Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2041

Consultation draft

St. Richard's House, Heritage Centre and Town Council offices, Droitwich Spa

DJN Planning Limited · March 2025 · For Droitwich Spa Town Council

Pre-submission consultation and publicity notice

A public consultation on the draft Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Development Plan ('Neighbourhood Plan') held in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended will start at **9.00 a.m. on Monday 9 June 2025** for a period of six weeks and one day ending at **5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 22 July 2025.**

Where you can inspect the draft Neighbourhood Plan

The draft Neighbourhood Plan may be inspected:

- on the Droitwich Spa Town Council website at https://www.droitwichspa.gov.uk/.
- at the Town Council offices at St. Richard's House, and at Droitwich Spa Library.
- by emailing ndp@droitwichspa.gov.uk or contacting the Town Council office on 01905 774258 to request a printed copy.

Supporting documents are available on the Town Council website.

How to make comments on the draft Neighbourhood Plan

Comments must be made in writing and include the name and address of the person making the comments. Please make comments as specific as possible, quoting the relevant policy or paragraph number(s). All comments will be publicly available (personal information will not be published).

Comments can be submitted online on the Town Council website. Alternatively, a form for making comments may be downloaded and printed from the Town Council website or collected from St Richard's House or Droitwich Spa Library.

Send us your comments:

- online - scan the QR code or visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/M65BFH3.
- by email to ndp@droitwichspa.gov.uk.
- by hand to the collection boxes at St Richard's House or Droitwich Spa Library.
- at one of the following drop-in events:
  - on Wednesday 18 June at The Cabin, Droitwich Spa High School, Briar Mill, WR9 0AA between 5.00 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.
  - on Wednesday 25 June at Droitwich Mews Care Home, Mulberry Tree Hill, WR9 7SS between 5.00 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.
- by post to Neighbourhood Plan Consultation, Droitwich Spa Town Council, St Richard's House, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire WR9 8DS.

If you have any questions, please telephone the Town Council office on 01905 774258.

All comments must be received by 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 22 July 2025. These will be considered by Droitwich Spa Town Council and will help shape the final Neighbourhood Plan.

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1. SETTING THE SCENE

The Neighbourhood Plan

1.1 The Localism Act 2011 gave local communities the ability to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans ('Neighbourhood Plans') as part of the statutory planning framework governing the development and use of land in their area. When planning applications are made, they must be decided in accordance with this framework unless there are overriding circumstances to the contrary. [1]

1.2 Droitwich Spa Town Council has decided to make use of these planning powers to help ensure that decisions on future development are guided locally.

1.3 This document is the draft Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan ('the Plan'). Its publication for public consultation is in accord with the procedures laid down by Government and marks an important stage in the preparation process (Figure 1).

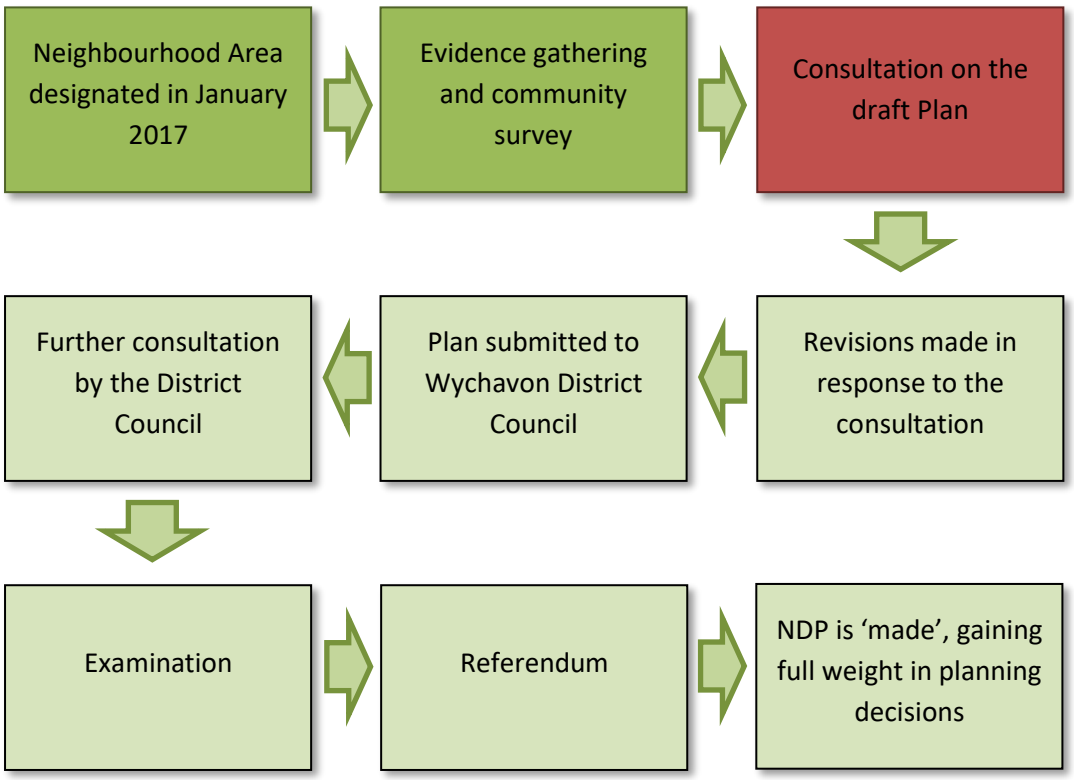


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Plan preparation process

[1] The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 provides that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan and any national development management policies, taken together, unless material considerations strongly indicate otherwise.

1.4 The Plan has been prepared by a Steering Group which includes Town Councillors, representatives from the Droitwich Spa Civic Society, and other volunteers. It is based on wide-ranging evidence about the characteristics of the town and the views of the community. A consultation was held in March and April 2023 to launch the Plan, followed by a comprehensive residents' questionnaire survey in October 2023. Technical support on housing need and design has been provided through Locality. Reports and other documentation prepared for the South Worcestershire Development Plan and by Wychavon District Council have provided much useful information, and an earlier Town Plan for Droitwich Spa prepared c. 2009 was also consulted. The resultant 'evidence base' is set out at Appendix A.

Format of the Neighbourhood Plan

1.5 The Plan begins by presenting a thumbnail sketch of the main features of the Neighbourhood Area (chapter 2).

1.6 The community's Vision for the Neighbourhood Area in 2041 is defined in chapter 3, together with more detailed objectives.

1.7 To deliver the Vision and objectives, the Plan sets out policies on the development and use of land, on the built and natural environment (chapters 4 and 5); housing (chapter 6); community facilities (chapter 7); the town centre (chapter 8); and jobs and active travel (chapter 9). Each policy is presented in bold text within a shaded box and is followed by a short justification and explanation. Chapter 10 explains how the Plan will be implemented, monitored, and reviewed. Finally, the process of preparing the Plan has highlighted a number of aspirations on non-land use matters, relating particularly to highways and transport, and these are listed in a concluding chapter as 'Community Actions'.

National and local planning policy context

1.8 The Plan's policies need to be read alongside the existing national and South Worcestershire planning policies which apply in the Neighbourhood Area.

1.9 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Planning Practice Guidance gives more detailed advice as to how national policy is to be implemented.

1.10 The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) was adopted in February 2016 and is the Local Plan for the administrative areas of Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District.[2] The SWDP sets out strategic and non-strategic planning policies for the development of South Worcestershire up to 2030 and makes specific provisions for the Neighbourhood Area.

1.11 Droitwich Spa is a 'Main town' in the SWDP's settlement hierarchy, second only to Worcester. As such it is seen as providing a comprehensive range of local services and employment

[2] Droitwich Spa is in the administrative area of Wychavon District Council.

opportunities for residents and the rural hinterland, and as a continued focus for balanced growth. The defined 'development boundary' around the town covers the majority of the Neighbourhood Area.

1.12 The SWDP allocates seven sites for development in the Neighbourhood Area, mainly for housing. Six of these are relatively smaller sites, including the mixed-use development of the Netherwich Canal Basin for housing, retail and leisure uses. In addition, an urban extension at Yew Tree Hill in the south is allocated for approximately 765 new homes (now complete). Two other urban extensions for housing (Copcut Lane) and employment uses (Stonebridge Cross Business Park) fall outside the Neighbourhood Area.

1.13 The SWDP Policies Map shows the following within the Neighbourhood Area:

- Green Belt.
- Strategic Gap (Kidderminster Road).
- Green Spaces.
- Conservation Areas and Scheduled Monuments.
- Sites of Regional or Local Wildlife Importance.
- Town Shopping Centre, with Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages, and Local Shopping Centres.
- Heavy Goods Vehicles Route Network and Safeguarded Land for Transport.
- Fluvial Flood Zones, Area Susceptible to Surface Water Flooding, and Management of Flood Risk Policy Areas (blue and yellow).
- Green infrastructure – Protect and Restore.

1.14 Mineral and waste matters are addressed in Local Plans prepared by Worcestershire County Council.

1.15 The SWDP is presently being updated to extend the plan period and meet the development needs of South Worcestershire up to 2041. The proposed new plan, the SWDP Review (SWDPR), was formally submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in September 2023. The submission includes an updated Policies Map.[3]

1.16 In the SWDPR Droitwich Spa retains its second-tier position within the SWDPR's settlement hierarchy. The town's development boundary has been reviewed with minor adjustments in the south and west. Previous SWDP allocations are generally retained unless the sites concerned have been developed or otherwise come forward. There are revised proposals for the Netherwich Canal basin with a reduction in the number of dwellings. New housing (916 dwellings) is proposed for the town, with a significant new allocation on previously-developed land at Union Lane (400 dwellings). Not all the proposed sites are in the Neighbourhood Area, notably a new urban extension at Hanbury Road (300 dwellings) to the east.

1.17 The reviewed SWDP is expected to be adopted in December 2025.

[3] Interactive SWDPR Reg 19 Policies Mapping https://periscopeinsight.newgrove.com/81d1897f-416b-4e88-918f-56071666ad63

1.18 The Plan has been written to complement rather than duplicate existing planning policies. The Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan. Whilst these are presently to be found in the SWDP, given the above timetable it is possible that the Plan will be independently examined against relevant policies in the SWDPR. The draft Plan has been prepared with this in mind. References to SWDP and SWDPR policies and to the Policies Map will be updated as the Plan progresses through the statutory stages. The reasoning and evidence on which the emerging Local Plan is based are likely to be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which the Plan will be examined even if the SWDPR timetable is not achieved.[4]

1.19 In preparing the Plan, consideration has been given to the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations. Wychavon District Council has concluded in a screening opinion dated March 2025 that the Plan does not require a full SEA or HRA. This is because the Plan was considered to be in general conformity with the SWDPR and does not deviate from the proposed land allocations for development made in the SWDPR.

1.20 The Plan covers the period 2025 to 2041. This is co-terminous with the SWDPR.

[4] Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 41-009-20190509.

2. DROITWICH SPA NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

2.1 The Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Area was designated in January 2017. It covers the civil parish of Droitwich Spa which extends to 836 hectares to the north of Worcester in the district of Wychavon, Worcestershire (Plan 1). The qualifying body is Droitwich Spa Town Council.

2.2 This chapter describes the Neighbourhood Area in terms of the social, environmental, and economic aspects which contribute to sustainability and to a distinctive sense of place.

Community

2.3 Droitwich has a long history of human settlement. Its origin and development is linked to the ready availability of high-quality brine from springs along the River Salwarpe, to the north of the present town centre. Salt has been produced from these sources since the Iron Age and throughout the Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods. The manufacture and distribution of salt was aided by completion of the Droitwich Barge Canal in 1771, linking the town to the River Severn. Communications were further improved in the 1850's by the construction of a rail link and the Droitwich Junction Canal, which connected to the canal network to the east. Salt production reached its peak in 1872.

2.4 The development of the town took a new turn when the therapeutic qualities of brine were discovered in the early 19th century. Led by entrepreneur John Corbett, the salt production industry was re-located and the town developed as a spa resort with the construction of Lido Park, the laying out of new streets and other public spaces, and the building of several brine baths.

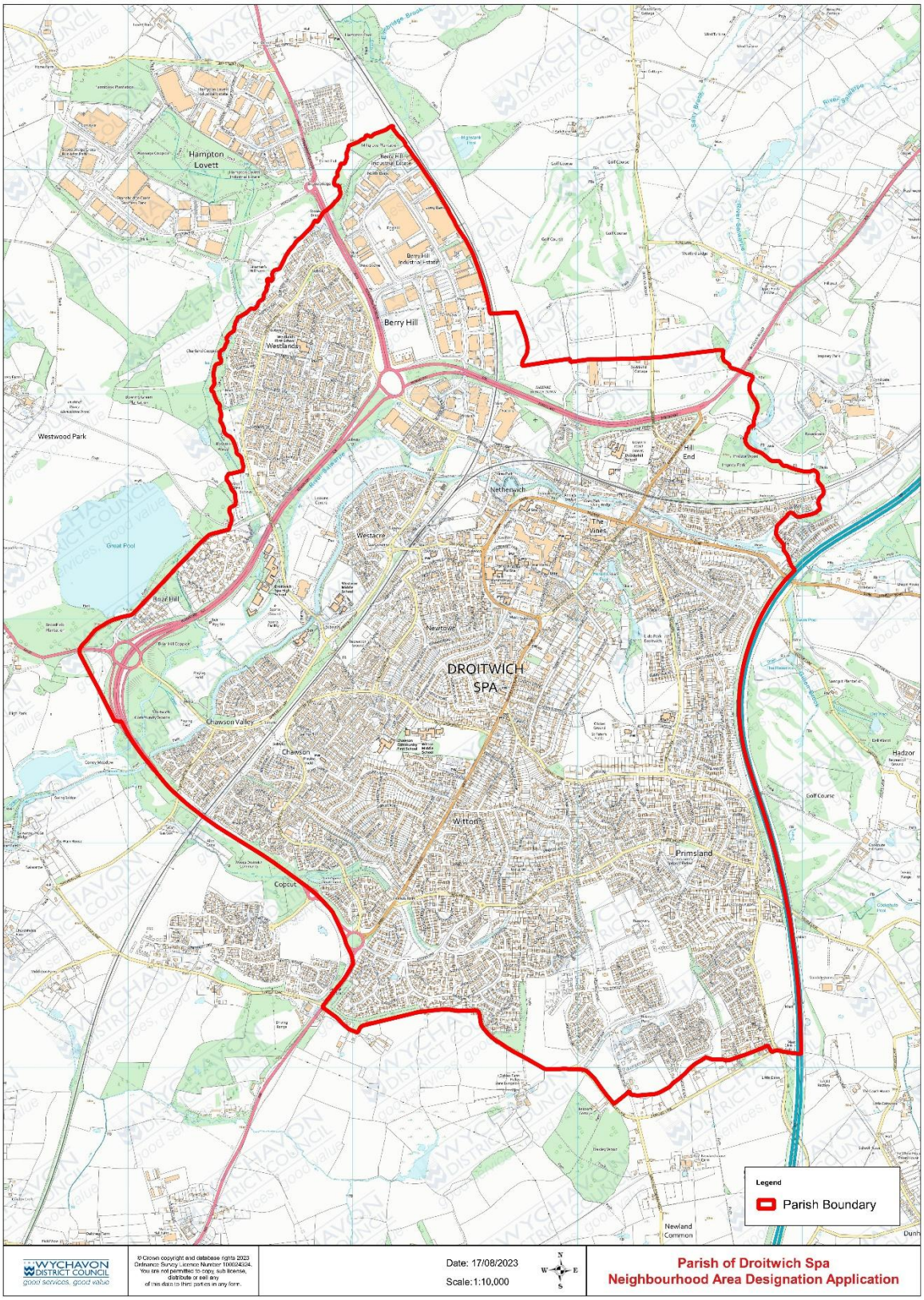
2.5 The two distinct phases of the town's development up to Victorian times, first as a salt manufacturing centre and then as a tourist resort, provide the basis for its distinctive identity and character which is readily apparent today in and around the town centre.

2.6 In the 20th century, land within the town boundary has become largely built-up for housing and employment. The M5 motorway was built in 1962. The most recent phase of residential development has been at Yew Tree Hill in the south where construction began in 2016.

2.7 The population of the Neighbourhood Area was 25,041 at the time of the Census in April 2021.[5] This compares to 23,504 in 2011, an increase of 6.5%. The 2021 population equates to a density of 30 persons per hectare (ppha), significantly more than that of Wychavon District (2.0 ppha), reflecting its built-up nature.

2.8 The number of households rose by 5.7% between 2011 and 2021, from 10,385 to 10,973. The average household size increased slightly as a result, from 2.26 to 2.28. In 2021, 31% of all households were single person; over half of these were aged 66 or over.

[5] The local area statistics given in this chapter are for Droitwich Spa civil parish as per Census 2021 Topic Summaries and other Tables available on Nomis.



Plan 1: Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Area

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2.9 The age profile of the Neighbourhood Area in 2021 compared to the District is shown in Figure 2. The town has a younger age profile than Wychavon overall, with a relative over-representation of those aged up to 44, and an under-representation of older age groups. Notwithstanding this, between 2011 and 2021 the town's population has aged somewhat. Younger age groups up to age 19 accounted for 23% of residents in 2011, this falling to 21.8% in 2021, whilst those aged 65 and over rose from 20% to 23.7%.

