

NOTICE OF DELEGATION OF DECISION TO CABINET MEMBER BY STRONG LEADER

Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

I Marcus Hart, as Strong Leader, delegate the decision to agree the Statement of Common Ground with South Worcestershire to the Cabinet Member below:

Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and the Green Agenda

Dated: 27.09.23

Signed: *M. J. Hart*

Leader of the Council

NOTICE OF DECISION OF CABINET MEMBER

Pursuant Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by section 63 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1st December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

In accordance with the authority delegated to me by the Leader, I have made the following decision:

Subject	Decision	Reason for decision	Date for Decision to be taken
Statement of Common Ground between South Worcestershire councils and Wyre Forest	<p>To agree the statement of common ground with South Worcestershire that will form part of the submission of their Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate.</p> <p>To agree that delegated authority be given to the Head of Strategic Growth to finalise the wording for this Statement of Common Ground in the event that any further minor or grammatical changes are required that do not affect the substance of the current draft.</p>	To approve the Statement of Common Ground to be submitted through the strong leader process.	27/09/2023

I confirm that the appropriate statutory officer consultation has taken place with regard to this decision.

Dated: 27.09.23

Signed: 

Councillor: Cllr. Dan Morehead.....
Cabinet Member

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Strong Leader

**Statement of Common Ground between the South Worcestershire Councils
(Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City
Council) and Wyre Forest District September 2023**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek agreement to the content of the Statement of Common Ground (appended to this report) which has been prepared by the South Worcestershire Councils and amended by officers at WFDC, for submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

2. RECOMMENDATION

For the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda to agree that;

- 2.1** the Draft Statement of Common Ground, as amended, is submitted to the South Worcestershire District Councils AND
- 2.2** delegated authority be given to the Head of Strategic Growth to finalise the wording for this Statement of Common Ground in the event that any further minor or grammatical changes are required that do not affect the substance of the current draft.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1** The South Worcestershire Councils concluded their Regulation 19 Publication Plan Consultation on 23/12/2022. As part of the background papers for this consultation, officers at the South Worcestershire Councils have had to provide evidence that they have fulfilled the Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring authorities.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1** A draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been drawn up by officers from the three South Worcestershire Districts outlining the key cross-boundary planning issues between them and Wyre Forest. These include housing, employment, cross boundary transport impacts, infrastructure, matters relating to the historic and natural environment and gypsy and traveller provision.
- 4.2** There are no specific housing related highways or infrastructure cross boundary issues as the 3 strategic proposed housing site allocations are in the south of the area around Worcester. The only large housing allocation which may have implications for Wyre Forest is at Hartlebury.
- 4.3** The existing small allocation at Clows Top is carried forward from the existing SWDP.
- 4.4** There are no significant employment allocations in close proximity to Wyre Forest with only limited allocations on Hartlebury Trading Estate.

- 4.5 Officers have made representations in the statement of common ground regarding the addition of sites with proximity to Stourport on Severn (at 6.5 and 6.6) and the requirement to do infrastructure modelling.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs are minimal and relate to staff time. These will be met by existing budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The duty to co-operate is enshrined in legislation (Localism Act 2011) but it does not require local authorities to reach agreement where this is not possible.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Not applicable

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Non-participation in the preparation or failure to approve a Statement of Common Ground with neighbouring authorities could make it difficult for Wyre Forest District Council to demonstrate, in any future Local Plan Review, that it has met the Statutory Duty to Cooperate. There is also the risk that neighbouring authorities will be unwilling to enter into discussions during future local plan reviews if we have been unwilling to discuss issues arising from their Local Plans.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Wyre Forest District Council is being requested to sign a statement of common ground which sets out the key issues arising from discussions between officers from the South Worcestershire District Councils and Wyre Forest District Council during the formulation of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review.

**Statement of Common Ground between the South
Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District Council,
Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council)
and Wyre Forest District Council**

Date: September 2023



1. Introduction

1.1 In accordance with the NPPF (paragraph 24)¹, public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to the strategic priorities set out above. This forms part of each local planning authority's evidence for their respective emerging Local Plans.

