

1. The Previous SHELAA

- 1.1 Since the production of the First Edition SHELAA 2019 Report a spatial development strategy has been formulated for Preferred Options (PO) and this has informed the more detailed assessment of the SHELAA sites that were submitted during the Call for Sites Exercise in 2018 and reported on in the SHELAA Report First Edition that can be accessed at the following link https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/?page_id=14130. At the time of the previous publication officers were unable to rule out sites for locational purposes as the spatial development strategy was still being developed. Based on the strategy set out in the Preferred Options and informed by the location of the Call for Sites submitted, officers have subsequently ruled out all sites that would not be supportive of the proposed spatial strategy – i.e. for housing on land that is outside a new settlement location, main town or a cat 1 – 3 village or in the wider open countryside. All sites were assessed against the PO strategy and their status can be viewed on the SWDPR interactive map at the following link: <http://swdp.addresscafe.com/app/exploreit/default2.aspx>.
- 1.2 In terms of employment, South Worcestershire's economy is characterised by the dispersed location of a wide range of employment sites and therefore it is considered that it would not necessarily be inappropriate to provide additional employment uses outside development boundaries. Sites submitted purely for employment uses may therefore not have been ruled out of the SHELAA for locational purposes in the same way that residential or mixed use sites will be. Employment sites outside of the main towns and larger villages have also been assessed to ascertain their market suitability for employment uses by professional economic development officers.
- 1.3 Potential housing sites that were not ruled out for locational / strategy purposes and employment sites that were not ruled out for market suitability submitted up to 30th September 2019 were further assessed as far as possible by officers for inclusion as allocation sites within the PO document. The site assessment spreadsheets can be found at the following link: https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/?page_id=14734.

2. The Development Strategy

- 2.1 The Preferred Options sets out a revised spatial development strategy which focuses most of the housing growth in locations where there is or could have excellent access to a railway station. Consequently, the majority of the housing and employment growth is directed to three strategic locations as follows:
- Worcestershire Parkway – a new town initially comprising 5,000 dwellings, 40 hectares of employment land, plus retail, leisure and education facilities to 2041 with the potential for further expansion in the longer term.

- Throckmorton Airfield – a new town initially comprising 2,000 dwellings, 20 hectares of employment land, plus retail, leisure and education facilities will be delivered on completion of a new direct link to the A44 and Pershore railway station. This area also has the potential for further expansion beyond 2041.
- Rushwick – an expanded settlement with 1,000 new dwellings, 10 hectares of employment land, plus retail, leisure and education facilities to be delivered once the new railway station has been secured.
- In addition, there are proposed allocations for around 810 new homes in Worcester, 730 in Droitwich Spa, 200 in Evesham, 880 in Malvern, 600 in Pershore and 60 in Tenbury Wells as well as 900 in villages in Wychavon District and 390 in villages in Malvern District.

2.2 The spatial development strategy is driven by the SWDPR Vision, the Sustainability Appraisal outputs and technical evidence, in particular transport. It brings together land use, development and infrastructure considerations that flow from the economic, environmental and social characteristics of the area. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) demonstrates that the proposed development strategy will best deliver the SA objectives. Worcester has the greatest local housing need, which is why a substantial element of housing and employment is directed towards the city and surroundings areas, in particular at Worcestershire Parkway. Beyond there, growth is directed at the towns, a new settlement at Throckmorton Airfield, an expanded settlement at Rushwick, and then Category 1, 2 and 3 villages (ranked according to the Village Facilities and Rural Transport Study 2019) in order to satisfy the social objectives of sustainable development.

3. The SHELAA Update Findings

3.1 The First Edition SHELAA Report 2019 dealt with sites received up to February 28th 2019 and between this date and 30th September 2019, **32** further sites have been considered within this updated study. This amounts to a total **218.863 ha** of further land submitted by landowners and developers. At a crude indicative density of 20 - 50 dwellings per hectare (based on officer judgement), this could deliver **7,660** houses (**4,596 factoring in 40% GI** - see table 1 below).

Area	No. of Post 28th Feb 2019	Total hectares for Post 28th Feb 2019 sites	Total unconstrained capacity (dwellings) for post 28th Feb 2019 sites @ 35dph	Potential Dwelling Capacity factoring in 40% GI (net)
Malvern Hills	7	30.607 ha	1,071	643
Worcester City	2	1.3 ha	46	14
Wychavon	23	186.956 ha	6,543	3,926

Total	32	218.863 ha	7,660	4,596
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3.2 The proposed uses submitted by landowners / developers for each of the sites are set out in table 2 below.

Table 2: Further SHELAA Sites – Proposed Uses				
Area	Mixed Use	Employment	Residential	Other
Malvern Hills	5	0	2	0
Worcester City	0	0	1	1
Wychavon	4	1	18	0

3.3 The sites were split into Level 1 and Level 2 sites as specified in the original methodology:

Level 1 Sites

3.4 Level 1 sites are those considered to be unsuitable for housing or employment development due to significant physical constraints including:

- Flood Zone 2 or 3 i.e. at a medium to high risk of flooding;
- National conservation or wildlife designation constraint;
- Land affected by high levels of Contamination; and,
- Sites promoted for housing in the Green Belt (housing only).

