

COUNCIL
19 MAY 2022

REPORTS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH RESPONSIBILITY

Report of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy and Skills

Introduction

1. I am very pleased to present this report to Council on the work carried out in the areas of economy and skills over the last year.

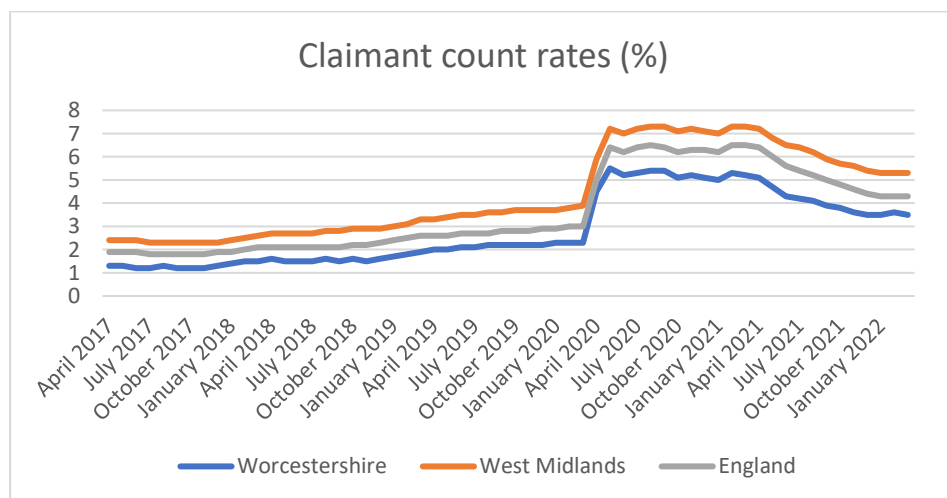
The Worcestershire Economy:

2. Worcestershire's economy is predominately made up of micro businesses which have between 0-9 employees and account for 90.6% of the 29,210 businesses in the county. Businesses employing between 10-49 account for 7.7% of the total and medium (50-249) and large 250+ account for 1.4% and 0.4% respectively.

3. Based on the number of businesses, the top five sectors in the county are Business Administrations and Support Services; Professional, Scientific and Technical; Construction; Transport and storage and Manufacturing. Manufacturing businesses make up 5.8% of the total number of businesses in Worcestershire compared to an average of 4.98% in England.

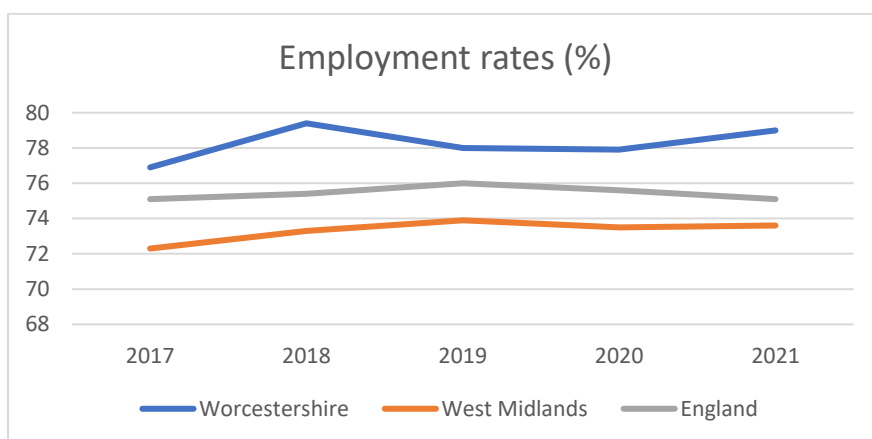
4. Business survival rates in Worcestershire since 2016 have been consistently higher than the West Midlands regional average of 91.3% (2019) and the average in England of 88.2% (2019) at 95.1% in 2019, making Worcestershire a good place to start a business.

Claimant count



5. The claimant count figures remain lower in Worcestershire when compared to both the regional and national averages, with the claimant count for Worcestershire at March 2022 being 3.5% compared to an average in England of 4.3% and a West Midlands regional average of 5.3%. The county is also seeing a faster recovery as we move closer towards pre pandemic claimant count level of 2.3%.