1.2 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to fulfil the duty to cooperate requirements in accordance with paragraph 27 of the NPPF² and the section of the Planning Practice Guidance on Maintaining Effective Cooperation.

2. Purpose

2.1. This SoCG has been produced to support the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR), which has been jointly prepared by the South Worcestershire Councils (SWCs) - Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council. It sets out how the SWCs have engaged with Wyre Forest District Council to fulfil its Duty to Cooperate Requirements.

3. Scope

3.1. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides details on the scope of a SoCG, which is detailed below.

- a short description and map of the administrative areas covered by the statement;
- the key strategic matters being addressed by the statement;
- the plan-making authorities responsible for joint working detailed in the statement, and list of any additional signatories;
- governance arrangements for the cooperation process;
- if applicable, the housing requirements in any adopted and (if known) emerging strategic policies relevant to housing within the area covered by the statement;
- distribution of needs in the area as agreed through the plan-making process, or the process for agreeing the distribution of need (including unmet need) across the area;
- a record of where agreements have (or have not) been reached on key strategic matters, including the process for reaching agreements on these; and
- any additional strategic matters to be addressed by the statement which have not already been addressed.

1. The PPG also recognises that the *'level of cooperation detailed in the statement is expected to be proportionate to the matters being addressed. The statement is expected to be concise and is not intended to document every occasion that strategic policy-making authorities meet, consult with each other, or for example, contact prescribed bodies under*

¹ *'Local planning authorities and county councils are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries' (NPPF, 2021, Para 24)*

² *'In order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policy making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These should be produced using the approach set out in national planning guidance, and be made publicly available throughout the plan-making process to provide transparency'*

*the duty to cooperate. The statement is a means of detailing key information, providing clear signposting or links to available evidence on authorities' websites.'*³

4. Relevant Local Authorities and Geography

- 4.1. The relevant Local Authorities to this SoCG are the SWCs (Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council) and Wyre Forest District Council.
- 4.2. The administrative areas of Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council are located in Worcestershire County. Malvern Hills / Wychavon District Council's administrative area adjoins the Wyre Forest District, which is also located in Worcestershire.
- 4.3. As the South Worcestershire Councils and Wyre Forest District Council are neighbouring planning authorities, it is important that effective duty to cooperate discussions are undertaken between them regarding strategic planning matters that cross administrative boundaries, during the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review.
- 4.4. The map below illustrates the location of the South Worcestershire Councils and Wyre Forest District Council:

³ Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 61-011-20190315, NPPF (2021)