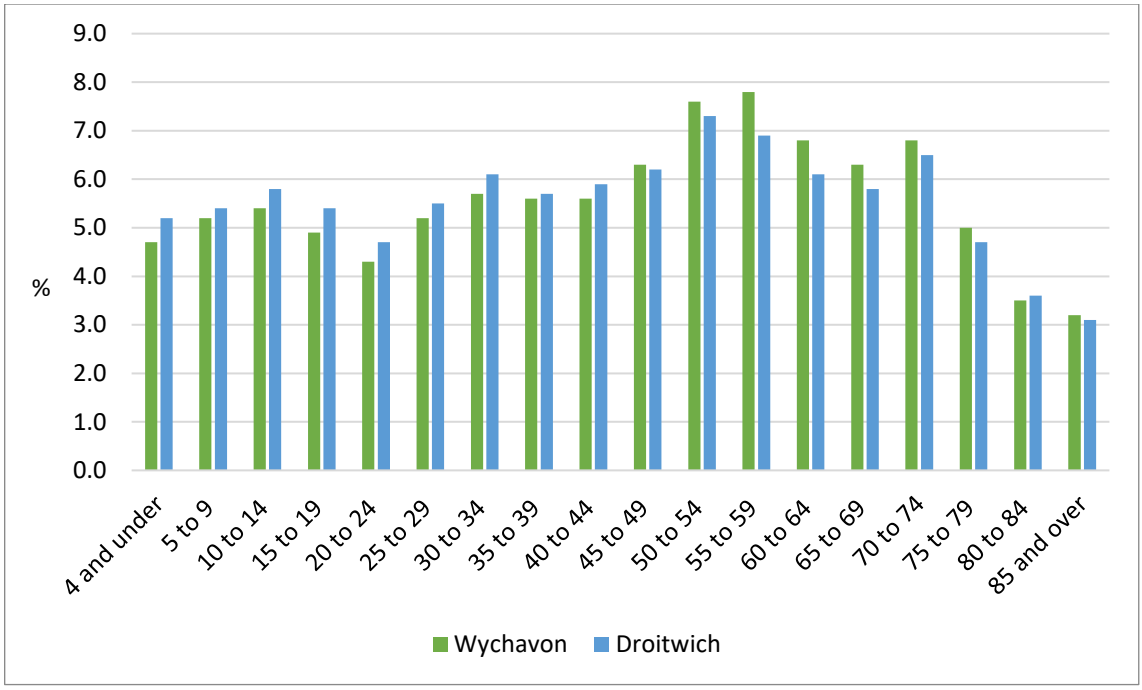


Figure 2: Age structure in 2021

2.10 In 2021 66% of homes in the Neighbourhood Area were owner-occupied, either outright or with a mortgage or loan (Figure 3). The corresponding figure for the District was 70% The proportion of private rented housing was also lower than for Wychavon; conversely the proportion of social rented housing was higher.

2.11 Most houses in Droitwich Spa are detached or semi-detached, though the proportion of both is lower than in Wychavon (Figure 4). Terraced housing accounts for 20% (District 16%), and purpose-built blocks of flats for 13%, or 1,388 units (District 8%).

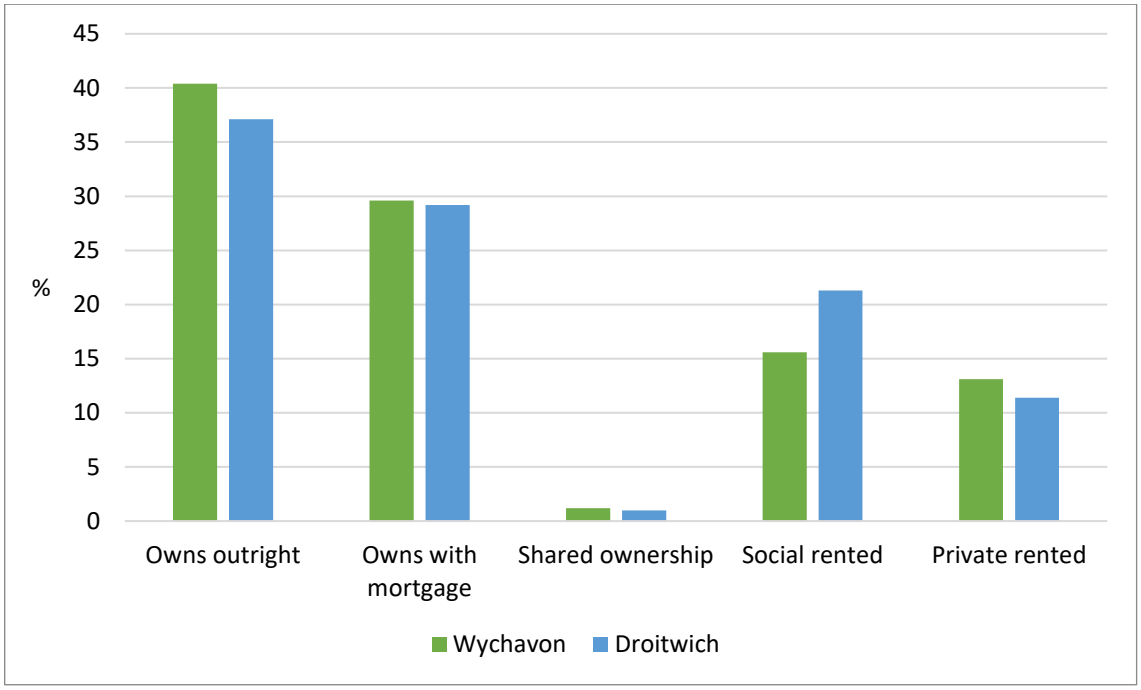


Figure 3: Tenure

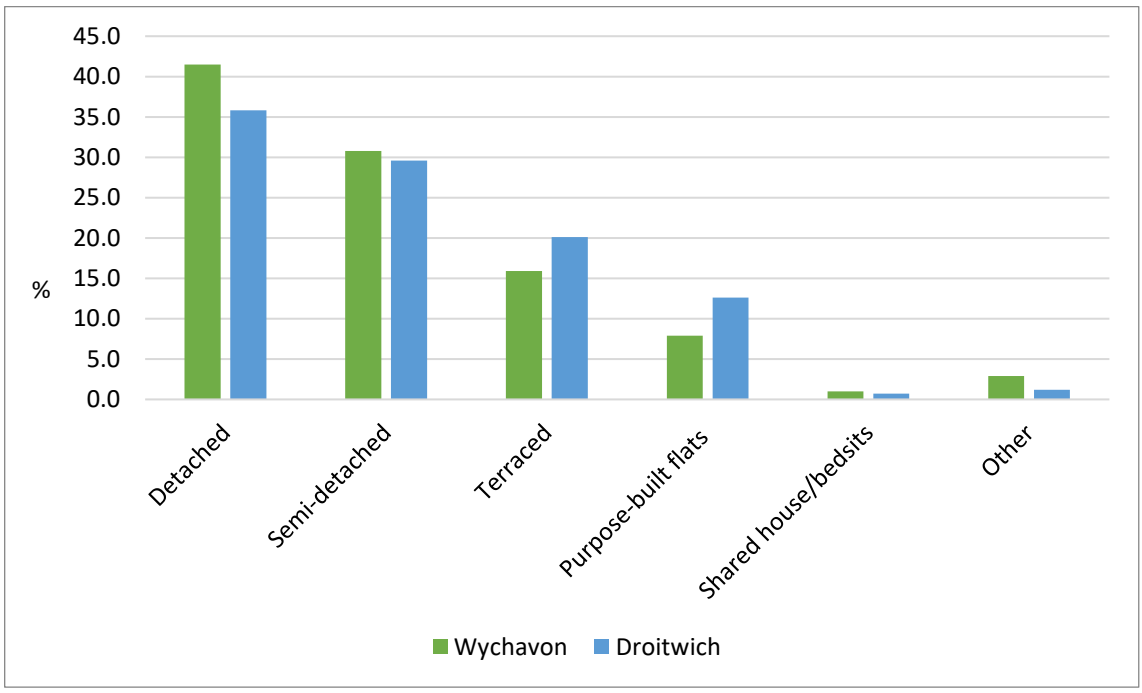


Figure 4: Accommodation type

2.12 Droitwich Spa has a wide range of community facilities, commensurate with its size and the population served. The following (non-exhaustive) list is indicative of the range of built community facilities available in the town:

- Health and care, including The Droitwich Spa Hospital, Droitwich Health Centre, Covercoft Centre, and the Spa, Salters and Corbett Medical Practices.
- Sport and leisure, including Droitwich Spa Leisure Centre and Droitwich Spa Lido.
- Cultural, including Droitwich Spa Library, Norbury Theatre and St. Richards House Tourist Information and Heritage Centre.
- Educational, including day nurseries, pre-school, primary schools, Westacre and Witton Middle Schools, Droitwich Spa High School and Sixth Form Centre, and RGS Dodderhill.
- Community, including Droitwich Spa Community Hall.
- Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist and other places of worship.
- Emergency services, including police and fire stations.

2.13 These and other existing community facilities are safeguarded under the terms of Local Plan and SWDPR policies and will be protected and retained accordingly.

2.14 Lido Park and the adjoining St. Peter's Fields are the town's foremost open spaces. The formal character of the original Victorian park and pleasure grounds has been largely retained and is readily apparent today. St. Peter's Fields to the south were added to the park in the 1920's, being remnants of the previous farmland setting of the town. They provide a more informal open space experience. Lido Park offers a wide range of leisure and recreational opportunities:

- Droitwich Spa Lido, one of the UK's last remaining inland, open-air, saltwater swimming pools.
- Herriot's Pool (fishing).
- Bandstand.
- Bowling Green.
- Tennis courts.
- 5 a side court.
- Children's play area.

2.15 Vines Park is to the north of the town centre and the Saltway, an informal linear open space laid out alongside the River Salwarpe, Droitwich Barge Canal and Netherwich canal basin. Occupying what was once the centre of brine extraction and salt production in Droitwich Spa since the Iron Age, it is of considerable historic significance. A bowling green (Vines Park Bowling Club Ltd) lies adjacent.

2.16 Other sports, recreation and leisure provisions are focussed in the Chawson Valley green corridor to the west of the town through which run the River Salwarpe and Droitwich Barge Canal. Formal pitch provision gives way in the south to areas of woodland and open space, including Droitwich Community Woods and Briar Hill Coppice.

2.17 As with built community facilities, green open spaces including both formal and informal provisions are safeguarded by Local Plan and SWDPR policies.

Environment

2.18 The Neighbourhood Area has a wealth of heritage assets, reflecting its long history of settlement and the role played by brine extraction, salt production and distribution in the town's development from the Iron Age to Victorian times. The historic environment interest is focussed on the north of the present city centre within the areas of Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement. Here there is a rich and inter-connected heritage comprising the original street pattern, burgage building plots, historic buildings, open spaces, Canal and other water features, and buried archaeological remains. Designated heritage assets are:

- 56 listed buildings. These are mainly Grade II with notable clusters at Friar Street and High Street. There are two Grade I entries, for the Church of St Andrew, St Andrew's Street and the Church of St Peter, St Peter's Church Lane. There are three Grade II* entries: the Church of St. Augustine; Nos. 31-35 High Street, and the Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart and St Catherine of Alexandria, Worcester Road. The Raven Hotel, a prominent part-16th century building in the heart of the town, is Grade II.
- Four scheduled ancient monuments, which lie adjacent to each other northwards from Friar Street and High Street:
    - Multi-period salt production remains in Droitwich (land and buildings including the Netherwich Canal Basin and Vines Park in the River Salwarpe/Saltway corridor).
    - Roman fort, Saxon church and medieval hospital at Dodderhill (includes the Grade II* listed Church of St. Augustine, a town landmark).
    - Roman settlement at Bays Meadow, comprising the buried remains of a Roman villa to the west of the Roman fort at Dodderhill.
    - Roman camp 430m east of Dodderhill Court Farm and north-east of the Roman Fort.
- Three Conservation Areas:
    - the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area, designated in 1974 and which embraces both the older historic core and the commercial, residential and park areas of the newer planned spa resort to the south.
    - The Droitwich Canal Conservation Area, designated in 1975 for the whole of the Barge Canal. It extends outside the Neighbourhood Area to the River Severn to the west.
    - The Droitwich Link Canal Conservation Area, designated in 1987 for the whole of the Junction Canal. It extends outside the Neighbourhood Area to the east to Hanbury Wharf.
- One registered Park and Garden at Westwood Park (Grade II) which is outside but adjoining the Neighbourhood Area boundary to the west.

2.19 The areas associated with Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement contain significant archaeological information in the form of earthworks and buried remains relating to these periods. There are also many unlisted buildings of local interest in the historic core and Droitwich Spa Conservation Area which have been identified by the District Council.

2.20 In terms of biodiversity, there are a range of sites and habitats which are identified and protected in Local Plan policy. The River Salwarpe and the Droitwich Canals running through the Neighbourhood Area are Local Wildlife Sites, as is the Droitwich Community Woods and Briar Hill Coppice (also a Worcestershire Wildlife Trust nature reserve). Other Local Wildlife Sites are:

- Broadfield Plantation (eastern part).
- Land between Westwood Way/A38 Roman Road.
- Oakley Wood (bordering).

2.21 Priority Habitat Inventory sites in the Neighbourhood Area as listed by Natural England comprise:

- Deciduous woodland, often in linear form such as along A38 Roman Way.
- Wood-pasture and parkland including Lido Park and Impney Park.
- One area of ancient and semi-natural woodland (Briar Hill Coppice).

2.22 The SWDPR identifies an extensive ecological network in the form of urban biodiversity corridors including roadside verges and open spaces throughout the Neighbourhood Area, in addition to the River and Canal corridors referred to above.

2.23 There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the Neighbourhood Area, although there are two nearby:

- Westwood Great Pool SSSI adjoins the Neighbourhood Area to the north-west of Westwood Way. Its condition was assessed as 'unfavourable – no change' due to freshwater pollution when last assessed in 2010.
- Oakley Pool SSSI is some 500m south of Pulley Lane and the Neighbourhood Area boundary. Its condition was 'unfavourable – recovering' when assessed in 2010, with a restoration project underway.

2.24 The River Salwarpe is the principal watercourse in the Neighbourhood Area. It flows north-east to south-west through the Area, enroute to its confluence with the River Severn south of Hawford. Elmbridge Brook marks much of the north-western boundary of the Neighbourhood Area, joining the Salwarpe below Droitwich High School.

2.25 The Neighbourhood Area is generally at low risk of flooding as defined in national planning policy guidance (i.e. Zone 1), the only areas of higher risk (Flood Zones 2 and 3) being associated with the corridors of the River Salwarpe, the Droitwich Canals and Elmbridge Brook.

Economy

2.26 Droitwich Spa has excellent road connections courtesy of the M5, A38 and other main routes. Employment opportunities and markets in nearby Worcester, Bromsgrove, and Kidderminster are within easy reach, and the town is well-placed to access the West Midlands conurbation and further afield via the national motorway network.

2.27 The town centre is home to a wide range of retail and service businesses ranging from independent traders to national stores, including the St. Andrews shopping centre and two supermarkets (Waitrose and Morrisons). Just outside the Saltway inner ring road lies the North Street Industrial Estate, with the railway station adjoining. To the north of the railway line is the recently completed Salwarpe Business Park (Screwfix and others), with further commercial uses and out-of-centre retail (including Aldi and Lidl) beyond served from the A38 Roman Road. The Berry Hill Industrial Estate is a well-established employment location extending over 52 ha. east of the A442 Kidderminster Road.

2.28 Outside and to the north of the Neighbourhood Area lie the 22 ha. Hampton Lovett Industrial Estate (Amazon, Koito, and others) and the 32 ha. Stonebridge Cross Business Park (Müller Wiseman, Vax, and others). Stonebridge Cross is a Local Plan Strategic Employment Site with proposals for a 10 ha. extension.

2.29 In 2021, 58% of working-age residents were in employment the week before the Census, similar to the District as a whole (57%). Almost a third were classed as being in either 'professional occupations' or 'associate professional and technical occupations' (19% and 13% respectively). The equivalent proportions for Wychavon were higher in both cases at 27% and 15%. 'Managers, directors and senior officials' at 13% were also under-represented compared to the District (22%). Skilled trades accounted for 11% (District 10%). Occupations such as sales, customer service, caring, other services and 'process, plant and machine operatives' were relatively over-represented, these accounting for 25% of jobs in the Neighbourhood Area compared to 14% for Wychavon.

2.30 In 2021, some 83.4% of households had the use of one or more cars or vans, lower than for the District (88.2%), reflecting the compact nature of the town and the potential for using public transport, walking and cycling to access goods and services.

2.31 For those travelling to work, in 2021 this was most commonly by driving a car or van (56% of working-age residents in employment), similar to the equivalent District figure (55%). Just over a third (35%) travelled 10km or less to work (District 29%) reflecting the town's role as an employment and service centre. Consistent with the occupational profile described above, with relatively fewer jobs compatible with home working, the Neighbourhood Area had a lower proportion of residents who worked mainly at or from home – 27% locally compared to 30% in Wychavon.

3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Key issues

3.1 The key issues to be addressed in the Plan have been identified by the Steering Group taking account of the feedback from community consultation, the questionnaire survey, the characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area set out in chapter 2, and the wider evidence base.

3.2 Planning policies in the NPPF and the Local Plan already address many issues of local relevance and concern. The Neighbourhood Plan focusses on those topics where additional local detail will help decision makers in considering development proposals in the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Area. The Plan addresses these topics through its Vision, objectives, and the neighbourhood planning policies on the development and use of land in chapters 4 to 9.

3.3 Some of the issues raised in community feedback are outside the scope of the Plan, because they are not related to development and land use. They include existing conditions and service levels in respect of traffic and highways, other transport matters including town centre car parking and public transport, other infrastructure, and services and facilities including health and education. Where appropriate, these are addressed in the Plan as Community Actions in chapter 11.

3.4 The key planning issues addressed by the Plan's neighbourhood planning policies are as follows:

- Providing for well-designed new development which reflects local character.
- Protecting, conserving, and enhancing the town's heritage, particularly the street and plot pattern, buildings, Canal and other water features, and archaeological remains in the historic core.
- Ensuring that development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Droitwich Spa and Droitwich Canals Conservation Areas.
- Protecting and enhancing the local environment including its biodiversity, key views, and green spaces of importance to the community.
- Matching the type and size of new housing to the needs of the community.
- Setting criteria for new housing and householder development which reflect local factors and community priorities, including for sites allocated or proposed for allocation in the Local Plan.
- Protecting community facilities and enabling new provision.
- Supporting the growth, management, and adaptation of Droitwich Spa town centre.
- Providing criteria for employment development including tourism which reflect local factors and community priorities.
- Supporting development which is sustainable, including mitigating and adapting to climate change and moving to a low carbon economy.
- Encouraging and promoting facilities for walking and cycling (active travel) in new development to foster connectivity improvements by sustainable modes.

