



# **Worcester Town Investment Plan**

Appendix D: Detailed Project Summary Report

January 2020



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# 1 Introduction

Over the next five years, we have identified, in consultation with the community, six priority projects for immediate investment through the Towns Fund that will deliver the priorities that underpin our vision for the city. These projects, taken together, comprise Worcester's Town Investment Plan (TIP) with a combined financial ask of £27.89 million contributing to an overall investment in the projects we have put forward of £56.9m.

The Towns Deal Board's six priority projects are:

- **Community Skills and Enterprise** – this project will equip existing and new facilities in the heart of our communities to deliver skills and training opportunities to those who need support, working with a number of educational and vocational training providers to make the offer as attractive as possible to our hard to reach communities. We will build on the many successes of Worcester's network of community centres and develop additional construction and green technology skills provision in the West of the city.
- **Severn Centre for Health and Wellbeing** – delivery of a regionally significant centre for skills across the health professions led by the University of Worcester. State of the art specialist clinical simulation and health education facilities – that support Research and Development activities in the region – will be created in the fully refurbished, attractively clad dilapidated former Worcester News building.

These new opportunities will enable these excellent, educationally inclusive pathways to be used by many more students from Worcester's disadvantaged communities to access and earn health professional qualifications. This will be a significant contribution to producing sustainable skilled employment opportunities at scale in a fast growing, much needed sector of the economy. Severn campus will link with the riverside destination through provision of publicly accessible amenities.

- **Shrub Hill Regeneration** – firing up the revival of the Shrub Hill Quarter that currently acts as a poor gateway for those arriving in the city via the train station. The investment will have a significant local impact, addressing negative perceptions engendered by a dilapidated, under-utilised major entry point to the city. The vision for the Shrub Hill area, endorsed within the Worcester City Centre masterplan, is to deliver a new high-quality mixed-use quarter for the city. The Towns Fund element involves three key interventions:
  - **Redevelopment of the current Bus Depot Site** – releasing the existing bus depot site and regeneration of its 1.1ha of land as part of a canal-side mixed use scheme to include approximately 350 new homes and 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial / employment space and the relocation of the existing bus depot from the site to support wider regeneration.
  - **Public Realm** – 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of high-quality public realm following the line of Cromwell Street from Shrub Hill Road to Pheasant Street to provide a new connection between the Shrub Hill Railway Station, Shrub Hill Regeneration area and onward to the city centre.
  - **Enterprise and Innovation Centre** – regeneration of a 1.15ha site to include a 3,000m<sup>2</sup> Enterprise and Innovation Centre and approximately 100 new homes. The Enterprise and Innovation Centre will provide training and business support that help residents and small businesses develop business ideas into real opportunities alongside space for collaborative working between businesses and academia.
- **Heritage Tourism** – development of the significant but underplayed heritage attraction of the City, presenting and marketing it as a coherent tourist offer. Complementary to our Riverside project and our successes with our cultural capital projects, this will enable our tourism

economy to grow to encourage and support weekend and week-long stays. We will achieve this by linking the city's many heritage locations with digital and physical interpretation that present a joined-up offer of a remarkable heritage City. We will also further develop the City's Commandery attraction to create a tourist destination.

- **Riverside as a Destination** – as part of our investment in our tourism economy and for our own residents' health and wellbeing, this project aims to develop the natural heart of the city, the River Severn. It will be achieved through a number of distinct interventions which draw in some of the city's best known organisations as delivery partners (University, Cathedral, Canal and River Trust, County Council, County Cricket Club) and overall will combine to improve the visitor experience at the riverside, boosting the economic impact of this important asset and benefitting the city as whole.
- **Active Travel** – provision of new and upgraded walking and cycling infrastructure in Worcester providing greater local connectivity between communities, social facilities and employment opportunities across the city. A particular emphasis of this project is linking deprived communities to employment centres in the city. Currently the public transport linkages and severance created by the train lines, the river and major roads create a disconnect between the city centre and Worcester's more deprived areas.

Greater detail on each of these priority projects is outlined in the following sub-sections.