6. This is supported by the increase in the employment rate in the county from 78% in 2019 to 79% in 2021, compared to the West Midlands employment rate of 73.6% which remains lower than the pre pandemic level of 73.9%. A similar position is evident from the average rates for England



Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP)

7. Worcestershire County Council is a key partner in the WLEP and also performs the role of accountable body. Worcestershire County Council's Corporate Plan is clearly aligned to the Plan for Growth (PfG), the economic strategy to 2040 and is committed to supporting the delivery of an **additional 25,000 jobs and increase in GVA by £2.9 billion by 2025, with targets set to 2030 and 2040.**

8. Over the last two years the Worcestershire LEP and the County Council have continued to co-invest in projects and deliver against the government programmes of Local Growth Fund and the Getting Building Fund.

9. The development of Worcestershire's PfG sets the strategic direction for skills, enterprise and infrastructure, and remains a core priority along with a strong focus on key sectors including agri-tech, advanced manufacturing, cyber security, defence, and IT, as well as recognising the cornerstone sectors of health and care, professional services and construction. The PfG was developed on five foundations:

- a) Ideas: innovative economy
- b) People: good jobs and greater earning power for all
- c) Infrastructure: upgrading infrastructure
- d) Business Environment: the best place to start and grow a business
- e) Places: prosperous communities across the UK.

The Worcestershire Growth Hub

10. The County Council has worked closely with partners to develop a sustainable partnership for Worcestershire's Growth Hub, formerly Worcestershire Business Central. The service is now co-located within Worcester City Council. The County Council has allocated three members of staff to the team.

11. The enhanced growth hub has continued to develop a proactive engagement strategy to ensure Worcestershire businesses are aware of the support available to them. This is done predominately through four Business Engagement Managers, focused on supporting business growth and the three key priority sectors identified in the Plan for Growth.

12. The website continues to have approx. 6,000 visits per month, and over the past 12 months the service has provided support to over 1,400 Worcestershire-based businesses, of which almost 600 businesses received in-depth support.

Business Support Programmes

13. A number of business support programmes have been developed and expanded over the last 12-24 months to meet the needs of the local economy and the views of local businesses have been key in the design of these programmes which include:

14. **Here2Help Business** – Worcestershire County Council has launched the new Here2Help Business Programme in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. A £4m programme designed to assist local businesses to recover, adapt, and support future resilience as lockdown measures reduced and the economy re-opened.

Here2Help Business performance:

- Managed and processed over 687 enquiries
- Assisted 171 Businesses through 1:1 specialist advice clinic
- Contracted over £4.1m in grant funds which has resulted in £5.4m of Private Sector match funding
- 249 new jobs have/will be created as a result of the grant funding
- 522 jobs safeguarded as a result of grant funding
- 47 new graduate placements created.

Worcestershire Innovation (WINN)

15. WINN promotes a culture of innovation across Worcestershire, bringing together a community of inspirational individuals and businesses with innovative ideas and projects. In line with its success, the Proof of Concept grants offered as part of the programme have now been fully allocated and these will have achieved the total of 80 outputs by the project completion date. Businesses supported through the initiative within the WINN to provide entrepreneurs with the advice and guidance to create new products have supported a total of 133 companies.

16. The 'Make it Happen' Challenge 2021 targeted the Worcestershire Innovation Community, bringing 'WINNING' ideas together with the help and professional advice of a value of £5k of support per business. This was funded by Worcestershire County Council through a variety grant support and expert advisors who sponsored the event. The challenge had two categories, one focusing on Health and Care, and

the other focusing on Science and Tech. Our winners have achieved some amazing business success with their sponsors, including a joint well-being event, held at The Fold, between WINN and the Health and Care winners NeuroHeadway/IndigoWell, focusing on the latest innovation and thinking in supporting wellbeing in the workplace.