Vision

3.5 Earlier drafts of the Vision and objectives were consulted on in the community survey and received widespread support, as well as many comments which have been taken into account in the versions shown below.

Vision

In 2041, Droitwich Spa will be a place where:

- There is **a distinctive spa town sense of place** including a re-instated Brine Baths and regenerated Canal-side as part of a protected and enhanced historic environment.
- **Well-designed new development** respects the spa town character and the wider environment, by protecting biodiversity, key views and Local Green Space and by mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- **New housing** is of a size and type to help meet community needs and requirements.
- A wide range of indoor and outdoor **community facilities** are available, meeting the social, recreational, and cultural needs of all ages including young people and families.
- The regenerated **town centre** is home to a range of uses and services with a safe and attractive public realm, well-connected to its surroundings including the railway station, Vines Park, and Lido Park.
- A range of local **employment opportunities** are available including for manufacturing, retail, leisure, and tourism, building on the spa town heritage wherever possible.
- Development is supported by suitable **infrastructure** with transport options which foster active travel by walking and cycling.

Objectives

3.6 The following objectives for the neighbourhood planning policies reflect the community priorities and concerns identified in consultation and surveys. They will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development:

- To ensure new development achieves a **high quality of design** and maintains and enhances local character and distinctiveness.
- To conserve and enhance the **historic environment,** recognising the desirability of sustaining the significance of heritage assets, their contribution to sense of place, and the wider benefits that flow from their conservation.
- To protect the **natural environment** in terms of its biodiversity, key views, and Local Green Spaces, and by mitigating and adapting to climate change and supporting the move to a low carbon economy.
- To ensure that **new housing development** is energy- and resource-efficient and otherwise sustainable, of a suitable size and type to meet community requirements and supporting the use of brownfield sites in preference to greenfield.
- **To support new or expanded community facilities** to enable and promote new provision particularly for health care services and those designed to meet the needs of children, young people, and older people to support a healthy, inclusive, and safe community.
- **To help support and regenerate the town centre,** providing guidance for the development of key sites including land at Union Lane and the Netherwich Canal Basin, encouraging a range of town centre uses including retail, leisure, and housing, and promoting improvements to its accessibility, safety, and attractiveness.
- **To ensure that new employment development** is well-designed and accessible, with provision for business start-up and growth including home working and manufacturing, and for tourism-related development linked to the town's heritage.
- **To ensure that suitable supporting infrastructure** is provided ahead or alongside new development, taking account of existing conditions including regarding flood risk, traffic, and transport.

4. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Design

Policy SPA1: Design

Development proposals should maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness of the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Area and achieve a high quality of design by:

1. **having regard to the Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes and other relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). A Design and Access Statement or similar should be provided to show how the Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes and SPDs have been addressed and positively influenced the proposed design solution; and**
2. **respecting the character of the locality and street scene as to layout, density, height, massing, architectural detailing, building to building distances, boundary treatment, landscaping, and materials; and**
3. **retaining natural site features of amenity and biodiversity value, such as trees, ponds, and hedgerows, as far as possible; and**
4. **providing new tree planting and other landscaping and open space which is in keeping with local townscape character and provides for wildlife, with a preference for native deciduous species; and**
5. **being capable of being safely accessed from the local road network without undue impacts on the character of the locality and be provided with sufficient off-road vehicle parking; and**
6. **avoiding creating unacceptable impacts on neighbourhood amenity including from noise, volume and nature of traffic generated, dust or odour.**

Modern design approaches will be welcomed where they make a positive contribution to the character of the area and contribute to local distinctiveness.

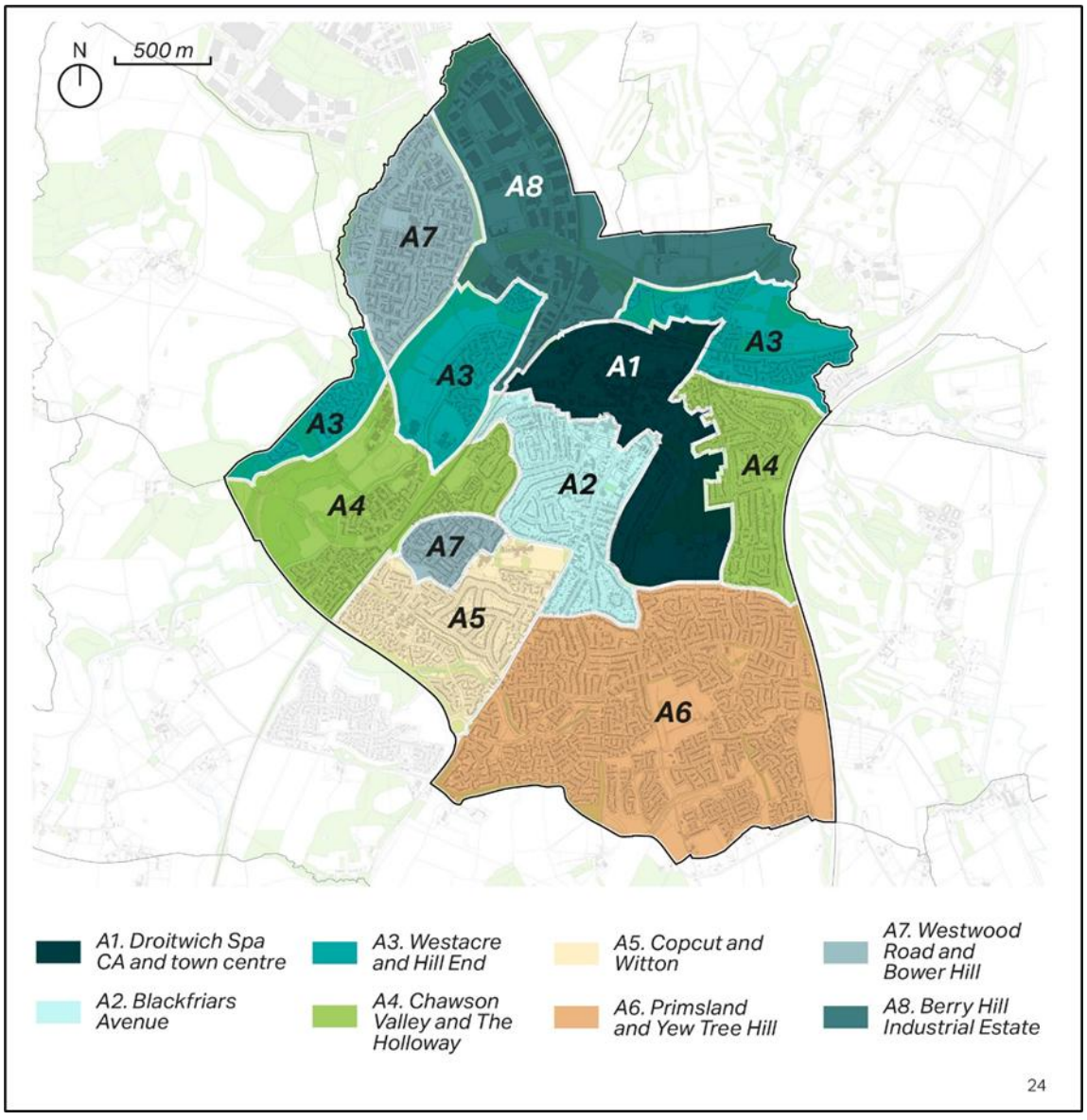
4.1 The design of individual buildings and their relationship to each other and their surroundings is an important aspect of the local environment. National policy is that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role by identifying the special qualities of an area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. Design guides and codes can provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality of design.[6]

4.2 The Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes have been prepared to help assist future change and development in the Neighbourhood Area.[7] They are based on a character

[6] NPPF paragraphs 131 - 133.
[7] Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes, November 2023.

assessment which segments the Neighbourhood Area into eight Character Areas based on shared or similar characteristics (Plan 2). Each Character Area is analysed with reference to layout, landscape, built form and appearance. This provides the basis for design recommendations specific to each Character Area. Design codes are provided at Neighbourhood Area-level. For each Character Area, particularly relevant area-wide codes are specified.

4.3 The document also provides design principles for two sites which are either allocated (Netherwich Canal Basin) or proposed for allocation (land at Union Lane) in the Local Plan. These site-specific principles have been reflected in the respective Plan policies (SPA11 Land at Union Lane and SPA15 Netherwich Canal Basin).



Plan 2: Droitwich Spa Character Areas

Source: Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes, figure 8. Reproduced with permission.

4.4 The Design Guidance and Codes should be demonstrably taken into account by new development. They apply to all new developments, for all uses, including extensions to existing buildings and land, with the overall objective of helping to ensure new development is in keeping with the historic and town character. The Guidance and Codes cover key design issues for Droitwich Spa:

- Heritage and local character.
- Green and public spaces.
- Waterfronts.
- Blue and green infrastructure.
- Identity.
- Street hierarchy and pattern (building line to building line, plot width, carriageway width, enclosure ratio).
- Car and cycle parking.
- Pedestrian, cycle movement and transport options.
- Energy efficiency measures towards net-zero carbon.
- Built form (block and building lines, appearance).

4.5 The Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes should be applied alongside other national and local guidance, including the South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the Local Plan which provides guidance on overarching design principles. In addition, Wychavon District Council are presently preparing a set of design codes, to be adopted as SPD to the Local Plan in due course, one of which covers Droitwich Spa and the surrounding area.[8]

4.6 In the context of the above guidance, the Plan supports development that respects the character, appearance, and amenity of the surrounding area, identifying design elements to be considered when assessing how any given proposal contributes to its environs. Responses to the community survey pointed to a range of factors that are important to residents in the design of new development. Priority was given to providing sufficient off-road parking, retaining trees and other landscape features, and having regard to wildlife and biodiversity. Scheme layout including its relationship to the surroundings and the street scene, the provision of landscaped open space, and the overall height, size, and density of new buildings were also seen as important factors in considering design.

[8] Draft Wychavon Design Code, Droitwich Spa and surrounding area, undated draft consulted upon in January/February 2024.

Historic environment

Policy SPA2: Historic environment

Development proposals should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment of the Neighbourhood Area and its contribution to local character and distinctiveness. This particularly applies to the historic core of Droitwich Spa and its evolved and connected heritage of street and plot pattern, buildings, open spaces, trees, Canal and other water features, archaeological remains, associated views and setting.

In considering the impact of proposed development on heritage assets, appropriate account will be taken of their significance (including any contribution made by their setting) by:

1. **giving great weight to conserving designated heritage assets (listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and the Droitwich Spa, Droitwich Canal, and Droitwich Link Canal Conservation Areas); and**
2. **for non-designated heritage assets including other archaeological sites and buildings of local interest, balancing the scale of any harm or loss against their significance; and**
3. **recognising the desirability of putting heritage assets to viable uses consistent with their conservation, particularly where this contributes to the regeneration of the town centre and to tourism; and**
4. **requiring development proposals to be accompanied by Heritage Impact Assessments where the significance of heritage assets may be affected. Where proposals may affect archaeological interests, an appropriate desk-based assessment and where necessary a field evaluation should be provided. These should be made available to enable them to be considered during determination of the relevant planning application.**

4.7 Droitwich Spa has considerable architectural, historic, and archaeological interest with more than two thousand years of settlement history. From its origins in prehistory Droitwich has been a small Roman town, an important Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval commercial centre, a busy Georgian and a Victorian industrial town and latterly a popular Victorian and early 20th century tourist spa resort. Each of these phases of development has left its mark, with a legacy of buildings and other structures overlaying an historic settlement form, with much evidence of its early origin and changing role in history and a very high significance of archaeological interest and potential.[9]

4.8 A key factor in the origins and historic development of the town was the ready availability of high-quality brine. The archaeological record shows salt production based around the brine

[9] This account of the historic development of the town and subsequent paragraphs is drawn from the District Council's Droitwich Spa Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, September 2013.

springs to the north of the present town centre in the Iron Age. The salt industry was developed and expanded over time, reaching peak production in the 19th century. At the same time, a focus on the therapeutic qualities of brine led to the development of Droitwich as a spa town.[10]

4.9 The medieval town is still readily apparent in the layout of the historic core, with well-defined rectangular burgage plots divided and defined by brick walls behind tight lines of buildings fronting narrow streets. There is a mix of timber frame, brick and rendered buildings dating from the 13th century onwards. The later planned areas are identifiable in large, detached Victorian and early 20th century buildings set in generous plots in tree lined avenues, reflecting the wealth of new visitors and residents.

4.10 The historic environment makes a strong and positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness despite having been adversely affected by some later 20th century development in and around the town centre. Plan policies provide for the historic environment to be conserved and enhanced. This reflects a community survey priority and will help ensure that the contribution it makes to the character and identity of the town are protected for the future. Policies also recognise the role that the town's heritage can play in supporting town centre regeneration, and in boosting the local economy and tourism. Achieving such wider aims in turn will help to create the conditions in which heritage assets can be appropriately maintained and conserved and put to viable use.

4.11 Designated heritage assets in Droitwich Spa comprise:[11]

- 56 listed buildings. These are mainly Grade II with notable clusters at Friar Street and High Street. There are two Grade I entries, for the Church of St Andrew, St Andrew's Street and the Church of St Peter, St Peter's Church Lane. There are three Grade II* entries: the Church of St. Augustine; Nos. 31-35 High Street, and the Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart and St Catherine of Alexandria, Worcester Road.
- Four scheduled ancient monuments, all to the north of the town centre:
  - Multi-period salt production remains in Droitwich (land and buildings north and south of Saltway and including Netherwich Basin).
  - Roman settlement at Bays Meadow.
  - Roman fort, Saxon church and medieval hospital at Dodderhill.
  - Roman camp 430m east of Dodderhill Court Farm.
- Three Conservation Areas: the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area, the Droitwich Canal Conservation Area and the Droitwich Link Canal Conservation Area. Plan policies SPA3 and SPA4 provide detailed guidance on how development proposals can preserve or enhance their character or appearance.

[10] Archaeological Assessment of Droitwich, The Central Marches Historic Towns Survey 1996.
[11] See Interactive SWDPR Reg 19 Policies Mapping for designated area boundaries of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas and the Westwood Park Historic Park and Garden.

4.12 In addition, the Westwood Park Historic Park and Garden (Grade II) lies outside but adjoining the Neighbourhood Area boundary to the west.

4.13 Non-designated heritage assets comprise:

- archaeological sites and remains. Whilst these may occur throughout the Neighbourhood Area, the 1996 Archaeological Assessment of the town demonstrates that the areas associated with Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlement contain significant archaeological information in the form of earthworks and buried remains relating to these periods. Any proposed development within these areas of historic settlement that may have a potential impact on earthworks or buried remains should be assessed as early as possible in the planning process, informed by available evidence including the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record.
- unlisted buildings of local interest in the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area identified by the District Council.[12] Where other buildings/structures of local interest which are not designated are identified, the Town Council will seek their inclusion on the District Council's Local List of non-designated heritage assets, in line with the guidance set out in the Local List Supplementary Planning Document. A Community Action is included to that effect in Table 4.

[12] In the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, September 2013.

Droitwich Spa Conservation Area

Policy SPA3: Droitwich Spa Conservation Area

Development proposals within the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area or affecting its setting should preserve or enhance its character or appearance, having regard to the significance and special interest of the Conservation Area as set out in the Appraisal and Management Plan. Proposals will be supported provided that they:

1. **serve to preserve or positively enhance the Conservation Area by virtue of their use, character, and design; and**
2. **respect the historic plan form including street pattern, plot boundaries and building to plot characteristics, recognising the variations that occur in these factors within the Conservation Area; and**
3. **avoid any demolition of a building or structure if its loss would be harmful to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area; and**
4. **ensure that any extensions and service buildings are subsidiary to the main property, are not unduly prominent in the street scene, and use sympathetic materials to the main property; and**
5. **reflect the size, height, scale, proportions, and detailing of the existing and surrounding historic built form; and**
6. **use materials and vernacular techniques to reflect the historic context; and**
7. **retain the important boundary features, significant views, landmark and focal features, prominent open spaces, significant trees and tree groups, and significant water features identified in the Appraisal and Management Plan; and**
8. **specify street furniture and materials for surface and boundary treatments which do not detract from the historic environment; and**
9. **ensure that proposed shopfronts and signage respect the historic character of the host building in their siting, size, materials, and design, and having regard to the Shopfront Design Guide.**

4.14 Droitwich Spa Conservation Area was designated in 1974 in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest (Plan 3). The District Council's Appraisal and Management Plan, prepared in 2013, sets out the special interest and character of the Conservation Area and provides guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of its character or appearance can be achieved.[13] The Appraisal and Management Plan remains relevant today and provides the basis for Neighbourhood Plan policy.

4.15 The Appraisal explains that the Conservation Area is one of contrasts, embracing both the older historic town, with its commercial core of local businesses in small historic buildings lining narrow streets, and the green and spacious layout of the commercial, residential and

[13] Droitwich Spa Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, September 2013.

park areas of the newer planned spa resort. Buildings are constructed in a variety of materials and architectural styles spanning several periods of the town's growth. Despite modern development and the pressures of traffic and car parking, the Conservation Area retains a strong sense of history and identity, with successive phases of development readily identifiable. The special interest of the designated area arises from:

- Its long history, evident in the street layout, buildings and other structures, and in visible archaeological remains.
- The strong survival of the medieval street pattern based around Friar Street and High Street, urban plan form and buildings, including burgage plots and rear ancillary buildings.
- The distinct identity of the 19th century spa town phase of development.
- Its significant archaeological interest and potential, with over two thousand years of settlement dating back to before the Iron Age and linked in particular to the development of salt production.
- The number and quality of historic buildings.
- The high level of survival of historic fabric and architectural detailing.
- The contribution of trees, gardens, and open spaces including Lido Park and St. Peter's Fields.
- Key views and vistas, particularly from Vines Park, Saltway, High Street, Victoria Square, and Lido Park, serving to demonstrate the distinctive and contrasting urban forms of the historic early town and the planned spa resort.