## 2 Community Skills and Enterprise

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Project Description	<p>This project is critical in the delivery of the government's levelling up agenda and builds on the accelerated Towns Fund allocation for Worcester. It will enable completion of our ambitious programme to repurpose a network of strategically located community centres into 'Skills and Enterprise' hubs providing inclusive, safe, and high-quality training facilities in deprived communities. The project aims to embed a culture of aspiration, lifelong learning and entrepreneurship tackling the multiple barriers which lead to educational disengagement and economic inactivity. Whilst the project's core aim is to deliver 'first step' entry level skills for those with no or low qualifications, it will enable residents at any level to progress the skills ladder and/or retrain to find employment in the post COVID-19 jobs market.</p> <p>The accompanying delivery programme will bring a wide range of 'Skills' activity - including basic, digital, life and job focused support leading to soft skills and accredited qualifications; self-employment; start up and social enterprise support to convert talent and ideas into new ventures; STEaM education outreach for young people and all age Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) - into the heart of the City's most deprived communities.</p> <p>Training of community staff and volunteers in Level 1 Careers Advice will support the effective signposting of participants on to their 'next step'. This will counteract the 'revolving door' for many low skilled, unemployed residents who go in and out of insecure, unsustainable employment with no skills progression. The project will focus on training and retraining women, young people, over 50's, BAME groups and those with health/disability barriers as they are the most disadvantaged in the jobs market, hardest hit by COVID-19 job losses and therefore most at risk of 'long term unemployment'.</p> <p>Delivered through a 'hub and spoke' model under the umbrella of the Worcestershire LEP's Employment &amp; Skills delivery framework, the project will provide investment into our community based infrastructure to enable the city partnership make a step change in tackling entrenched economic deprivation and low social mobility, whilst stimulating economic activity and start-ups at the neighbourhood level.</p> <p>More specifically the project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance, extend, improve, redesign and equip Worcester's Network of Community Centres to provide 'Skills and Enterprise' Hubs across the city which are accessible and attractive to multiple users (learners, SME's, employment and training providers), overcoming the real and perceived barriers that currently deter engagement. Works will include refurbishment, extension or reconfiguration and provision of digital infrastructure and vocational training equipment. Dedicated high quality digitally enabled training facilities will be created within high quality welcoming buildings that enable training and established community uses to take place at the same time.</li><li>• Engage with a range of mainstream education, employment, training, and careers advice providers leveraging existing revenue funding streams to deliver from and within targeted communities e.g. DWP and ESFA Prime Contractors.</li></ul> <p>Linked to the key growth sectors identified in the Town Fund Evidence Base &amp; the Local Industrial Strategy, activity will be closely aligned with Job Growth sectors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Construction Sector</b> - The project will develop additional Construction &amp; Green Technology Skills provision in the West of the City replicating the successful 'Building Block' construction skills centre model at Warndon Community Centre. A 2nd Building Block and centre refurbishment at Dines Green, will enable Worcester Community Trust (WCT) to respond to the unmet skills demands of the Construction and green technology sectors linked in part to S106 agreements from the urban extensions to Worcester (circa 5,000 houses).</li><li>• <b>Health, Care and Early Years sector</b> - The project will work closely with DWP, the Severn Centre for Health and Wellbeing and Sanctuary Care to prepare the unemployed, and returners to work to access jobs growth in the Health &amp; Care sector, and the identified skills gaps for Early Years care. promoting the sector to those who might not otherwise have considered H&amp;C as a career targeting those seeking work and returners to the labour market. Early discussions with Sanctuary Care have identified the potential for developing an employment pathway via supervised volunteering and work experience attached to the Community Hubs. Links with the University of Worcester will provide student volunteer and work experience placements, mentoring and coaching and professional best practice learning in Mental Health, and Dementia Care to improve the health and wellbeing of residents.</li><li>• <b>Digital Inclusion and Basic/Soft Skills</b> - The centre network will offer a universal 'digital skills' offer at all locations, so that there is 'no wrong door' for residents with digital barriers. Utilising the 'Essential Digital Skills Framework' centre users will be encouraged to access the IT facilities from a 'soft engagement approach to attending drop-in sessions to use facilities and on</li></ul>
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to more self-guided or assisted E-Learning starting at the level which matches their competencies.

- **Future Workforce** – The project will work with the LEP's Future Workforce team to deliver more STEaM education outreach in community settings to tackle the social mobility issues identified in the Local Industrial Strategy so that all young people can form the core technical and creative skills needed in the future economy.
- **Creative Industries** – Linked to the city's Arches project, the community network will also provide space and facilities to bring in outreach activity around the Arts, Culture and Creative/Digital Creative to link deprived communities and disadvantaged groups with work experience, volunteering, apprenticeships and jobs with the city's growing Creative & Cultural sector..
- **Mainstream Hubs** – The community network will link with key 'mainstream hubs' including the DWP Youth Hub; The Hive and University of Worcester; The Arches & The Kiln for creative and digital start up; apprenticeships & NEET activity; Worcester Job Centre; Heart of Worcestershire College Campuses; and the Severn Centre for Health and Wellbeing.

The chosen locations will be selected during development of the business case business but at this stage it is envisaged that the locations will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- Warndon (Worcester Community Trust)
- Ronkswood (Worcester Community Trust)
- Tolladine (Worcester Community Trust)
- King George V (Worcester Community Trust)
- Horizons (Cathedral Ward) (Worcester Community Trust)
- Dines Green (Worcester Community Trust)
- Stanley Road (Worcester Muslim Welfare Association)
- St Peters Village Hall (South Worcester)
- St John's Library
- Fairfield Adult Learning Centre - Hair and Beauty Vocational Training Suite (Worcestershire County Council Adult Learning & Libraries)