17. Showcase videos featuring each of the winners journeys are available through various social media channels.

18. Betaden is Worcestershire's first dedicated tech accelerator for entrepreneurs and scale-up businesses at the forefront of testing and developing future technologies. Situated within the WLEP offices at Malvern Hills Science Park, BetaDen offers entrepreneurs, start-ups and scale up businesses a package consisting of free office space, mentorship from handpicked experts and a proof of concept grant. Cohort 5 have started on the programme, with plans for the recruitment of the final EU funded Cohort 6 readiness for an autumn start date. Key outputs from BetaDen thus far include:

- 10 new products delivered to market;
- 15 new products to founder/company, with 15 in the pipeline; and
- 3 new tenants at the Science Park & 30 jobs created.

19. **Enterprising Worcestershire Start Up Programme** - a comprehensive programme of support for pre-start and start-up businesses. The pre-start delivery incorporates a partnership with Worcestershire libraries to maximise the reach of a project to Worcestershire residents, and benefit from the Business & IP Centre support through the libraries. The Enrich project, also sits alongside these programmes to provide support for young entrepreneurs delivered in partnership with the University of Worcester. A total of 57 people to date have completed 12 hours support each through ERDF funding. Additional core funding has been allocated through WCC and the six district councils to support Business to Consumer businesses in the start-up phase, as these cannot be supported under EU funding rules.

20. For early-stage businesses, a successful business coaching programme is in full delivery, and has already supported 25 small businesses in the first phase, with provision in place to support a further 50 businesses. The high growth start-up programme is also available and will support a total 45 high growth businesses under 2 years old. A total of 60 start-up grants have so far been awarded totalling £328k; grants are available from £1k-£15k.

21. **Elevate** – Worcestershire County Council's Business Growth programme, launched in January 2020, now has a total of 130 businesses completed/enrolled on the programme and hitting the target client profile (of over 5+ employees). Delivery has included sector specific support - including digital manufacturing and supply chain support for manufacturing SMEs and scale-up support for businesses in the creative tech sector. From the support alone, over 30 jobs have been created (ahead of target at this stage of the programme). Customer feedback is excellent - 100% of surveyed businesses have said that they would recommend the support to others.

22. Businesses completing the support can apply for grant funding up to £10k for capital or revenue projects to implement actions within individually tailored business

plans. A total of 28 grant projects are underway directly funded through the Elevate programme. A significant number of clients from the early cohorts were funded through the Here2Help Business programme.

23. **Elevate Technology** - launched in October 2021, this new programme provides support to SMEs to adopt new, or maximise existing, digital tools and technologies within the business based on a bespoke digital roadmap. To date, 25 businesses are receiving support from digital technology specialists, with funding to support an additional 25 businesses secured.

24. The project is developing an online resource with guides, top tips, blogs, and case studies on growing your business through digital technologies. A tech showcase is also being planned for Autumn 2022.

Community Renewal Fund

25. Worcestershire County Council was successful in securing £2.7 million of the government's £220m Community Renewal Funding to support innovative projects across the County to take forward levelling up through projects to support local communities, businesses and young people across the county. The six locally-led projects across Worcestershire are already benefitting from the Community Renewal Fund to help level up and deliver carbon net zero initiatives Projects include skills training and developing low carbon technology.

26. The programme started in December 2021, and the government has recently announced the programme will be extended from June 2022 to December 2022, to allow projects to meet important targets and outcomes both locally and nationally, and allow the learning from evaluations to inform future programmes such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

27. By December 2022, the Worcestershire programme will have supported 316 people who are economically inactive or unemployed, supported 35 people in employment into training and worked with over 5,000 young people improving their knowledge and skills in relation to enterprise. The programme will also provide a range of business support assistance to 156 business and support 68 organisations in the public, private and voluntary Sectors.