4.16 The Appraisal highlights problems and pressures adversely affecting the character, appearance, or significance of the Conservation Area. They are:

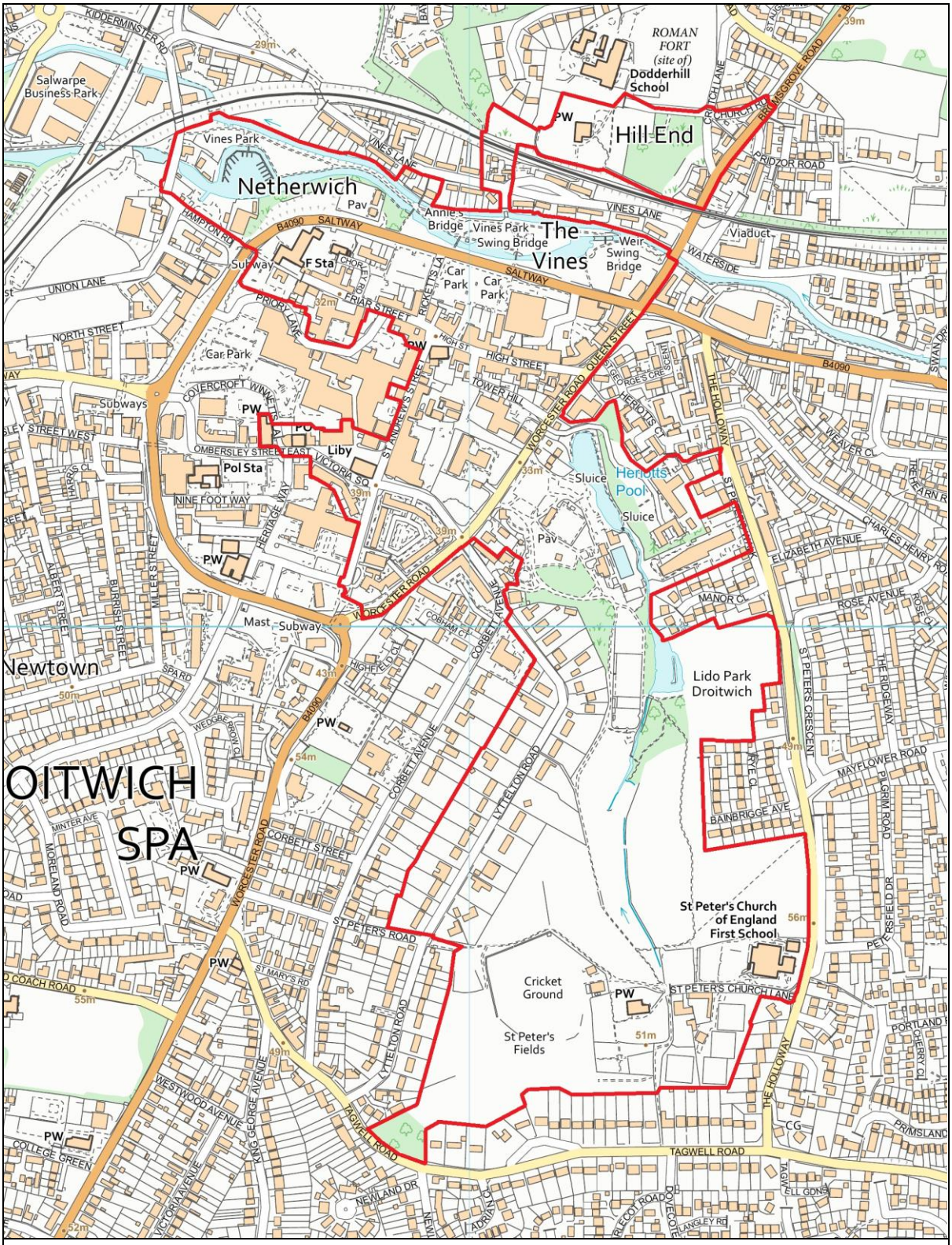
- Pressure for development threatening gardens, open spaces, historic plot divisions and existing buildings.
- Visual intrusion where some recent development has not reflected the value of the historic plan of the Conservation Area or the scale and architectural quality of its buildings.
- Factors such as flooding, retail competition, lack of investment in building maintenance, poor shopfronts and signage, and wider economic circumstances affecting the attractiveness and vitality of the historic commercial core and its appearance, with implications for the success of its longer-term conservation.
- Quality of the historic environment and the setting of historic buildings impacted by inappropriate paving, particularly along High Street, and by excessive street furniture such as litter bins, planters, signage, and bollards in Victoria Square.
- Shop fronts and signage which fail to respect the qualities of the host building in scale, design, lighting, and materials. On this issue, the District Council's Shop Front Design Guide provides relevant and detailed advice with the overall aims of ensuring shop

fronts complement the design and appearance of the premises and their street setting, supporting wider aims for town centre regeneration and tourism.[14]

- Loss of original architectural features on historic buildings and their replacement with poor quality modern substitutes such as uPVC or stained hardwood.
- Replacement of historic surfacing materials and boundary walls with modern materials and timber panelled fences, undermining the quality of the historic environment.
- Threat to trees through age, proximity to buildings or highway location.
- Inadequate building maintenance and repair risking deterioration and/or eventual loss of historic fabric.

4.17 National planning policy requires that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. It sets out a graduated approach to apply when considering the impacts of a proposed development on designated heritage assets such as Conservation Areas. This approach is reflected in Local Plan policy. Within this framework, policy SPA3 draws on the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and the issues identified to set out guidance on how development proposals should be assessed so that its character and appearance can best be preserved and enhanced. This is important in its own terms, as well as helping to contribute to wider aims – to encourage tourism and inward investment, and to increase the overall vitality and attractiveness of the town centre. In turn, achieving these aims will help support finding viable uses for historic buildings and their maintenance, repair, and conservation. The policy is complementary to the Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes.

[14] Wychavon Shop Front Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, March 2017.



Plan 3: Droitwich Spa Conservation Area

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Conservation Area

Droitwich Canals Conservation Areas

Policy SPA4: Droitwich Canals Conservation Areas

Development proposals within the Droitwich Canals Conservation Areas or their setting should preserve or enhance their character or appearance, having regard to the significance and special interest of the Conservation Areas including as set out in the Conservation Management Plan. Proposals will be supported provided that they:

1. **serve to preserve or positively enhance the Conservation Areas by virtue of their use, character, design, car parking arrangements and signage; and**
2. **avoid any demolition or removal of a building or structure particularly including original Canal features if its loss would be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area; and**
3. **where repair work is proposed, use matching traditional materials and vernacular techniques wherever possible; and**
4. **specify matching traditional materials or native species for any new boundary treatments such as walls, railings, fencing or hedging; and**
5. **ensure any adaptations to built heritage features, or to the towpath to facilitate access by all users, do not degrade their character, appearance, significance, or setting.**

4.18 The Droitwich Barge Canal was built by James Brindley and completed in 1771, joining Droitwich to the Severn at Hawford. The Canal enabled the import of coal for powering steam engines used in brine extraction, and the wider and more rapid distribution of salt. It was extended eastwards as the Droitwich Junction Canal to join the Worcester and Birmingham Canal at Hanbury Wharf in 1852. The Canals fell into disuse in the early 20th century, being fully restored to navigation in 2011.

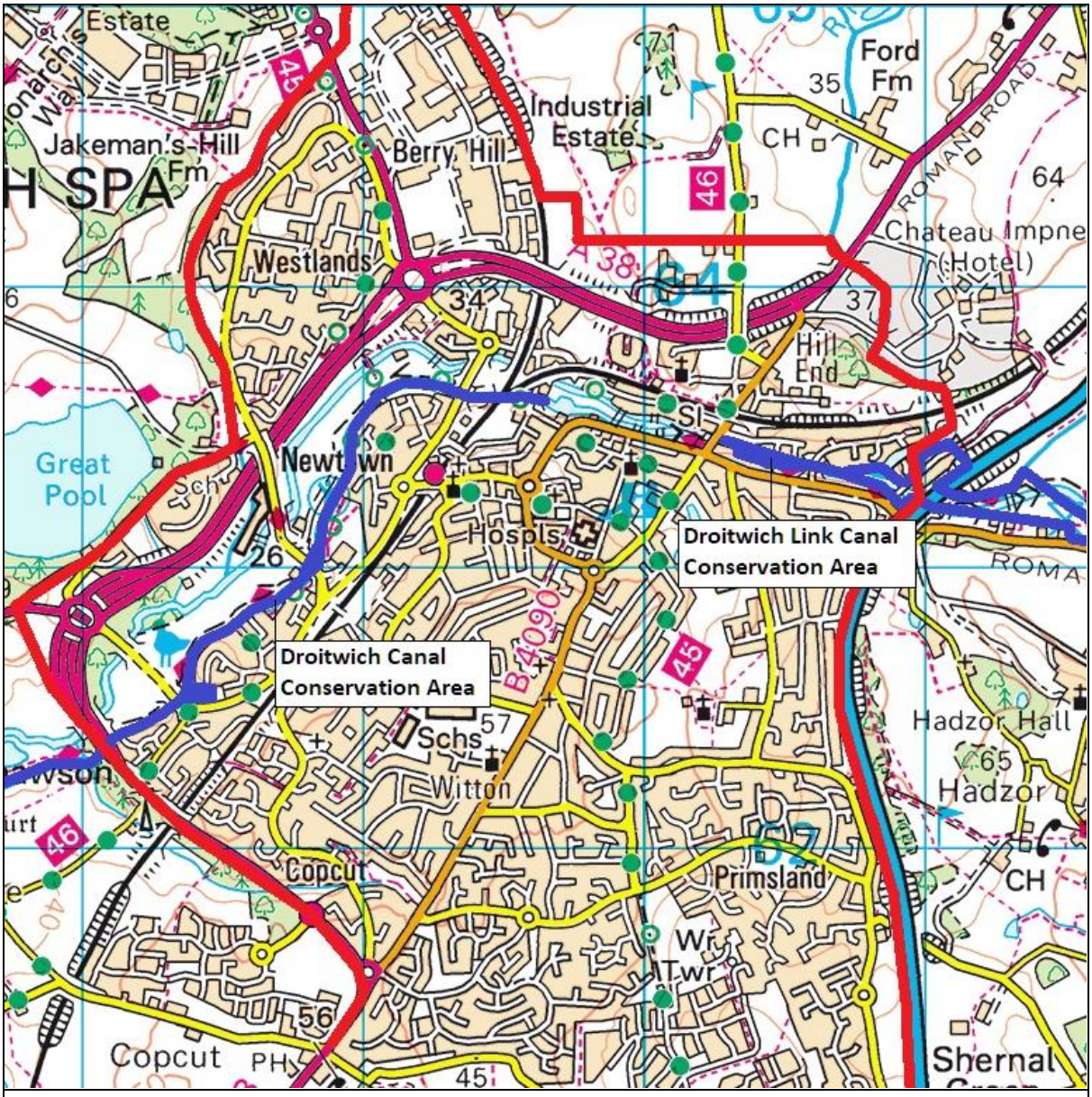
4.19 The linear corridors of the two Canal corridors along with associated land and buildings were designated as Conservation Areas as follows:

- The Droitwich Canal Conservation Area, designated in 1975 for the Barge Canal.
- The Droitwich Link Canal Conservation Area, designated in 1987 for the Junction Canal.

4.20 Plan 4 shows those parts of the two Conservation Areas which lie in the Neighbourhood Area. The designations exclude the Netherwich Canal Basin and Vines Park[15].

4.21 The management and maintenance of the waterways is guided by a Conservation Management Plan, prepared in 2009 for British Waterways (now the Canal and River Trust). The Management Plan summarises the heritage significance of the Canals as follows:

[15] See SWDPR Reg 19 Interactive Mapping for detailed Conservation Area boundaries.



Plan 4: Droitwich Canals Conservation Areas

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Neighbourhood Area **Canal Conservation Areas**

"… the Droitwich Canals played an important role in the development of Droitwich and its salt industry during the industrial revolution. Together the Droitwich Canals are significant in historical terms. They are a tangible manifestation of the salt trade for which the town of Droitwich was famous. Individually the canals are historically significant. The Barge Canal is significant as a very early example of a broad canal built at the start of the Canal Age, and one of the few of Brindley's canals to have been constructed during his lifetime. By contrast the

Junction Canal is significant as a very late example of canal to be built at a time when the railways had already started to become dominant.".[16]

4.22 Many of the remaining built heritage features are of high value, particularly the original Brindley locks, bridges and weirs. There are also buried archaeological remains, notably associated with the Droitwich salt industry but also including other areas of potential such as smaller village settlements outside the Neighbourhood Area.

4.23 The Conservation Management Plan highlights the following issues, vulnerabilities and conflicts which may adversely affect the character, appearance, or significance of the Conservation Areas. These have been taken into account in the above Plan policy:

- Wear and tear to bridges, locks, canal walls, towpaths, and other canal features through use.
- Physical damage to bridges, locks, canal walls, towpaths, and other canal features because of vandalism and accidents.
- Damage to heritage significance resulting from inappropriate/poor quality repair techniques and materials.
- Potential pressure for health and safety improvements, e.g. provision of safety barriers.
- Impact on the setting of historic features from new development generated by the restored canals.
- Visual impacts of development/commercial facilities generated by the restored canal, car parking (either in the form of introduction of car parks or informal parking in the landscape corridor of the canals), picnic areas, signs, lighting and litter.
- Impact on the setting of the canal resulting from the potential need to upgrade sections of towpath or to facilitate access by all users, including people with disabilities.

[16] British Waterways, Droitwich Canals Conservation Management Plan, 2009, para. 3.7.

5. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Biodiversity

Policy SPA5: Biodiversity

The protection, conservation, and enhancement of the biodiversity of the Neighbourhood Area, including its Local Wildlife Sites, Priority Habitat Inventory sites, woodland, trees (particularly ancient and veteran trees), hedgerows, grassland, watercourses, and water features will be supported in order to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

Development proposals in the Neighbourhood Area likely to have an adverse effect on the neighbouring Westwood Great Pool Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or the Oakley Pool SSSI, either on their own or in combination with other developments, will not be supported unless the benefits of the development in the location proposed outweigh both the likely impacts on the features of the Site that make it of special scientific interest and on the national network of SSSI's.

In securing measurable net gains for biodiversity, development proposals should:

1. **retain, conserve, and enhance existing site features which are of importance to biodiversity, including woodland, trees, hedgerows, water courses and water features; and**
2. **where new landscaping is proposed, ensure this serves to maintain and enhance biodiversity. New planting should favour native species, and arrangements for the future maintenance of the landscaping scheme should at least maintain its biodiversity value; and**
3. **take every opportunity to maintain, restore, and enhance the contribution of sites and habitats to the coherence and connectivity of ecological networks in the Neighbourhood Area including the River Salwarpe and Droitwich Canals and urban biodiversity corridors.**

5.1 Given the urban nature of the Neighbourhood Area, natural habitats are relatively scarce, meaning that their conservation, enhancement, and restoration is all the more important in the context of delivering measurable net gains in biodiversity. The River Salwarpe and the Droitwich Canals, and associated land, are key wildlife corridors running through the town and connecting to the surrounding countryside. They provide river and open water habitats as well as marshland, woodland, reedbeds, grassland and hedgerows. Their intrinsic value and ecological network role is recognised through their designation as Local Wildlife Sites. In the west, Droitwich Community Woods, Briar Hill Coppice, eastern parts of Broadfield Plantation and land between Westwood way and the A38 Roman Road are also Local Wildlife Sites, connecting to the River Salwarpe and the Canal corridors. In the south, Oakley Wood Local

Wildife Site lies just outside the Neighbourhood Area at Newland Common. The Community Woods/Briar Hill Coppice are a Worcestershire Wildlife Trust nature reserve. There are also several Priority Habitat Inventory Sites:[17]

- Deciduous woodland, often in linear form such as along the A38 Roman Way.
- Wood-pasture and parkland including Lido Park and Impney Park.
- One area of ancient and semi-natural woodland (Briar Hill Coppice).

5.2 The SWDPR identifies a wider and more extensive ecological network in the form of urban biodiversity corridors including roadside verges and open spaces throughout the Neighbourhood Area, in addition to the River and Canal corridors referred to above.[18]

5.3 Whilst there are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the Neighbourhood Area, there are two neighbouring:

- Westwood Great Pool SSSI adjoins the Neighbourhood Area to the north-west of Westwood Way. Its condition was assessed as 'unfavourable – no change' due to freshwater pollution when last assessed in 2010.
- Oakley Pool SSSI is some 500m south of Pulley Lane and the Neighbourhood Area boundary. Its condition was 'unfavourable – recovering' when assessed in 2010, with a restoration project underway.

5.4 Whilst the Sites themselves are outside the Neighbourhood Area, their proximity is such that they may be affected by development proposals inside the town boundary.[19]

5.5 In the community survey, there was generally strong support for retaining trees, hedgerows, ponds, and streams on development sites, and for the design of proposals to have regard to wildlife and biodiversity. There was support also for open spaces to be managed to maintain and improve their biodiversity value. To this end, the Town Council is developing proposals to enhance biodiversity and provide community benefit at two of its open spaces, Copcut Park and Spring Meadow.[20] The proposals include tree planting, grassland enhancement, woodland enhancement/management, woodland bulb planting and seed sowing, wetland enhancements, non-native species removal, formal planting using native species, and wildlife features. A Community Action is included in Chapter 11 in respect of further such initiatives.

[17] As per the Priority Habitat Inventory which is maintained by Natural England pursuant to section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Boundaries shown on Natural England, Magic Map at http://www.magic.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx.
[18] See SWDPR Reg 19 Interactive Mapping for Local Wildlife Sites, Green Spaces and Urban Biodiversity Corridors, and SSSI boundaries.
[19] As indicated by the Impact Risk Zones defined by Natural England on Magic Map.
[20] Biodiversity Enhancement Assessment, Copcut Park and Spring Meadow, October 2023.

Local Green Spaces

Policy SPA6: Local Green Spaces

The following areas of land as shown on Plan 5 are designated as Local Green Space:

- **LGS1: Lido Park/St. Peter's Fields**
- **LGS2: Vines Park**
- **LGS3: King Georges Field**
- **LGS4: Briar Hill**
- **LGS5: Droitwich Community Woods**
- **LGS6: Spring Meadow**
- **LGS7: Copcut Park**
- **LGS8: Addyes Way**

Development will be managed in a manner consistent with that applicable to designated Green Belt.