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Project Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Both the Town Fund and the Local Industrial Strategy evidence base illustrate entrenched issues around economic exclusion in Worcester. Low social mobility and deprivation is concentrated in certain parts of the city, with persistent and worsening levels of low or no skills, and localised NEET issues in specific wards comparable with rates in inner city Birmingham and London. Compounding these issues is the impact of COVID-19 on both the local economy and the mental health of our young people and most vulnerable. predominantly hitting young people, women, low-income households, and low skilled residents. Previous records show that labour markets take up to 3 – 7 years to recover from recession and economic shocks. Long-term unemployment for the UK is forecasted to increase by 600%.</li> <li>● Over 20 years of neighbourhood renewal, welfare to work and social inclusion intervention programmes at the national and local level (including the Worcester 'Our Happy Place' programme) have identified the complex array of 'multiple barriers' which must be addressed in order to break the cycle and raise skills levels. These barriers include lack of confidence, fear of formal educational settings due to poor school experiences; mental and physical health; caring responsibilities; lack of transport; financial hardship and poor social capital which combine to prevent many residents engaging with mainstream services which are predominantly located in the city centre. The River Severn also forms a barrier for people living on the west of the city to access services 'over the bridge' with communities such as in Dines Green experiencing high levels of social isolation.</li> <li>● The community delivery model works in breaking down those barriers, due to the high levels of engagement and trust the community hubs have with marginalised and vulnerable residents, with the capacity for further engagement through a broader 'skills &amp; enterprise' offer. Once an individual accesses the hub it widens the reach for other support services such as Health, Housing and Financial Inclusion.</li> <li>● The identified Network of Community Centres are strategically located across the city, accessible to residents and businesses as a neighbourhood resource. Existing Community Centres and our strong third sector provider network already play a vital part in delivering for the Inclusive Growth agenda within the City. Worcester Community Trust are a key partner in delivering the £6m Worcestershire Building Better Opportunities program funded by National Lottery/ESF. They also deliver ESF Community grants projects and host Adult Education delivery funded by Worcestershire County Council. WCT have also begun to deliver internally accredited training for local businesses. WCT also deliver a range of entry level – level 3 accredited Construction and Electrical training through the Building Block as a City &amp; Guilds/LOGIC training centre.</li> </ul>
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- The proposed 'network of community Skills & Enterprise Hubs delivering as part of a city wide 'hub and spoke' model meets the eight key design principles of integrated employment & skills services to tackle local unemployment and economic inactivity 1) A clear offer, easily delivered 2) Combined effort between national and local 3) Personalise through trusted relationships 4) Choice – flexible and responsive 5) Contributing to recovery – linked to getting people into work 6) COVID-19 proofed 7) Flexibility and adaptability – agile arrangements 8) Preventative and sustainable – new approaches.
- The skills pyramid with this project squarely at its foot links directly to the four priorities of the Worcester City Employment and Skills Strategy – 1. Partnership Working (including Employer Engagement) 2. Future Workforce/Connecting Schools & Business 3. Skills for Growth (workforce & advanced skills to drive SME growth in key sectors) 4. Inclusive Growth (Levelling Up) – Community level skills; lifelong learning and entrepreneurial culture).
- Capital Investment - The biggest issue with the centres currently is that it is very difficult to hold more than one activity at a time, due to access, circulation, welfare facilities, noise, safeguarding, limited Disabled facilities etc. Multiple use is fundamental. These issues are all solvable as the footprints of the buildings are large enough, but the space needs to be redesigned to make them fit for purpose.
- The age of the buildings also mean that they are energy inefficient, both in terms of heat loss, but also the systems used. A report by Severn Wye Energy Agency showed that energy bills could be reduced by 20% by switching to modern and energy efficient technologies. The cost of running the Centres currently means that the buildings or areas of them are often kept closed. Annual repair and maintenance costs are also increasing as the centres age and this trend will continue. Refurbishment now to bring the buildings up to modern standards and suitable for the delivery of the services outlined in this document, mean that instead of being a major drain on resources for the Council as Landlord and WCT as Tenant, they can instead become major assets, contributing significantly to the achievement of strategic aims for both organisations and generating more income. The proposals are all inter-related. Intervention and modernisation in the buildings is not possible without a re-engineering of the Building's Heating, Plumbing and Electrical Systems and actually presents a cost-effective opportunity to update them.

Towns Fund Ask and Match Funding	Towns Fund ask - £4,950,750
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbishment, extension or reconfiguration of buildings</li> <li>• Provision of digital infrastructure and vocational training equipment</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established training network</li> <li>• 5,000 learners achieving level 1,2,3 qualifications</li> </ul>

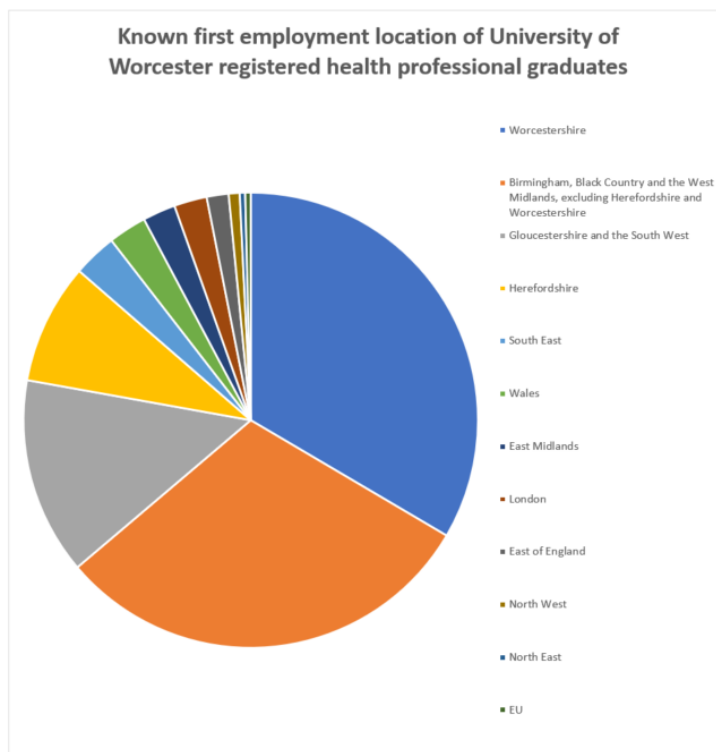
### 3 Severn Centre for Health and Wellbeing