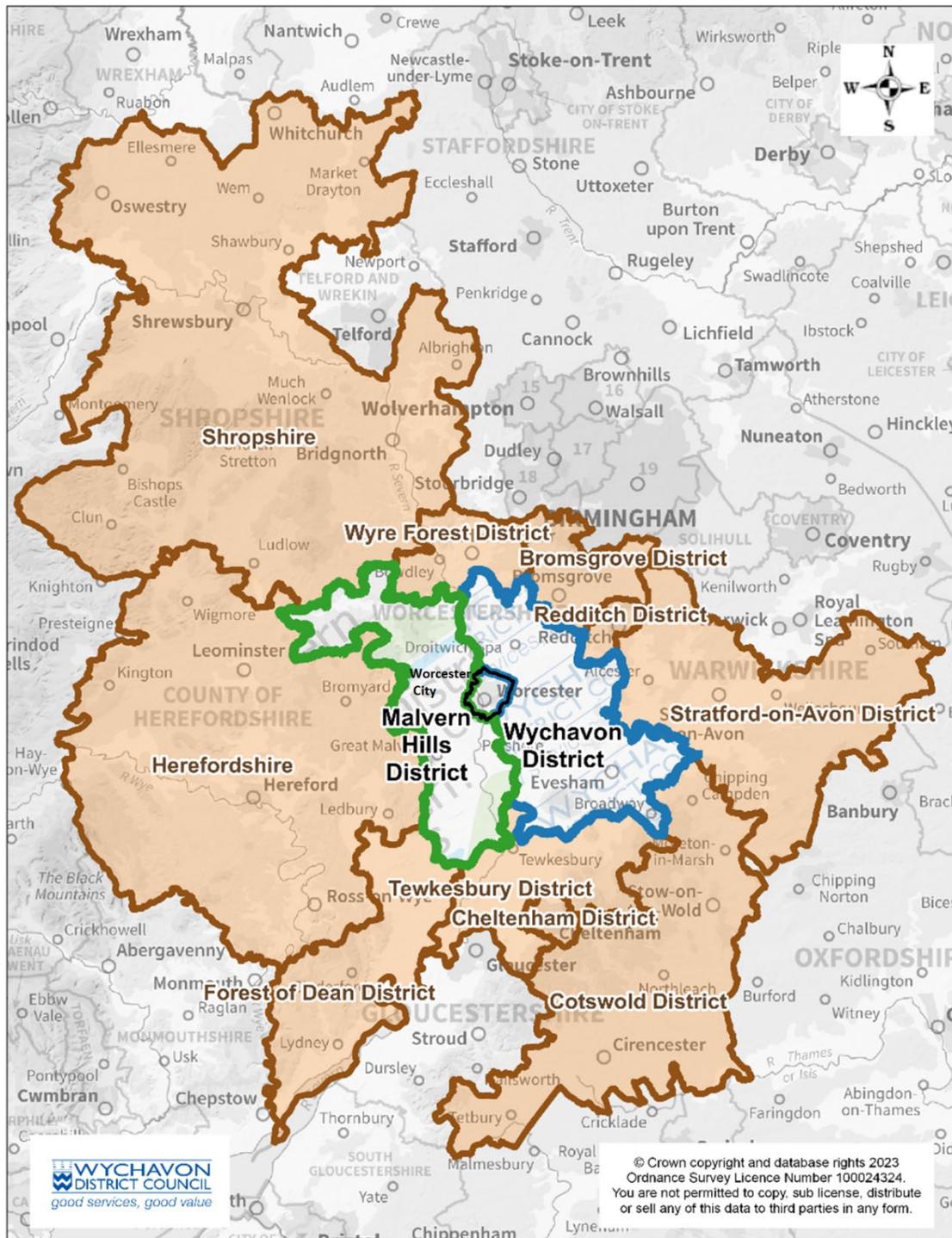


Figure 1 Map of SWCs and Neighbouring Authorities

5. Duty to Cooperate

South Worcestershire Development Plan Review

- 5.1. The Development Plan for the SWC currently comprises the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP, adopted 2016), Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP, 2017), Minerals Local Plan (2022), Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy (2012), together with made Neighbourhood Plans. The SWDP was prepared jointly by the three SWCs working together under plan making arrangements. On completion of the SWDP Review process, the SWDP will be replaced by the 'South Worcestershire Development Plan Review, 2021-2041' (SWDPR).
- 5.2. The SWDPR includes strategic and detailed policies, together with site allocations for the Plan period 2021 to 2041.
- 5.3. There has been ongoing and active engagement between the SWCs and Wyre Forest District Council throughout the SWDPR process and duty to Cooperate discussions have occurred at appropriate times during the SWDPR process.
- 5.4. As part of the development of the SWDPR the SWCs have consulted Wyre Forest District Council during the following consultations:
 - Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options - consultation concluded on 9 May 2016.
 - Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD Revised Preferred Options - consultation concluded on 18 April 2018.
 - Village Facilities and Rural Transport Proposed Methodology - consultation concluded on 2 July 2018.
 - SWDPR Call for Sites and Proposed SHELAA Methodology - consultation concluded on 2 July 2018.
 - Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report - consultation concluded on 3 July 2018.
 - Development Boundaries Review Proposed Methodology - consultation concluded on 8 October 2018.
 - SWDPR Issues and Options - consultation concluded on 17 December 2018.
 - SWDPR Preferred Options - consultation concluded on 16 December 2019.
 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Call for Sites - consultation concluded on 3 April 2020.
 - Country Park Call for Sites - consultation concluded on 24 July 2020.
 - SWDPR Further Regulation 18 (III) Sustainability Appraisal Consultation - consultation concluded on 19 April 2021.
 - Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD Revised Preferred Options - consultation concluded on 5 July 2021.
 - SWDPR Regulation 19 – consultation concluded on 23 December 2022.
 - Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD Publication – consultation concluded on 13 December 2022.
- 5.5. Duty to Cooperate discussions will continue at appropriate times as the SWDPR progresses.