5.6 National planning policy allows neighbourhood plans to designate land as Local Green Space to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities. Such designation should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development, complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. The designation should only be used where the green space concerned is:

- In reasonably close proximity to the community served.
- Demonstrably special to the community and holds a particular local significance, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.
- Local in character and not an extensive tract of land.[21]

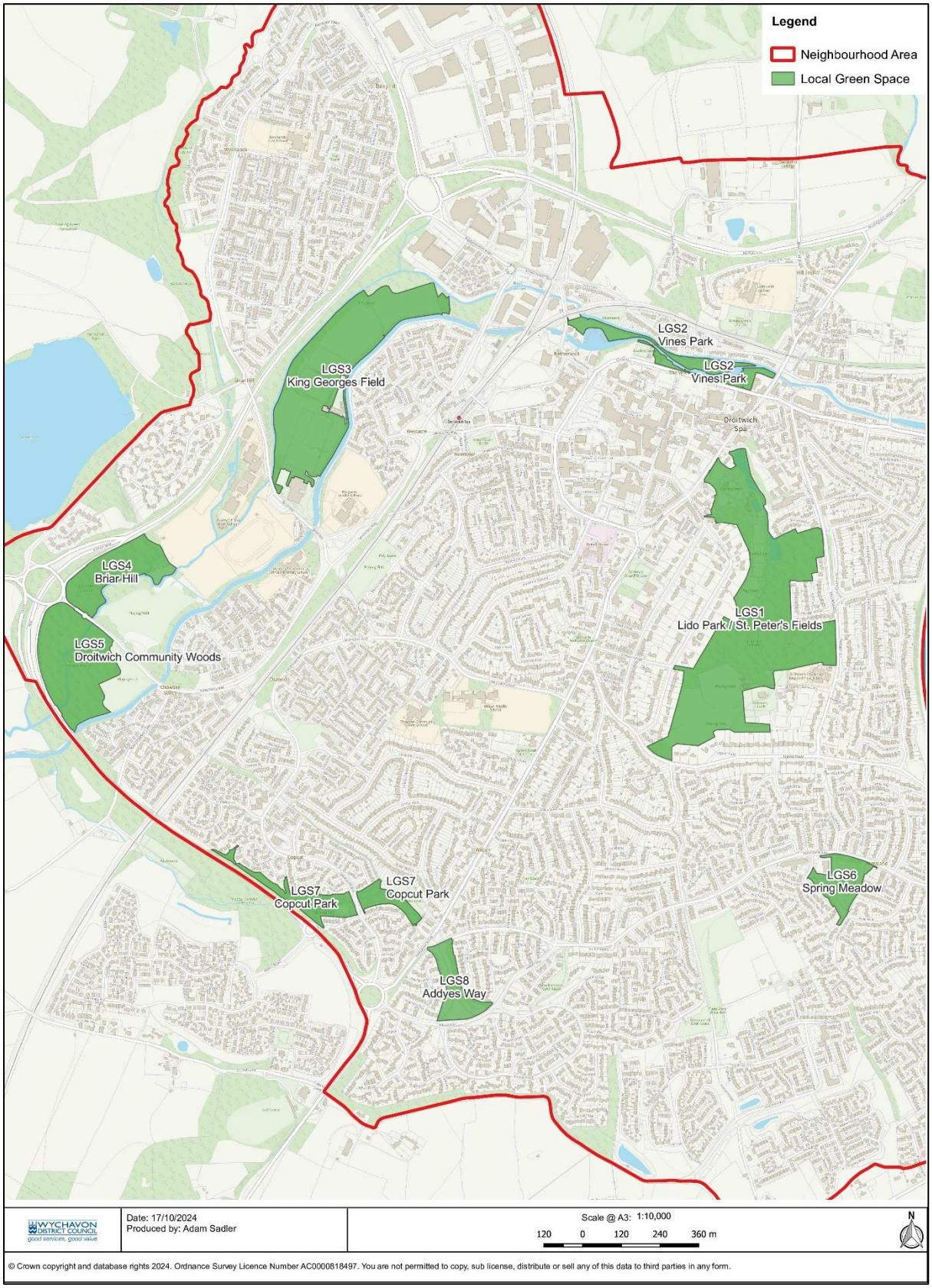
5.7 In line with this approach, the most important areas of green space in Droitwich Spa have been identified for designation as Local Green Space, taking into account responses to the community survey. They are shown on Plan 5. Table 1 confirms how each area meets the requirements of national planning policy.

5.8 The Plan's Vision and objectives show that these designations are consistent with the local planning of sustainable development, with social, economic and environmental matters having been considered together. The designation of these areas will complement investment in homes, jobs and other essential services addressed elsewhere in the Plan.

[21] NPPF paragraphs 106 and 107.

Local Green Space	Close proximity to community	Demonstrably special to community	Beauty/visual amenity	Historic significance	Recreational value	Tranquility	Wildlife	Local in character
LGS1 Lido Park/St. Peter's Fields	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LGS2 Vines Park	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
LGS3 King Georges Field	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
LGS4 Briar Hill	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
LGS5 Droitwich Community Woods	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
LGS6 Spring Meadow	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
LGS7 Copcut Park	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
LGS8 Addyes Way	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓

Table 1: Local Green Spaces



Plan 5: Local Green Spaces

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Key views

Policy SPA7: Key views

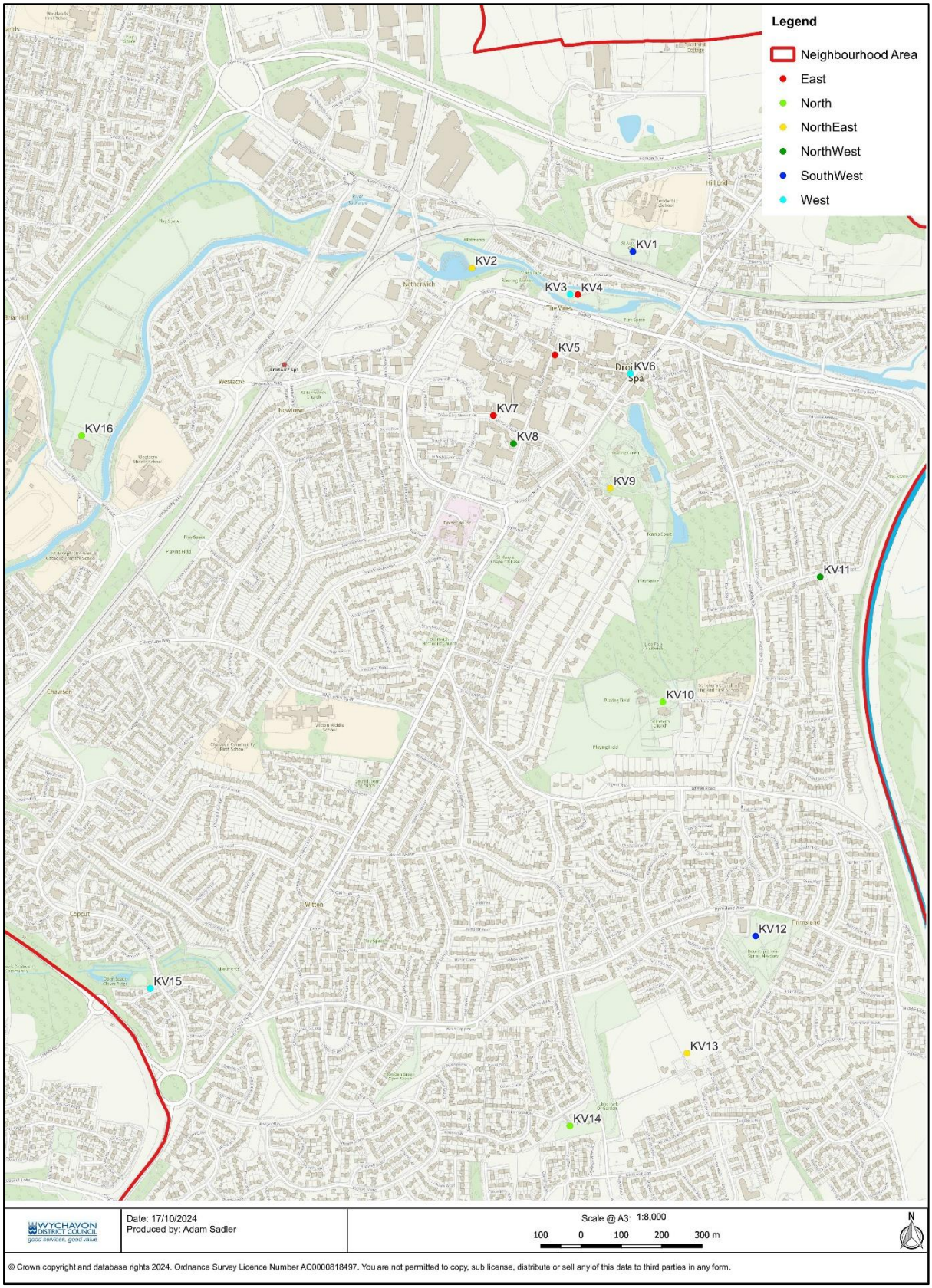
Where a development proposal within the Neighbourhood Area would have a significant visual impact on the key views (KV) listed below and shown on Plan 6, a Townscape/Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or similar study should be provided to demonstrate that the levels of effects are acceptable, and that the scheme has been sited and designed sensitively and appropriately reflecting, respecting, and where possible, enhancing its townscape and landscape context:

- **KV1: view from Dodderhill Church grounds towards Vines Park/the town centre.**
- **KV2: view from Netherwich Canal Basin/Vines Park towards Dodderhill church.**
- **KV3: view from Vines Park towards Netherwich Canal Basin.**
- **KV4: view from Vines Park towards Hanbury.**
- **KV5: view from High Street (west) towards Worcester Road.**
- **KV6: view from High Street/Worcester Road junction along High Street.**
- **KV7: view from Victoria Square War Memorial towards The Raven Hotel, Library, and St. Richards House.**
- **KV8: view from St. Richards House towards Wychbold radio masts.**
- **KV9: view from Lido Park towards the bandstand and Herriot's Pool.**
- **KV10: view from by St. Peters Church across Lido Park.**
- **KV11: view from Cockshute Hill/Mayflower Road junction towards the town centre.**
- **KV12: view from Spring Meadow towards Yew Tree Hill Water Tower.**
- **KV13: view from Yew Tree Hill Water Tower by Dove Crescent towards Spring Meadow.**
- **KV14: view from Rebekah Gardens open space towards the town centre.**
- **KV15: view from by Celvestune Way across Copcut Park.**
- **KV16: view from Leisure Centre towards King George V playing fields.**

5.9 Key views for protection have been identified taking into account responses to the community survey. All views are available from publicly accessible points in the Neighbourhood Area. The key views are listed in Table 2 and shown on Plan 6. They are additional to those views identified in the District Council's Droitwich Spa Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and referenced in policy SPA3.

Ref	Description	Viewpoint grid reference
KV1	View from Dodderhill Church grounds looking south-west towards Vines Park and the town centre.	SO90146363
KV2	View from Netherwich Canal Basin/Vines Park looking north-east towards Dodderhill church and ridgeline.	SO89746359
KV3	View from Vines Park looking west towards Netherwich Canal Basin.	SO90046353
KV4	View from Vines Park looking east towards Hanbury.	SO90046353
KV5	View from western end of High Street looking east towards Worcester Road.	SO89956338
KV6	View from High Street/Worcester Road junction looking west along High Street.	SO90146334
KV7	View from Victoria Square War Memorial looking east toward The Raven Hotel, Library, and St. Richards House.	SO89806323
KV8	View from St. Richards House looking north-west towards Wychbold radio masts and their night-time warning lights.	SO89856316
KV9	View from Lido Park looking north-east towards the bandstand and Herriot's Pool.	SO90096305
KV10	View from by St. Peters Church looking north across Lido Park towards town centre.	SO90226252
KV11	View from Cockshute Hill/Mayflower Road junction looking north-west towards the town centre.	SO90616283
KV12	View from Spring Meadow looking south-west towards the Yew Tree Hill Water Tower.	SO90456194
KV13	View from Yew Tree Hill Water Tower by Dove Crescent looking north-east towards Spring Meadow.	SO90286165
KV14	View from Rebekah Gardens open space looking north towards the town centre.	SO89996147
KV15	View from by Celvestune Way entrance to Copcut Park looking west towards pond and parkland.	SO88956181
KV16	View from Leisure Centre looking north towards King George V playing fields.	SO88786318

Table 2: Key views



Plan 6: Key views

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6. HOUSING

Neighbourhood Area housing requirement

6.1 The SWDPR identifies a housing requirement of 374 dwellings for the Neighbourhood Area for the period 2021-2041.[22] This is based on the Local Plan strategy for the pattern and scale of development and the population of the Neighbourhood Area. It takes into account proposed SWDPR allocations and re-allocations (including those ascribed to Droitwich Spa in the allocation policies, but which are outside the Neighbourhood Area). In preparing the Plan and in relation to the remaining housing requirement, consideration has been given to:

- The amount of housing growth already proposed at Droitwich Spa in the SWDPR. The Review allocates or re-allocates such suitable and available opportunities as do exist in the Neighbourhood Area, including sites of less than one hectare. The proposed allocation at Hanbury outside the Neighbourhood Area demonstrates the lack of opportunities within the town.
- Windfall housing completions. Windfalls are dwellings arising on sites not specifically identified in the development plan. Since 2021, 42 new dwellings have been provided as windfalls, through change of use, subdivision, and conversion as well as new build (Appendix B). If this rate is sustained up to 2041, windfalls will make a substantial contribution to housing delivery.
- Possible opportunities for housing to be provided on appropriate town centre sites, alongside main town centre uses. An assessment of opportunity sites identified by the District Council in the town centre has not identified any as suitable and available for allocation for housing.[23] However, Plan policies support such provision in principle (see policy SPA14), and several of the recent windfall dwellings have arisen through the change of use of former office/commercial premises in the town centre, including 12 flats at Orchard House, Victoria Square.

6.2 Whilst national planning policy guidance encourages neighbourhood planning bodies to plan to meet their housing requirement, this is not binding as neighbourhood planning groups are not required to plan for housing.[24] Given the above factors and guidance, the Plan does not include any new further housing allocations, over and above those already provided for in the SWDPR.

[22] South Worcestershire Councils, Addendum to the Housing Requirement for Designated Neighbourhood Areas, 2021 Census update, September 2024. A Minor Suggested Change put forward by the South Worcestershire Councils to the SWDPR Examination revises the requirement upwards to 487.
[23] Site Assessment Report August 2023.
[24] Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 103 Reference ID: 41-103-20190509 and Paragraph: 104 Reference ID: 41-104-20190509.

Housing mix

Policy SPA8: Housing mix

Development proposals for new housing of five or more units must demonstrate that they provide market dwellings of a type and size that positively contribute to meeting the latest assessment of housing needs. There is a particular requirement in the Neighbourhood Area for:

- **Dwellings with 2 and 3 bedrooms.**
- **Housing designed to meet the needs of older people including retirement housing and bungalows.**

On any given scheme the proposed mix should take into account the design, character and density of the surrounding built environment, any other site- or building-specific factors, and viability considerations.

Where affordable homes are proposed, an indicative 65% should be provided as affordable housing for rent (social rent and/or affordable rent); 25% as First Homes, and 10% as shared ownership properties. On any given scheme the affordable housing tenure mix should also take into account viability, local need, site- and/or building-specific factors, and location.

6.3 It is important to make sure that where new housing is provided it helps meet local requirements, to help deliver sustainable and balanced communities. The Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) undertaken for the Plan addresses issues of dwelling size, specialist accommodation for older people, and affordability.[25] Together with other local and District-wide evidence it provides the basis for the above policy.

6.4 On dwelling size, the HNA suggests prioritising the provision of 2- or 3-bedroom dwellings based on projected demographic changes and gaps in the existing housing stock. At the same time, it advises that future housing delivery should not be restricted too strictly to smaller dwelling sizes, and that the overall mix should take account of contextual factors such as the design, character and density of the surrounding built environment and any site-specific factors which may justify an alternative approach.

6.5 The priority given in the HNA to 2- and 3-bedroom dwellings is reflected in both the community survey and the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) undertaken to inform the SWDPR. In the survey residents strongly favoured small and medium sized homes with 2 or 3 bedrooms. The SHMA confirms that the largest component of the housing mix for Wychavon District in the period 2021-2041 comprises 3-bedroom houses (35-40% for both

[25] Droitwich Spa Housing Needs Assessment, 2023.

market dwellings and affordable home ownership).[26] However, for social/affordable rented tenures the emphasis is on flatted properties and 1-bedroom bungalows with level access. The HNA comments that different size mixes may be appropriate for market housing and affordable housing. The precise mix of affordable housing required on applicable sites will be defined at the time of any planning application in consultation with the District Council's housing team.

6.6 The HNA also considers the need to provide for specialist housing for older people. The context is that the older (age 75 and over) population of the town is expected to almost double over the plan period. There is a good level of retirement housing at present, including an Extra Care scheme (Horton Mill Court). Projections suggest a significant potential need for specialist older people's accommodation in Droitwich Spa by 2041, in excess of 1,000 units. The majority of projected need is for sheltered (age-restricted) housing as opposed to extra care, but lack of current extra care options may justify provision of such a scheme. Most of the need is also for market purchase tenures as opposed to affordable rents, given the dominance of social renting in the current stock and general tendency for older households to be homeowners.

6.7 Housing to meet the needs of older people such as adapted/easy access homes and supported/sheltered accommodation was strongly supported in the community survey. The SHMA also points to the need to consider the housing needs of older people, with notable aspirations in this group for bungalows, flats, and smaller houses.

6.8 The HNA identifies particularly acute issues of affordability in Droitwich Spa affecting both home ownership and, to a lesser extent, the rental market. This is echoed in responses to the community survey, where there was significant support for affordable homes in various forms. Affordable housing for rent was most preferred, closely followed by discounted market sales such as First Homes. To meet local needs over the Plan period the HNA recommends an indicative mix of affordable housing tenures as follows:[27]

- Affordable housing for rent (affordable rent and/or social rent, the proportions to be set by registered providers): 65%.
- Routes to home ownership: 35%, of which 25% to be provided as First Homes.

