

South Worcestershire Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2024-2026

January 2025

Produced by
Malvern Hills District
Council, Worcester City
Council, and Wychavon
District Council

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1. What is the Local Development Scheme?

- 1.1. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a project management document which sets out the South Worcestershire Council's priorities for preparing Development Plan Documents over the next two years. It is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) that a Local Planning Authority should produce an LDS, which must include any Development Plan Documents it intends to prepare and a timetable indicating the main milestones of production. The 2004 Act also sets out several other requirements to be included in the LDS
- 1.2. Since October 2010, the South Worcestershire Councils (SWC) of Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon have been working together to produce the joint South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP), which was adopted in February 2016. Joint working on this strategic planning document has brought together many other work streams and has also created the need for further joint working in the future. The South Worcestershire Councils are therefore continuing to combine resources on many planning policy matters and have worked collaboratively to prepare the shared elements of this LDS.
- 1.3. Paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary¹. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of a plan and should consider changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy.
- 1.4. Accordingly, the South Worcestershire Councils commenced a joint review of the SWDP in late 2017. The SWDP review was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 27 September 2023 for independent examination in public. The intention of this LDS is to:
 - set out the updated timetable for the SWDP Review;
 - report on the progress made to date on the review of the SWDP; and
 - set out the updated timetable for the Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Policies and Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

¹ Reviews at least every five years are a legal requirement for all local plans (Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Plan)(England) Regulations 2012).

1.5. The LDS has been made available online at www.swdevelopmentplan.org/publications/local-development-scheme . It is also available from each of the South Worcestershire Local Authorities planning policy pages.

1.6. Hard copies are available to view at each of the South Worcestershire Council civic offices. In Worcester, additionally the document can be viewed at The Hive, and Warndon and St John's libraries during their normal opening hours.

1.7. If you have any questions about the LDS or how to access it, please contact the relevant council's Planning Policy Teams at the following:

Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council

Email: policy.plans@wychavon.gov.uk

Tel: 01386 565565

Worcester City Council

Email: planning@worcester.gov.uk

Tel: 01905 722233 and ask for the Planning Policy team

1.8. The South Worcestershire Development Plan Team can be contacted directly at:

Email: contact@swdevelopmentplan.org

Tel: 01386 565565

2. Adopted Local Policy

South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)

2.1. The SWDP was adopted in February 2016. A review of the SWDP commenced in late 2017. Table 1 shows the progress that has been made to date:

Stage of Plan Preparation	Date	
Issues and Options (regulation 18) consultation	November – December 2018	Complete
Preferred Options (regulation 18) consultation	November – December 2019	Complete
Further focused regulation 18 consultation on Sustainability Appraisal	March – April 2021	Complete
Publication (regulation 19) consultation	November – December 2022	Complete
Submission to Planning Inspectorate	September 2023	Complete

Proposed Changes to the Planning System

2.2. Following a general election on 4 July 2024, a change in Government occurred. On 30 July 2024 a consultation was launched on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system. The consultation ended on 24 September 2024. All SWCs submitted separate, although aligned responses to the consultation. Notwithstanding changes to the NPPF, as the Local Plan review has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, it will continue to be examined under the NPPF (July 2021). SWCs are clear if the proposed changes to the planning system are implemented, they will be required to proceed to an immediate review.

Minerals and Waste Planning

2.3. Minerals and Waste planning is carried out by Worcestershire County Council (WCC). The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document was adopted November 2012.

2.4. The Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan (2018-2036) was adopted in July 2022.

2.5. A minerals site allocations Development Plan Document is being prepared by Worcestershire County Council. A timetable for the preparation of this document can be found in the Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme which can be found on the County Council's website: [here](#)².

Neighbourhood Plans

² <https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/publications/local-development-scheme>

2.6. At the time of reviewing the Local Development Scheme, the following status applied across the south Worcestershire plan area (data correct November 2024):

Council	Neighbourhood Areas Designated which are not actively in the NDP process	Neighbourhood Plans which have been through Pre-submission consultation	Submitted Neighbourhood Plans	Adopted Neighbourhood Plans	Neighbourhood Plans under review
Malvern Hills	8	2	1	10	2
Wychavon	11	0	1	12	2
Worcester City	1	1	0	0	0

Current Development Plan for South Worcestershire

2.7. The South Worcestershire Council's existing Development Plan currently comprises:

- The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)
- The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012)
- The Hereford and Worcester Minerals Local Plan (2024)

2.8. These are the documents which provide the planning policies that planning applications should be determined against (unless material considerations indicate otherwise) at the time of reviewing this LDS.