Wyre Forest Local Plan

- 5.6. Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036) was formally adopted by Wyre Forest District Council on 26 April 2022.

- 5.7. The Wyre Forest District Local Plan now forms part of the development plan for the Wyre Forest District alongside the 'made' Neighbourhood Plans. It replaces the previously adopted Core Strategy (December 2010), the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan (July 2013) and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (July 2013).
- 5.8. As part of the development of the new Wyre Forest Local Plan, Wyre Forest District Council has consulted the SWCs during the following consultations.
- Issues and Options Consultation – September/October 2015
 - Preferred Options Consultation – June/August 2017
 - Pre-Submission Consultation – November/December 2018
 - Pre-Submission Consultation (reopening) – September/October 2019
 - Duty to Cooperate meetings also took place on the following dates:
 - 12th December 2018
 - 8th April 2019
 - 25th September 2019.

6. Key Strategic Matters

- 6.1. The following key issues have been identified in the Duty to Cooperate dialogue and consultation between SWC and Wyre Forest District Council.
- 6.2. At the Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation in the autumn of 2018 the following were raised by Wyre Forest District Council
- 6.3. WFDC invites discussion on addressing the housing need within South Worcestershire with the SWCs considering that the overall quantum of development in South Worcestershire is to increase from 1,183-¹ per annum (existing adopted 2006-2030 development plan), to 1,232 per annum for the new plan period (up to 2041), with a shortfall of 391 per annum.
- 6.4 In reference to the Overall Development Strategy, WFDC expressed that more weight should be given towards the most sustainable development, in line with the revised NPPF. Specifically, they favoured option 1D of instigating Large Urban Extensions on existing transport corridors as option 1B and 1C are not sufficient alone to meet all of the development requirements of South Worcestershire.
- 6.5 WFDC expressed concern over the potential adverse pressure that future development would place on existing infrastructure that is valuable to Wyre Forest District. It was outlined that the SWDPR Call for Sites map indicates the site at Astley Cross bordering the Wyre Forest District is being considered, despite being refused under a previous application and is pending on another application. Given that there is already limited access in this area, it is stated that any potential site allocations near to the Areley Kings area of Stourport-on-Severn will need assessing regarding traffic impact. WFDC expect to be consulted at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.6 WFDC also note the presence of several sites situated within Hartlebury. Whilst it is noted that Hartlebury is accessible via rail, additional development could still put excess pressure on the transportation and infrastructure within Stourport-on-Severn. Transport modelling is advised to assess the potential impact and to inform the Local Plan.

