



# WORCESTER CITY PLAN

2022-2027

*“Building a successful future  
on 2,000 years of history”*





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# Introduction

**Welcome to Worcester City Council’s new City Plan for the next five years: Building a successful future on 2,000 years of history. This is a refresh of the 2016-2021 plan and continues to focus not just on the Council’s activities but on how we hope residents and stakeholders can continue to work together for a successful, vibrant and sustainable Worcester. As Leaders of each of the Council’s political parties we have come together to renew our shared vision of a future Worcester; only by working together with partners across the city can it become a reality.**

**Our collective vision is of a city that is prosperous, accessible, diverse and inclusive; with great opportunities for work, leisure, sport and tourism alongside a quality of life that is attractive to all.**

The central focus of this plan remains people and communities, making them stronger, more prosperous, helping them to fully participate in the experience of living in their city, to be connected to each other and to achieve their aspirations. We also want Worcester and its residents to play an increasing role in the livelihood and wellbeing of Worcestershire and in the growing prosperity of the West Midlands.

By 2027 we want Worcester to be even more firmly recognised as a growing cosmopolitan cathedral and university city with a dynamic sporting and cultural heritage, where people are welcome from all communities and are given the opportunity to achieve the best possible lives for themselves and their families – a city that is uniquely Worcester. Our ambitions remain the same: we want our riverside to become an international as well as a national destination, and our restaurants, bars and shops to include a fabulous mix of mainstream, independent and designer traders, embracing the artisan and quirky. We want Worcester to remain a safe city with a strong base of creativity and innovation, but for it also to be a city with a growing international reputation for sporting excellence for people of all abilities. In addition, we want the city to be recognised for its vibrant cultural scenes: a place of art and festival, of colour and community, of open space used for the enjoyment of all.

Alongside all this success, our vision is to maintain Worcester’s precious environment through sensitive management of local and city-wide activities and to encourage the use of sustainable energy whenever possible. We want to work to eradicate poverty and strive to support everyone to get involved in the city’s future.

Worcester is known for its strong community spirit, as a city where people support each other, ‘muck in’ and do their bit, not just for their own families but for their neighbours and communities too. Both public, private and third sector partners in our city work together to provide support where it is needed in the most effective way possible, using our collective resources to achieve the best possible outcomes for the city. Our vision is for this welcoming, inclusive community spirit to be enhanced further as we move towards 2027.

The first City Plan was a great success in helping to shape the city for the benefit of all, promoting and supporting progress on 22 of the 35 measures published, including:

- ◆ **33% of all homes built 2015-2020 were affordable homes**
- ◆ **13% reduction in journey times due to opening of Worcester Parkway**
- ◆ **18% reduction in households experiencing fuel poverty**
- ◆ **25% increase in designated local nature reserves**
- ◆ **13% improvement in air quality measures.**

The plan has also enabled the Council to submit bids for government funding which have brought nearly £45m of capital investment into the city since 2018.

This refresh builds on that success by renewing and revising the five overlapping and interconnected themes. There are also new challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic which has affected communities across the city and will continue to shape the landscape for some time to come. This plan will form part of the recovery process and help us together achieve the Worcester we want to be by 2027.

# 1

## Stronger and connected communities



### What do we want?

**We want people in Worcester to feel they are part of a city where they have positive relationships with each other, where they feel safe and where they are able to succeed to the best of their abilities.**

### What does this mean?

**We will build on the existing and emerging strengths of our communities and ensure people are not left isolated or unsupported in our neighbourhoods. We will support people to use available technology to access the information and services they need, and to enhance their ability to play an active role in their communities, enjoying the socially enhancing opportunities of involvement and participation.**

### What will it involve?

- ◆ People feeling like they belong and are proud of where they live
- ◆ People participating and volunteering and supporting each other to build resilient, inclusive communities
- ◆ People feeling safe and able to enjoy the city fully without fear of crime or anti-social behaviour
- ◆ Being an accessible city in both the physical sense but also in the virtual/digital sense
- ◆ Developing communities where everyone can thrive in partnership with the third sector, faith and minority ethnic groups
- ◆ Having a wide mixture of good quality housing provision to suit the full range of needs

