



**Worcester**  
CITY COUNCIL



# WORCESTER CITY PLAN 2016-2021

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



Councillor Adrian Gregson



Councillor Marc Bayliss



Councillor Louis Stephen

# Introduction

Welcome to Worcester City Council's strategic plan for the next five years: Building a successful future on 2,000 years of history. This plan is not just about the Council's activities but about how we hope residents and stakeholders can pull together to create a successful, vibrant and sustainable Worcester. As Leaders of the Council's three political parties we have come together to formulate 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 is 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 2021 we want Worcester to be recognised as a growing cosmopolitan cathedral and university city with unrivalled heritage, where residents from all communities are given the opportunity to achieve the best possible lives for themselves and their families – a city that is uniquely Worcester. 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.

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 in some of our poorest neighbourhoods 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 community spirit to be enhanced further as we move towards 2021.

Over the following pages we outline the City Plan's five overlapping and interconnected themes, which will together shape the Worcester we want to see by 2021.

Councillor Adrian Gregson  
Leader, Labour group

Councillor Marc Bayliss  
Leader, Conservative group

Councillor Louis Stephen  
Leader, Green group

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# 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
- Communities being inclusive and cohesive
- People supporting each other to build resilient communities
- People participating and volunteering to support each other and their communities
- People feeling safe and able to enjoy the city fully
- Working with third sector, faith, minority ethnic groups and others to enhance community cohesion
- Being an accessible city in both the physical sense but also in the virtual/digital sense
- Developing communities where everyone can thrive
- Having a wide mixture of good quality housing provision to suit the full range of needs
- Working with partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in all communities and in the city centre

## Outcomes

- Increase in volunteering and participation in community activities
- Fewer people living in isolation
- Less crime and reduced perception of crime
- 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
- Appropriate support for homeless people and other vulnerable adults and children
- Reduction in underused property, including re-using empty homes and more flats over shops
- Reduced number of substandard rental properties



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# 2 A Prosperous City

## What do we want?

We want sustainable growth from which many people and communities can benefit. We want to attract good employers, support existing businesses and ensure everyone has the chance to get the opportunities, training and jobs that they need. 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 will it involve?

- Becoming identified nationally and internationally as a good investment opportunity
- Creating the conditions for sustainable growth and unlocking potential
- Encouraging more well-qualified people to come to live and work here
- Being forward-thinking and a centre for innovation
- Having pathways for people to get into employment for the first time
- Up-skilling within and outside the workforce
- Building basic skills and removing barriers to work, to help increase local employment
- Working with training providers to ensure skills to support public and private sector workforce demands are met
- Increasing opportunities by supporting city people to develop new skills
- Creating an entrepreneurial culture where new business creation is supported and promoted
- Working with investors and developers to broaden the city's offer and create a resilient economy
- Partners working together to a set of common goals for the city as a whole
- Leveraging the positions of the University and other educational establishments to drive innovation and growth
- Worcester being a key component of the Worcestershire 'Open for Business' priority
- 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
- Working with businesses to make the case with Network Rail and Government on achieving infrastructure ambitions

## What does this mean?

Worcester will be attractive to businesses established in the city or relocating here, and local people will have the 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.

## Outcomes

- A highly skilled workforce, with the experience and qualifications city employers need
- Existing businesses retained and growing
- New businesses moving to and delivering success in Worcester
- Increase in number of apprenticeships
- Increase in high value 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
- Greater training and employment opportunities to people currently out of work
- Increase in average wage baseline across the city
- A thriving night-time economy which is managed effectively and safely through partnership
- Through improved connectivity, Worcester will make a growing contribution to the economy of the county
- Tourism - driving up visitor spend in the city

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# 3 A Healthy and Active City

## What do we want?

We want our city's residents to have a good start in life, enjoying 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
- Support for sports and sporting clubs within the city
- Worcester achieving a growing reputation for sporting excellence – including becoming a hub for competitive swimming - building on the excellent reputation it already has for disabled sports
- Using our green space effectively, including our parks
- Using the city's major sporting facilities and its grassroots leisure centres and sports grounds in an inclusive, creative and dynamic way
- Encouraging wellbeing through partnership and co-operation, with partners like the rugby, cricket, basketball and football clubs and the University of Worcester
- Being positive about mental as well as physical wellbeing and happiness
- Working with the University and others to become a beacon of accessible/inclusive sports
- Working with partners to develop a sustainable joined-up health and care service
- Working with Worcestershire County Council to increase the amount of walking and cycling in the city
- Enriching the lives of residents and visitors through a diverse cultural and arts offer over a spectrum of venues and settings
- Developing partnerships with the University, colleges, schools and others to encourage active and healthy lifestyles
- Developing a quality environment for living and working that supports good physical and mental health
- Ensuring health services and facilities, including pharmacies, are appropriate and accessible
- Walking and cycling to become core part of transport strategy to maintain activity through active travel

## 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
- City-wide 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
- Accessible links to the proposed new Worcester Parkway Station and rail services including developing the idea of a "rail park and ride"
- Strong sporting and leisure partnerships, embracing the University of Worcester, Worcestershire County Cricket Club, Worcester Warriors Rugby Club, Worcester Racecourse, Worcester Rowing Club, Worcester Canoe Club, Worcester City Football Club, Worcester Wolves Basketball Club, Worcester Swimming Club, Freedom Leisure and others
- Healthy walking routes around the city are enhanced
- People of all ages and abilities participate in sporting activities after completing their formal education
- A diverse and growing cultural, theatre, music and arts offer for residents and visitors

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# 4 A Heritage City for the 21st Century

## 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, through the creation of a heritage partnership, encompassing Worcestershire County Council, historical societies and others. All these elements will create a compelling Worcester package.