- 6.7 It was stressed that SWCs should engage with Worcestershire County Council to establish what type of highway and other infrastructural improvements are needed prior to the commencement of any significant development.
- 6.8 WFDC note that the Green Belt Parcels bordering Wyre Forest (Parcels NW1-4, & 6) are classified as having a contribution / significant contribution to the Green Belt. It is also noted that the Hartlebury Trading Estate is recommended to be inset within the Green Belt, which is located near the district boundary and is a significant employer to Wyre Forest residents.
- 6.9 WFDC welcomes the development of Worcestershire Parkway Station as an ideal growth node consistent with option 1A of the Issues and Options Consultation, and that the plan should consider a significant settlement to exploit the site's excellent connectivity and will, therefore, be a more sustainable and accessible allocation than the proposed sites near to Areley Kings, which are located further away from a railway station.
- 6.10 WFDC notes that the revised supply of employment land for the 2018-2041 plan period allocated 189.8 hectares of land to Wychavon, 35 ha to Worcester, and 70 ha to Malvern Hills. It was also highlighted that the potential conversion of the A46 as an express dual carriageway may help to ease the expected increase in traffic to these areas.
- 6.11 It is noted that although Wyre Forest District has close linkages to the South Worcestershire Area, it is concluded in the WFDC Employment Land Review (Oct 2018) that the Wyre Forest District is a self-contained functional Economic Market Area with the majority of residents working within the district. The district will allocate 29 ha of employment land in the pre-submission Local Plan in the 2016-2036 period and will continue to promote economic development through the Worcestershire LEP.
- 6.12 WFDC supports the SWDPR in promoting the use of electric vehicles through requirements for all new residential and employment development to establish electric charging points for all properties as outlined in Option 24, which is consistent with policy SP.37 of the Wyre Forest District Adopted Local Plan.
- 6.13 WFDC welcomes further dialogue with the SWCs through the Duty to Co-operate process and, therefore, wishes to be consulted on subsequent stages of the SWDP Review.
- 6.14 At the Regulation 18 Preferred Options consultation in the autumn of 2019 the following were raised by Wyre Forest District Council
- 6.14.1 Sought clarification on the amount of employment land proposed for allocations.
- 6.14.2 Expressed concerns on the adverse impact on capacity and infrastructure due to increased population, particularly in those settlements near to Wyre Forest District such as Hartlebury, Abberley and Clows Top.
- 6.14.3 Accept that the calculated housing need from the Government's standardised methodology will mean that additional housing allocations will be required in South Worcestershire.
- 6.14.4 Stated that Wyre Forest District is a self-contained functional economic market and the majority of residents will work in the district. Wyre Forest District will continue to promote economic development through the Worcestershire LEP. As a result of subsequent policy changes by the Government, the GBS LEP is being wound up and Wyre Forest District Council is no longer a member of it.

6.14.5 Expressed concern that there are no plans to increase car parking provision at Hartlebury railway station which could potentially increase pressure on the transportation and infrastructure within Stourport-on-Severn and the wider Wyre Forest District. Advise that development in Hartlebury should be tested through transport modelling.

6.14.6 Advise that any benefits in employment generation will have to be balanced with the impact on further development within the Green Belt

6.14.7 Advise that proposed development should take into account the proximity of the Hartlebury Common SSSI.

6.14.8 Concern on the potential impact of the existing road capacity and service capacity in Wyre Forest District due to additional housing allocations in Hartlebury, Clows Top and Abberley Common. In Tenbury Wells, the same concerns apply, though additionally there is concern that development in the area has the potential to impact the local road network (A456 towards Birmingham, Hagley and M5 motorway).

6.14.9 Outlines importance for South Worcestershire Councils to engage with Worcestershire County Council in a timely manner to establish what improvements to highways and infrastructure are needed, and their phasing, to support housing growth in the Plan area.

6.14.10 Express concern with regards to the potential adverse pressure on existing infrastructure in Wyre Forest District as a result of emerging allocations in close proximity to the Wyre Forest District administrative border.

6.14.11 Support removal of site at Astley Cross given the impact the development would have on the local road network.

6.14.12 Advise that any allocations close to Areley Kings would need to be assessed in terms of traffic impact and Wyre Forest District Council would wish to be consulted on any potential development at the earliest opportunity.

6.14.13 Support the SWDP promoting the use of electric vehicles by requiring all new residential, employment and commercial development to have electric charging infrastructure. This is consistent with Policy 24B Renewable and Low Carbon Energy of the Wyre Forest District Pre-Submission Publication Document.

6.14.14 Wyre Forest District Council welcomes the opportunity for further discussion with the South Worcestershire authorities on the SWDP through Duty to Co-operate. Wyre Forest District Council wishes to continue to be consulted on subsequent stages of the SWDP review.

All of the aforementioned issues have been addressed through subsequent plan making stages.

