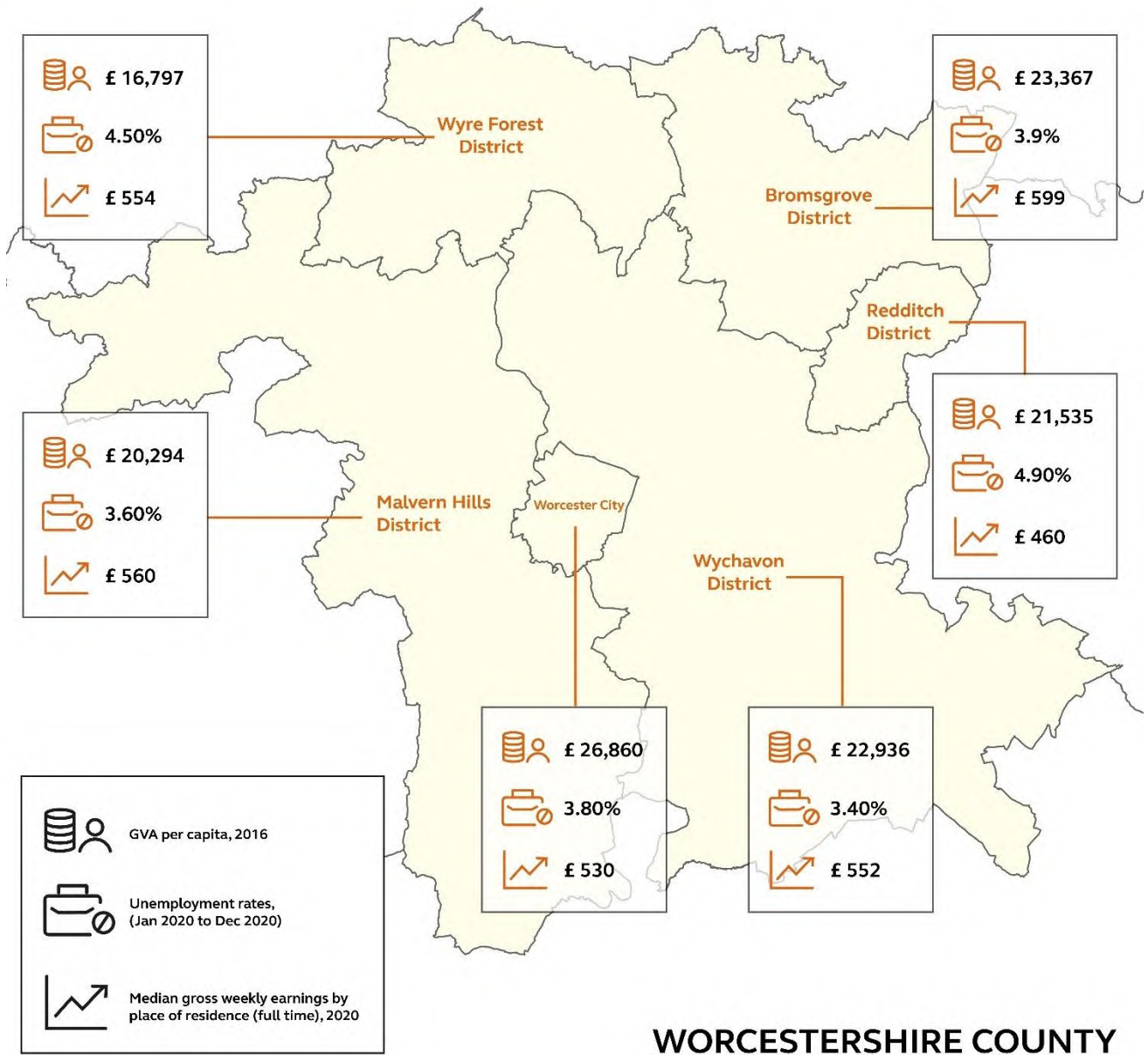
*The Strategy highlights the requirement to develop low carbon retrofit supply chains in Worcestershire aligned to national demand for decarbonisation.*

