

## Views needed for South Worcestershire

Views are being sought to help shape the future growth of South Worcestershire into the middle of this century.

A public consultation was launched on Monday, 5 November on the review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP). This will help Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils decide how to best accommodate housing and employment growth in the area to 2041.

This includes the building of another 14,000 new homes to meet demand as well as 169 hectares of employment land to support companies to grow and create new jobs.

The current SWDP was approved by the three South Worcestershire Councils in 2016 and set out proposals to deliver 28,400 new homes and 300 hectares of employment land by 2030.

However, the Government now requires all councils to review their local plans every five years to ensure they are keeping up with the latest housing requirements. Failure to do so could mean councils losing control over where development takes place.

Since December 2017 planners have been collecting and analysing technical evidence which has been used to inform the review so far. Using the Government's standard methodology it has been calculated an additional 14,000 new homes will be needed by 2041.

This is due to factors such as population increases, more people living in smaller households and affordability. Despite more than 16,500 new homes being built since 2006, many people still struggle to access affordable and market housing. The average house price in South Worcestershire is now £260,000 and the average rental for a one bedroom flat as high as £530 a month.

Planners have also been looking at whether the current SWDP development strategy - which focuses most development at Worcester, Droitwich, Evesham and Malvern - could deliver the new requirement or other options such as a brand new settlement or settlements should feature.

Other issues being looked at include whether or not:

- Planning rules should be relaxed in town centres to support the viability and vitality of high streets
- The Green Belt should be used to accommodate some new development
- New employment land should be provided near new housing or strategic transport sites like railway stations and motorway junctions
- Electric car charging points should be required in new developments
- Developers should have to provide plots to allow people to build their own homes

This work has now been set out in an Issues and Options document and the public and all interested parties are being invited to have their say.

A series of roadshows are being held to provide people with more information and gather views. They take place on:

Saturday 10 Nov Crown Gate, Friary Walk, Worcester 10am to 4pm

Tuesday 13 Nov Pump Rooms, Tenbury Wells 2pm to 8pm

Thursday 15 Nov Parish Centre, Droitwich 2pm to 8pm

Tuesday 20 Nov Memorial Hall, Upton upon Severn 2pm to 8pm

Wednesday 21 Nov Town Hall, Pershore 2pm to 8pm

Monday 26 Nov Lyttleton Rooms, Malvern 2pm to 8pm

Thursday 29 Nov Town Hall, Evesham 2pm to 8pm

People can also take part in the consultation online at [www.swdevelopmentplan.org](http://www.swdevelopmentplan.org)

The deadline for responses is 5pm on Monday 17 December.

Comments on the Issues and Options will be assessed and will help inform the next stage of the plan making process which will include site specific development proposals which will be the subject of another round of public consultation likely to be in November next year.

A final report will be published for consultation and submitted to the Government's Planning Inspectorate for public examination in 2020. It is hoped a revised SWDP will be approved and published in 2021.