### Outcomes

- ◆ Increased use of technology by all communities
- ◆ Improved turn-out at elections and in residents' satisfaction levels
- ◆ Sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure, including facilities and shops
- ◆ Increased integration and partnership working across all key stakeholders to reduce crime and perception of crime
- ◆ Appropriate support for homeless people and other vulnerable adults and children
- ◆ Reduction in underused property and reduced number of substandard rental properties
- ◆ Increased opportunities for young people to play, develop, participate and gain a high quality education



# 2

## A prosperous city



### What do we want?

**We want sustainable growth from which all people and communities can benefit. We want to attract good employers, support existing businesses and ensure everyone has the chance to get the opportunities, education, training and jobs that they need so that prosperity is increased for all. We want to work in partnership to increase the proportion of high value employment in the city and for our growing entrepreneurial city to contribute to the prosperity of communities across Worcestershire and to the sustainable growth of the wider West Midlands economy.**

### What does this mean?

**Worcester will be attractive to businesses established in the city or relocating here, and local people will have the relevant skills and ability to be their workforce. It will be a city where private investment is increasing and public investment is used effectively and efficiently in a joined up manner to ensure people from all skill levels are able to succeed.**

### What will it involve?

- ◆ Becoming identified nationally and internationally as a good investment opportunity
- ◆ Creating the conditions for sustainable growth and unlocking potential
- ◆ Being forward-thinking and a centre for innovation
- ◆ Having pathways into employment by building basic skills and removing barriers to work
- ◆ Increasing opportunities by supporting city people to develop new skills
- ◆ Creating an entrepreneurial culture where new business creation is supported and promoted
- ◆ Improving essential infrastructure, including high speed broadband and road/rail links, to ensure the growing prosperity of the city will benefit not just our own residents, but communities across Worcestershire
- ◆ Developing strong working relationships with policy-makers, investors and other partners in the UK and across the globe, to continue to attract investment

### Outcomes

- ◆ A highly skilled workforce, with the experience and the right types of qualifications that city employers need
- ◆ Existing businesses retained and new businesses moving to and delivering success in Worcester
- ◆ Increase in high value and better paid jobs in the city
- ◆ Improved connectivity with other parts of the West Midlands, UK and Europe including a London train service taking under two hours
- ◆ Increase in number of graduates remaining in the city to live and work
- ◆ Increase in start-up businesses that last over 12 months
- ◆ Increase in number of disabled people able to work
- ◆ Progress in delivering economic and housing ambitions of the South Worcestershire Development Plan
- ◆ Progress in delivering on Government-funded capital investment including a new pedestrian bridge and transport infrastructure improvements, the development of a Centre for Health and Wellbeing, the Arches Worcester and a vibrant new cultural quarter
- ◆ A thriving night-time economy which is managed effectively and safely through partnership

# 3

## A healthy and active city



### What do we want?

**We want our city's residents to have a good start in life, enjoying long, healthy and fulfilling lives, through to a dignified end. We want people to have the opportunity to be as fit and healthy as they can be by using all of Worcester's assets, from the new swimming pool to our green spaces, to improve their wellbeing. Worcester will become an inspirational sporting city, hosting regular national and international competitions and boosting grassroots participation for people of all abilities.**

### What does this mean?

**People, families and communities will be able to make the best choices they can in relation to their own health. Health services being provided at home or as close to home as possible. Technology is used to maintain independent living for as long as possible and people are actively engaged within their neighbourhood. Worcester's many successful sports clubs will provide inspiration to people to use state-of-the-art fitness and leisure facilities to be active and healthy.**

### What will it involve?

- ♦ Helping more people make healthier choices, more easily
- ♦ Worcester achieving a growing reputation for sporting excellence - building on the excellent reputation it already has for disabled sports
- ♦ Increasing participation by continuing to build strong sporting and leisure partnerships, embracing Worcestershire County Cricket Club, Worcester Warriors Rugby Club, Severn Stars Netball Club and Worcester Wolves Basketball Club, Worcester City Football Club, Worcester Rowing Club, Worcester Canoe Club, Worcester Swimming Club, Worcester Hockey Club, Racecourse operators Arena, Freedom Leisure and others
- ♦ Being positive about mental as well as physical wellbeing and happiness
- ♦ Working with partners to develop a sustainable joined-up health and care service
- ♦ Enriching the lives of residents and visitors through a diverse cultural and arts offer over a spectrum of venues and settings
- ♦ Developing a quality environment, including our parks and open spaces, for living and working that supports good physical and mental health
- ♦ Ensuring health services and facilities, including pharmacies, are appropriate and accessible