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

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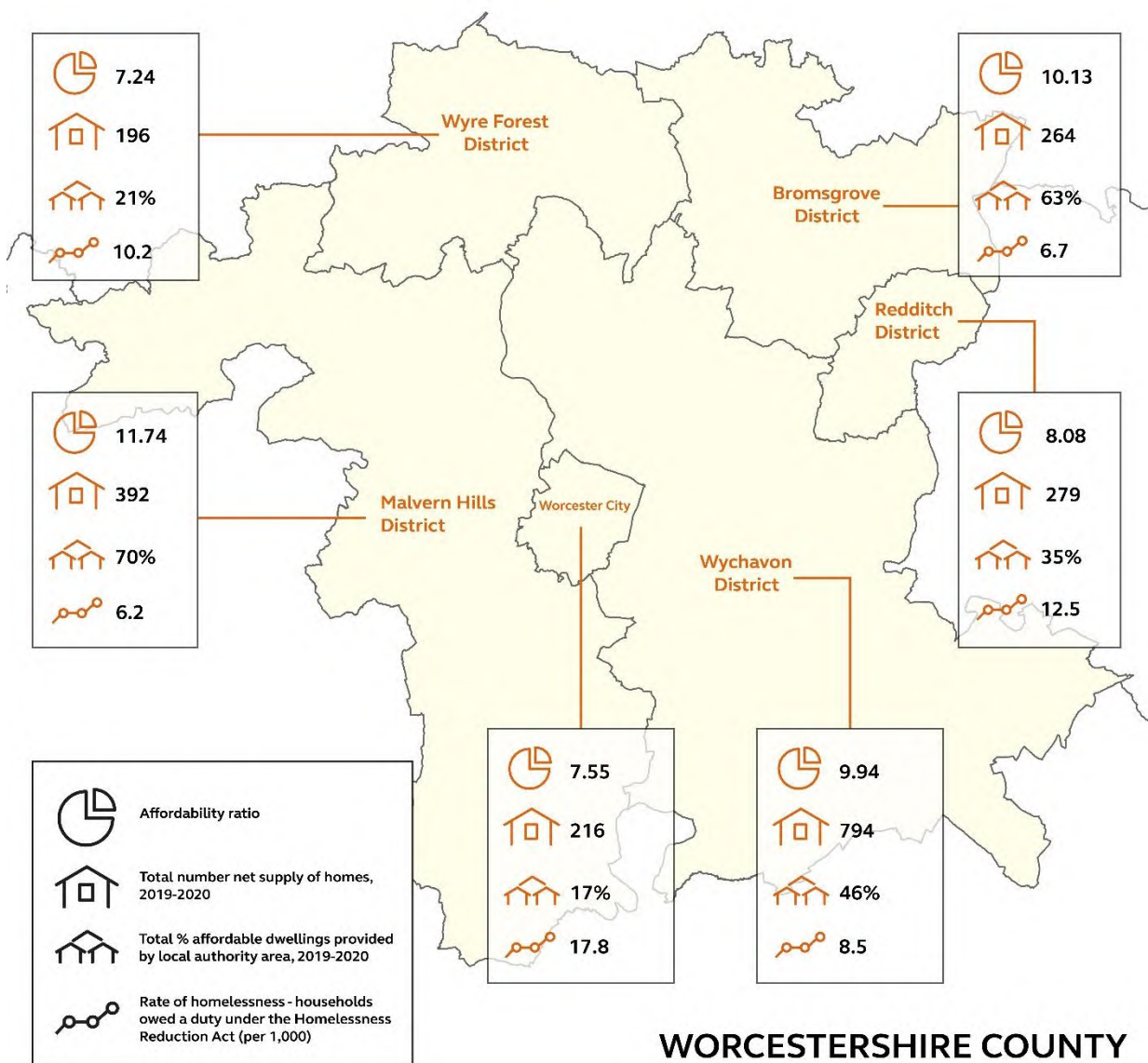
<sup>9</sup> HI05 Regional labour market: Headline indicators for the West Midlands, published September 2021.

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 2020<sup>10</sup>. By comparison, the West Midlands region affordability ratio is 6.78 and England is at 7.84.<sup>11</sup> 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)<sup>12</sup>. 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.



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

<sup>11</sup> ONS: House price to workplace-based earnings ratio

<sup>12</sup> 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 measurement<sup>13</sup> 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 homes<sup>14</sup> were delivered in Worcestershire, representing over 45% of the total stock delivered in this period.<sup>15</sup>

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.*

<sup>13</sup> MHCLG, Housing Delivery Test: 2020 measurement

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> MHCLG, Live Table 253.