Existing local planning policy framework

2.9. The wider planning policy framework for the South Worcestershire Councils consists of the following Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Shrub Hill Quarter - 2024 (Worcester City Council only)
- Revised Developer Contributions – July 2018
- Water Management and Flooding – July 2018
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy – July 2018
- Design Guide - March 2018
- Planning for Health – September 2017
- Affordable Housing – October 2016
- Houses in Multiple Occupation – October 2024 (Worcester City Council only)

3. Development Plan Documents

- 3.1. The Development Plan Documents currently being progressed is The South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (prepared jointly between Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon).
- 3.2. The South Worcestershire Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Policies and Site Allocations DPD (prepared jointly between Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon) is on hold and may be subsumed into the emerging Local Plan review document. This is a subject for consideration alongside the policies for gypsies and travellers in the SWDPR through the Examination in Public by the appointed Inspectors.
- 3.3. The following section sets out the content of, and timetable for, producing the above documents. All references to Regulations in this section refer to [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012³](#).
- 3.4. The South Worcestershire Councils are also progressing a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy and charging schedule, a timetable for which is also set out in this document.

³ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/pdfs/uksi_20120767_en.pdf

South Worcestershire Development Plan Review

Overview	
Role and content	The plan will update the existing SWDP, reviewing the development requirements, policies, site allocations and extending the Plan period to 2041.
Status	Development Plan Document
Geographical coverage	The plan covers the administrative areas of Malvern Hills, Worcester City, Wychavon councils.
Jointly produced	YES. The SWDP was jointly produced by Malvern Hills, Worcester City Council and Wychavon collectively known, for plan making purposes, as the South Worcestershire Councils.
Chain of Conformity	National Planning Policy Framework, the National Planning Practice Guidance, case law and planning legislation.

Milestones (Completed Stages are shown in BLUE)	
Evidence Gathering	Commenced in late 2017
Issues and Options (Regulation 18 (i))	November/December 2018
Preferred Options (Regulation 18 (ii))	November/December 2019
Further Preferred Options Consultation (Regulation 18 (iii))	March/April 2021
Publication (Regulation 19)	November/December 2022
Submission (Regulation 22)	September 2023
Independent Examination Hearings (Regulation 24)	March 2025 ⁴
Main Modifications Consultation (if required to be found sound)	July 2025
Receipt of Inspector's Report (Regulation 25)	November 2025
Adoption (Regulation 26)	December 2025

⁴ Timeframe is dependent upon availability and scheduling at the Planning Inspectorate.