**Project Description** Centrally situated on the Severn riverbank in Worcester, the Severn Centre for Health and Wellbeing will be a major new regional centre for skills across the health professions. It will be delivered through the conversion of a former industrial print works (Worcester News) to create a 4,000m<sup>2</sup> new skills facility to house nursing, physiotherapy and medical training including an anatomy lab for 50-100 students, 12 rooms for GP simulation, a range of seminar and teaching spaces alongside breakout and welfare facilities. The Centre will be the cornerstone of a sustainable outstanding health and wellbeing campus which will contribute to serving the needs of the local community including a GP practice, on-site therapy and rehabilitation clinics and prescribed classes in nutrition and exercise. The technologically rich medical training building will support the education and training of health professionals in the use of vital modern digital techniques. Innovation will be at the heart of the proposals. For example, the anatomy suite will include the most modern methods of health and medical education. This will enable medical students and the new profession of Physicians' Associates to train in surgical and investigative techniques without operating on either living patients or human cadavers. Students in many health disciplines will also be able to learn to consult, take health histories and examine using video link under supervision with all the benefits this will bring in terms of efficiency and reach in urban and rural areas.

A vital contribution to recovery from COVID-19 and to meeting the local and national nursing and health professional shortage, this major expansion will build on the University's nationally acknowledged expertise in widening participation and inclusion to provide greatly increased opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged communities in Worcester to access the health professions, and then gain sustained employment as nurses, paramedics, midwives, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

The Centre for Health and Wellbeing will also provide vital amenities and attractive landscaping for Worcester's Riverside Park. The location of the project provides access to facilities for visitors to the Riverside Park in the form of café and toilets, alongside bike and EV parking and improved connectivity between the river and St Johns through the campus.

This project is of regional significance for the West Midlands as an educational centre of health education that supplies graduates to hospitals and other medical facilities at a range of locations as shown in the graph below.



\* Data from the Graduate Outcomes Survey 2017/18.

Project Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the July 2020 allocation by HM Government of 473 additional annual places for health courses at the University of Worcester, a new specialist building is needed so that these much-needed opportunities can be provided in Worcester to meet the workforce needs of the NHS.</li> <li>By 2023-4 over 1,500 more health professional students will be educated at the University of Worcester than in 2019-20, many from the city, who will be joined by an initial 100 medical students a year when the University's application to create a medical school is successful (anticipated 2022-23).</li> <li>This increase, which will only be possible through the development of the Severn Centre for Health and Wellbeing will generate an additional 60 jobs directly in education plus a further 40 in student, professional, facilities and administrative services. The significant scale of the Severn Centre and Worcester's reputation in this field is evidenced by the Centre receiving the largest single increase in the number of new health professionals being trained in England (8% of the national total).</li> <li>Educational links between the University, Health Trusts, HOW College, Worcester 6th Form College and state secondary schools are already strong. These new opportunities will provide the previously missing professional places to enable these excellent, educationally inclusive pathways to be used by many more students from Worcester's disadvantaged communities to access and then earn a prized qualification to become a health professional.</li> <li>This will be a significant contribution to producing sustainable skilled employment opportunities at scale in a fast growing, much needed sector of the economy. The new building will also provide a significant expansion of continuing professional development opportunities for those who are currently working as health care assistants and in health to earn higher health professional qualifications, increasing skills and earnings.</li> <li>The health education programmes run from the centre will include the expansion of existing wellbeing programmes for healthy ageing as well as new programmes in wellbeing and weight control. There will also be specialist rehabilitation programmes such as supervised exercise for those recovering from heart attacks, which the University and local Health Trust pioneered some years ago, and which can now be significantly expanded to provide opportunities for 'social prescribing' by GPs and other health professionals. It is anticipated that these will be particularly helpful for members of deprived communities in Worcester who experience significant health inequality and who will find the centre and its purposely designed 'wellbeing route' highly attractive.</li> <li>There is much competition for places in nursing, paramedicine, midwifery and physiotherapy in particular. Applications for Midwifery has peaked at 37 applicants per place and being able to offer these places in Worcester will meet the needs of the city popular for excellent nursing and midwifery care - two acknowledged areas of shortage throughout the 21st Century, whilst providing opportunities to access these professions for local Worcester City residents.</li> <li>Demand is high - with its partners, the University provided 98 widening participation taster events, classes, meetings and other interventions in Worcester from 2018 to early 2020 with just over 3,000 participants. There are access courses and agreements in place with HOW College and the University's recently introduced Associate Nursing Programme (in partnership with the Worcestershire NHS Health and Care Trust) and Access to the Health Professions courses are very well-subscribed by Worcester residents.</li> <li>The University of Worcester enjoys a reputation as one of the UK's leading nursing educators. This excellent reputation, combined with a long history of close and effective working with local Health Trusts, underpinned the award to Worcester of the largest number of additional health care places in England in July 2020 - 473 per year of which 50% are nurses.</li> <li>The University is currently well advanced in its work, in partnership with the Health trusts of the Three Counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire to create the Three Counties Medical School. The Severn Centre for Health and Wellbeing will be the home for Medical students who will, in time, play a vital role in solving the profound staffing shortage experienced by all NHS Trusts in the region. This is a vital aspect of the Building Back Better programme and of meeting the Government's pledge for 50,000 more nurses in the NHS by 2024.</li> </ul>
Towns Fund Ask and Match Funding	Towns Fund ask - £3,500,000 Match Funding – £12,350,000
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4,000 m<sup>2</sup> new skills facility to house nursing, physiotherapy and medical training including an anatomy lab for 50-100 students, 12 rooms for GP training seminar rooms</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,500 new learners assisted</li> <li>100 new jobs</li> </ul>