Project Name	Description of Activity
Made In Worcester Creative Collective	A private sector collaboration of independent film companies to provide immediate employment opportunities to support a thriving Film Industry sector. The project will generate and accelerate film production, upskill and reskill young people to develop a pool of creative and entrepreneurial talent.
Worcestershire Wellbeing and Jobs	Jobs and Wellbeing Clubs will offer information advice and guidance sessions, taster training courses, wellbeing activities and access to laptops and printers. 12 community partners are in place, delivering grass roots interventions to communities in Wyre Forest and Worcester. Beneficiaries are being supported to identify and overcome the barriers they face finding employment, gain a new

	qualification(s), increasing their self-confidence and improve their wellbeing.
Zero Carbon Ready Worcestershire / Wyre Forest	Pilot activities that are currently ineligible for funding from existing and previously available funding streams. Different types of intervention will be piloted and evaluated. Activities to be funded are: Net Zero Carbon Business Engagement, Decarbonisation Reviews, Business advice and grants. Some beneficiaries may benefit from more than one of these elements.
Betaden Tech Bootcamp Pilot	The Betaden Tech Bootcamp Pilot is a 90-day pilot version of the existing, highly successful, Betaden Technology Accelerator. It will provide the County with a pioneering initiative that could pave the way for new ideas and products with a carbon reduction focus. 21 businesses have already attended workshops, which had guest speakers from Vodafone and Siemens. The programme has recruited the cohort of six businesses for the Cleantech Bootcamp from 12 full applications.
Young Enterprise	Deliver a series of programmes working with both mainstream and SEND schools to deliver enterprise education, enabling enterprise skills development for young people at secondary schools, middle schools, special schools, colleges, youth and community hubs in Worcestershire.
Upskilling in Malvern Hills and Wychavon	This project seeks to develop the existing intelligence available on local skills needs within businesses across all sectors and deliver targeted support to improve outcomes. A survey of over 650 local businesses has taken place to identify skills gaps. The project is now providing support to business re skills development and graduate placements.

Visit Worcestershire

28. Worcestershire County Council took over the operational management of Visit Worcestershire in April 2020 at the start of the pandemic. The Visit England recognised our/the Destination Management Organisation function has evolved with renewed focus on co-ordinating improved brand awareness, visitor experience and providing tourism and hospitality businesses with a promotion body that they can engage with.

29. Since April 2020, the website has been developed to improve visitor experience, we have seen an increase in web traffic by 300%, with an average of 40,000 unique visitors viewing the site every month. Page views have increased from 1 to 4 pages per visit, which shows users are engaging with the content. The social media following has grown by 33% with a combined following of 34,000 across our platforms. Impressions reach around 250,000 per month. Visit Worcestershire has increased its communication channels to Instagram, with the audience growing from 120 in April 2020 to nearly 4,000 in April 2022 and a newly launched Tik-Tok account in March 2022.

30. Over 200 businesses joined us for our inaugural Tourism Awards in March this year, with the 100 applications being whittled down to 12 winners at the black-tie event held at Stanbrook Abbey. Three of our winning businesses have gone forward to the national finals which are taking place in Birmingham in June, putting Worcestershire on the national stage alongside areas such as Cornwall and Devon. The 2022/23 Tourism Awards are now open for applications until 29 July 2022.

31. Visit Worcestershire directly supported 123 businesses in 2021/22 with businesses taking part in webinars, face2face networking sessions, and bespoke account management support. This support continues to develop greater collaboration with the sector on joint promotion, exhibitions and the development of content promoting Worcestershire as a visitor destination.

32. The new summer campaign 'Make Worcestershire Part of your Story' launches in May 2022, with out of county advertising based around travel points in Birmingham including the M6 Starlight Boards, NEC and Railway Stations to link Worcestershire into the Commonwealth Games market. This is being supported by motorway service advertising, promotional guides and postcards in regional locations. Digital and social media advertising will run from May to August. The new 56 page guidebook is being circulated across the region to Tourism Information Centres, service stations and accommodation providers.

Skills and Investment

33. The work of the Skills and Investment team directly supports the Open for Business theme of the Corporate Plan and the economic priorities of the County Council, which is focused on improving skills levels in the county, development of a skilled workforce whilst supporting businesses to survive and grow following the pandemic.

34. Alongside this work the team supports the ambition to ensure all young people realise their potential and move successfully into employment whilst focusing on improving outcomes for our most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.

35. The skills team group manager also acts as the statutory lead for young people Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) for the County Council.

