

# South Worcestershire Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2023-2026

## September 2023

Produced by  
Malvern Hills District  
Council, Worcester City  
Council, and Wychavon  
District Council

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## 1. What is the Local Development Scheme?

- 1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a project management document which sets out the South Worcestershire Council's priorities for preparing Development Plan Documents over the next two years. It is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) that a Local Planning Authority should produce an LDS, which must include any Development Plan Documents it intends to prepare and a timetable indicating the main milestones of production. The 2004 Act also sets out several other requirements to be included in the LDS.
- 1.2 Since October 2010, the South Worcestershire Councils (SWC) of Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon have been working together to produce the joint South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP), which was adopted in February 2016. Joint working on this strategic planning document has brought together many other work streams and has also created the need for further joint working in the future. The South Worcestershire Councils are therefore continuing to combine resources on many planning policy matters and have worked collaboratively to prepare the shared elements of this LDS.
- 1.3 Paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary<sup>1</sup>. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of a plan and should consider changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy.
- 1.4 Accordingly, the South Worcestershire Councils commenced a joint review of the SWDP in late 2017. The SWDP review will soon be reaching a key milestone in its production, and will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in public. The intention of this LDS is to:
- to set out the updated timetable for the SWDP Review;
  - to report on the progress made to date on the review of the SWDP; and
  - to set out the updated timetable for the Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Policies and Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
- 1.5 The LDS has been made available online at [Local Development Scheme - South Worcestershire Development Plan \(swdevelopmentplan.org\)](http://swdevelopmentplan.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Reviews at least every five years are a legal requirement for all local plans (Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Plan)(England) Regulations 2012).

And is also available from each of the South Worcestershire Local Authorities planning policy pages.

1.6 Hard copies are available to view at each of the South Worcestershire Council civic offices. In Worcester, additionally the document can be viewed at The Hive, and Warndon and St John's libraries during their normal opening hours.

1.7 If you have any questions about the LDS or how to access it, please contact the relevant council's Planning Policy Teams at the following:

Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council

**Email:** [policy.plans@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:policy.plans@wychavon.gov.uk)

**Tel: 01386 565565**

Worcester City Council

**Email:** [planning@worcester.gov.uk](mailto:planning@worcester.gov.uk)

**Tel: 01905 722233** and ask for the Planning Policy team

1.8 The South Worcestershire Development Plan Team can be contacted directly at:

**Email:** [contact@swdevelopmentplan.org](mailto:contact@swdevelopmentplan.org)

**Tel:** 01386 565565

## 2. Progress to date

### *South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)*

- 2.1 The SWDP was adopted in February 2016. A review of the SWDP commenced in late 2017. Table 1 shows the progress that has been made to date:

<b>Stage of Plan Preparation</b>	<b>Date</b>	
Issues and Options (regulation 18) consultation	November – December 2018	✓
Preferred Options (regulation 18) consultation	November – December 2019	✓
Further focused regulation 18 consultation on Sustainability Appraisal	March – April 2021	✓
Publication (regulation 19) consultation	November – December 2022	✓

- 2.2 Progress was hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic, however work continued in plan preparation throughout the time of the pandemic

### *Proposed Changes to the Planning System*

- 2.3 As part of the Levelling Up agenda, the Government is proposing to reform the planning system to make plan making quicker and more transparent than under the current system. Plans are likely to be more concise and much more easy to use and understand. A consultation is currently being held (at the time of writing, August 2023), which considers the changes to the plan making process/system, this follows numerous previous consultations and white papers which have established desired outcomes of these proposed changes.
- 2.4 The plan review has been prepared under the current planning system, and through the transitional arrangements currently proposed in the current consultation on proposed changes to national policy. It is proposed that the plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination ahead of the deadline for plans to be examined under the current system, and thereby will have been adopted before the deadline for doing so.

### *Minerals and Waste Planning*

- 2.5 Minerals and Waste planning is carried out by Worcestershire County Council (WCC). The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document was adopted November 2012.
- 2.6 The Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan (2018-2036) was adopted in July 2022.

- 2.7 A minerals site allocations Development Plan Document is being prepared by Worcestershire County Council. A timetable for the preparation of this document can be found in the Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme which can be found on the County Council's website: [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lds](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lds).