### Quality and performance of existing homes

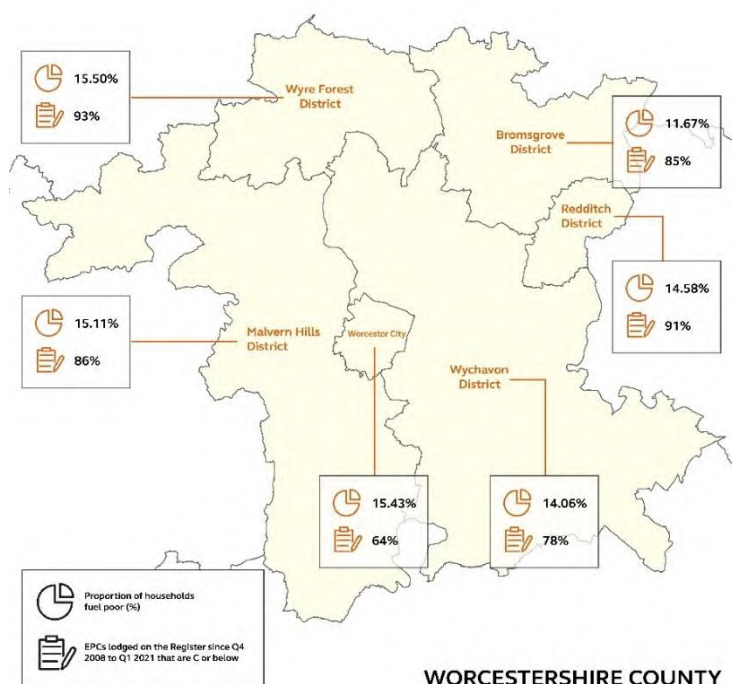
The quality of existing stock is an important consideration with respect to health and wellbeing of residents, and requirements for decarbonisation.

Fuel poverty is a material issue in Worcestershire, affecting around 14.4% of households compared with 13.4% of households in England as a whole<sup>16</sup>. 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.<sup>17</sup>

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.<sup>18</sup>

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.*

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

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

<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

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.

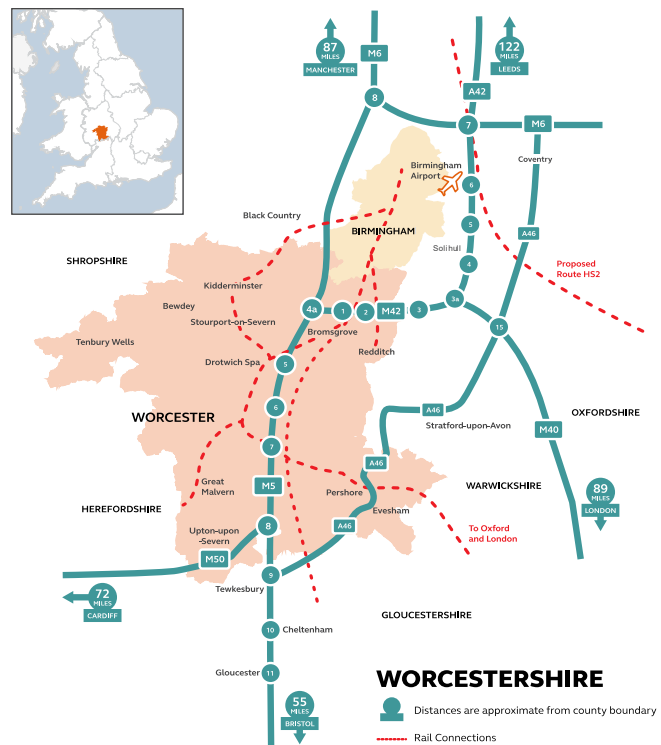


Figure: Location plan (top left) and transport map (bottom right)