36. As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, many skills challenges have been accelerated, and the closure or limited access of physical spaces has had a detrimental effect on the ability of education providers to deliver learning and services such as careers advice. This is alongside a growing recruitment and skills challenge being faced in our SMEs driving wage rates to previously unseen levels within certain industries and sectors.

37. NEET levels in the County remain low, having seen a slight increase during the pandemic to just under 3% of the cohort of a school year group (each year 11). Services are working intensively with an extra 70 young people.

38. Businesses across Worcestershire continue to report skills deficits and challenges in recruiting staff, with the latest Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce report indicating 76% of respondents find it difficult to recruit staff and cite skills deficits most frequently in ICT, Higher Level ICT and technical

skills. Worcestershire County Council continues to work with the Training Providers Association to ensure provision of training course in these areas is increased

Local Skills Report

39. The Skills and Investment Team works with the Worcestershire LEP and the Group Manager, Judy Gibbs acts as the Director of Skills in the LEP, creating co-ordination of the vision and strategic approach to skills support in the County.

40. In February 2022, the Local Enterprise Partnership published the Local Skills Report for 2022, which sets the Skills and Training strategy from the evidence base of both data and stakeholder analysis for the County. This report informs the Department for Education of the aspirations and planned skills interventions for Worcestershire over the next 3-5 years.

Skills and Investment Team Programmes

41. Over the last twelve months, the team's programmes have been developed and expanded to meet the needs of the local residents and businesses within the funding envelope the team operates within.

Careers and Enterprise Company Programme

42. The Careers and Enterprise Company Programme works with 65 Education establishments, with cohorts of young people from Year 7 up to Year 13 across the county, to assist with the careers planning of young people. The County Council and the LEP work with the schools and colleges to influence young people to choose the skills and education pathways as needed by the employers within the county, whilst supporting our employers' future workforce ambitions.

43. The programme over the last year has been focused on recovery from the pandemic, which has been incredibly challenging for schools. The resulting impact being both a decline in the levels of employer encounters offered in education, but also a less informed information, advice and guidance service for young people which has significantly affected the landscape around post 16 destinations.

44. This year the programme has been returning to pre pandemic levels and the performance has returned to similar levels. Nationally, Worcestershire is regarded as an exemplar local area for careers education for young people.

Careers Worcestershire

45. Over the last twelve months, the brand of Careers Worcestershire has been used to support careers education for young people aged 16-24. The programme, launched in January 2022 has been designed to support over 1900 young people who are either NEET or at risk. The Countywide programme will work in education establishments and in communities working with seven education partners and supporting 850 young people into employment.

46. Alongside this, a bid has been submitted to Department of Work and Pensions for £130k annually, to support the creation of a physical drop-in space for 18–24 year-old claimants. If successful, this project would support up to 300 young people annually.

Worcestershire Apprenticeships

47. Apprenticeships have faced a challenging period over the last two years primarily as a result of the pandemic. Apprenticeship numbers stood at 3,490 in 2020/21 with significant drops in Under 19s engaging with the programme, down around 1,000 starts from pre pandemic levels. However, employer interest has recovered in 2021/22 with the introduction of Government incentives and vacancy levels are at an all-time high. More work is needed to influence young people and support employers to be able to undertake apprenticeships as a route to workforce planning.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Kickstart

48. As part of the HM Governments Plan for Jobs in 2020, DWP launched the Kickstart programme to support claimants aged 16-24 into 6 month paid placements free of charge to employers. Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire LEP jointly took on the programme to become a gateway for Kickstart and support employers across the county to access placements. Despite a slow start from DWP in the programmes administration processes, the team placed 298 young people into employers and to date have had 75 move into full time employment within their respective companies.

Worcestershire Jobs

49. Launched in April 2021, Worcestershire Jobs supported residents to efficiently search and access vacancies, training, and apprenticeships in the county across online platforms bringing them all together into one place. To date the site has had 45,000 unique views with new easy access links to the County Council and NHS vacancies.