### *Neighbourhood Plans*

- 2.8 At the time of reviewing the Local Development Scheme, the following status applied across the south Worcestershire plan area (data correct August 2023):

Council	Neighbourhood Areas Designated	Neighbourhood Plans which have been through Pre-submission consultation	Submitted Neighbourhood Plans	Adopted Neighbourhood Plans
Malvern Hills	8	0	1	9
Worcester City	1	1	0	0
Wychavon	10	0	0	12

### *Current Development Plan for South Worcestershire*

- 2.9 The South Worcestershire Council's existing Development Plan currently comprises:
- The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP);
  - The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2012); and
  - Saved Policies from the Hereford and Worcester Minerals Local Plan (adopted 1997).

These are the documents which provide the planning policies that planning applications should be determined against (unless material considerations indicate otherwise) at the time of reviewing this LDS.

### *Existing local planning policy framework*

- 2.10 The wider planning policy framework for the South Worcestershire Councils consists of the following Supplementary Planning Documents:
- Affordable Housing – October 2016
  - Planning for Health – September 2017
  - Design Guide - March 2018
  - Revised Developer Contributions – July 2018
  - Water Management and Flooding – July 2018
  - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy – July 2018
  - Houses in Multiple Occupation – October 2014 (Worcester City Council only)

### **3. Development Plan Documents**

- 3.1 The Development Plan Documents currently being progressed are:
- The South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (prepared jointly between Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon).
  - The South Worcestershire Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Policies and Site Allocations DPD (prepared jointly between Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon).
- 3.2 The following section sets out the content of, and timetable for, producing the above documents. All references to Regulations in this section refer to [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#).
- 3.3 The South Worcestershire Councils are also progressing a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy and charging schedule, a timetable for which is also set out in this document.

### 3a South Worcestershire Development Plan Review

Overview	
Role and content	The plan will update the existing SWDP, reviewing the development requirements, policies, site allocations and extending the Plan period to 2041.
Status	Development Plan Document
Geographical coverage	The plan covers the administrative areas of Malvern Hills, Worcester City, Wychavon councils.
Jointly produced	YES. The SWDP was jointly produced by Malvern Hills, Worcester City Council and Wychavon collectively known, for plan making purposes, as the South Worcestershire Councils.
Chain of Conformity	National Planning Policy Framework, the National Planning Practice Guidance, case law and planning legislation.

Milestones (Completed Stages are shown in BLUE)	
<b>Evidence Gathering</b>	Commenced in late 2017
<b>Issues and Options</b> (Regulation 18 (i))	November/December 2018
<b>Preferred Options</b> (Regulation 18 (ii))	November/December 2019
<b>Further Preferred Options Consultation</b> (Regulation 18 (iii))	March/April 2021
<b>Publication</b> (Regulation 19)	November/December 2022
<b>Submission</b> (Regulation 22)	September 2023
<b>Independent Examination</b> (Regulation 24)	January to March 2024 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Main Modifications Consultation</b> (if required to be found sound)	June to July 2024
<b>Receipt of Inspector's Report</b> (Regulation 25)	November 2024
<b>Adoption</b> (Regulation 26)	December 2024

<sup>2</sup> Timeframe is dependent upon availability and scheduling at the Planning Inspectorate.



### 3b. South Worcestershire Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Policies and Site Allocations DPD

Overview	
Role and content	The South Worcestershire Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Policies and Site Allocations DPD will set out the updated requirement for the number of sites and pitches to be provided to meet the needs of Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the area over the coming years. It will then allocate sites or extensions to existing sites to meet this requirement. The DPD also includes a policy on the design and layout of sites and yards to assist in determining planning applications.
Status	Development Plan Document
Geographical coverage	The plan covers the administrative areas of Malvern Hills, Worcester City, and Wychavon.
Jointly produced	YES. The South Worcestershire Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Policies and Site Allocations DPD is being jointly produced by Malvern Hills, Worcester City Council, and Wychavon collectively known as the South Worcestershire Councils.
Chain of conformity	NPPF, Planning policy and guidance for traveller sites, case law and planning legislation, adopted SWDP (2016), and SWDPR.