Housing Market Area

6.15 The area covered by the SWC's is considered to represent a broadly self-contained Housing Market Area (HMA) in terms of migration and travel to work.

6.16 However, it is acknowledged that the Duty to Cooperate is not restricted to just Planning Authorities within the same HMA. As such, the SWCs and Wyre Forest District Council have liaised closely during the SWDPR process, in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate.

Housing Need and Requirement

- 6.17. Using the Government's standard method calculation (using the 2022 baseline data and median workplace-based affordability ratio published in 2022, the housing requirement for the SWCs is currently 1,293 dwellings per annum (equating to 25,860 dwellings over the 20-year period from 2021–2041). The assessment of need will be kept under review.
- 6.18. In summary, the SWCs are proposing to meet the entirety of their LHN within the South Worcestershire HMA area and are therefore not seeking Wyre Forest District Council to meet any of their need.

Employment Land Requirement

- 6.19 The Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) published in March 2022, has informed the need for employment land in the SWDPR for the period to 2041. The EDNA currently identifies a gross employment land demand for 350.50 ha, of which 71.75 ha is already committed, i.e., planning permissions plus proposed SWDP allocations without planning permission. The proposed employment allocations in the SWDP Review total 290.70ha (including 75 ha at the strategic locations). This gives a surplus of 11.95ha of employment land across the plan area. The SWCs are proposing to meet the entirety of their employment land requirement within South Worcestershire and are therefore not seeking Wyre Forest District Council to meet any of their need.
- 6.20 Although Wyre Forest District has close linkages to the South Worcestershire area bordering both Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council, the Wyre Forest District Council Employment Land Review (Oct 2018) concludes that Wyre Forest District is a self-contained functional economic market area with the majority of residents working within the district. Wyre Forest District Council has allocated 31.43 ha of employment land in the Wyre Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036. Wyre Forest continues to promote economic development through the Worcestershire LEP.

Distribution of Development

- 6.21 Policy SWDP 02 of the adopted SWDP (2016) sets out the development strategy and settlement hierarchy for south Worcestershire to 2030. SWDP 02 focuses most development on the main urban areas (Worcester city and the towns of Droitwich Spa, Evesham, Malvern, Pershore, Tenbury Wells and Upton upon Severn), where both housing needs and accessibility to lower-cost public services are greatest. In order to deliver the social objectives of sustainable development, the adopted SWDP directs some growth to rural settlements (Category 1, 2 and 3 villages) that enjoy some local facilities and services.
- 6.22 Emerging Policy SWDPR 03 in the SWDPR sets out the revised development strategy and settlement hierarchy for south Worcestershire for the period 2021-2041. The revised strategy for the pattern and scale of additional development focuses as much of the additional growth as possible within easy reach of existing or proposed new rail stations in order to facilitate rail travel and reduce dependence on the private car. The SWDPR focuses the majority (8,000 new dwellings) of the additional circa 11,000 dwellings

required at three new or expanded settlements - Worcestershire Parkway centred around Worcestershire Parkway rail station (5,000 dwellings), Throckmorton Airfield with proposed improved access to Pershore rail station (2,000 dwellings) and Rushwick with a proposed new rail station (1,000 dwellings). The circa 12,300 dwellings is the LHN for 2021-2041 at 25,860 dwellings plus the additional 500 dwellings at Mitton, minus outstanding deliverable SWDP allocations, commitments and an appropriate windfall allowance, and a 10% additional buffer