## 4 Shrub Hill Regeneration

**Project Description** The importance and opportunity of the Shrub Hill Quarter cannot be underestimated. The Worcester City Centre Masterplan identifies it as a currently low density and undervalued area, served by an underused mainline rail station, on the edge of an historic city centre, located within a rapidly growing city and county. Modelling within the Masterplan highlights potential for the delivery of up to 100,000m<sup>2</sup> of development across a range of uses and the potential to be a railway gateway to the city through transformation of Shrub Hill station and improved rail links to London, Birmingham and Bristol with significant long term economic benefits to the city and to the wider area through links to Kidderminster and Malvern. This wide vision has County-level significance as it will enhance connectivity between the economic centre of the county and the rest of the county. It will be realised over a period of 10-15 years extending beyond the timeframe of the TIF. It will be led by the Shrub Hill Project Board which comprises Network Rail, Great Western Railway, First Group, Worcester City Council, Worcester County Council, Worcestershire LEP, West Midlands Rail Executive and West Midlands Trains.

The proposed Towns Fund regeneration activities offer a unique opportunity to start to unlock the potential of the area, and in doing so, to catalyse positive change for the wider city centre. This catalysing effect is depicted in the figure below (source: PRD / SLC Rail).

The TIP focuses on three key interventions:

- Redevelopment of First Bus Depot site** - The existing depot facilities are tired and inhibit rather than support the regeneration of the area due to their physical appearance and hours of operation. By relocating the existing depot elsewhere within the city (bringing substantial transport. benefits) this will create a 1.1ha site canal side site which will be regenerated as a mixed-use scheme to include c.350 new homes and c.2,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial / employment space on the edge of the city centre. The relocated depot will provide space to maintain up to 70 vehicles on a site of 0.8ha with a 1,500m<sup>2</sup> new maintenance and cleaning facility.
- Public Realm** – 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of high-quality public realm following the line of Cromwell St from Shrub Hill Road to Pheasant Street to provide a new connection between the Shrub Hill Railway Station, Shrub Hill Regeneration area the city centre. This improved link provides a new pedestrian and cycle connection to the city centre from Shrub Hill station supporting the TIP Active Travel project.
- Enterprise Centre (Isaac Maddox House)** - this 1.15ha site will be regenerated to include a 3000m<sup>2</sup> Enterprise Centre and c.100 new homes. The centre will act as a catalyst to business start-up and growth, providing a range of co working plus individual business spaces alongside a training and business hub that helps residents and small businesses develop business ideas into real opportunities. As a public asset the City and County Councils will seek a manager / partner to deliver enterprise skills training alongside the physical business space thus creating a centre for enterprise in this regenerated quarter of the city adjacent to strategic rail links. The housing proposals to the rear of the site will complement those of the Bus Depot site opposite creating a new environment along the canal corridor linked to the city centre by new public realm.

To enable this process the County Council have acquired 3.5 ha of land adjoining Shrub Hill station including the Isaac Maddox house site to support the regeneration of the area and secured £0.8m of Getting Building funding to support initial work on the regeneration of the station area and the wider connectivity work.