6.9 This mix will allow for the delivery of a considerable amount of socially rented accommodation, to meet the most acute needs in the town. It will also meet the Government's requirement that 25% of all homes delivered through section 106 developer contributions on sites enabled through the planning process should be sold as First Homes. Given the relative unaffordability of home ownership, it will also increase access to home ownership to average earners through routes other than First Homes in the interests of diversity and maximizing choice.

[26] Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2021 update, Table 6.3.
[27] Droitwich Spa Housing Needs Assessment, 2023, Table 4-6.

6.10 The above proportions differ from those recommended in the SHMA, [28] in that the HNA gives greater emphasis to routes to home ownership. For the purposes of this Plan, this approach is preferred in that the HNA is more recent and is based on more localised evidence.[29]

6.11 In considering the precise mix of affordable housing to be provided on any given development, regard should be had to site circumstances, including scheme viability, and to any evidence on local need which may demonstrate an alternative tenure split is justified.

[28] Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2021 update, paragraph 7.8.
[29] See HNA paragraph 114.

Housing development

Policy SPA9: Housing development

Development proposals for new housing will be supported provided they:

1. **make appropriate provision for infrastructure which is necessary and reasonably related to the development; and**
2. **provide for energy and water conservation and the generation of renewable energy. All new housing should aim to achieve the highest standards of energy conservation, being ideally carbon neutral whilst as a minimum complying with Building Regulations; and**
3. **incorporate other sustainability measures to include dwelling orientation and design, construction methods and materials, drainage, and provision for waste recycling, cycle storage, communications and broadband technologies, and electric vehicle charging points; and**
4. **avoid unacceptable impacts on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings including from loss of privacy, overlooking, and reduction of outlook or daylight; and**
5. **have safe, direct, and attractive connections by foot and cycle to community facilities and public transport as far as practicable; and**
6. **are located and designed to avoid adverse impacts on the amenity of the future occupants from the operation of existing uses, including business and community uses, where such impacts could lead to unreasonable restrictions being placed on them.**

6.12 The community survey showed that key priorities for residents in the consideration of new housing were:

- Retaining trees and other important landscape features on development sites.
- The impact on surrounding roads, other infrastructure, and local services.
- Avoiding on-road parking.
- Scheme design in terms of its relation to the character and appearance of surrounding development and of the town, and its environmental performance.
- Impact on residential amenity.
- Protecting historic buildings and features.
- Being within walking or cycling distance of play areas, local services, and public transport.

6.13 Some of these concerns are addressed in other Plan policies, notably in policy SPA1 on design. This addresses the retention of trees, off-road parking, and character and appearance,

drawing on the Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes. These provisions are not repeated here.

6.14 A key concern arising from community survey responses was that there should be no more new housing until shortfalls in services and facilities, particularly in the areas of health and education, had been rectified, with further development linked to the provision of the necessary infrastructure. Many of these issues concern existing conditions and are outside of the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan to address. The infrastructure requirements arising from housing growth in South Worcestershire are dealt with in the Local Plan and the associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan.[30] It is an established principle that development provides or contributes toward the provision of necessary infrastructure, such as affordable housing, transport, green infrastructure, green spaces, education, health, waste, and social infrastructure including leisure, and sports and recreation facilities. This principle is reflected in the above policy. Any known site-specific requirements for Local Plan adopted or proposed allocations have been included in this Plan's site development criteria. Finally, Community Actions are proposed in chapter 11 to give a focus to Town Council engagement with partner organisations responsible for service delivery in the town.

6.15 Other community priorities addressed in the above policy are:

- Residential amenity.
- Active travel. Residential developments should serve to positively promote walking and cycling, by giving these modes priority over other means of travel in scheme layout and design. Schemes should maximise the scope to access nearby community facilities on foot and by cycle, on routes which avoid main roads wherever possible and which link to the existing network of cycle/footpaths in the town.
- Achieving sustainable, eco-designs. The policy supports minimising the carbon footprint of new housing and encourages sustainable designs, for instance using renewable energy sources such as solar panels and air source heat pumps, and the promotion of water conservation through such means as water harvesting.

[30] SWDP 7, SWDPR 09 and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan September 2022.

Householder development

Policy SPA10: Householder development

Proposals for alterations and extensions to existing dwellings or for ancillary development within residential curtilages will be supported where they are in accord with policy SPA9 and:

1. **the existing dwelling remains as the dominant element of built form on the curtilage, to which the proposed development is subordinate; and**
2. **the proposal respects and complements the existing dwelling in massing, height, materials, and detailing; and**
3. **there are no unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring properties; and**
4. **trees and other natural features are retained as far as possible; and**
5. **the proposal does not lead to an unacceptable loss of on-site parking or of useable private amenity space.**

6.16 Householder developments are those within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse which require an application for planning permission.[31] Examples include alterations and extensions, conservatories, loft conversions, home offices, dormer windows and the provision of ancillary accommodation, swimming pools, garages, car ports and annexes. Householder developments accounted for over one-third (39%) of all planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area in the last five years (since 2019).

6.17 Proposals for householder development are expected to continue to come forward in the Neighbourhood Area up to 2041 as the housing stock is adapted to changing demands and requirements, including a potential increase in home working.

6.18 In the community survey, top priorities for householder development were to respect the amenity of neighbouring dwellings, keeping trees and other natural features, no additional on-road parking, and designs to match the original/main dwelling. The above policy reflects these considerations. It is to be applied together with relevant criteria in policy SPA9.

[31] Householder development does not include proposals to build a separate dwelling in the garden, changes of use to part or all a property to non-residential (including business) uses, or anything outside the garden of the property (including stables if in a separate paddock).

Land north/south of Union Lane

Policy SPA11: Land north/south of Union Lane

Development proposals for land north and south of Union Lane which meet the following requirements and are in accordance with other development plan policies will be supported:

1. **provide a high quality and sustainable design, taking account of the Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes, including the site-specific principles provided for the site, and policy SPA1; and**
2. **include proposals to improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between the railway station, the town centre, and Vines Park/canal towpath, linking to adjacent development sites; and**
3. **conserve or enhance the site's contribution to the significance of nearby designated heritage assets as part of their setting, and assess the site's potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest; and**
4. **enhance the value of the site for biodiversity, taking account of the Droitwich Canal Local Wildlife Site to the north and any opportunity to extend or consolidate wildlife corridors; and**
5. **in respect of the potential for land contamination, demonstrate that the site is or can be made suitable for the proposed use, providing appropriate site investigation information and proposals for mitigation and remediation as may be required; and**
6. **incorporate suitable measures to ensure no undue adverse impact on the amenity of future residents of the development from noise, light or other factors arising from railway operations or adjoining uses.**

6.19 Land at Union Lane is proposed for allocation in the SWDPR for housing (indicative capacity 400 dwellings), to include the provision of 250 car parking spaces to serve the railway station.[32] The above Neighbourhood Plan policy sets criteria for the development of the site to support the delivery of the proposed allocation. The policy recognises the local context and takes account of evidence on which the emerging Local Plan is based, together with other information summarised below. It assumes that the SWDPR proposal will proceed to adoption and has been prepared on that basis.

6.20 In any event, the land is within the SWDP's development boundary. Whilst lacking any specific SWDP allocation its development for housing would be in accord with the adopted development strategy for Droitwich Spa as a second tier Main Town in the settlement hierarchy and the encouragement given to the redevelopment of brownfield sites.[33] In this

[32] SWDPR ref WYPHM04 and SWDPR Reg 19 Interactive Mapping. A Main Suggested Change put forward by the South Worcestershire Councils to the SWDPR Examination sets out a reduced housing provision of approximately 190 new homes through a heritage-led redevelopment.
[33] SWDP 2.

regard, there were calls in responses to the community survey for brownfield sites to be developed ahead of greenfield, with specific references to the land at Union Lane as a suitable opportunity in the town.

6.21 The land comprises two brownfield sites to the north (1.86 ha.) and south (0.87) of Union Lane. They were formerly occupied by Baxenden Chemicals Ltd. There are commercial units to the east and south; the railway station and line are to the north and west. The northern site is contiguous with or adjacent to other Local Plan allocations (Boxing Club Kidderminster Road and Netherwich Canal Basin) and close to the town centre.

6.22 The site assessment undertaken for the SWDPR identifies potentially significant issues of land contamination because of former uses including chemical works, coal yard, and railway, with risk assessment and site investigation required as a result. However, the assessment concludes that these are brownfield sites in a sustainable location near to the facilities and services in the town centre and adjacent to the railway station, suitable to be proposed for a mixed-use allocation.[34]

6.23 The site assessment undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan additionally identifies issues of noise, heritage, and ecology to be addressed in Plan criteria to guide development.[35] There are nearby designated heritage assets, comprising the Droitwich Canal Conservation Area (also a Local Wildlife Site), Droitwich Spa Conservation area, and the multi-period salt production remains Scheduled Ancient Monument. Given the location of the site in relation to the town's historic core to the east there may be potential for heritage assets with archaeological interest to be affected.

6.24 The Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes provides site-specific guidance for site development.[36] This takes account of the emerging Local Plan proposals for the site, along with suggestions in the District Council's Investment Prospectus for Droitwich Spa. The Prospectus identifies a role for the Union Lane land in the creation of a new residential quarter to the west of the town centre which also includes the Netherwich Canal Basin.[37]

6.25 The Design Guidance and Codes assess the site's constraints and opportunities (illustrated on Plan 7) and provide design principles covering such aspects as:

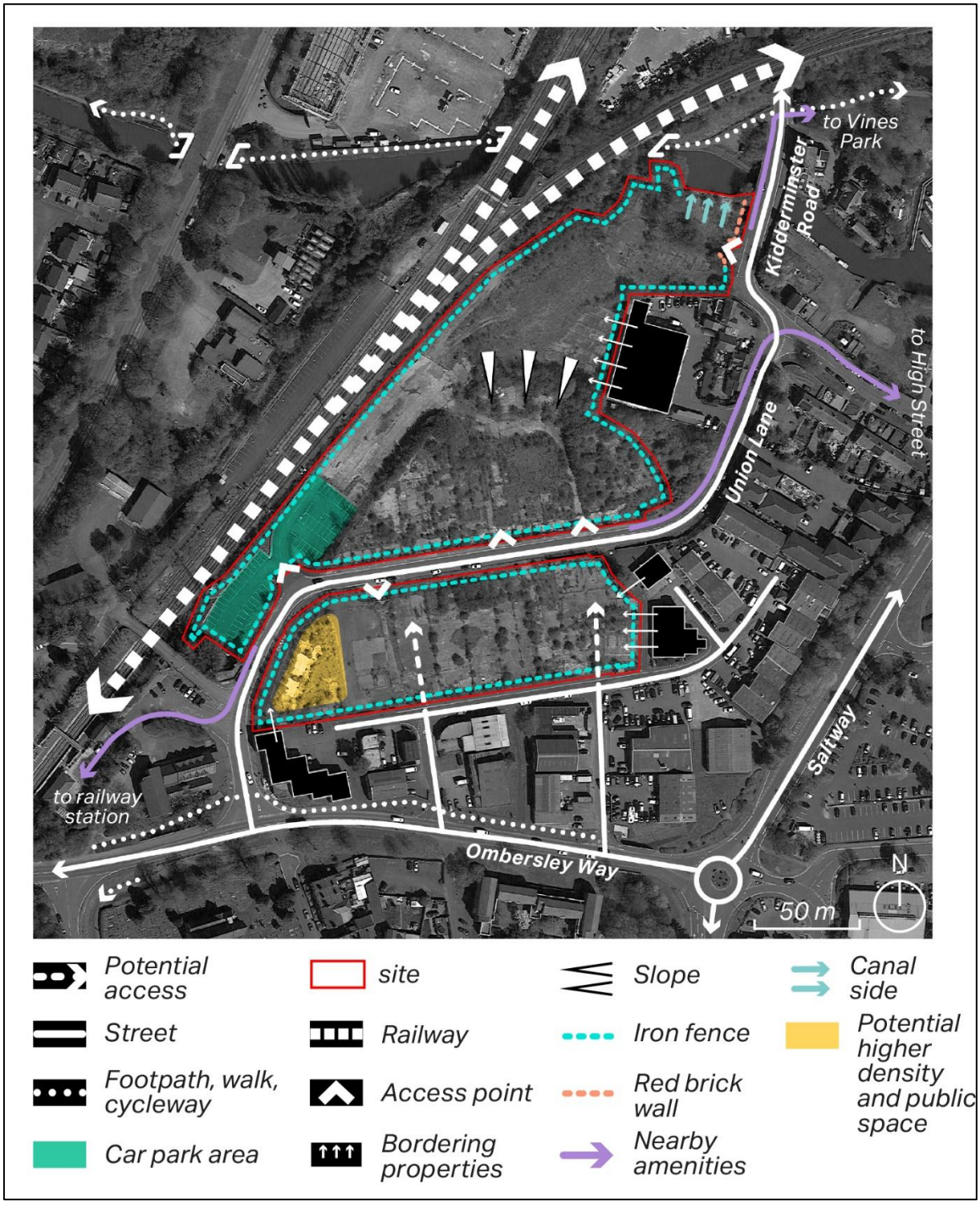
- Dwelling mix, density, and type. Properties to be inspired by traditional formats of the Character Area (townhouses and terraces) within a contemporary and consistent built form, to reinforce identity.
- Private gardens and building setbacks from the highway.
- Materials and colour.
- Boundary treatment with commercial/industrial properties and railway to protect residential amenity.

[34] Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Droitwich sites CFS0855A and B.
[35] NP Site Assessment Report, site 3 land north/south of Union Lane.
[36] Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes, November 2023, section 5.
[37] Droitwich Spa Town Centre Investment Prospectus, section 7.

- Sustainable drainage.
- Fostering of walking and cycling, with public access route/s through the northern site providing a more direct and gently graded route than the present Union Lane, and forming part of an integrated network connecting to the railway station, Vines Park, and the town centre.
- Street design.

6.26 As well as the site-specific principles, the design recommendations provided for the Town Centre West and Conservation Area Character Area and the design codes provided at Neighbourhood Area-level are to be applied.

6.27 In line with one of the Plan's Community Actions, the naming of streets and other public spaces in the development of the Union Lane should be informed by historic place names used in the area, to maintain and promote a sense of historical continuity and local distinctiveness.



Plan 7: Land north/south of Union Lane opportunities and constraints

Source: Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes, figure 150. Reproduced with permission.

Criteria for other allocated housing sites

Policy SPA12: Criteria for other allocated housing sites

Development proposals for new housing on the following Local Plan allocations which meet the requirements for each site and are in accordance with other development plan policies will be supported:

Land at Mayflower Road

1. **incorporate suitable measures to ensure no undue adverse impact on the amenity of future residents from the M5 motorway; and**
2. **in respect of the potential for land contamination, demonstrate that the site is or can be made suitable for the proposed use, providing appropriate site investigation information and proposals for mitigation and remediation as may be required; and**
3. **retain existing trees as far as practicable.**

Land at Keepers Cottage, Newland Road

4. **conserve and enhance the value of the site for biodiversity, taking account of Oakley Wood Local Wildlife Site to the south and any opportunity to extend or consolidate wildlife corridors.**

Boxing Club, Kidderminster Road

5. **provide a high quality design which takes account of the prominence of the site and its Canalside location, and enables connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists to adjacent development sites; and**
6. **conserve or enhance the site's contribution to the significance of nearby designated heritage assets as part of their setting, and assess the site's potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest; and**
7. **enhance the value of the site for biodiversity, taking account of the Droitwich Canal Local Wildlife Site to the north and any opportunity to extend or consolidate wildlife corridors along the Canal and towpaths; and**
8. **in respect of the potential for land contamination, demonstrate that the site is or can be made suitable for the proposed use, providing appropriate site investigation information and proposals for mitigation and remediation as may be required; and**
9. **incorporate suitable measures to ensure no undue adverse impact on the amenity of future residents from noise, light or other factors arising from railway operations or adjoining uses.**

Policy SPA12: Criteria for other allocated housing sites, continued/

Oakham Place

10. **conserve or enhance the site's contribution to the significance of the adjacent Droitwich Canal Conservation Area as part of its setting; and**
11. **conserve and enhance the value of the site for biodiversity taking account of the Droitwich Canal Local Wildlife Site to the west and any opportunity to extend or consolidate wildlife corridors; and**
12. **retain existing trees including that adjacent to the site access as far as practicable.**

Acre Lane

13. **provide a high quality design which responds to the site's frontages on to Salwarpe Road and Acre Lane; and**
14. **incorporate suitable measures to ensure no undue adverse impact on the amenity of future residents including from noise, light or other factors arising from railway operations; and**
15. **retain existing trees as far as practicable.**

Willow Court, Westwood Road

16. **avoid built development in any parts of the site shown to be at risk of flooding.**

6.28 As well as the land at Union Lane, the SWDPR allocates other sites for new housing in Droitwich Spa. These are either carried forward from the SWDP or are new proposals (Table 3). Site boundaries may be seen on the SWDPR Reg 19 Interactive Mapping. Policy SPA15 below deals with the mixed-use development of the Netherwich Canal Basin, including for housing.

6.29 The policy specifies requirements for the development of each of these sites to support the delivery of the Local Plan proposals, assuming that they will proceed to adoption.[38] It is informed by the site assessments undertaken for the SWDPR and for the Neighbourhood Plan.[39]

[38] A Main Suggested Change put forward by the South Worcestershire Councils to the SWDPR Examination sets out that, with the exception of the land at Keepers Cottage, all the sites listed in policy SPA12 are to be removed either as a new allocation (land at Mayflower Road) or re-allocation. Pending the outcome of the Examination, the sites have been retained at this stage in the consultation draft Neighbourhood Plan.
[39] Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Droitwich sites, and NP Site Assessment Report.