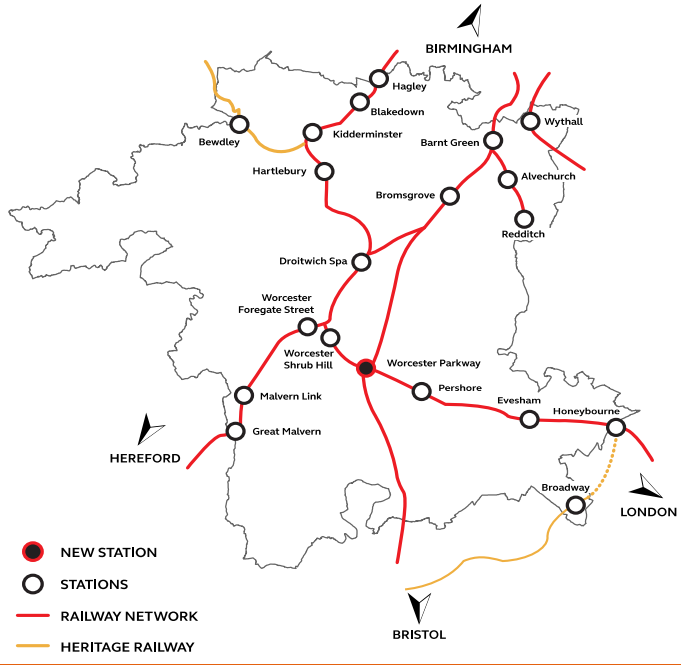


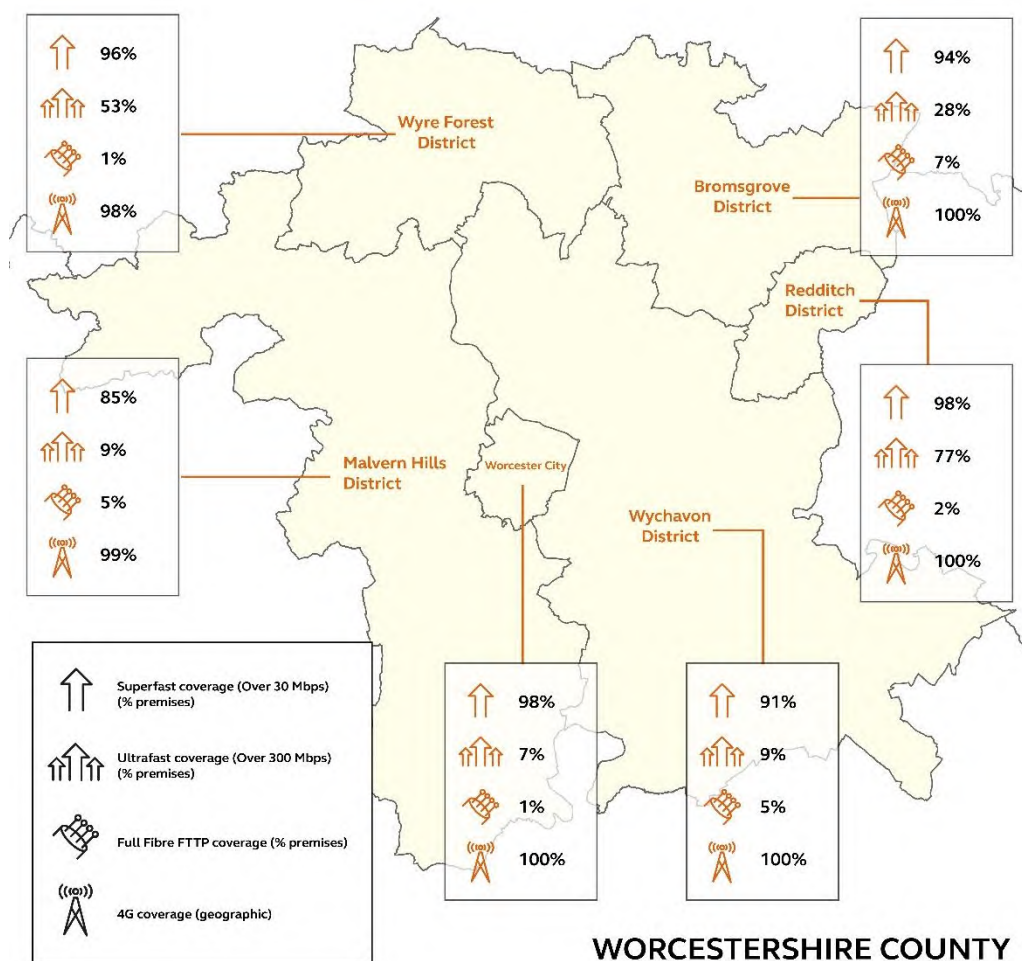
Figure: Rail connectivity plan

*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.*

<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.*

<sup>20</sup> 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.

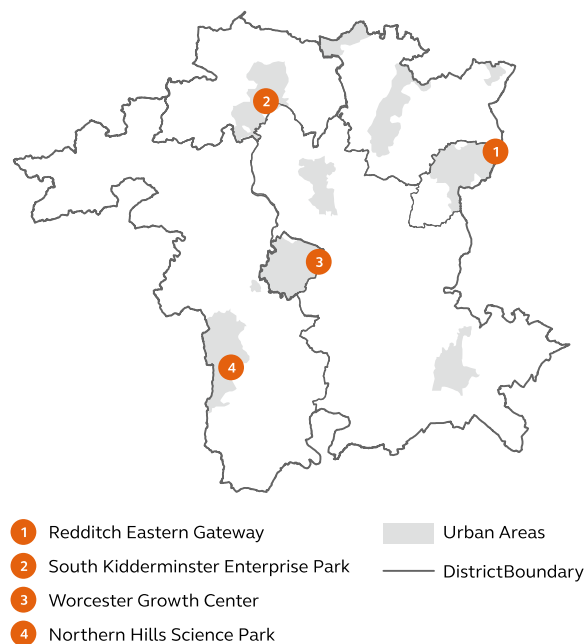


Figure: Economic "Game-Changer" Sites in Worcestershire

\*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.