Project Rationale	<p>Through the delivery of the Shrub Hill Quarter ambitions – and specifically the Towns Fund projects outlined above - there are strategic opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support aspirations to strengthen the diversity and value of the Worcester economy through improved connectivity and creating new economic assets</li> <li>● Unlock the potential of the station as a high-quality arrival point to the city through public realm improvements and new development.</li> <li>● Significantly enhance the quality of links between this part of the city and the centre, helping meet aspirations for a more connected and accessible city.</li> <li>● Respond to the significant socioeconomic challenge and polarisation which exists in the city, particularly in the north-east.</li> </ul> <p>The project rationale for the individual projects are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Redevelopment of First Bus Depot Site</b> –supports Worcester Towns Fund Vision Statement and Priorities and in particular its themes of Connected City (new connectivity improvements for active travel and securing investment in bus services through a new bus depot), Building on Quality of Place (new high-quality development respecting the city's heritage), Building on Economic Diversity (new employment / commercial space)).</li> <li>● <b>Public Realm</b> - provides opportunity to create new pedestrian and cycling linkages between Shrub Hill and Worcester City Centre forming part of the wider active travel network helping to address issues of poor cycling and pedestrian connectivity, congestion and poor air quality.</li> <li>● <b>Enterprise Centre (Isaac Maddox House)</b> - will house c.150 jobs and provide accommodation to c.100 businesses at a time (assumed average occupancy of 1 business per 37m<sup>2</sup> gross internal). The remainder of the site can accommodate housing development of c.100 new homes fronting on to the Worcester to Birmingham canal.</li> </ul> <p>Market evidence supports the need for high quality accommodation within the city for, as evidenced from the development of the Porcelain Works creating high-quality office / studio space within the city centre. In addition, this was let during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic which points to the opportunity this space presents benefiting from proximity to the city centre and Shrub Hill station. The Enterprise Centre will generate new businesses and help to sustain existing ones in doing so addressing the Towns Fund evidence base where lower than expected levels of business formation are identified as a key issue.</p> <p>The Towns Fund project sits at the heart of a broader connectivity project offering 2 trains per hour (tph) to Oxford, the Thames Valley and London, connectivity at Oxford to the Oxford Cambridge Arc, 2 tph to Birmingham via Bromsgrove or Kidderminster, 2 tph to Hereford and up to 2 tph to Cheltenham, Gloucester and the south west. This new rail-based connectivity specific to Shrub Hill is forecast to generate £40.75m of new Gross Value Added (GVA) p.a.</p> <p>The more frequent Oxford/London service is under development by the North Cotswold Line Task Force, for which Worcestershire County Council is the lead authority, with its Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) currently being assessed by the Department for Transport. Worcestershire County Council is progressing its other Shrub Hill-related service aspirations with Network Rail, Midlands Connect and the West Midlands Rail Executive. The existing Project Board including the County and City councils and the rail industry has completed the Station Masterplan's SOBC, and moving to the next rail industry development stage. The County Council has secured a range of key sites around the Station and Quarter supporting proactive partnership-based thinking consistent with the City Council's City Centre Masterplan</p> <p>The Shrub Hill area is adjacent to areas of deprivation such as Gorse Hill, Tolladine and Ronkswood which enables it to link these areas to opportunities within it therefore contributing to the levelling up of the city.</p>
Towns Fund Ask and Match Funding	<p>Towns Fund ask - £10,500,000 Match Funding – £5,500,000</p>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 450 new homes</li> <li>● 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of high-quality commercial space</li> <li>● 2.25ha of remediated land</li> <li>● 3,000m<sup>2</sup> of shared business space</li> <li>● 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of new and upgraded walking and cycling infrastructure</li> <li>● 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of new and upgraded public space</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 230 new jobs</li> <li>● Flexible office space</li> </ul>





## 5 Heritage Tourism

Project Description	<p>Worcester has a strong but disjointed heritage offer which is underplayed and therefore does not attract the numbers of tourists and visitors that it could do or maximise the economic impact for the city. This project has six elements, it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a framework for physical and digital interpretation, providing a mesh of historic information, images and stories, and practical wayfinding, covering the historic city, its buildings and other heritage assets. This can build on the wealth of information in the city’s Historic Environment Record and Worcestershire archives. The project will be flexible and scalable, so that new opportunities can be taken where they present themselves.</li> <li>• Develop the national profile of The Commandery, a historic site whose story is central to the ending of the English Civil War, by investing in interpretation and making more links to national institutions.</li> <li>• Modernise the story of the Worcestershire Soldier using it alongside the Commandery as a catalyst for learning about democracy and conflict resolution.</li> <li>• Raise the quality of the interpretation at the Guildhall, one of the most beautiful civic buildings in England and in the middle of Worcester’s High Street, ensuring that this magnificent building is a true tourist destination alongside its civic role.</li> <li>• Provide a new art and exhibition space in the heart of the city centre. The Council has plans to undertake significant transformation of the MAG, and is in discussion with the Arts Council, but this will fall outside the life of the TIP and there is a small but important proposal within the TIP to expand the existing art exhibition space into that vacated by the Military Museum.</li> <li>• Link the cultural attractions in the Northern end of the City Heart. The University Art House, the Arches, and the City Museum and Art Gallery (MAG) form a triangle of cultural attractions in an area of the city that is not currently seen as a key visitor location. It aims to develop an under-visited area into a destination for enjoyment and culture. Works to enhance the public realm through coherent infrastructure, a number of public art installations and wayfinding improvements will link the assets.</li> </ul>
Project Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RSA Heritage Index 2020 reflects this picture. Worcester is in the top 10 authorities in England for historic built environment, museums and industrial heritage assets. However, it scores much lower for heritage related activities, such as museum visits, events or interpretation installations. As an example, Worcester ranks 5th out of 316 for industrial heritage assets, but 188th for related activities. It is clear that the potential of the city’s heritage is not yet being realised.</li> <li>• Worcester’s compact city centre is built on layers of heritage, 2000 years of history in less than a quarter of a square mile. Rather than focusing on a single period or event, this deep history in a small space has the potential to be an attractor in itself, making Worcester a tourist destination where visitors can come close to many meaningful stories of England’s past.</li> <li>• Worcester has over 1000 listed buildings dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In many cases they are not brought to life for visitors through interpretation, which could add so much to the experience for both residents and visitors. Stories include those of Hannah Snell, born in Worcester, who served as a man in the army and navy in the 1740s, and Sarah Siddons, the best-known actress of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, who made her first public performance in Worcester in 1767.</li> <li>• For decades, Worcester’s tourism was built around the Royal Worcester porcelain factory which was an international attractor. Since its closure in 2009, Worcester has struggled to find a unique selling point to bring visitors to the city. This is not for want of heritage assets, but through a lack of joined up information. Worcester has much to attract its tourists: the mighty River Severn which shaped the city and continues to challenge the city to be resilient through its annual flooding; it was the site of the first and the last battle of the English Civil War, the place where decisions were made that changed the model of British democracy, with echoes throughout the world; and it remains a place where visitors can explore industrial history from china to gloves to chocolate, and is a centre for musical expression following in the footsteps of Edward Elgar.</li> <li>• This project will create information for visitors to research before their trip and then access onsite a greater depth of heritage, tailored for their own interests. This will convert 2-hour visits to day visits, day visits to overnight visits and overnight visits to weekend visits – attracted by the breadth of the heritage offer, benefitting Worcester’s retail and restaurants. An additional 25,000 tourist visits would bring in £1m additional economic impact but doubling the dwell time of those visits would add an estimated £7m to the city.</li> <li>• Heritage interpretation can be successfully combined with wayfinding, as the Bristol – Legible city project has shown. There, clear design and strong branding allows the various physical and digital elements to form an easily understood whole.</li> </ul>