## 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 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 industrial past through the social changes that have informed the development of its riverside and residential areas – to create a compelling tourism offer.

## What will it involve?

- Creating a 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 put Worcester on the map nationally and internationally
- Worcester's role in the English Civil War being widely recognised
- Increasing international awareness of the visit of US Presidents Jefferson and Adams to the city
- Enhancing and co-ordinating the city's tourism offer and increasing visitor numbers and spend
- Being welcoming and attractive to all
- Developing an attractive offer for people of all ages, genders, ethnicities, sexuality, abilities and beliefs
- Promoting and celebrating nationally and internationally the Uniquely Worcester offer
- Better protection and utilisation of the city's historical buildings
- Seeking Heritage City status to acknowledge and boost Worcester's status as a heritage destination
- Meeting the need for hotel provision for a wide range of different visitors

## Outcomes

- Increase in people coming for overnight stays
- Increased turnover at key heritage sites
- Increased visitor numbers to all the city's venues and events
- Enhanced reputation as an attractive tourist destination
- Increased reputation as a destination with a major heritage appeal, in part through achieving Heritage City status
- 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

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# 5 Sustaining and Improving our Assets

## 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
- Maintaining and enhancing the city's biodiversity
- Sourcing renewable/affordable energy
- Recognising the significance of the River Severn as National Critical Infrastructure
- Enhancing our natural assets such as parks, green spaces and waterways, helping and encouraging people of all ages to benefit from using them
- Enhancing further the main gateway routes into the city
- Creating a 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
- Improving flood resilience
- Enhancing and extending cycle network corridors
- Working with existing organisations like the city's two Parish Councils to increase involvement and participation in local areas
- Maximising the use of community assets both physical and human

## Outcomes

- Improved air quality
- 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

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# From Plan to Delivery

## How are we going to do it?

**By creating a new relationship with people and partners that can simultaneously build a successful thriving and welcoming city.**

We will create a Delivery Board consisting of no more than 10-12 key stakeholders to work in partnership to achieve the outcomes of the City Plan. On an annual basis the Board will agree an annual report on progress with a view to it going through appropriate accountability structures.

This, however, will not be the only mechanism; this plan is dependent on working effectively with existing partners 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). It should be noted that this will need further work and input.

### 1 Stronger and Connected Communities Measures

- Unemployment claimant count (County Council)
- Youth unemployment 18 - 24 (County Council)
- Electoral turnout (City Council)
- Proportion of population with no qualification (nomis – official labour market statistics)
- Number of crimes per 1,000 population (County Council)
- People's perception of crime reducing (PCC)
- Annual proportion of affordable housing built (City Council/Fortis)
- Number of eligible households provided with homelessness support (City Council)
- Total number of households on housing waiting list (City Council)

### 2 A Prosperous City Measures

- Job density (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 (County)
- Journey time to high strategic destinations, i.e. London, Bristol, Birmingham, Heathrow
- Start-ups lasting beyond 12 months (BID)

### 3 A Healthy and Active City Measures

- Proportion of working age group on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- 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)
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy indicators - 2016-21 (County Council/SWCCG)
- Number of sporting events hosted and attendance at major sports venues

### 4 A Heritage City for the 21st Century 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)
- Amount and range of accommodation in the city
- Total number of stays and £ spent per stay

### 5 Sustaining and Improving our Assets Measures

- Air quality assessment (Worcestershire Regulatory Services)
- Number of sites awarded 'Green Flag' status (City Council)
- Annual total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per person (kilotonnes) (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy)
- Proportion of homes in Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band D or better (ie, Bands A-C) (DCLG)
- Proportion of homes in fuel poverty (City Council)
- Total local renewable energy generation (City Council)

## Policies underpinning this City Plan

Some are existing (E), others are to be developed (D)

- South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) (D)
- Disability Friendly City (D)
- Accessible/Green transport network (E)
- City and Transport Master Plan update (D)
- Equality and Community Cohesion Plan (D)
- Volunteering/Participation/Engagement (D)
- Community Resilience Plans (D)
- Strategic Housing Policy (E)
- Digital/Networked/City Centre Wifi (D)
- Looking at local supply chains/Buy local and where possible buy local (D)
- One Town Review (D)
- Marketing and positioning/investment portfolio (D)
- International Plan (D)
- Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 4 (D)
- Inclusive Sports/No barriers to entry to sport, including elite sport (D)
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy (E)
- Biodiversity Strategy update (D)
- Tourism Strategy (D)

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