## 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**



**Quality and Standards**



**Health and Wellbeing**



**Net-zero carbon and Climate Change**

- **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

<b>Vision Statement or Objective for 2040</b>	
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.	
<b>Why?</b>	<i>Worcestershire’s median population age is over 45 – 5 years older than the median for the West Midlands.  The number of over 60’s will grow by 85% by 2035.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worcestershire housing stock needs to be aligned to local demand as well as the wider market.</li> <li>• Ample affordable stock is needed because earnings in Worcestershire are below the national average.</li> <li>• An expanded Later Living provision is important to deal with the expected growth in the elderly population.</li> <li>• There are wider opportunities to attract a workforce by freeing-up and improving existing housing for use by young families.</li> </ul>	

- 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.

*Worcestershire's housing affordability ratio in 2020 was 8.87, compared to 6.78 for the West Midlands.*

### 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<sup>21</sup> 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?

- District Council housing, development, and planning
- County Council transport planning
- One Public Estate Team
- Worcestershire LEP
- Registered Providers and other housing providers
- Partnership housing developers
- DLUHC
- General public – through general and project specific consultation

### The outcome – how Worcestershire will be different:

- 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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		
<p><b>Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>The equity value in public land will enable Local Authorities in Worcestershire to participate as partners in mixed community development.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public land can be directly developed by a Local Authority.</li> <li>Partnership arrangements can be used to participate in mixed-tenure development schemes.</li> <li>Land can be developed for the private market to create the capital needed for additional affordable housing development.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital released from public land can be invested directly into affordable housing.</li> <li>Local Authorities have the means to participate in development.</li> <li>Local authorities are in the position to incorporate affordable housing in the scope of mixed-tenure partnership development.</li> </ul>
Jobs to be done1: Maximise coordination / collaboration in use of planning resources		
<p><b>Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>This approach builds on the successful collaboration that has already taken place in South Worcestershire.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning reform. Where possible Districts should develop a coordinated response to proposed planning reform including plan development processes, digital systems, and design code templates.</li> <li>Specialist resources (e.g., energy network planners) should operate on a cross-boundary basis.</li> <li>Strategic responses to shared, long-term challenges (net zero carbon, ageing population) should be developed on a county-wide basis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve benefits of scale in the delivery of planning services.</li> <li>Resource-efficient response to major changes in planning such as the development of design code templates.</li> <li>Increase ability of Worcestershire to recruit specialist resources.</li> <li>Joined-up approach to long-term strategic objectives.</li> </ul>

**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><b>Vision Statement or Objective for 2040</b></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><b>Why?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>			<p><i>By 2035, the number of people living alone in Worcestershire is expected to rise by 36%.</i></p>
<p><b>Strategic Levers</b></p>			
<p><b>Lever 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lever 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the planning reforms proposed in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill to encourage great quality development.</li> <li>Develop local standards, design guides and codes as needed to secure high-quality development.</li> <li>Secure that sufficient resource is in place for any changes to the Local Plan process.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lever 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare to implement the digital technologies envisaged for planning as part of the reforms to the planning system.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Jobs to be done</b></p>			
<p><b>Job 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>The housing strategy should consider wider aspects of</li> </ul>	<p><b>Job 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a common approach to Design Codes across the county.</li> <li>Districts and distinct areas within districts have the opportunity to have their own codes based on a county-wide framework.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Job 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Fire Safety requirements for existing residential buildings over 11m high.</li> <li>Implement changes introduced by the Charter for Social Housing Residents.</li> </ul>	

<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"> <li>• 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. .</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These measures will contribute to a better quality of life for affected residents in the county</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who is involved?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Council – planning, public health, and transport</li> <li>• District Council – housing, management, housing development and planning</li> <li>• Registered Providers and other housing providers</li> <li>• National, regional and SME housing developers</li> <li>• Housing third parties including funders, insurers etc.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Worcestershire’s plan – how it will be different:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The encouragement of a diverse supply chain including local SME developers and investment in MMC capacity related to pooled demand from schemes in Worcestershire.</li> </ul> <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		
Opportunity	Solution	Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional methods of house building are less well suited to the production of high-performance, net-zero carbon homes.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consolidation of demand for MMC housing will be led by the public sector and by Registered Providers when delivering their own programmes.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The clearing house will support the procurement of MMC homes from a range of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to MMC capacity in Worcestershire will be enhanced by the development of a clearing house function that consolidates demand from multiple clients.</li> <li>• The clearing house will simplify procurement and encourage investment. It might potentially encourage the development of MMC factories in Worcestershire.</li> <li>• The most important outcome will be the quality of homes produced which will contribute to reduced carbon emissions.</li> </ul>

