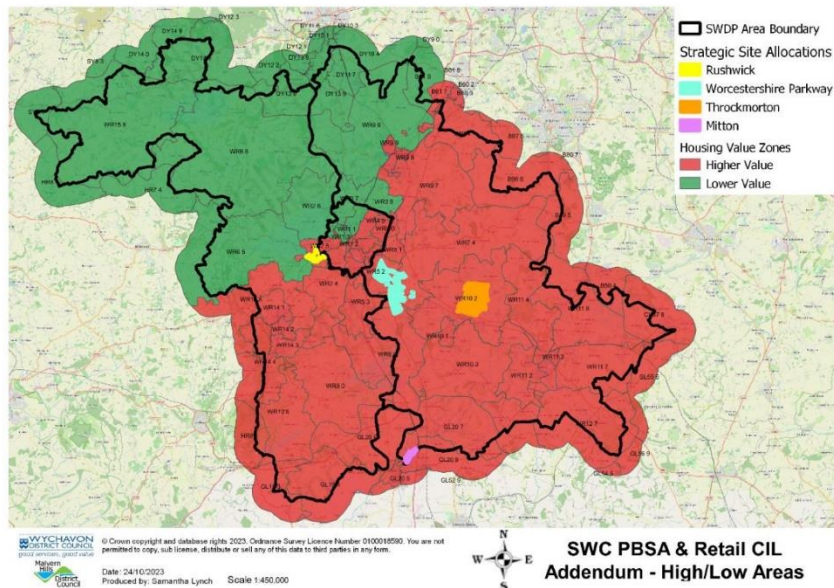


Cllr Barbara Jones -Williams February 2024 report

Community Infrastructure Levy

At the last Full Council meeting held in January, to which I chaired, the Council approved a new CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) for public consultation. The Levy is designed to cover the infrastructure costs of the SWDPR proposals. The proposal is to charge a much lower rate in the North of the District than the South and our amendment to examine the evidence and reconsider this was outvoted, although few arguments against our resolution were put forward. The current majority of speculative applications are in our area, which clearly suggest that these are a greater profit for landowners and therefore there should be scope to match the CIL charge for the rest of the district. A reduced charge will provide an incentive to develop more in our villages than other areas, as well as reducing the amount of money that Parish Councils receive from their share. Unsurprisingly the developers and agents are in favour of the lower levy. The local infrastructure requirements are also unknown in respect of transport requirements as the promised modelling to inform site allocations has still not been carried out, despite the final sites being deified in the review. The Leader of the Council did offer the view that the planned railway halt at Rushwick would help with such transport difficulties and was offered a map to assist in knowledge of the area

areas in south Worcestershire. Please note that these higher and lower value areas are for housing developments only.



Map 1: Map of the higher and lower value areas in south Worcestershire and locations of the strategic sites in the SWDP Review

Neighbourhood plan

The government has now introduced changes to increase the validity periods of Parish Neighbourhood Plans in planning terms, to five years. Unfortunately, it now seems that the small print conditions may mean that sCouncil's Five Year Plan to focus more on wellbeing

Council's Five Year Plan to focus more on wellbeing

A revised version of the council's Five Year Plan was approved at a Council meeting on 30 January and includes new actions and amendments where circumstances have changed or targets have been updated.

The plan, which is reviewed annually, sets out 31 actions to be completed by 2025 under its three priority areas - Our Health and Wellbeing, Our Economy and Our Environment.

One of the biggest changes is the greater emphasis placed on Health and Wellbeing. This is to better represent the wide range of the actions in that priority area.

Its aim is to achieve the council's vision of enhancing the Malvern Hills District as a destination to explore and an outstanding place to live and work.

As well as this, other new additions include:

- Increase investment in welfare support in 2024/25, to directly support those most in need of help with household basics
- Achieve 100% Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) usage in all household waste collection freighters by 2025.
- Return footfall in towns to at least pre-Covid levels by 2026 and grow it by a further 10% by 2030.

Malvern Hills Eco-friendly awards

Eco-friendly buildings and biodiverse land across the Malvern Hills district are types of projects that will soon be recognised with the introduction of a new award scheme.

The Malvern Hills Greener Places Award has been created to recognise and promote schemes that go above and beyond to create sustainable places in the district.

Projects could include built development from individual buildings to whole developments, or involve beneficial land management and biodiversity enhancements, as well as supporting infrastructure such as renewable energy or transport.

Anything that contributes towards Malvern district being a more sustainable and climate resilient place may be eligible. However, projects that raise the bar on the following issues would be particularly welcomed:

- Energy efficiency and reducing space heating demand
- Utilising low carbon heating systems
- Installing renewable energy technologies
- Improving biodiversity and habitats

- Adapting to the impacts of climate change
- Active and low carbon travel

Applications can be submitted at any time and projects will be considered throughout the year.

They can be submitted by people/organisations directly involved in the project or they may be nominated by someone externally, the council may also identify projects for consideration for an award.

Awards will be granted on individual merit and the final decision will be made by the council's Environment Policy Development Panel.

The Malvern Hills Greener Places Award was approved by the Executive Committee on 23 January 2023. Visit www.malvern hills.gov.uk/greener-places-award for more information on award criteria.

Barbara Jones-Williams