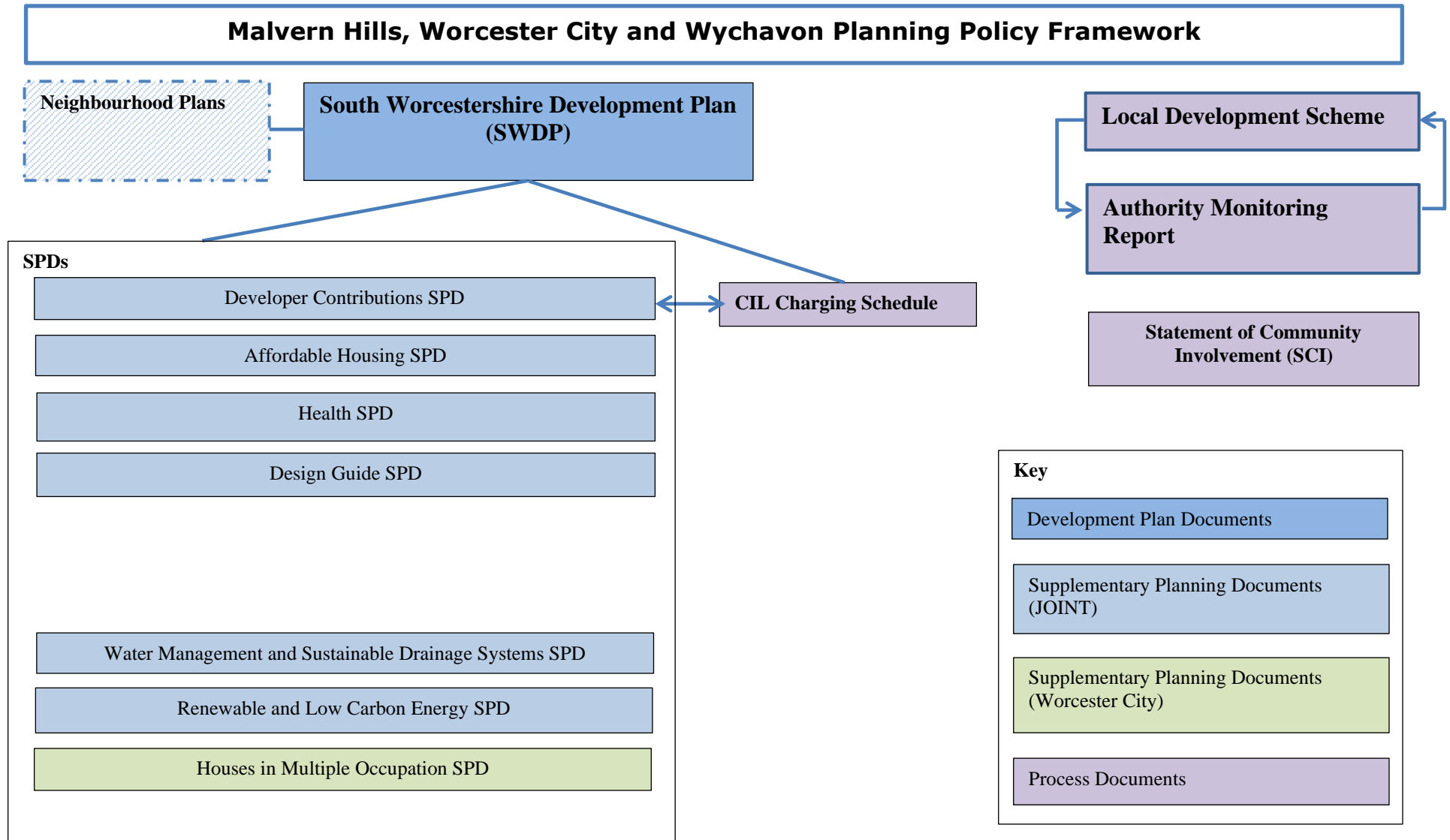
4. Supplementary Planning Documents

- 4.1. Several Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) have been prepared to provide further guidance on the policies within SWDP. These documents are not part of the Development Plan. It is no longer a requirement to detail SPDs and their timetables for preparation within an LDS. However, the list of SPDs in the wider planning policy framework for the South Worcestershire Councils can be viewed at paragraph 2.9 of this report and on page 9 within the South Worcestershire Planning Policy Framework Diagram.
- 4.2. A review of the Community Infrastructure Levy will be undertaken to update the existing charging schedules and to take account of changes to the development plan through the current review. A timetable for this is shown below:

Timetable	
Council decision sought to consult on Charging Schedule	June 2025
Consultation	July - August 2025
Submission	October 2025
Examination	December 2025 ⁵
Inspector's report	January 2026
Adoption	February 2026

⁵ Timeframe is dependent upon availability and scheduling at the Planning Inspectorate.

South Worcestershire Planning Policy Framework Diagram



5. Risk Assessment

5.1. The South Worcestershire Councils acknowledge that there are risks in delivering the documents set out in the LDS. Some of these risks are within the council's control and some are not. Table 1 identifies the main areas of risk, their impact, and the ways to overcome them so that the programme in the LDS can be delivered.

Table 1: Risk Assessment

Area of risk	Likelihood/Impact and Consequence	Mitigation
Adequate staff resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to complete documents on time and to the required standard • Consequential programme slippage • Consequential increased risk of inappropriate, speculative planning applications if there is an up-to-date Local Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint working with SW Councils and county council • Ring fence policy teams dedicated to plan production • Employ temporary staff/consultants (subject to resource availability)
Funding pressure on resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of resources to fund plan making, resulting in programme slippage • Consequential increased risk of inappropriate speculative planning applications if there is no up to date Local Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols agreed by the SW Councils for budgets and shared costs • Provision of schemes to influence budgetary decisions • Monitoring of costs and budget spend/profiles
Council procedures and Corporate commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of programme slippage • Consequential increased risk of inappropriate, speculative planning applications if there is no up to date Local Plan • Risk to the Council's reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust programme management • Joint Advisory Panel to advise SW Councils on plan production • Joint Officer Steering Group to oversee plan production process • Awareness of consultations and council diaries
Neighbourhood planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient staff resource available to meet legal requirements in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain contact with town and parish councils to ascertain scale and type of work required from the LPAs