	suppliers on behalf of local clients.	
<b>Jobs to be done: Plan for the development of supply chain capacity</b>		
<b>Opportunity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment associated with the delivery of the housing strategy will create significant opportunities for business growth and local employment over the next 20 years.</li> <li>New skills in developing areas including low-carbon heat will be needed, whilst traditional skills associated with housebuilding will also be in high demand.</li> <li>Expanded housebuilding, combined with support for SME and self-build housing will encourage the creation of additional housing development capacity.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<b>Solution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills requirements specific to the housing strategy should be included in county skills planning including the Worcester Local Skills Plan and other skills initiatives.</li> <li>The Worcester LEP and other stakeholders dealing with skills and industry capability should have a defined role in the delivery of the housing strategy.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Skills development should be aligned to the creation of capable and competent low-carbon supply chain (See net zero carbon)</li> <li></li> </ul>	<b>Outcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Local people will have the opportunity to participate in the housing sector including new areas associated with low-carbon construction.</li> <li>The housing sector will be properly integrated into skills and capability markets in Worcestershire and the wider West Midlands region.</li> </ul>

### 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 high<sup>22</sup>. 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.

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<sup>22</sup> 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

<p><b>Vision Statement or Objective for 2040</b></p> <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><b>Why?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Local Authorities and health partners in Worcestershire collaborate to deliver great services to citizens, centred around the home.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>			<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>			
<p><b>Strategic Levers</b></p>			
<p><b>Lever 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lever 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lever 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt an area-based operating model that integrates the community with public and private housing providers and other service providers including leisure facilities.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Jobs to be done</b></p>			
<p><b>Job 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	<p><b>Job 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	<p><b>Job 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	

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

**Making it happen (essential actions):**

Strategic Lever: Increase the delivery of a diverse range of affordable and social housing		
<b>Opportunity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality housing plays an important role in quality of life. Affordability is important in Worcestershire due to below average wage levels.</li> <li>• Homelessness and acute housing need will only be addressed if additional housing is developed to meet the need.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<b>Solution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• New housing will meet the needs of currently underserved groups including families and single young adults at risk of homelessness.</li> <li>• The planning system will play a key role in the matching of demand and supply – backed by an evidence-base of need.</li> </ul>	<b>Outcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More good quality, healthy, affordable housing will improve health outcomes – particularly for people whose choice of housing is limited due to personal circumstances.</li> <li>• Levels of measurable deprivation including homelessness will fall.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Jobs to be done - Take steps to improve the life chances of people living in poor quality housing		
<b>Opportunity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor quality housing is known to contribute directly to health inequality. Fixing problems with</li> </ul>	<b>Solution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net zero retrofit should be prioritised to improve the energy performance of the local</li> </ul>	<b>Outcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worcestershire’s net zero retrofit programme delivers</li> </ul>

<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"> <li>• Homelessness is closely associated with poor physical and mental health.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p>housing stock and tackle issues with damp and mould.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public programmes should prioritise poor quality housing first.</li> <li>• Disposal of ‘hard to improve’ housing which will slow down improvement works by public bodies should not be permitted.</li> <li>• Housing providers should develop more dedicated accommodation for the homeless, including making use of PDR powers to develop new accommodation in suitable locations.</li> <li>• Independent living housing should be developed to meet the needs of local residents, enabling existing properties to be improved and reused.</li> </ul>	<p>healthy homes to the most-needy residents before 2030.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public retrofit programmes prioritise housing that is in the poorest condition.</li> <li>• Housing provision for the homeless meets the needs of all groups including single people and families.</li> <li>• Elderly homeowners can access help and support to improve their homes or to move to more suitable accommodation.</li> </ul>
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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 Strategy<sup>23</sup> (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 ECO<sup>24</sup>
- 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.