Learning Services

50. The Learning Services team in Skills and Investment delivers a number of Education and Skills Funding Agency contracts worth approximately £1.07m, which are subject to Ofsted inspection. The team delivers programmes of education including qualifications to vulnerable young people and adults 19+ through the Adult Learning Centre in Warndon and other community venues. The challenge of learning delivery in 2020-22 on a virtual basis has been significant, and the decision was taken over 2021/22 to utilise the time to restructure the service and to refocus the services to respond to the needs of residents moving out of the pandemic. To date this year the spend sits at approximately £600k with one term of activity remaining.

Digital Connectivity

Broadband

51. The third and final contract of the Superfast Worcestershire programme in partnership with Openreach completed deployment in June 2021. Since the programme began in 2013, the 'Superfast' (24Mbps+) coverage increased from the 69% of the county (only 44% for business premises), beyond the original 90% coverage aspirations to the 98.1% we see in May 2022 (UK average 97.4%). Other schemes and commercial solutions exist to support the remaining 2% without superfast speeds and efforts continue to bring greater full fibre and gigabit capable coverage across the county through a combination of commercial deployments and national and local government gap investment funding, as part of Project Gigabit.

52. When last reported (August 2020) Worcestershire's full fibre coverage was at 7.7%, just over half of the 14.4% UK figure; these figures now stand at 24% and 35%

respectively, with both numbers increasing monthly. Gigabit capable coverage stands at 46.9% in county and 67.8% across the UK.

53. Current 'take-up' of improved connectivity services where we have invested, remains above the national average and significantly above the initial take up expectation of just 20% for contract one. Since the last report, contract one 'take up' has increased from 73.5% to 84.5%, contract two 'take up' from 68% to 74.8% and contract three, which was not reported last time, stands at 56.9%. Higher than anticipated 'take up' ensures benefits are realised across the county and provides an opportunity for reinvestment into the programme through the 'claw-back' mechanisms within the contract as previously agreed by Worcestershire County Council Cabinet.

5G

54. Building on the work completed in the summer of 2020 of the Worcestershire 5G consortium, led by the County Council and Worcestershire LEP, further work has continued so the early achievements can be maximised for the benefit of the county and local business. An Open for Business supported project has helped to set up and establish a new entity 'nexGworx', incorporated in Spring 21, as a subsidiary to Malvern Hills Science Park, as well as providing funding to drive inward investment and support Business Development so the benefits of 5G can be accessed by local businesses and cohorts of the BetaDen project.

55. The two-year project 'West Mercia Rural 5G Connected Communities' has recently been extended to the end of June 2022, to allow for an increased period of use-case testing. Jointly funded by DCMS and private sector partners, led by Worcestershire County Council and supported by other public sector partners, the project has built and utilised 5G infrastructure in the vicinity of Tenbury Wells and Malvern to explore two research questions. First, how new operating models to deploy 5G in rural areas may work in practice; second, investigating how developing 5G technology may support new products, services and models in health and social care applications across rural areas.

Existing Mobile Communications Coverage

56. Following assessments, the quality of 2G, 3G and 4G in the county (2017 and 2019 studies), we have directed the initial phase of the industry and central government supported Shared Rural Network (SRN) to improve coverage to high volume but no coverage areas. Commercial deployments of 5G in parts of the county has taken place with more infrastructure planned as well as a series of announcements regarding the sunsetting of 2G and 3G networks by 2030. The team are talking to the industry to influence these investments across the county.

Employment sites

Worcester Six

57. Worcester Six is a 72-hectare (178 acre) site set immediately to the east of the M5 motorway at junction 6, Worcester Six is progressing into a prominent business site in Worcestershire. With current and future Worcester Six occupiers/investors including:

- Kimal
- Spire Healthcare
- Material Solutions (part of Siemens)

- Supersmart
- Kohler Mira
- Cornelius Drinks
- Victoria Carpets
- ZwickRoell
- IONOS

58. Worcestershire County Council continue to work with the developer, land owner and District Council colleagues to target employers to bring high value jobs to the county.

Redditch Gateway

59. The Redditch Gateway development is an exciting opportunity to build on the town's wealth of engineering and manufacturing expertise. The new development aims to promote and enhance supply chain links, and to further develop the skills of the local labour market. Redditch, Bromsgrove and Stratford upon Avon District and Borough Councils all approved the project in March 2018 with Outline Planning consent granted.