Timetable (Completed Stages are shown in BLUE)	
<b>Commencement</b>	September 2014
<b>Preferred Options</b> (Regulation 18)	May/June 2016 February/March 2018 May/June 2021
<b>Publication</b> (Regulation 19)	July/August 2022
<b>Submission</b> (Regulation 22)	January 2024
<b>Independent Examination</b> (Regulation 24)	April 2024 <sup>3</sup>
<b>Main Modifications Consultation</b> (if required to be found sound)	June to July 2024
<b>Receipt of Inspector's Report</b> (Regulation 25)	November 2024
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<sup>3</sup> Timeframe is dependent upon availability and scheduling at the Planning Inspectorate.

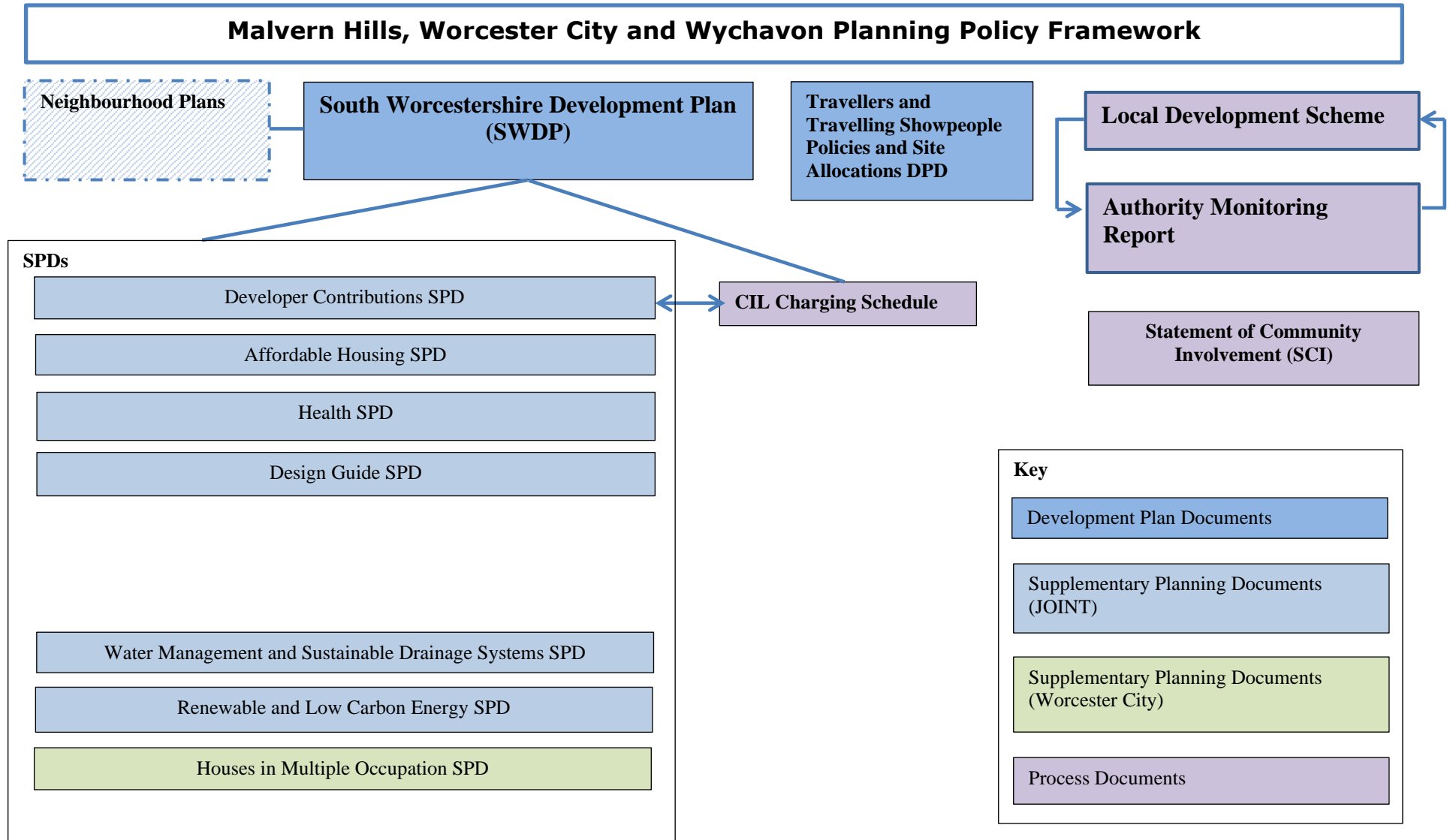
## 4. Supplementary Planning Documents

- 4.1 Several Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) have been prepared to provide further guidance on the policies within SWDP. These documents are not part of the Development Plan. It is no longer a requirement to detail SPDs and their timetables for preparation within an LDS. However, the list of SPDs in the wider planning policy framework for the South Worcestershire Councils can be viewed on the diagrams below and in section 2.15 of this report.
- 4.2 A review of the Community Infrastructure Levy will be undertaken to update the existing charging schedule and to take account of changes to the development plan through the current review. A timetable for this is shown below:

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Council decision sought to consult on Charging Schedule</b>	December 2023
<b>Consultation</b>	January – February 2024
<b>Submission</b>	April 2024
<b>Examination</b>	September 2024 <sup>4</sup>
<b>Inspector's report</b>	November 2024
<b>Adoption</b>	December 2024

<sup>4</sup> Timeframe is dependent upon availability and scheduling at the Planning Inspectorate.

### South Worcestershire Planning Policy Framework Diagram



## 5. Risk Assessment

5.1 The South Worcestershire Councils acknowledge that there are risks in delivering the documents set out in the LDS. Some of these risks are within the council's control and some are not. Table 1 identifies the main areas of risk, their impact, and the ways to overcome them so that the programme in the LDS can be delivered.

**Table 1: Risk Assessment**

Area of risk	Likelihood/Impact and Consequence	Mitigation
Adequate staff resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unable to complete documents on time and to the required standard</li> <li>• Consequential programme slippage</li> <li>• At the extreme – DPDs and SPDs may be withdrawn e.g., if found unsound or subject to successful legal challenge</li> <li>• Consequential increased risk of inappropriate, speculative planning applications if there is an up-to-date Local Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint working with SW Councils and county council</li> <li>• Ring fence policy teams dedicated to plan production</li> <li>• Employ temporary staff/consultants (subject to resource availability)</li> </ul>
Funding pressure on resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of resources to fund plan making, resulting in programme slippage</li> <li>• Consequential increased risk of inappropriate speculative planning applications if there is no up to date Local Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols agreed by the SW Councils for budgets and shared costs</li> <li>• Provision of schemes to influence budgetary decisions</li> <li>• Monitoring of costs and budget spend/profiles</li> </ul>
Council procedures and Corporate commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of programme slippage</li> <li>• Consequential increased risk of inappropriate, speculative planning applications if there is no up to date Local Plan</li> <li>• Risk to the Council's reputation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader's meetings to coordinate strategy</li> <li>• Robust programme management</li> <li>• Joint Advisory Panel to advise SW Councils on plan production</li> <li>• Joint Officer Steering Group to oversee plan production process</li> <li>• Awareness of consultations and council diaries</li> </ul>
Neighbourhood planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient staff resource available to meet legal requirements in the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain contact with town and parish councils to ascertain scale and type of work required from the LPAs</li> </ul>

Area of risk	Likelihood/Impact and Consequence	Mitigation
	provision of technical advice and support to town and parish councils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient funding to resource LPA support</li> <li>• Diversion of staff resources from preparation of DPDs and SPDs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the extent to which neighbourhood plans deliver the LDS</li> <li>• Assessment of neighbourhood plans to influence budgetary decisions</li> <li>• Seek Government funding for resources</li> </ul>
Changes to external context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unable to meet requirements of national policy and guidance</li> <li>• Insufficient flexibility and resilience to meet economic / environmental / social changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor policy announcements and consultations</li> <li>• Assess Local Plan/SPD consistency with policy</li> <li>• Use of latest guidance</li> <li>• Monitor future trends, use of Foresight intelligence</li> </ul>
Time required for consideration, consultation and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient time to meet standard lead in times to decision making</li> <li>• Significant level of responses to consultation</li> <li>• Additional scrutiny stage(s)</li> <li>• Programme slippage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination of council meeting dates</li> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Awareness of council diaries and constitutions and protocols for decision making</li> <li>• Awareness of events such as elections and holidays</li> <li>• Use of delegated decisions route</li> <li>• Efficient/effective handling of responses</li> </ul>
Capacity of the Planning Inspectorate and outcomes of its recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PINS unable to meet demand for DPD examination leading to delay in adopting plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide LDS to PINS as early as possible – to identify DPD production</li> <li>• Regular liaison with PINS</li> <li>• Monitor Inspector’s reports and High Court Challenges and draw up/use lessons learnt</li> </ul>
Unforeseen Circumstances (i.e., Covid-19 Pandemic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unable to continue with key areas of evidence base development.</li> <li>• Inability to work face to face and attend meetings.</li> <li>• Inability to meet project timetable (programme slippage).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise video conferencing for meetings.</li> <li>• Produce evidence in house (where possible).</li> <li>• Update/review project timetable.</li> </ul>