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Towns Fund Ask and Match Funding	Towns Fund ask - £2,250,000 Match Funding - £650,000
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wayfinding signage, maps, leaflets downloadable audio trails, video, and virtual reality</li><li>• Provision of specialist digital technology to present and interpret the varied heritage offer</li><li>• Provision of heritage interpretation boards and wayfinding</li><li>• Upgraded museum, historical landmarks, and arts centre</li></ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased number of visitors to arts, cultural and heritage events and venues.</li><li>• Growth in employment – creation of new jobs to support the hospitality and leisure sectors post pandemic recovery.</li></ul>

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## 6 Riverside as a Destination

Project Description	<p>This project seeks to maximise the value of the Riverside park as a city centre visitor and tourist destination, linking discrete visitor attractions and providing active leisure opportunities. As well as being attractions in their own right the projects will ensure adequate visitor facilities (food and beverage and toilets) are freely available to the public. There are seven discrete elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Riverside Park – building on the Riverside Park Management strategy that the Council adopted in 2018, investment will ensure an accessible, welcoming, and coherent experience via improvements to access points, wayfinding and landscaping, linking intuitively with the city centre. The nature of the park is largely level paved paths which make it suitable for those with restricted mobility to move between attractions easily.</li> <li>2. Copenhagen Street Link - the shortest route from the High Street to the Riverside lies along Copenhagen Street but this is characterised by a wide expanse of roadway and narrow footpath. This project will install new public realm treatments to ensure an intuitive and welcoming link between the High Street (footfall 17m+ p.a.) and riverside.</li> <li>3. Diglis Island Visitor Hub – supporting the Canal and River Trust (CRT) in opening up toilet and other facilities to public access as part of the ground-breaking ‘Unlocking the Severn’ project, supporting the educational activities around this significant environmental project.</li> <li>4. Access to Cathedral Gardens– opening up the currently inaccessible Cathedral gardens to become a public green space accessible directly from the riverside and making one of Worcester’s premier visitor attractions an intuitive route to link the High Street with the Riverside park.</li> <li>5. Moorings – working alongside CRT to provide commercial and leisure moorings to introduce life and activity to the River in the heart of the city.</li> <li>6. Cricket Club Museum and Visitor Centre – supporting the County Cricket Club proposals for a visitor centre celebrating the history of cricket in the city and its role in the fall of apartheid, as well as securing public toilet facilities adjacent to the Riverside.</li> <li>7. Boat House – providing support to the proposed redevelopment of the multi organisation River Sports buildings, securing public access to new seating and viewing areas and a cafe and toilets.</li> </ol>
Project Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worcester has grown up on the banks of the Severn, but despite improvements over the last 10 years, the perception remains that the city “turns it’s back” on the river and the asset of a 5km long Riverside Park in the heart of the city is underplayed. There are a number of visitor attractions and the park itself provides a valuable and attractive destination but the lack of key facilities available to the public and poor connectivity with the city centre means that the potential to drive greater visitor numbers and generate longer stays is not realised.</li> <li>• The riverside should be a major visitor destination in the city and is an economic asset boosting the profile nationally and internationally. Worcester currently welcomes almost 3.7million day visitors each year but has only c.183,000 overnight stays. This project seeks to enhance and extend the average stay of visitors, and their spend whilst in the city, including overnight accommodation. The projects will also enhance the attractiveness of Worcester as a place to live encouraging new residents.</li> <li>• Feedback suggests that visitors sometimes struggle to find the riverside and, once there, can’t necessarily find their way around. In addition, visitors by boat have reported they struggle to moor in the city so will prefer to go on to more boat-friendly destinations like Tewkesbury or Gloucester whilst commercial leisure boat attractions are hampered by poor facilities.</li> <li>• Walking and cycling are free activities, with many associated health benefits. In a post-COVID-19 world, exercise in the open air has been identified as an important factor in maintaining health and wellbeing. Enhancing the 10km route will support and encourage healthy activity.</li> <li>• This project links closely with three other Towns Fund projects, the Severn Centre for Health and Wellbeing (located on the riverside), the new Kepax bridge and associated improvements within the walking and cycling network, and the Heritage Tourism project that includes a number of river side attractions and locations.</li> </ul>
Towns Fund Ask and Match Funding	<p>Towns Fund ask - £1,890,000 Match Funding – £1,456,000</p>