Site name	SWDP ref	SWDPR ref	Area (ha.)	SWDPR indicative housing capacity
Land at Mayflower Road	-	WYPHM03	0.39	5
Land at Keepers Cottage, Newland Road	-	WYPHM06	2.001	34
Boxing Club, Kidderminster Road	SWDP48/2	WYHMA04	0.11	10
Oakham Place	SWDP48/3	WYHMA05	0.16	6
Acre Lane	SWDP48/4	WYHMA06	0.38	20
Willow Court, Westwood Road	SWDP48/5	WYHMA07	0.17	10

Table 3: Other allocated housing sites

Land at Mayflower Road

6.30 This site is open space in a largely residential area on the eastern edge of the town, with housing to the north and south and a scout hut to the west. Site levels fall to the east, towards the adjacent M5 motorway. Noise mitigation may be required. Land contamination may also be an issue as it was previously used as a tip for household waste. Mature trees on the site boundaries should be retained as far as possible in line with community survey priorities.

Land at Keepers Cottage, Newland Road

6.31 This site is on the southern edge of Droitwich Spa, between the Yew Tree Hill development to the north and further new housing under construction and proposed nearby. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement arising from its semi-rural location on the edge of the urban area with Oakley Wood Local Wildlife Site to the south-west should be explored in scheme design.

Boxing Club, Kidderminster Road

6.32 The site of a former Council depot, this site adjoins the land at Union Lane on its southern boundary. The Droitwich Canal (Conservation Area and Local Wildlife Site) forms the northern boundary with the railway line beyond. The site's Kidderminster Road frontage is in the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area, with the Netherwich Canal Basin further to the east. The scheme should be designed to make a positive contribution to the setting of these adjacent designated heritage assets and take account of its Canalside location. Its position between the land at Union Lane and the Canal Basin means it has an important linking role to play in

improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity between these two sites and so onwards to the town centre, Vines Park/Canal towpath, and the railway station. There are potential noise issues arising from the railway line. The area is industrial/commercial in character and there is the possibility of contamination associated with previous land uses.

Oakham Place

6.33 Oakham Place is a small area of open space with established housing to the north and east. The undeveloped land to the west of the site is within the Droitwich Canal Conservation Area and is also a Local Wildlife Site. The site is overlooked by Ombersley Way to the south. The impact of development on the mature tree adjacent to the end of Oakham Place should be considered in scheme design with a view to its retention in accord with community survey priorities.

Acre Lane

6.34 This site is situated between Salwarpe Road and the railway line, with housing to the south and a cleared site to the north. Access is from Acre Lane via a railway bridge from the southeast. There are mature trees on the site boundaries. There are potential noise issues arising from the railway station/line and Salwarpe Road.

Willow Court, Westwood Road

6.35 The site at Willow Court comprises open space, garage units and hard surfacing used for incidental car parking. It is surrounded by housing with open space to the east and west. The western edge of the site is in Flood Zone 2.

6.36 Planning applications made pursuant to these Local Plan allocations should be supported by appropriate documentation to demonstrate the policy requirements relevant to the site have been met, including:

- Noise survey and mitigation.
- Contaminated land: preliminary risk assessment and (if shown to be required) site investigation, detailed risk assessment and remediation.
- Arboricultural Statement/tree survey. Trees and other existing planting should be retained as far as practicable in line with priorities expressed in the community survey.
- Ecological Survey and Report.
- Heritage Statement.
- Design and Access Statement.
- Flood Risk Assessment.

7. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

New or expanded community facilities

Policy SPA13: New or expanded community facilities

Development proposals for new or expanded community facilities including those providing health, educational, sport and leisure services, and services for children, younger and older people will be supported provided that:

1. **the facilities are accessible by a choice of transport modes including walking and cycling and include adequate off-road vehicle and cycle parking on the site, with appropriate provision for those with restricted mobility; and**
2. **there will be no significant harmful impacts on residential amenity; and**
3. **their siting, scale, and design respects the character of the surrounding area, including any historic and natural assets.**

Proposals for community facilities enabling the delivery of new or expanded health services and provision for children, younger and older people will be particularly encouraged.

Developer contributions via Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy and/or other mechanisms will be sought to enable new or expanded provision of community services to ensure that new development fully mitigates the additional demands on service provision arising.

7.1 A key concern in the community survey was that recent new housing and population growth in the town has not been matched by the provision of infrastructure including community facilities and services. Particular reference was made to health care and medical services such as General Practice, dentist, and pharmacies; the needs of children and younger people, including schools and youth services; and provision for older people.

7.2 The supply and delivery of community services is outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Plan can enable and support the provision of new or expanded premises for such services where proposals come forward. Proposals for new or expanded community facilities will be supported where the above policy requirements are met. Built facilities will need to be considered in terms of their accessibility, including on foot and by cycle, and take account age-specific access needs. Residential amenity and the character of the surrounding area should also be respected.

7.3 Supporting Community Actions are included in respect of community services in Chapter 11.

8. DROITWICH SPA TOWN CENTRE

Town centre vitality

Policy SPA14: Town centre vitality

The consideration of development proposals for main town centre and residential uses in the town centre will have regard to the extent to which they would deliver any of the following measures contributing to vitality:

1. **Public realm improvements promoting an accessible, attractive, and safe environment including at High Street, Friar Street and St. Andrews Street.**
2. **Improvements to safety and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists to and from the town centre and via links to the railway station, Vines Park, Lido Park, and residential areas.**
3. **A wider range of activities, including evening, night-time, and community events, where these enhance vitality without unduly impacting on amenity.**
4. **The bringing into use of vacant upper floors for main town centre uses and residential purposes including enabling measures.**
5. **Securing the beneficial use of heritage assets consistent with their conservation.**
6. **The desirability of re-instating a Brine Baths to encourage tourism, increase vitality and sustain character and sense of place, particularly where this involves or enables the adaptive reuse of historic assets.**

Development proposals for the following will be supported in principle:

- **The development of suitable sites identified in the Droitwich Spa Town Centre Investment Prospectus for main town centre uses and/or residential.**
- **The viable restoration and re-development of The Raven Hotel for main town centre uses, including leisure and tourism, and residential in a manner consistent with the conservation and enhancement of the historic fabric.**

8.1 Droitwich Spa town centre has a distinctive character reflecting its heritage. It offers a wide range of food and non-food retail in both older, smaller shops and modern, purpose-built premises, alongside other services and facilities including library and health care. In the community survey, the range of shops and services in the centre and the well-maintained, attractive surroundings were key 'likes' about living in the town. At the same time, respondents recognised the need to secure improvements and regeneration through more investment and a wider range of shops and other businesses. The Raven Hotel, St. Andrews shopping centre, High Street, re-instatement of a Brine Baths, and the public realm were all seen as specific needs and opportunities.

8.2 The Retail and Town Centre Study undertaken for the SWDPR (2024 update of 2019 study)[40] concludes that the town centre displays reasonable levels of vitality and viability, with identified strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats as follows:

Strengths and Opportunities

- The town centre is accessible by all modes of travel which is aided by flat topography and good parking provision.
- Strong retail service offer within the town centre due to increase in units since 2019.
- Good take up of prominent units.
- Strong convenience goods provision (including Waitrose, Morrisons).
- Opportunities for further improvements to the night-time economy.
- High Street continues to be attractive, and St Andrews Square and Victoria Square continue to provide good quality shopping environments.
- Good quality public realm with some environmental improvements such as cycling provision and planting within the town centre.

Weaknesses and Threats

- Weakening of financial and business service offer.
- Railway station poorly linked to the town centre.
- The long-term vacancy of the prominent former Raven Hotel does not contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre. Its longstanding vacancy suggests it may not be attractive to investors which may result in the former hotel remaining vacant for the foreseeable future.
- Proximity of nearby retail parks continues to provide significant competition to the town centre.
- Areas such as Ombersley Road and St Andrews Street would benefit from additional investment to improve their environmental quality.

8.3 The town centre is defined in the SWDPR as the area bounded by Saltway, Worcester Road and Queen Street, with policies designed to ensure its vitality. Proposals for retail, leisure, and other main town centre uses must contribute to an accessible, attractive, and safe environment; enable use of upper floors; and retain or provide an active ground floor frontage. Other Local Plan policies control changes of use within the core retail area and frontages and provide for the night-time economy.[41]

8.4 The Neighbourhood Plan endorses the view expressed in the SWDPR that in 20 years' time town centres will have more people living in them, provide more leisure opportunities, be places where events and community celebrations take place and provide experiences that cannot be bought online. Droitwich Spa, because of its location and historic environment, is

[40] South Worcestershire Retail and Town Centre Study, 2024 Update.
[41] See SWDPR Reg 19 Interactive Mapping for Town Centre, Primary Shopping Area, and Primary Shopping Frontage boundaries.

well-placed to benefit from these trends which will make a positive contribution to the overall vitality and viability of the town centre.

8.5 To help realise that potential, the District Council has prepared an Investment Prospectus for the town centre designed to secure public and private investment over the next two decades.[42] The Prospectus identifies a number of town centre sites with the potential to deliver catalytical change in that period, together with other opportunities for interventions.

8.6 The sites identified by the Prospectus where development or re-development is an option have been assessed in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.[43] Two of the sites are existing or proposed Local Plan allocations (Netherwich Canal Basin and land at Union Lane) and are the subject of Neighbourhood Plan policies. The following other Prospectus sites have been assessed as suitable for main town centre uses, with potential also for residential development:

- The Raven Hotel.
- Fire Station.
- Covercroft Centre and adjacent public surface car park.
- Public surface car parks at Ricketts Lane and St. Andrews Road.
- Areas of private surface car parking serving Norbury House and Droitwich Medical Centre.

8.7 The Raven Hotel is a Grade II listed building and grounds occupying a prominent and key site in the heart of the town centre. Of 16th century origins, it was restored and enlarged by 'salt king' John Corbett in 1897. Now in disrepair, its restoration and re-development has the potential to deliver significant regeneration benefits and to secure beneficial use of the listed building. Current proposals for residential conversion and development and the re-instatement of a Brine Baths demonstrate that potential.

8.8 The remaining sites are in a range of uses, including public and private car parks. If they were to become available and be progressed for development, they would do so as 'windfall' sites within the framework of development plan policies. Several of the sites are District Council car parks whose availability is dependent on a detailed study of car parking capacity and requirements which would be required to support any rationalisation of provision.

8.9 The other opportunities identified by the Prospectus and supported by the Plan are highway, public realm, and other measures:

- St. Andrews shopping centre, to rationalise the amount of retail floorspace and re-purpose elements to bring in community uses and residential provision.
- Droitwich Spa Library, internal reconfiguration.
- High Street, traffic calming and pedestrian priority measures to encourage a greater appreciation of its historic character.

[42] Droitwich Spa Town Centre Investment Prospectus, May 2022.
[43] NP Site Assessment Report, August 2023.

- Other public realm improvements to Friar Street and St. Andrews Street.
- Improvements to underpasses to create safer environments and better accessibility to the town centre.
- Improved pedestrian crossings to Vines Park, Lido Park and towards the railway station, addressing the existing barrier posed by the Saltway and other roads to pedestrian and cyclist movement.

8.10 The community survey demonstrated that residents particularly wanted to see fewer vacant shops in the town centre, the restoration/re-development of The Raven Hotel, and the re-instatement of a Brine Baths. Other priorities were for public realm improvements, festivals and street markets, reduced charges for or free public car parking, and boosting the evening economy.

8.11 Development proposals in the town centre can support the conservation and enhancement of historic fabric, by finding new and viable uses for older buildings and providing funds for property maintenance, repair, and conservation. Neighbourhood Plan policies for the town's historic environment recognise the contribution that heritage assets can make to regeneration by helping to encourage tourism and inward investment and increasing the overall vitality and attractiveness of the town centre.

8.12 Development proposals can also make a positive contribution to regeneration by supporting measures such as those set out in the Investment Prospectus. Town centre enhancements can help make it safer and more attractive as a place to visit and linger, enhancing vitality and the economic viability of businesses. The community survey points to a strong desire amongst residents to see improvements to the 'public realm'. This term includes publicly owned streets, pathways, underpasses, right of ways, publicly accessible open spaces, and public buildings. Improvements could include but are not limited to more landscaping, such as planters; improved pavements and road surfaces, including shared spaces; traffic management; better street lighting; additional seating; litter bins, and cycle racks/parking.

8.13 As well as such physical improvements there is also scope to extend the range of activities offered in the town centre, such as temporary uses in vacant premises, pop-up shops, promoting the evening economy, and seasonal events. Whilst many of these measures will not require planning permission, development proposals which serve to make or contribute to such improvements will be supported and encouraged. Community Actions are included in Chapter 11 in respect of public realm improvements and non-land use aspects.

Netherwich Canal Basin

Policy SPA15: Netherwich Canal Basin

Proposals for the mixed-use development of the Netherwich Canal Basin which meet the following requirements and are in accordance with other development plan policies will be supported:

1. **provide a high quality and sustainable design, taking account of the Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes, including the site-specific principles provided for the site, along with policy SPA1; and**
2. **incorporate proposals to improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between the town centre, Vines Park/Canal towpath, and railway station, including by linking to adjacent development sites; and**
3. **provide high quality public realm to the Canalside; and**
4. **make provision for community, tourism, and heritage-based uses where this can be achieved without detriment to the delivery of the Local Plan allocation for the site including viability; and**
5. **conserve or enhance the site's contribution to the significance of designated heritage assets including as part of their setting, and assess the site's potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest; and**
6. **enhance the value of the site for biodiversity, taking account of the Droitwich Canal Local Wildlife Site to the north and any opportunity to extend or consolidate wildlife corridors along the Canal and towpaths; and**
7. **in respect of the potential for land contamination, demonstrate that the site is or can be made suitable for the proposed use, providing appropriate site investigation information and proposals for mitigation and remediation as may be required; and**
8. **incorporate suitable measures to ensure no undue adverse impact on the amenity of future residents from noise, light or other factors arising from transport corridors or adjoining uses.**

8.14 Land at Netherwich Canal Basin is allocated in the SWDP for housing (indicative capacity 80 dwellings), retail and leisure. The allocation is for land totalling 1.1 ha. on both sides of the Droitwich Canal.

8.15 A revised version of this proposal has been carried forward into the SWDPR.[44] Land on the northern bank of the Canal is no longer included in the allocation, which now comprises 0.95 ha. south of the Canal Basin. The western half of this site is to be developed for housing (60 dwellings), retail, and leisure, with the eastern half proposed for new green infrastructure.

[44] SWDPR ref WYPHM07 and SWDPR Reg 19 Interactive Mapping.

8.16 The Neighbourhood Plan policy for the site assumes that the SWDPR revised allocation for the Canal Basin will proceed to adoption. The policy sets criteria for the development of the site to support the delivery of the allocation, recognising the local context and taking account of evidence on which the emerging Local Plan is based, together with other information summarised below.

8.17 The site is associated with historic salt production and other former industrial uses linked with the Canal including the town gas works. It includes a residential property and a business (tyre depot) as well as open space, and has boundaries to the Canal and Canal Basin, Kidderminster Road, Hampton Road, and Saltway. There are terraced dwellings facing the site along Hampton Road, and the Droitwich Fire Station and Training Centre lies opposite across the Saltway. The town centre is to the south, with an adjacent subway link between Hampton Road and Friar Street passing under the Saltway. Local Plan allocations/proposed allocations are adjacent to the west (Boxing Club Kidderminster Road, land at Union Lane).

8.18 The site assessment undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan identifies issues of noise, a history of potentially contaminative uses, heritage, ecology, and design to be addressed in Plan criteria to guide development.[45] The site is within the Droitwich Spa Conservation Area and the multi-period salt production remains Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Droitwich Canal Conservation Area, also a Local Wildlife Site, abuts to the north. Given the location of the site within the town's historic core and its association with brine extraction and salt making it is likely there is potential for heritage assets with archaeological interest to be affected.

8.19 The Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes provides site-specific guidance for the development of the site.[46] It takes account of the emerging Local Plan proposals for the site, along with suggestions in the District Council's Investment Prospectus for Droitwich Spa. The Prospectus identifies a role for the Netherwich Canal Basin in the creation of a new residential quarter to the west of the town centre which also includes land at Union Lane.[47]

8.20 The Design Guidance and Codes assess the site's constraints and opportunities (illustrated on Plan 8) and provide design principles covering such aspects as:

- Development mix: residential (including 2-3 bedroom dwellings), retail, and leisure uses to add to town centre vibrancy.
- Scheme layout to be organic and irregular, responding to the line of the Canal, Saltway and the fire station.
- Dwellings to be inspired by traditional formats of the Character Area (townhouses and terraces) in a contemporary and consistent built form.
- Building scale, height, and detailing to reflect the historic character of the area.
- High quality public realm provided to the Canalside, connecting to Vines Park and surrounding areas.