### Outcomes

- ♦ Worcester has a strong national and international reputation for a range of sports, including inclusive sports
- ♦ National and international competitions are regularly hosted in the city, boosting tourism and providing sport and health inspiration
- ♦ Increase in sport/physical activity for all age groups through the wider sporting community, such as the Parkrun and grassroots sport
- ♦ Health inequalities, including levels of obesity, smoking, alcohol and drug use and mental health problems, are reducing
- ♦ Transportation is improved, reducing congestion and improving air quality, with an increased provision and use of cycle/walking routes and enhancements to the city's ring routes and radial routes
- ♦ Increased participation in football, cricket, rugby, rowing, canoeing, netball, basketball, swimming, hockey, tennis, running and other sports
- ♦ Healthy walking routes around the city are enhanced to achieve a '15 minute city' where facilities are accessible to all

# 4

## A heritage city with a 21st Century culture



### What do we want?

We want to retain the ‘essence of Worcester’, whilst accommodating the needs of sustainable growth and development in a way that is sympathetic with a range of views, needs and potential. We want to attract visitors to enjoy the city’s compelling leisure offer - from bars and restaurants to shopping and the strong cultural life – and to enjoy its great heritage appeal, while building a new reputation as a centre for cultural ideas, expressions, and art. All these elements will create a compelling Worcester package in partnership with Worcestershire County Council, the Cathedral, historical societies and many others.

### What does this mean?

We will celebrate and sustain our unique history and heritage whilst embracing the best aspects of the fast-paced 21st Century, through festivals, arts and entertainment to create a diverse and cosmopolitan city that is attractive for people to live, work and visit. We will champion our city’s rich heritage – from its ancient Cathedral quarter and its industrial past through the social changes that have informed the development of its riverside and residential areas – to create a compelling tourism offer by improving access to sites of interest, information and advice.

### What will it involve?

- ♦ Implementing the Masterplan for the city that brings together the need for sustainable growth and development whilst maintaining a balance between historic and good quality new buildings and other assets
- ♦ Working with a wide range of partners to make Worcester visible as a centre of art and culture to national and international audiences
- ♦ Worcester’s role in the English Civil War being widely recognised
- ♦ Enhancing and co-ordinating the city’s tourism offer for people of all ages, genders, ethnicities, sexuality, abilities and beliefs and increasing visitor numbers and spend
- ♦ Better protection and utilisation of the city’s historical buildings, including the Cathedral and City walls, the Guildhall and the museums and art gallery
- ♦ Meeting the need for hotel provision for a wide range of different visitors

### Outcomes

- ♦ Increase in people coming for overnight stays
- ♦ Increased visitor numbers to all the city’s venues and events
- ♦ Enhanced reputation as a vibrant centre for arts and culture
- ♦ Increased reputation as a destination with a major heritage appeal
- ♦ Sustainable growth delivered for the city’s tourism, leisure, accommodation, hospitality and catering businesses
- ♦ More accommodation for delivering more spend in tourist attractions
- ♦ National and international recognition for Worcester’s unique history
- ♦ A diverse and growing cultural, theatre, music and arts offer for residents and visitors

# 5

## Enhancing and sustaining our beautiful city for future generations

### What do we want?

**We want people to recognise the beauty of our city and to work with us to protect, sustain and improve its environment for the benefit of current and future generations. We want sustainable and sympathetic growth which is in tune with the environment. We want a city where people's communities are enriched by the natural world.**

### What does this mean?

**We will use our existing wealth of natural, historical and cultural resources to create a place that is attractive to residents, visitors, businesses and investors. We will capitalise in the most positive way on the environmental opportunities and potential in our city whilst conserving our existing natural and built environments and cultural assets. We will make the most of our city's location close to other natural and cultural assets such as the Malvern Hills and Stratford-upon-Avon as a draw to bring people here.**