- 6.23 Whilst the SWDPR proposes the majority of new dwellings in the main urban areas and new or expanded settlements, in order to deliver the social objectives of sustainable development, the SWDPR continues to direct some growth to rural settlements that enjoy some local facilities and services. The SWDPR proposes around 1445 new dwellings across Category 1, Category 2 and Category 3 villages.
- 6.24 Wyre Forest District Council support the settlement hierarchy which is set out particularly the identification of Droitwich as a main town, Hartlebury as a category one village and Clows Top as a Category 3 village. However, the District Council has some concerns regarding the general distribution of development, with many villages taking significant amounts of residential development.
- 6.25 Wyre Forest District Council support the general approach in the adopted SWDP of focusing development in the larger urban areas where there is typically better access to existing infrastructure and services and the approach of the SWDPR of focussing as much of the additional growth as possible within easy reach of existing or proposed new rail stations in order to facilitate rail travel and reduce dependence on the private car.
- 6.26 Wyre Forest District is largely rural, and has three towns: Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn. Stourport-on-Severn borders both Malvern Hills and Wychavon Districts and developed as an important industrial Georgian Canal Town at the confluence of the River Severn and River Stour with the construction of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. Kidderminster lies close to Wychavon's administrative boundary. Important transport links between south Worcestershire and Wyre Forest District include the rail line linking Birmingham and the Black Country to Worcester via Kidderminster and the A451, A4025, A449 and A442. Hartlebury is close to the Wyre Forest District boundary and has functional links to Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn.
- 6.27 Within the SWDPR, Hartlebury is identified as a Category 1 settlement. Category 1 settlements provide varying ranges of local services and facilities. Their role is predominantly aimed at meeting locally identified housing and employment needs. They are considered to be suited to accommodating market and affordable housing needs alongside limited employment for local needs. The draft SWDPR proposes two housing allocations at Hartlebury – land off Southall Drive (52 dwellings) and land off Inn Lane, Roselands (7 dwellings). The draft SWDPR also proposes several small extensions (totalling around 6 hectares) to the Hartlebury Trading Estate at Crown Lane.

7. Other Strategic Matters

Gypsies and Travellers

7.1 The South Worcestershire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), published in 2019, informs the SWDPR. The GTAA identifies a requirement for 30 permanent Traveller pitches and 7 permanent Travelling Showpeople plots between 2019 and 2023. It also identifies a likely longer-term requirement for 20 Traveller pitches and 1 Travelling Showpeople plot between 2024-2028; 22 Traveller pitches and 1 Travelling Showpeople plot between 2029-2033; and 32 Traveller pitches and 1 Travelling Showpeople plot between 2034-2041.

7.2 The SWCs have identified sites in a draft Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (T&TS DPD). The SWC will update annually the supply of deliverable sites, with a rolling five-year cumulative requirement for pitches, set against a rolling five-year delivery of pitches. When planning permissions are granted for permanent pitches through the development management process, they will contribute towards the required 5-year land supply. Between 1 January 2019 and May 2023 planning permission was granted for 72 new pitches and 2 Travelling Showpeople plots in south Worcestershire. The SWCs consulted on the Regulation 19 Publication version of the T&TS DPD in November and December 2022. None of the Traveller sites proposed are in close proximity to Wyre Forest District Council. The SWCs intend to address their own needs for Traveller and Travelling Showpeople provision within south Worcestershire through the T&TS DPD.

Infrastructure Provision

7.3 Worcestershire has a mature economy, with well-established transport networks and connectivity between economic centres already in place. The SWDPR aims to ensure that development brings about improvements to the transport network. The Worcestershire LTP4 and associated local transport plan policies, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and overarching strategies (including the Worcester Transport Strategy) provide the basis on which to develop and deliver the existing network.

7.4 Improved public transport (including a new rail station and associated car park) is proposed as part of the proposed expansion of Rushwick, 2.5 miles south-west of Worcester city. The proposed rail station is unlikely to impact Wyre Forest District. The proposed rail station is unlikely to impact Wyre Forest District.

Climate Change and the Renewable Energy

7.5 To increase the security of energy supply and reduce greenhouse gas emissions the SWDPR proposes to allocate 9 solar farms in south Worcestershire. None of the proposed solar farms are in close proximity to the Wyre Forest District Council administrative boundary.

Natural Environment, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Proposed New Areas of Informal Recreation

7.6 The Cotswolds National Landscape and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are nationally important landscapes and form an important part of the borders between south Worcestershire, Cotswold District, Tewkesbury District and Herefordshire.