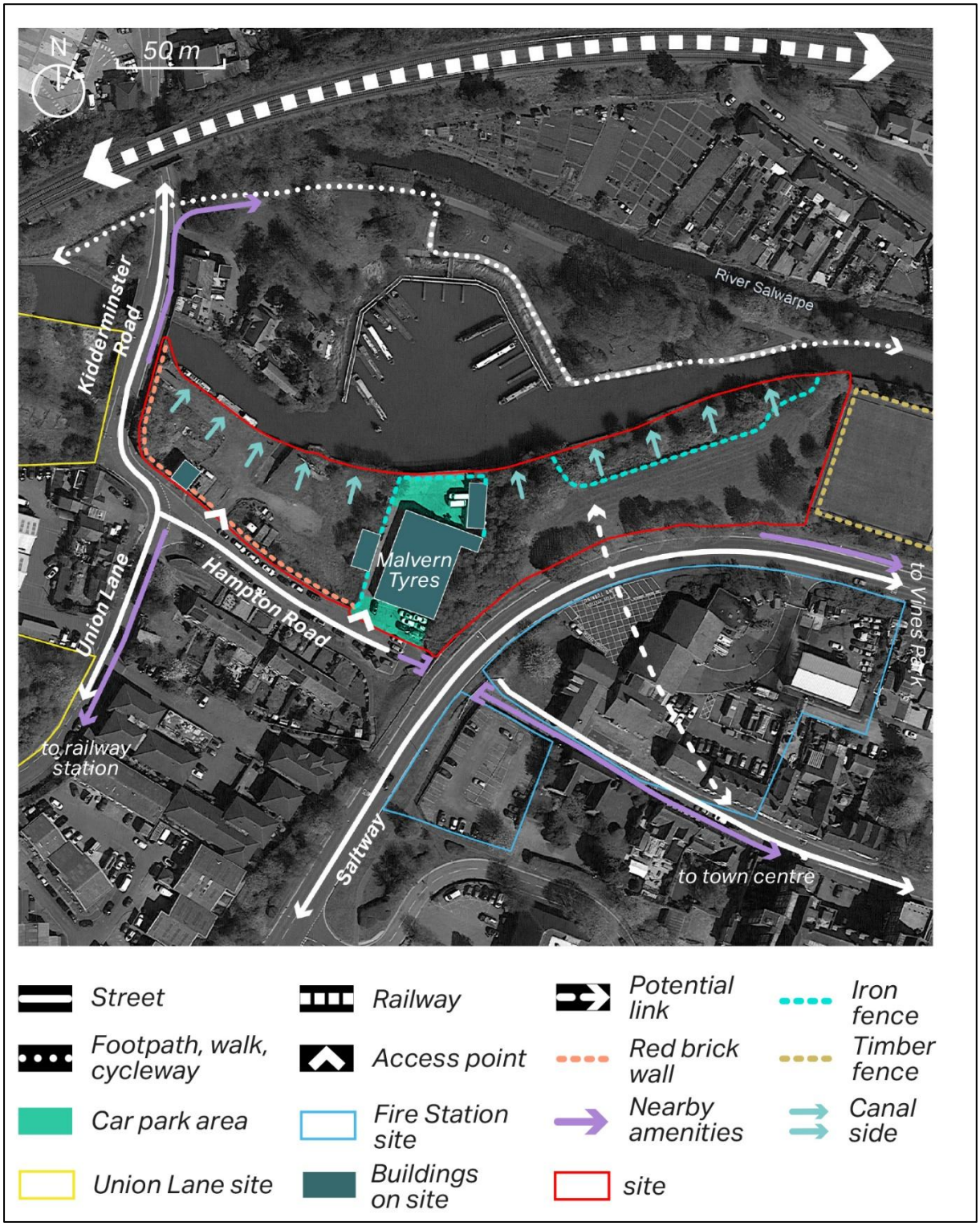
[45] NP Site Assessment Report, site 4 Canal Basin (Netherwich).
[46] Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes, November 2023, section 5.
[47] Droitwich Spa Town Centre Investment Prospectus, section 7.

- Dwellings and other uses to face the Canalside/towpath and public spaces, with high boundary treatments avoided to allow natural surveillance.
- Green infrastructure and sustainable drainage.
- Pedestrian routes in the design connecting to the railway station, Vines Park, the town centre, and existing footpaths and cycleways.
- Streets to be pedestrian and cycle-friendly to support retail and leisure activities and active travel. Pedestrian and cycle movement should be prioritised over vehicles.

8.21 As well as the site-specific principles, the design recommendations provided for the Town Centre West and Conservation Area Character Area and the design codes provided at Neighbourhood Area-level are to be applied.

8.22 In the community survey, planning priorities for the development of the site were to provide a safe and direct access to the town centre, for any scheme to reflect the industrial heritage of the site based on salt production and the role of the Canal, provision of open space and landscaping with benefits to wildlife and biodiversity, and a publicly accessible Canalside, with retail, leisure and boating facilities to foster tourism. Less priority was attached by respondents to housing, although this is one element in the mix of uses proposed by the Local Plan and therefore a 'given' as far as the Neighbourhood Plan is concerned. Other desirable uses highlighted in survey comments were for community purposes, tourism, and heritage, and these have been included in the above policy.

8.23 In line with one of the Plan's Community Actions, the naming of streets and other public spaces in the development of the Canal Basin should be informed by historic place names used in the area, to maintain and promote a sense of historical continuity and local distinctiveness.



Plan 8: Netherwich Canal Basin opportunities and constraints

Source: Droitwich Spa Design Guidance and Codes, figure 161. Reproduced with permission.

9. JOBS AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

Economic development

Policy SPA16: Economic development

Proposals for employment development which are of an appropriate scale and design in terms of their context will be supported provided they:

1. **minimise traffic generation and demonstrate that the traffic generated can be safely accommodated on local roads without undue operational, safety or environmental consequences; and**
2. **take all opportunities to promote safe, direct, and attractive access to and from the proposed site by public transport (rail and bus), walking and cycling; and**
3. **do not create unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residents, including through noise or air pollution, light levels, working hours, and increases in traffic.**

The following are encouraged:

- **The re-use of existing buildings or previously developed land.**
- **Proposals for a business centre offering flexible workspace options for local enterprises.**
- **Tourism-focussed and other businesses which serve to interpret, curate, and promote the town's heritage and historic environment including its history of brine extraction and salt production, Canals, historic buildings, and role as a spa resort.**

9.1 Droitwich Spa is already home to many businesses and services, including in and around the town centre and on established employment areas at the North Street Industrial Estate, Salwarpe Business Park, and Berry Hill Industrial Estate. The community survey investigated residents' priorities in considering proposals for new economic development.[48] Key concerns and priorities were to re-use existing buildings and previously developed land; maximise local employment opportunities; encourage businesses linked to the town's heritage, thereby supporting tourism (such as a Brine Baths or Canal-related); and to minimise increases in traffic.

9.2 Droitwich Spa's heritage has significant potential from an economic development point of view. Businesses drawing on the town's past can serve in turn to conserve and enhance that heritage for the future, as well as promoting a wider and modern-day appreciation and interpretation of its contribution to local character.

[48] Within Use Classes E (g), B2 and B8.

Walking and cycling

Policy SPA17: Walking and cycling (active travel)

Development proposals should give pedestrian and cycle movements priority over other means of travel. Wherever possible and opportunities arise, the potential for access on foot or cycle from residential areas to/from Droitwich Spa railway station, other public transport, schools, health, other community facilities and the town centre should be maximised by providing safe, direct, and attractive connections and associated facilities such as sheltered and secure cycle parking.

Development proposed to implement the following Local Transport Schemes or elements thereof will be supported in principle and subject to detailed design proposals:

- **Droitwich Package, Active Travel Network Investment Programme.**
- **Droitwich Rail Station Improvement Scheme.**
- **Worcester to Droitwich Spa Active Travel Corridor.**

Development proposals should not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the utility and enjoyment of public rights of way.

9.3 Responses to the community survey identified many barriers to walking and cycling in and around the town, along with corresponding suggestions for improvements with the aim of providing better access to health, transport, leisure, and retail facilities. Proposed improvement measures included footway/cycleway maintenance, vegetation clearance, widening and new route provision; improved lighting; enforcing against parking on footways and cycleways; improvements to underpasses/subways or their replacement with surface road crossings; and reducing traffic speeds. Locations or facilities identified in the survey where access on foot or by cycle should be improved included:

- BP petrol filling station/M&S Simply Food store at Worcester Road.
- Spa and Salters Medical Practices.
- To/from the Westlands estate across Roman Way/Kidderminster Road.
- Droitwich Spa Railway Station.
- Lido Park.

9.4 The Worcestershire Local Transport Plan includes schemes to promote 'active travel' (walking and cycling) in the Droitwich area and linking to Worcester.[49] The Active Travel Network Investment Programme aims to create a safe, comprehensive, integrated network linking residential areas with key trip attractors such as schools, the railway station, town centre and employment areas. The programme includes a review of subways to identify cosmetic

[49] Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan 2018-2030, adopted November 2017, Droitwich Package and Strategic Active Travel Corridor Schemes.

improvements and addressing access issues at Westlands through investing in active travel links. A railway station improvement scheme is also proposed incorporating accessibility enhancements to walking and cycling links between the station, town centre, and residential catchment areas.

9.5 The aims and broad proposals set out in the Local Transport Plan for active travel in Droitwich address many of the issues raised in the community survey, and as such are endorsed. Development required to implement agreed measures arising from the Local Transport Plan programme will in principle be supported.

9.6 In respect of the railway station, the Local Plan proposals for the development of contiguous sites at Union Lane, the Boxing Club on Kidderminster Road, and the Netherwich Canal Basin provide an opportunity to improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between the town centre, Vines Park/Canal towpath, and the railway station. This opportunity is highlighted in the relevant Plan policies for these sites.

9.7 More generally, all development should serve to positively promote walking and cycling, by giving these modes priority over other means of travel and encouraging their use to access public transport, schools and other community facilities and the town centre. Existing public rights of way including those giving access to the surrounding countryside will be protected from development which would harm their usefulness or public enjoyment.

9.8 Many of the issues raised in the community survey and Local Transport Plan in respect of fostering walking and cycling in the town are outside the scope of the Plan and as such provide a basis for a Community Action set out in chapter 11.

10. DELIVERING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

10.1 The Neighbourhood Plan is a long-term planning document for the period up to 2041. Droitwich Spa Town Council will seek to implement the objectives and policies of the Plan with the aim of achieving the Vision and delivering the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Area.

10.2 The principal means of doing this will be through decisions on planning applications. These are taken by Wychavon District Council as local planning authority in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Neighbourhood Plan will, when made, form part of the overall statutory 'development plan' until such time as it is reviewed and updated.

10.3 When responding to consultations on planning applications, the Town Council will base its response on development plan policies including those in the Neighbourhood Plan, taking due account of other material considerations. Existing and new Town Councillors will ensure that they are briefed on the Neighbourhood Plan and its purpose, that they are familiar with its contents, and skilled in the application of its policies to development proposals.

10.4 The Town Council will work pro-actively with applicants and the District Council to seek to support planning applications that improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the Neighbourhood Area. This will include suggesting the use of planning conditions or obligations to make unacceptable development acceptable.

10.5 The Town Council will monitor the implementation of the policies in the Plan and keep under review the need for the Plan to be amended and updated. Policies in this document may be superseded by other development plan policies or by the emergence of new evidence. Where its policies become out-of-date, the Town Council, in consultation with the District Council, will decide how best to review and update the Plan.

11. COMMUNITY ACTIONS

11.1 The formal role of the Plan is the setting of planning policies which deal with land use and development. However, in preparing the Plan and in its responses to consultations the local community has identified ways of improving the local area which extend beyond this remit. These generally concern infrastructure and transport matters. Such issues cannot be addressed through the land use planning policies of the Plan but may be expressed as Community Actions. These are set out in Table 4 overleaf. Whilst the Community Actions shown reflect the concerns raised, it is also the case that many of these issues are the subject of ongoing work by the Town Council with partner organisations.

11.2 Where possible and appropriate, developer contributions will be sought to deliver, or support the delivery, of improvements to issues highlighted as Community Actions, where such obligations are:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
- Directly related to the development proposed.
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

11.3 The Community Actions do not form part of the Neighbourhood Plan and do not constitute planning policy.

Ref.	Topic area	Community Action
CA1	Highways – road safety for all users	To support Worcestershire County Council and other partners in identifying and implementing measures to improve road safety, to include speed indicator devices, pavement maintenance and improvements including widening and hedge cutting, parking restrictions, and the enforcement and lowering of speed limits.
CA2	Highways - junctions	To support Worcestershire County Council in its upgrading of highway road junctions as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan: • A38/A442 Kidderminster Road (Westlands roundabout). • B4065/B4090/Queen Street (St. George's Square). • A38/B4090 (Copcut roundabout). • Vines Lane/Kidderminster Road. • B4090/The Holloway. • Tagwell Road/Primsland Way.
CA3	Highways – road maintenance	To support Worcestershire County Council in addressing issues of highway maintenance including surface water drainage (road run-off, ditches, and gullies) as they arise.
CA4	Highways – other matters	To support Worcestershire County Council in addressing other highway issues including noise pollution, air quality, traffic calming, and road and footpath signage.
CA5	Public transport provision	To support Worcestershire County Council, bus operators and Community Transport providers in addressing issues identified and to continue to press the case for existing service levels to be maintained and for improvements to be delivered.
CA6	Droitwich Spa Railway Station	To support Worcestershire County Council, the rail industry and developers and others in defining and implementing the Local Transport Plan's Rail Station Improvement Scheme.
CA7	Walking and cycling	To support Worcestershire County Council and developers in defining and implementing the Local Transport Plan's Active Travel Network Investment Programme, which is aimed at creating a comprehensive active travel network in Droitwich linking housing areas with key attractors. This is to include a review of subways and the provision of active travel links at Westlands to address access issues.
CA8	Public rights of way	To support Worcestershire County Council and landowners in promoting the maintenance of public rights of way throughout the town and linking to the surrounding countryside.
CA9	Town centre public realm	To support Worcestershire County Council and Wychavon District Council in delivering the highway and public realm improvements identified by the Investment prospectus.

Ref.	Topic area	Community Action
CA10	Town centre activities	To support and work with Wychavon District Council and other partners including the community to promote regeneration projects which serve to maintain and enhance the vitality of the town centre. This includes improving and extending the range of activities offered in the town centre so as to contribute to the day, evening and night-time economies.
CA11	Community facilities	To encourage and promote the co-location of community services in shared facilities in achieving and enhancing the viability of existing activities.
CA12	Health care services	To support health service providers to ensure existing provision is maintained and to investigate the scope to establish new provision of services such as General Practice, dentistry, and pharmacies.
CA13	Age-specific community services	To support initiatives intended to provide facilities and services to meet the needs of children, younger and older people.
CA14	Electric vehicle charging points	To promote and support appropriate proposals for the further provision of publicly-available electric vehicle charging points.
CA15	Communications and broadband	To promote and support improvements to communications and broadband infrastructure by working in partnership with Worcestershire County Council and network operators. This may include consideration of a community-led scheme.
CA16	Community information and communication	To continue to maintain and improve ways of providing information to and communicating with the community including use of notice boards, publications, website, and social media.
CA17	Open space biodiversity enhancements	To develop and implement proposals with partners to enhance the biodiversity value of open spaces owned/managed by the Town Council, and to promote such enhancements on other green spaces including highway land.
CA18	Non-designated heritage assets	To seek the inclusion of local heritage buildings and structures as may be identified on the District Council's Local List.
CA19	Naming of streets and public spaces	To promote the use of historic place names linked to the locality when consulted by the District Council/developers.

Table 4: Community Actions

APPENDIX A: EVIDENCE BASE

A.1 The following planning policy documents, reports, consultation evidence and other survey material have been used in drawing up the Plan.

National level evidence

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, 2024.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance.

Census 2011 and 2021 tables available on the ONS Nomis website.

Natural England, National Character Area profile 106: Severn and Avon Vales, 2014.

Environment Agency, Flood Map for Planning.

Environment Agency, Risk of flooding from Surface Water.

Historic England, National Heritage List for England.

Natural England, Magic Map at http://www.magic.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx.

Natural England, Regional Agricultural Land Classification map for West Midlands, 2010.

County and district level evidence

[NB South Worcestershire Councils comprise Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council].

Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils, Local list of heritage assets Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), undated.

South Worcestershire Councils, South Worcestershire Development Plan 2006-2030, adopted 25 February 2016.

Wychavon District Council, Wychavon Shop Front Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, March 2017.

Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan 2018-2030, November 2017.

South Worcestershire Councils, Supplementary Planning Documents to the SWDP.

Worcestershire County Council, Streetscape Design Guide, Spring 2020.

South Worcestershire Councils, Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Wychavon Final Report September 2019 and 2021 update for the SWDP area, November 2021.

South Worcestershire Councils, Significant Gap Appraisal, 2022.

South Worcestershire Councils, SWDP Review, Regulation 19 Publication Consultation document, November 2022 (submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination on 27 September 2023).

South Worcestershire Councils, Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment supporting the SWDPR Regulation 19 document, Droitwich sites (SHELAA74).

South Worcestershire Councils, Five Year Housing Land Supply Reports from April 2021, providing housing completion data for 2020/21 – 2023/24.

South Worcestershire Councils, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, September 2022.

South Worcestershire Councils, Retail and Town Centre Study, 2024 Update.

South Worcestershire Councils, Addendum to the Housing Requirement for Designated Neighbourhood Areas, 2021 Census update, September 2024.

Parish and local level evidence

Archaeological Assessment of Droitwich, The Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, 1996.

Town Plan Steering Group, Picturing the Future: a town plan for Droitwich Spa, undated but c. 2009.

British Waterways, Droitwich Canals Conservation Management Plan, July 2009.

Wychavon District Council, Droitwich Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, January 2009, adopted by Wychavon District Council 3rd September 2013.

Droitwich Spa Town Centre Investment Prospectus, Wychavon District Council, May 2022.

Reports by AECOM for Locality:

- Droitwich Spa Housing Needs Assessment, March 2023.
- Droitwich Spa Design guidance and codes, November 2023.

Reports by DJN Planning Ltd. for Droitwich Spa Town Council:

- Launch consultation March/April 2023, Results report, August 2023.
- Site Assessment Report, August 2023.
- Community questionnaire survey 2023, Results report and Comment listings, December 2023.

Natural Networks programme, Biodiversity Enhancement Assessment, Copcut Park and Spring Meadow, October 2023.

Wychavon District Council, Wychavon Design Code, Droitwich Spa and surrounding area, undated draft consulted upon in January/February 2024.

Wychavon District Council, Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2041, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion, March 2025.

Wychavon District Council, online planning applications.

APPENDIX B: WINDFALL HOUSING COMPLETIONS

B.1 Dwellings completed since April 2020 on windfall sites in the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Area are shown below. The figures are net of demolition or other loss of an existing dwelling(s).

Year	Address	No. completed in year
2020/21	Spring Meadow/Mulberry Tree Hill	39
	39 Ledwych Road	7
	Woodlands, The Holloway	1
Total		47
2021/22	15 Lyttelton Road	1
	Orchard House	12
	80 Mayflower Road	1
	Land rear of 12 Rose Avenue	2
	71 Friar Street	1
	22 St Andrews Street	1
	39 Oakleigh Road	1
	Land rear of 6 Steynors Way	1
Total		20
2022/23	1 Wych Road	2
	5 St Andrews Road	2
	Dodderhill Court	5
	38 High Street	1
	20 Rose Avenue	1
Total		11
2023/24	Land at Yew Tree Hill	4
	60 Friar Street	1
	42 Oakland Avenue	1
	7 Old Market Court, High Street	1
	Oakley Meadows	4
Total		11
Grand total		**89**

Source: South Worcestershire Councils, Five Year Housing Land Supply Reports Appendix 1 from April 2021.