60. The appointed developer at Redditch Gateway has secured one large occupier, Amazon and is now seeking occupiers for the remaining available plots. Currently, there is an existing planning application submitted to Stratford Upon-Avon District Council for two speculative builds totalling 446ksqft. A decision on the planning application is expected in the summer of 2022. The overall scheme is set to deliver economic value to the area. Achieving an increase in economic growth and productivity, through the development of high-quality headquarters-style manufacturing facilities, the site provides an opportunity to transform the economy in the environs of Redditch and re-position the area as a location of choice for growing local companies and prospective inward investors.

Malvern Hills Science Park and Technology Park

61. Malvern Hills Science and Technology Park describes the combination of the Malvern Hills Science Park and land formerly part of the QinetiQ site. Malvern Hills Science Park (MHSP) has been developed over five phases and is currently accommodating over 30 technology-rich companies employing over 350 people. Phase 5 construction is now complete providing a further 17,000 sq. ft of Technology/R&D workspace for new and existing tenants to expand into, releasing space and to accommodate new businesses.

62. Worcestershire County Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce are all major shareholders of MHSP and oversee its running and strategic direction.

63. Additional employment land adjacent to MHSP has been purchased by the County Council and enabling work is underway to develop up to 300,000 sq. ft of B1 (b) office and ancillary uses, to accommodate HQ, manufacturing, research and development and training facilities. This opportunity provided by this development land positions the Malvern site as a European Scale Science Park that in partnership with QinetiQ provides the ability to compete with truly international reach.

Shrubhill Quarter

64. Covering c.20ha the Shrub Hill Quarter in Worcester is a long-undervalued area with significant untapped potential. It has the capacity to create 500 new homes and c.5,000 new jobs with 80,000 sqm of office and workspace over the next 20-30 years. Government has committed c.£12m from different pots such as the Getting Building Funding, Brownfield Land Release Fund, Towns Fund. One of the most immediate opportunities is a project to bring one of the vacant buildings back to life as an enterprise centre – the idea is to use this as an early opportunity to activate the area and to start to draw in new types of business.

Development Management and Policy Planning

The Minerals Local Plan

65. The Minerals Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2019. Due to delays caused by the Covid 19 pandemic, the hearing sessions for the Examination in Public were held virtually in November and December 2020, with the Independent Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State.

66. Following the hearing sessions, consultation on main modifications to the Plan was undertaken between August and October 2021, and the responses received provided to the Inspectors for their consideration. The Inspector's report was received by the Council on 1 April, and the plan will proceed to Cabinet and Council for a decision on adoption in Spring / Summer 2022.

67. Applications are under consideration for a total of approximately 5 million tonnes of sand and gravel extraction at three sites which are:

- Bow Farm near Ripple
- Lea Castle near Kidderminster

These applications are currently progressing through the development management prior to be determined by Planning and Regulatory Committee.

- And Pinches near Bromsgrove

68. A further application for 1.35 million tonnes of sand was approved for the Chadwick Lane, Bromsgrove in March 2021.

Development Management Team

69. The Development Management team discharge conditions on applications which have been granted planning permission to ensure compliance with all the requirements of the permission. Notable examples in this reporting period included Chadwick Lane minerals site, A38 / A4104 new roundabout and Kepax Bridge.

70. There continues to be a high level of enforcement activity across the county, with the officer responsible investigating cases at minerals and waste sites or unauthorised sites. Most of these are resolved through negotiation but on occasions further action is required.

71. Highways Development Management continue to input commentary on the highways impacts of applications to all 6 district councils; a total of over 3000 applications, including securing developer contributions to facilitate highways mitigations required to offset the impact of development.

Local Plans

72. We have continued to work with the Districts Councils as they review and update their Local Plans. This is a joint workstream between transport policy and strategy and policy planning. Current focus has been on the ongoing South Worcestershire Development Plan review and Wyre Forest Local Plan examination in public hearing session. We will continue to collaborate with the districts during the next year as their plans progress and to assist in developing evidence bases and infrastructure delivery plans.

Councillor Marc Bayliss
Cabinet Member for the Economy and Skills