### What will it involve?

- Our city being a beautiful place to be in, whether as a resident or a visitor
- Combatting the climate change emergency by leading city-wide measures to reduce carbon emissions
- Maintaining and enhancing the city's biodiversity
- Sourcing renewable/affordable energy
- Recognising the significance of the River Severn as National Critical Infrastructure and improving flood resilience
- Enhancing our natural assets such as parks, green spaces and waterways, helping and encouraging people of all ages to benefit from using them
- Implementing the riverside plan to ensure the Severn, canals and basins are a focus point of tourism and wellbeing in our city, and are a central focus of social and healthy activity
- Increasing opportunities to walk, run and cycle alongside and across the river, including the building of a new bridge linking Gheluvelt and Kepax parks
- Maximising the use of community assets both physical and human

### Outcomes

- Improved air quality through reduction in carbon emissions
- A vibrant riverside which balances leisure opportunities with resilience, becoming a destination in itself
- More travel choices
- Increased use and appreciation of our city's full range of green spaces and parks by residents and visitors
- Reduction of lorries and other HGVs in city centre
- Reduction in the number of buildings at risk
- Improved flood resilience

# From plan to delivery

By building on the wealth of relationships between the Council and its partners created through the first City Plan that can simultaneously build a successful thriving and welcoming city.

## How are we going to do it?

We will hold an annual summit to bring partners and stakeholders together to explore in depth the 'State of the City' and identify new approaches to address agreed issues and priorities. The summit will receive an annual report on progress against the five themes and build an action plan to drive progress towards the desired outcomes.

This, however, will not be the only mechanism; this plan is dependent on working effectively with existing partners at all times as well as creating new partnerships and relationships.

## Measuring the City Plan

**Credible, evidence-based measures will be used to assess progress on each of the five themes (Sources listed in brackets). These will be used in conjunction with other information provided at a national level such as reports by the Centre for Cities and the UK Prosperity Index.**

### 1 Stronger and connected communities Measures

- ♦ Unemployment claimant count (nomis)
- ♦ Youth unemployment 18 - 24 (nomis)
- ♦ Electoral turnout (City Council)
- ♦ Proportion of population with no qualification (nomis)
- ♦ Number of crimes per 1,000 population (UK Crime statistics)
- ♦ People's perception of crime reducing (PCC)
- ♦ Increase the number of affordable housing built (MHCLG)
- ♦ Number of attendances at Worcester Food Bank (City)

### 2 A prosperous city Measures

- ♦ Job density (nomis)
- ♦ Employment by job type (nomis)
- ♦ Proportion of population economically active (nomis)
- ♦ Proportion of population qualified to NVQ level 3 or above (nomis)
- ♦ Average gross weekly residence pay (nomis)
- ♦ Average gross weekly workplace earnings (nomis)
- ♦ Average house price (UK house price index)
- ♦ New start-ups (nomis)
- ♦ Start-ups lasting beyond 12 months (nomis)

### 3 A healthy and active city Measures

- ♦ Modelled estimates of unemployment (nomis)
- ♦ Resident participation in healthy activities (Freedom Leisure)
- ♦ Proportion of households that experience fuel poverty (County Council - public health outcomes framework)
- ♦ Number of Lower Support Output Areas (LSOA) which fall within the top 10% most deprived nationally (DCLG)
- ♦ NHS hospital admissions related to obesity (NHS)
- ♦ Prevalence of Obesity at Year 6 (LA Health Profiles)
- ♦ Life expectancy for males and females (LA Health Profiles)

### 4 A heritage city with a 21st Century culture Measures

- ♦ Number of visitors to Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum and The Commandery (Museums Worcestershire)
- ♦ Number of assets on 'At Risk' register (City Council)
- ♦ Number of designated local nature reserves (City Council)
- ♦ Tree canopy coverage (City)
- ♦ City centre footfall (BID)

### 5 Enhancing and sustaining our beautiful city for future generations Measures

- ♦ Number of sites awarded 'Green Flag' status (City Council)
- ♦ Annual total CO2 emissions per person (kilotonnes) (National Statistics)
- ♦ Proportion of homes in Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band D or better (ie, Bands A-C) (National Statistics)
- ♦ Proportion of homes in fuel poverty (LG Inform)
- ♦ Total local renewable energy generation (City)