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Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● A coherent, accessible and attractive Riverside Park environment.</li><li>● New or upgraded cycle or walking paths</li><li>● Delivery of 2 new public spaces</li><li>● A network of publicly accessible visitors' facilities including toilets and cafés</li><li>● Remediation and/or development of dilapidated sites</li></ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Increased footfall and visitor numbers</li><li>● Increase in visitor dwell time</li><li>● Increase in visitor spend</li><li>● Enhanced accessibility of the city's assets for those with reduced mobility</li></ul>

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## 7 Active Travel

Project Description	<p>This proposal will provide new walking and cycling links between deprived communities and opportunities for employment, education, and leisure. It will promote cycling by adding to the existing active travel network. It will also provide secure cycle storage in the city centre and neighbourhood locations as well as a bike hire scheme. This will encourage a greater number of local trips to be made either by walking or cycling, reducing congestion, and improving air quality. Specifically, it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Build on the city's network by investing in key sections of off-road infrastructure to join up existing routes and support a comprehensive network of routes between key housing, employment, and leisure destinations. Areas of investment are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ronkswood, Perry Wood, Worcestershire Royal Hospital</li> <li>– Diglis and the Riverside Park to Carrington Bridge and the Southern urban extension</li> <li>– The Birmingham Worcester Canal from the Severn to Sixways</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Provide a new bridge ('Kepax Bridge') linking communities and opportunities to the north of the city and enhancing the attraction of the Riverside Park.</li> <li>● Provide secure undercover and managed cycle parking in the city centre, and secure cycle parking in neighbourhood locations.</li> <li>● Introduce a bicycle hire scheme (electric and conventional) to open up cycling to more residents and visitors, building on the success of the Woo bike scheme currently in operation. The scheme would have a city centre hub with satellite locations in deprived communities and at the University of Worcester.</li> </ul>
Project Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Despite the size of the city, connectivity between deprived communities and key locations for employment, education and leisure can be hampered by the availability of private vehicles, traffic congestion and availability of public transport. Routes for active travel are not currently equitably distributed across the city and this project seeks to address this imbalance.</li> <li>● Building on addressing this imbalance of access to opportunity the cycle hire scheme will provide a viable transport option within deprived communities.</li> <li>● Publication of the Government's new active travel strategy "Gear Change: A Bold Vision for Walking and Cycling" makes it clear that "Cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030." The Worcestershire Local Transport Plan sets out a vision for the expansion of the active travel corridor network across Worcester City.</li> <li>● Collectively, the projects above will encourage a much higher number of local trips to be made either by walking or cycling. A shift towards these modes of transport will contribute towards improved public health, reduced congestion and an improved local environment by reducing traffic emissions and noise.</li> <li>● The importance of outdoor exercise in clean and safe spaces has been demonstrated this year as we have navigated our way through the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite being a relatively small city (less than five miles across at its widest point), the mode share that cycling occupies in Worcester is less than 2%. The level of cycling infrastructure is key factor in this low mode share, which this project seeks to address.</li> <li>● Investment in strategic access improvements for active travel modes (particularly for cyclists) will significantly improve the attractiveness of the city as a place to live, visit and invest. This is critically important to enable the city centre to diversify and grow during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>● Secure cycle storage will encourage greater take up and assist in addressing the problem and perception of cycle theft which deters cyclists from visiting the city centre.</li> <li>● Worcester has relatively flat routes alongside the river, but the city is characterised by several short sharp hills between the river and surrounding neighbourhoods. An e-bike hire scheme would encourage greater take up of cycling and provide a realistic option for tourists and residents.</li> </ul>
Towns Fund Ask and Match Funding	<p>Towns Fund ask - £4,800,000 Match Funding - £8,050,000</p>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 11.5km of new or upgraded cycle or walking paths</li> <li>● New bridge link for the north of the city</li> <li>● City centre secure managed cycle parking and secure cycle parking in neighbourhood locations</li> <li>● Bike hire scheme</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased footfall and visitor numbers due to improvements in walking and cycling infrastructure</li> </ul>

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- Improved access to opportunities
  - Improved health levels of local and regional population
  - Modal shift towards active travel
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