Area of risk	Likelihood/Impact and Consequence	Mitigation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provision of technical advice and support to town and parish councils • Insufficient funding to resource LPA support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the extent to which neighbourhood plans deliver the LDS • Assessment of neighbourhood plans to influence budgetary decisions • Seek Government funding for resources
Changes to external context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to meet requirements of national policy and guidance • Insufficient flexibility and resilience to meet economic / environmental / social changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor policy announcements and consultations • Assess Local Plan/SPD consistency with policy • Use of latest guidance • Monitor future trends, use of Foresight intelligence
Time required for consideration, consultation and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient time to meet standard lead in times to decision making • Significant level of responses to consultation • Additional scrutiny stage(s) • Programme slippage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of council meeting dates • Project management • Awareness of council diaries and constitutions and protocols for decision making • Awareness of events such as elections and holidays • Use of delegated decisions route • Efficient/effective handling of responses
Capacity of the Planning Inspectorate and outcomes of its recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PINS unable to meet demand for SWDPR examination leading to delay in adopting plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular liaison with PINS and Programme Officer. • Monitor Inspector's reports and High Court Challenges and draw up/use lessons learnt
Unforeseen Circumstances (i.e., Covid-19 Pandemic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to continue with key areas of evidence base development. • Inability to work face to face and attend meetings. • Inability to meet project timetable (programme slippage). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise video conferencing for meetings. • Produce evidence in house (where possible). • Update/review project timetable.

<p>Government changes to planning processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not meeting timings for Plan to be examined under current planning system.• Needing to start the plan preparation process from the beginning under the new planning system.• Prolonged period of time without an up to date plan in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with stakeholders to address issues outside of the EiP and avoid delays at Examination
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6. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring

- 6.1. There is a requirement to monitor the implementation of the LDS⁶ and hence progress made in producing Local Plans and SPDs through an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). AMRs must be produced at least annually and must cover a period of no more than 12 months. AMRs must cover a continuous period, with no gap in coverage between reports.
- 6.2. In relation to each document included within the LDS, monitoring must be carried out on:
 - the timetable included for that specific document
 - the stage that the document has reached in the production process
 - if the document is behind the timetable set out in the LDS, the reasons for this
- 6.3. An AMR will be produced jointly each year and will be made available on each of the councils' websites as soon as it has been finalised. The AMR will be reported by the Local Planning Authority to the Joint Advisory Panel (or equivalent). As well as progress in plan-making, this will be the opportunity to report on the monitoring indicators in adopted Local Plans to assess policy performance.
- 6.4. Under the CIL Regulations 2019 the Council is required to prepare an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) setting out the collection of s106, CIL and other contributions and how these have been spent. The IFS also is required to identify and to prioritise infrastructure projects for CIL spending and payments committed. This must be published annually by 31st December.
- 6.5. In response to the yearly monitoring against the LDS, the South Worcestershire Councils will work together to review the content of their LDSs each year to provide real time information of the work programme over a rolling three-year period. Anticipated delays or actual slippage against the published timetable will be addressed, with realistic revisions to key milestones proposed.
- 6.6. The South Worcestershire Councils anticipates that the next full update of the LDS will be on adoption of the SWDP. Any review of the LDS will have to take account of any significant changes for example in legislation, national policy or circumstances that impact on plan-making or the delivery of strategy and policy.

⁶ Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Part 2 – Local Development. S. 35 (as amended)
Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 34 Authorities' Monitoring Reports.

Appendix A

South Worcestershire Local Development Scheme: Project Plan

	2024												2025												2026											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
SWDP Review														9					10			11	12	13												
Community Infrastructure Levy Review																			6	6		8		9	12	13										

Key - DPDs and SPDs

1	Preparatory work including compiling evidence base –including early engagement (issues and options) consultation for DPDs	6	Publication of Proposed Submission document for representations <i>(Regulation 19 For DPDs)</i>	11	Inspector considers consultation responses (May not be required. Dependent on outcome of Examination)
2	Preparation of draft document	7	Analysis of representations	12	Receipt of Inspector's report <i>(Regulation 25 for DPDs)</i>
3	Public Consultation <i>(Regulation 13 for SPDs), (Regulation 18 for DPDs)</i>	8	Submission to Secretary of State <i>(Regulation 22 for DPDs)</i>	13	Adoption/Completion/Judicial Review Period <i>(Regulation 14 for SPDs), (Regulation 26 for DPDs)</i>
4	Consideration of representations	9	Independent Examination <i>(Regulation 24 for DPDs)</i>		
5	Preparation of final document (for SPDs) Preparation of Proposed Submission document (for DPDs)	10	Consultation on Main Modifications (May not be required. Dependent on outcome of Examination)	R	Review

Regulation references relate to [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)