3.5 Criteria within the methodology has allowed these sites with severe development constraints to be assessed as Level 1 sites and thus eliminating **6 sites totalling 35.571 ha**. These sites have been ruled out with no further work being undertaken on appraising their housing or employment potential. For sites where just part of a site is in Flood Zone 2/3, or affected by contamination a judgement was made by officers as to how much of a constraint it would realistically be (that is, whether part of the site could still be suitable for housing or employment potential) and whether these should be ranked as a Level 2 site.

3.6 The extent of the Flood Zones have been informed by the latest Environment Agency mapping and the updated 2019 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (this can be viewed at the following link:

https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/?page_id=14568

3.7 The distribution of the Level 1 sites is shown below:

Table 3: Distribution of Level 1 sites

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Level 1 sites	Worcester	Wychavon	Malvern Hills	Total
No. of 2019 sites	1	5	0	6
Total area in hectares	0.544 ha	35.027 ha	0	35.571 ha

Level 2 Sites

3.8 Level 2 sites include all other sites. The following constraints to housing development are recognised and sites were ruled out when officers undertook the site assessment exercise as summarised below (this list is not exhaustive see Appendix 8 and 9 of the original First Edition SHELAA 2019 report regarding the methodology for more detail). For employment development, planning officers have assessed the sites constraints against the outputs of the Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) and the professional opinion of Economic Development officers as to their market suitability.

- Sites within the open countryside or not adjacent to existing development boundaries (Isolated);
- Established Employment sites (Employment);
- Existing communities facilities where no replacement land/buildings are identified (Valued Community Facility);
- Valued open space/sport/recreation sites identified for retention in up to date studies (Valued Open Space);
- Sites in a prominent area of landscape value within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Site has important nature designation e.g. SSSI, Special Wildlife Site, Local Nature Reserve (Nature Designation);
- Historic Environment constraints e.g. Conservation Area, Listed Building, Ancient Monument (Historic Environment);
- Sites within / edge of Category 4 villages (categorisation);
- Market Suitability (for Employment).

3.9 There were a total of **26 sites (218.863 ha)** that went through to Level 2; the majority were not in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The table below identifies the number of sites by Flood Zone. None are wholly in the flood plain as they would have been categorised as Level 1 sites and excluded (this applies to **1 site** submitted within Wychavon District totalling **1.032 ha** in area). **25 sites (182.893 ha)** were wholly in Flood Zone 1, which is generally at low risk of flooding in conformity with the Environment Agency's categories. **6 additional sites** were mainly in Flood Zone 1 but also had some parts in Flood Zones 2 and 3 (see Table 3 below). It is important to note that the SHELAA database uses only a general flood risk assessment that is a desk top assessment only. At the time that the sites are appraised further as potential housing or employment allocations, guidance is sought from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The latest version has been undertaken by JBA Consulting which is a far more detailed appraisal of actual sites, looking at both fluvial run off and surface water drainage and this takes account of climate change factors. In addition, individual Flood Risk Assessments will be required to accompany planning applications.

Table 4: Sites by Flood Zone category (2 & 3)				
District	Total site area (hectares)	Amount of site in Flood Zone 2 (ha)	Amount of site in Flood Zone 3 (ha)	Total amount of site in Flood Zones 2 and 3 (ha)
Wychavon	2.293	0.448	0.125	0.573
Wychavon	1.618	0.123	0.03	0.153
Wychavon	10.621	1.48	0.869	2.349
Wychavon	84.68	0.193	1.687	1.88
Wychavon	4.921	0.433	0.142	0.575
Wychavon	8.012	0.792	0.089	0.881
	112.145	3.469	2.942	6.411

3.10 The table below shows how many sites in the SHELAA were in the Green Belt and according to the protocol on the Green Belt (i.e. sites promoted for housing) have been excluded as Level 1 sites. 4 of the sites fall within Wychavon District and 1 within Worcester City. A Green Belt Review undertaken by Wood PLC of the existing Green Belt within South Worcestershire has been published as part of the evidence base for the SWDP Review and will inform of any exceptions to Green Belt policy. It is available to view at the following link:

https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/?page_id=14126

Table 5: All sites in the Green Belt - Level 1 sites		
	No. of sites	Hectares
Green Belt sites	5	52.9