7.7 To reduce the pressure from increased footfall on the Malvern Hills, the SWDPR will propose designating three new Areas of Informal Recreation (AIRs) in south Worcestershire. It is noted that Shropshire Council's administrative area is adjacent to the Malvern Hills and proposed major development may cause significant adverse impacts on the Malvern Hills due to increased footfall. It is agreed that this would need to be addressed through the Council's individual plan making process.

Neighbourhood Plans

7.8 Currently, the following designated Neighbourhood Areas adjoin south Worcestershire Plan area and the Wyre Forest District Plan area –

- Abberley Neighbourhood Plan area (adjoins Malvern Hills District)
- Chaddesley Corbett Neighbourhood Plan (Wyre Forest District) - situated in close proximity to Wychavon District.

7.9 The SWC's and Wyre Forest District Council will continue to raise awareness of, and consult on, emerging Neighbourhood Plans at relevant stages.

Minerals and Waste

7.10 Worcestershire County Council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for Worcestershire. The South Worcestershire Councils are therefore not responsible for allocating minerals or waste sites. Therefore, no significant cross boundary issues are identified.

Hartlebury and Hartlebury Trading Estate

7.11 Several sites are located within the village of Hartlebury or at Hartlebury Trading Estate. Hartlebury has a railway station which is situated on the Worcester to Birmingham line. However, Wyre Forest District Council have noted in their consultation responses that there are extremely limited parking facilities as there are only 20 car parking spaces available.

7.12 Wyre Forest District Council expressed concern that there appears to be no plans to increase the car parking provision at Hartlebury railway station which, together with increased development in the area, could potentially increase pressure on the transportation and infrastructure within Stourport-on-Severn and the wider Wyre Forest District. Those living and working in the Hartlebury area may travel to either Kidderminster railway station where more car parking is available or to Blakedown railway station where, as part of the Wyre Forest Adopted Local Plan, two car parks to serve the railway station are proposed. In total this could provide an additional 250 car parking spaces⁴. It has been agreed that the impact of

⁴ 250 Capacity is mentioned in the SLC Blakedown Station Car Park Options report. This is document no. IFT03 in the Wyre Forest Examination Library.

development in Hartlebury and at Hartlebury Trading Estate would need to be tested through transport modelling to inform the SWDP.

7.13 Given its proximity Wyre Forest District has strong employment linkages to Hartlebury Trading Estate which has been identified as a major developed site within the Green Belt in the current SWDP, and development is restricted to infilling and the development of previously developed land.

7.14 In the SWDP Preferred Options six employment sites are proposed, the majority of these are infill sites within the existing trading estate. The largest of these sites SWDP82 6.24 hectares is a larger site that is proposed to be allocated in the Green Belt which may have a negative impact on the surrounding green belt land. It is agreed by both Councils that any benefits in employment generation though will have to be balanced with the impact on further development within the Green Belt. Hartlebury Common SSSI is also located close by and proposed development must take account of this Site of Special Scientific Interest.

8 Matters of Agreement

8.1 All the above matters are agreed between the SWC's (Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council) and Wyre Forest District Council.

9 Matters of Disagreement (EM)

9.1 There are no matters of disagreement between the SWC's and Wyre Forest District Council.

10 Governance Arrangements

10.1 Governance arrangements are key to ensure that effective duty to cooperate discussions are undertaken⁵ and an appropriate SoCG prepared.

10.2 Updating of this SoCG will be linked to key milestones within the SWDPR and Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review processes.

11 Conclusions

11.1 The parties agree that:

- i) The South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council) have fulfilled their Duty to Cooperate with Wyre Forest District Council.
- ii) The parties will continue to work positively together and where relevant with other prescribed bodies on strategic cross boundary issues.

12 Signatories

12.1 This SoCG has been agreed and signed by the following:

South Worcestershire Councils

Name: Duncan Rudge

Position: Head of Planning, Worcester City Council

Date agreed: **INSERT**

Signature: **INSERT**

Wyre Forest District Council

Name: Kate Bailey

Position: Head of Strategic Growth

Date agreed: **INSERT**

Signature: **INSERT**