<sup>23</sup> BEIS. Heat and Building Strategy. October 2021

<sup>24</sup> 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"> <li>• Develop capacity for energy planning and mapping for decarbonisation in anticipation of the introduction of heat network zoning in 2025.</li> </ul>	<p>highlighted in the Housing Strategy.</p>	
<p><b>Jobs to be done</b></p>		
<p><b>Job 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Design the programme and specification to focus on privately rented and owner-occupied housing aligned to incentives outlined in the HBS.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Job 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Job 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <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"> <li>• The Worcestershire plan will go beyond the strategy by promoting a common assessment process through an early emphasis on public engagement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who is involved?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Council – planning, public health, sustainability, and transport</li> <li>• District Council – housing, management, housing development and planning</li> <li>• DLUHC</li> <li>• Midlands Energy Hub</li> <li>• Registered Providers and other housing providers</li> <li>• Energy generators contributing to ECO.</li> <li>• National, regional and SME housing developers.</li> <li>• Regional construction supply chain</li> <li>• Housing third parties including funders, insurers etc.</li> <li>• Training providers including the Higher Education sector.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Worcestershire’s plan – how it will be different:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>		

- 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		
<p><b>Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net zero carbon retrofit will require the development of a completely new supply chain.</li> <li>• Adoption of the PAS 2035 standard will promote the development of a competent supply chain for the roll-out of retrofit at scale.</li> <li>• The development of the supply chain will require a programme of work, competent assured contractors, trained operatives, and a materials supply network.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The outcome of the strategy will be made more certain using proven supply chain models.</li> <li>• Expanded capacity for retrofit in Worcestershire will enable the rate of progress to be maintained and may also achieve savings related to scale economies.</li> <li>• The supply chain should be accessible by the public and private sector.</li> </ul>

Jobs to be done: Develop a public engagement strategy to encourage private sector decarbonisation		
<p><b>Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most homes in Worcestershire are privately owned. The HBS anticipates that most homeowners will undertake their own retrofits in line with heating system upgrades.</li> <li>• Most homes in Worcestershire will require improvement works, so it makes sense to make early progress on 'no-regret' solutions that improve home comfort.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Actively participate in 'inward engagement' through public consultation by Government, so the needs of Worcestershire are considered in policy development.</li> <li>• Encourage public adoption of existing and future advice sources as highlighted in the HBS including the Simple Energy Advice platform.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Accelerated adoption of energy and carbon saving measures in line with the long-term trajectory needed to meet net zero targets.</li> <li>• People in Worcestershire are aware of the changes that are coming and have the time to prepare.</li> </ul>

<p>Making the right changes at the right time is critical.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness of low carbon opportunities for existing homeowners will increase take-up of solutions over the 30-year period of the HBS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote awareness of the availability of support including advice and grants</li> <li>• Promote the awareness of retrofit incentives including upgrades to EPCs and other planned changes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing retrofitted to meet NZC principles will be free of damp and mould.</li> <li>• Active participation by Worcestershire in policy formulation relevant to housing decarbonisation.</li> </ul>
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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 level 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
<b>Enabling actions</b>			
Engagement strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare and implement bespoke targeted stakeholder engagement programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligned stakeholders support for the strategy and implementation of its recommendations / next steps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quick and frictionless implementation of strategy delivering early benefits.</li> </ul>
Strategy update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree strategy monitoring and evaluation process.</li> <li>Agree strategy review periods - we recommend a review every 12 months and a refresh every 3 years.</li> <li>Develop review and refresh process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constant focus on delivery and evolution of strategy.</li> <li>Maintenance of evidence base of impact and benefits delivered – enabling ongoing stakeholder support.</li> <li>Strategy remains ambitious and future looking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy remains up to date and relevant to Worcestershire, its citizens, and stakeholders.</li> <li>Worcestershire remains the most attractive place to live, work, learn and enjoy leisure time in the UK.</li> </ul>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the effectiveness of existing governance arrangements as part of the strategy roll-out.</li> <li>Consider establishment of housing board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamlined governance model mobilised.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification and recognition of linkages between economic / housing / health activity leading to more impactful decision making and greater benefits being delivered.</li> <li>Development of culture of positive action and collaboration – task and finish approach.</li> </ul>
Government support & involvement of DLUHC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop key areas from the strategy where Government intervention, support or policy change is required to deliver the best possible outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The type and quality of homes required are delivered in Worcestershire.</li> </ul>

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



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

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

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

	<p>Standards' to reflect better the demographics of the county.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended life of existing sheltered housing stock.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health issues associated with loneliness and fuel poverty etc are addressed.</li> </ul>
<p>Develop a role for housing in the delivery of health and wellbeing services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with Integrated Care System Partners with the need to identify opportunities to better integrate housing service and healthcare pathways.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to pilot health and well-being hubs using existing community facilities.</li> <li>• 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).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on existing collaborative initiatives. Make full use of the contact opportunities created by housing services to provide other support as needed.</li> <li>• Develop a partnership-based model for shared community services and activities focused on the shared community facilities delivered by new build housing development.</li> <li>• Accelerate the adoption of digital care services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More joined-up working centred on the home.</li> <li>• Effective use of community facilities to host outreach activities and events.</li> <li>• Early appreciation of the potential of digitally enabled home healthcare ahead of growth of demand in Worcestershire.</li> </ul>
<b>Net zero-carbon and climate change</b>			
<p>Public engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop long-term plan for public engagement to increase awareness of the need for home decarbonisation and access to resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worcestershire people understand the issues, are engaged and are ready when they need to act to decarbonise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faster rate of decarbonisation</li> <li>• Wider base of support for decarbonisation measures</li> <li>• More homes that are healthier, less polluting and free of damp and mould.</li> </ul>