3.11 Two of the sites submitted were in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as shown in the table below. The area covers the Cotswolds and Malvern Hills AONBs that are nationally recognised designations affecting Wychavon and Malvern Hills Districts. Officers will further examine any detrimental impact on the AONB on the sites that fall within the AONB as part of the assessment process. They have not been ruled out as Level 1 at this stage in accordance with the methodology. However, it is evident from the NPPF and the availability of land outside the AONB that major development should not be directed / allocated to / in these areas. Further information is available in the AONB study that has been published as part of the evidence base for the SWDP Review and will inform of any exceptions to AONB policy. It is available to view at the following link:

https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/?page_id=14564

Table 6: All sites in the AONB		
	No. of sites	Hectares
AONB sites	2	2.117

- 3.12 There were no sites submitted that were wholly or largely affecting a National conservation or wildlife designation constraint (i.e. SAC; SSSI; LNR; biodiversity priority habitat).
- 3.13 In Wychavon District one site was also ruled out for 'Land Contamination' – equating to 0.825 ha in area.
- 3.14 After ruling out sites that were considered to be level 1 for flood risk and / or Green Belt / Land Contamination an assessment of the remaining level 2 sites was undertaken. In addition, four further residential sites were ruled out for 'Village Categorisation' totalling 7.685 ha. One site in Malvern Hills District was ruled out due to its size being too small (0.073 ha) and its isolated location with a further five residential sites in this district ruled out due to 'Village Categorisation' totalling 17.819 ha in area. No further level 2 sites were ruled out at this stage in Worcester City District.
- 3.15 This left a total of 15 sites remaining ruled in to the SHELAA process and the table below shows them categorised by whether they are greenfield or brownfield land. This illustrates that there are considerably more greenfield than brownfield sites. One Brownfield site was in Worcester City and the other within a category 1 village.

Table 7: Level 2 sites Greenfield / Brownfield (not including ruled out sites)		
	No. of sites	Hectares
Greenfield sites	13	156.959
Brownfield sites	2	1.581
Total	15	158.54

- 3.16 The table below shows the distribution of sites by their strategic location. Sites in Worcester are all sites within or surrounding the city boundary. The capacities of the sites below have been judged by officers who have made an assumption on suitable density for each site of between 20 – 50 dph.

Table 8: Sites by Strategic Location - Level 2 sites

Description of location	No. of sites	Hectares / capacity
Central Worcester	1	0.756
Towns (Malvern, Upton upon Severn, Tenbury Wells, Droitwich Spa, Evesham, Pershore)	2	7.859
Category 1 villages	4	13.093
Category 2 villages	2	3.443
Category 3 villages	6	111.427
Total	15	136.578

3.17 The table above shows that the vast majority of sites (80%) are outside of the main urban areas with the majority within or on the periphery of villages.

3.18 Table 9 shows the potential availability for development of the sites as assessed. Where information is unknown in terms of ownership, general developer interest or infrastructure constraints, sites are categorised as “unknown” in terms of availability. It should be noted that where availability is unknown a site generally remains ruled in to the SHELAA process to allow officers to further investigate the availability. It is generally only in cases where an owner or agent has made it clear that the site is unavailable that they may have been ruled out at this stage. Where sites have been ruled out on availability this does not preclude any information that may be forthcoming on such issues at a later date in the future meaning that they could be ruled back in.

3.19 The timescale for availability of sites are:

- Available now
- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- Unknown

3.20 The format of this appraisal is in line with the Government SHELAA guidance. Sites have been assessed based on landowner and developer estimation of deliverability. The deliverability of these sites will be analysed further in each of the SWCs five year housing land supply report updates and will depend on a number of factors.

Table 9: 2019 sites availability (dwellings / area) by Settlement

	Available now		1-5 years		6-10 years		11-15 years		Unknown	
	ha	sites	ha	sites	ha	sites	ha	sites	ha	sites
Worcester and Towns	8.615	3	13.735	2	17.017	1	0	0	0.399	1
Cat 1 Villages	0.68	1	10.621	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Cat 2 Villages	0	0	3.443	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cat 3 Villages	8.012	1	16.292	4	0	0	0	0	87.226	2
Cat 4	24.633	3	23.466	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	41.94	8	44.091	19	17.017	1	0	0	87.625	3

3.21 Table 11 above illustrates that of the sites submitted in the SHELAA update study, in the region of **5 sites (17.037 ha of land)** are considered to be available now in / adjacent to the towns and cat 1 – 3 villages with a further **11 sites (44.091 ha of land)** available within 5 years within / adjacent to cat 1 – 3 villages. 1 site in the town and 2 sites within a cat 3 village have availability unknown. A further 11 sites are considered to be either available now or available within 5 years in cat 4 villages.

4 Discounting on Sites

4.1 SHELAA practice guidance states that the assessment of constraints is inherently judgmental and therefore it is important that this takes place only once the unconstrained capacity has been identified. It also states that based upon the experience of previous studies, it is clear that in reality, following the assessment, the unconstrained figure will be reduced quite substantially in some cases by up to 50-60%. That is, out of the full range of sites and opportunities identified early on in the assessment, a much smaller number are likely to offer a realistic prospect for housing and / or employment development. For example, looking at the unconstrained figure of **7,660 dwellings** potential capacity at the beginning of the process – this is highly likely to reduce down to a more realistic figure of **4,213 dwellings potential capacity** (with a 50 – 60% reduction) and this would not be taking into account site category, location, availability or deliverability which would reduce this figure down again further.