<p>Changes to planning system through the Levelling Up agenda</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not meeting timings for Plan to be examined under current planning system.</li><li>• Needing to start the plan preparation process from the beginning under the new planning system.</li><li>• Prolonged period of time without an up to date plan in place.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid unnecessary delays in getting the plan to submission</li><li>• Work with stakeholders to address issues outside of the EiP and avoid delays at Examination</li></ul>
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## 6. Monitoring and Review

### Monitoring

- 6.1 There is a requirement to monitor the implementation of the LDS<sup>2</sup> and hence progress made in producing Local Plans and SPDs through an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). AMRs must be produced at least annually and must cover a period of no more than 12 months. AMRs must cover a continuous period, with no gap in coverage between reports.
- 6.2 In relation to each document included within the LDS, monitoring must be carried out on:
- the timetable included for that specific document;
  - the stage that the document has reached in the production process; and
  - if the document is behind the timetable set out in the LDS, the reasons for this.
- 6.3 An AMR will be produced jointly each year and will be made available on each of the councils' websites as soon as it has been finalised. The AMR will be reported by the Local Planning Authority to the Joint Advisory Panel (or equivalent). As well as progress in plan-making, this will be the opportunity to report on the monitoring indicators in adopted Local Plans to assess policy performance.
- 6.4 Under the CIL Regulations 2019 the Council is required to prepare an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) setting out the collection of s106, CIL and other contributions and how these have been spent. The IFS also is required to identify and to priorities infrastructure projects for CIL spending and payments committed. This must be published annually by the 31<sup>st</sup> December.

### Review of the LDS

- 6.5 In response to the yearly monitoring against the LDS, the South Worcestershire Councils will work together to review the content of their LDSs each year to provide real time information of the work programme over a rolling three-year period. Anticipated delays or actual slippage against the published timetable will be addressed, with realistic revisions to key milestones proposed.
- 6.6 The South Worcestershire Councils anticipates that the next full update of the LDS will be in 2025 on adoption of the SWDP but accept that it is good practice to review the LDS on an annual basis. This is subject to the LPA's consideration of any significant changes for example in legislation, national policy or circumstances that impact on plan-making or the delivery of strategy and policy.

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<sup>2</sup> Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Part 2 – Local Development. S. 35 (as amended)  
Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 34 Authorities' Monitoring Reports.

## Appendix A

## South Worcestershire Local Development Scheme: Project Plan

	2023												2024												2025											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
SWDP Review								8				9	9	9			10	10			11	12	13													
SW Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policies and Site Allocations DPD												8			9		10	10			11	12	13													
Community Infrastructure Levy Review												6	6		8					9		12	13													

## Key - DPDs and SPDs

1	Preparatory work including compiling evidence base –including early engagement (issues and options) consultation for DPDs	6	Publication of Proposed Submission document for representations <b>(Regulation 19 For DPDs)</b>	11	Inspector considers consultation responses (May not be required. Dependent on outcome of Examination)
2	Preparation of draft document	7	Analysis of representations	12	Receipt of Inspector's report <b>(Regulation 25 for DPDs)</b>
3	Public Consultation <b>(Regulation 13 for SPDs), (Regulation 18 for DPDs)</b>	8	Submission to Secretary of State <b>(Regulation 22 for DPDs)</b>	13	Adoption/Completion/Judicial Review Period <b>(Regulation 14 for SPDs), (Regulation 26 for DPDs)</b>
4	Consideration of representations	9	Independent Examination <b>(Regulation 24 for DPDs)</b>		
5	Preparation of final document (for SPDs) Preparation of Proposed Submission document (for DPDs)	10	Consultation on Main Modifications (May not be required. Dependent on outcome of Examination)	R	Review

Regulation references relate to [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)