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

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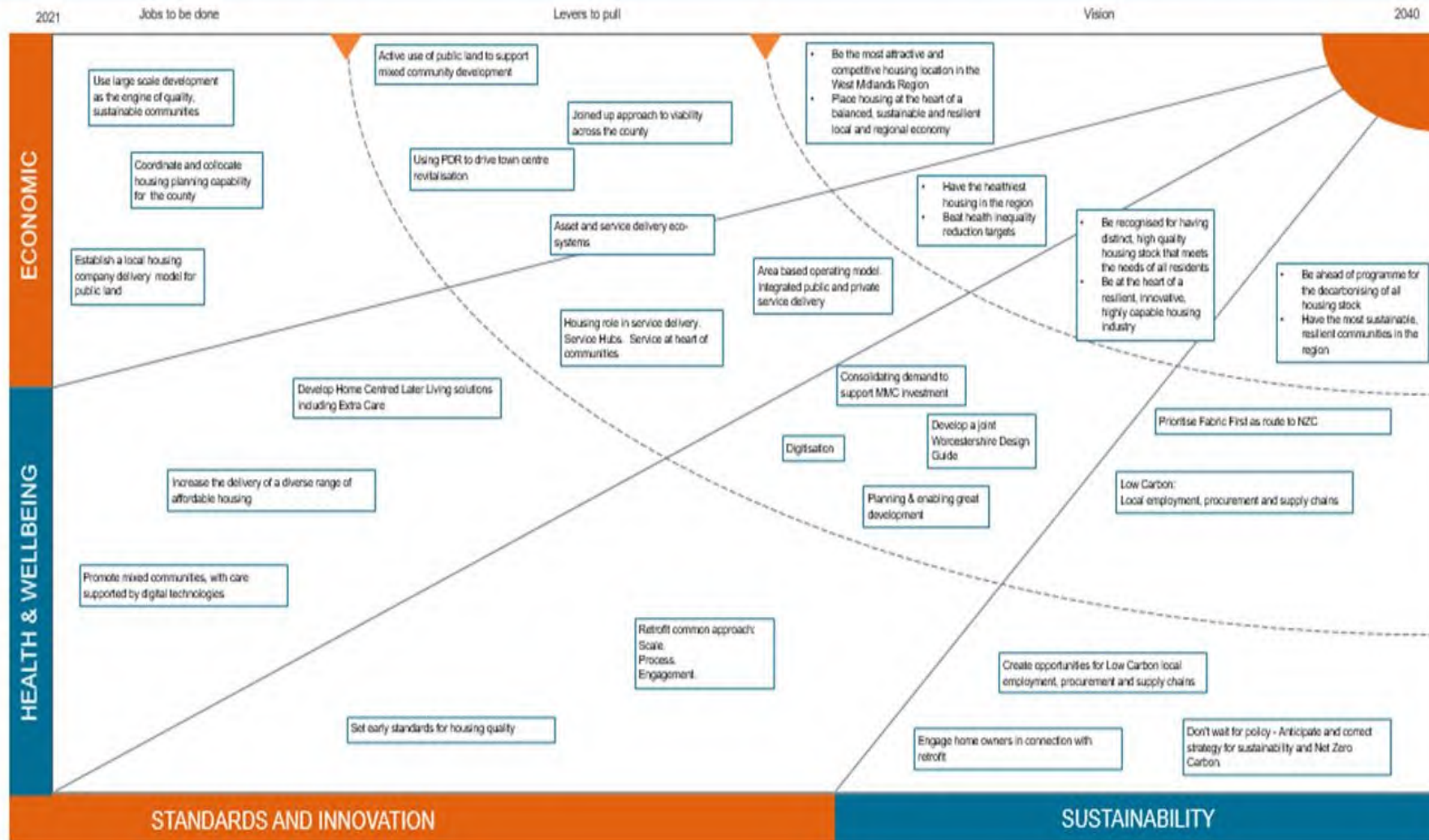
## 5.3 Long-term transformational road map

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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