



# **Worcester Town Investment Plan**

Appendix C: Project Prioritisation Report

December 2020



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# Issue and Revision Record

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# 1 Introduction

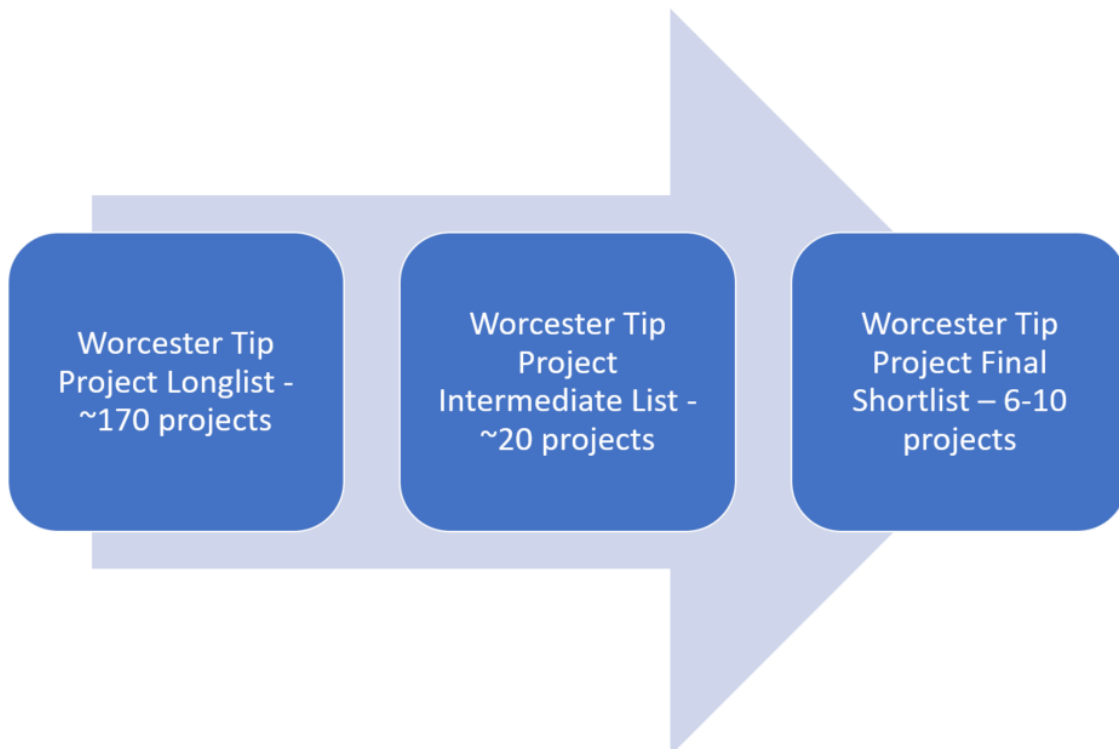
To support the development of the Worcester Town Investment Plan (TIP) a robust project selection process was developed to ensure the plan is reflective of the aims of Worcester City Council (WCC), the views of stakeholders and the objectives of the Towns Fund.

Through various mediums, 177 distinct project ideas were submitted for consideration on their merit for inclusion in the TIP. This longlist of project ideas was collated through a combination of sources including the online #MyTowns campaign (from members of the public) as well from direct stakeholder engagement undertaken by the Town Deal Board with local businesses, and cultural and civic organisations.

The amount of funding available via the Towns Fund means that not all of the projects in the longlist could be allocated a share of the funding. Therefore, an objective prioritisation process was required – employing an independent, standardised robust approach – to establish a final shortlist of projects of between six to ten projects from the initial longlist.

The anticipated number of projects by prioritisation stages are outlined in the figure below.

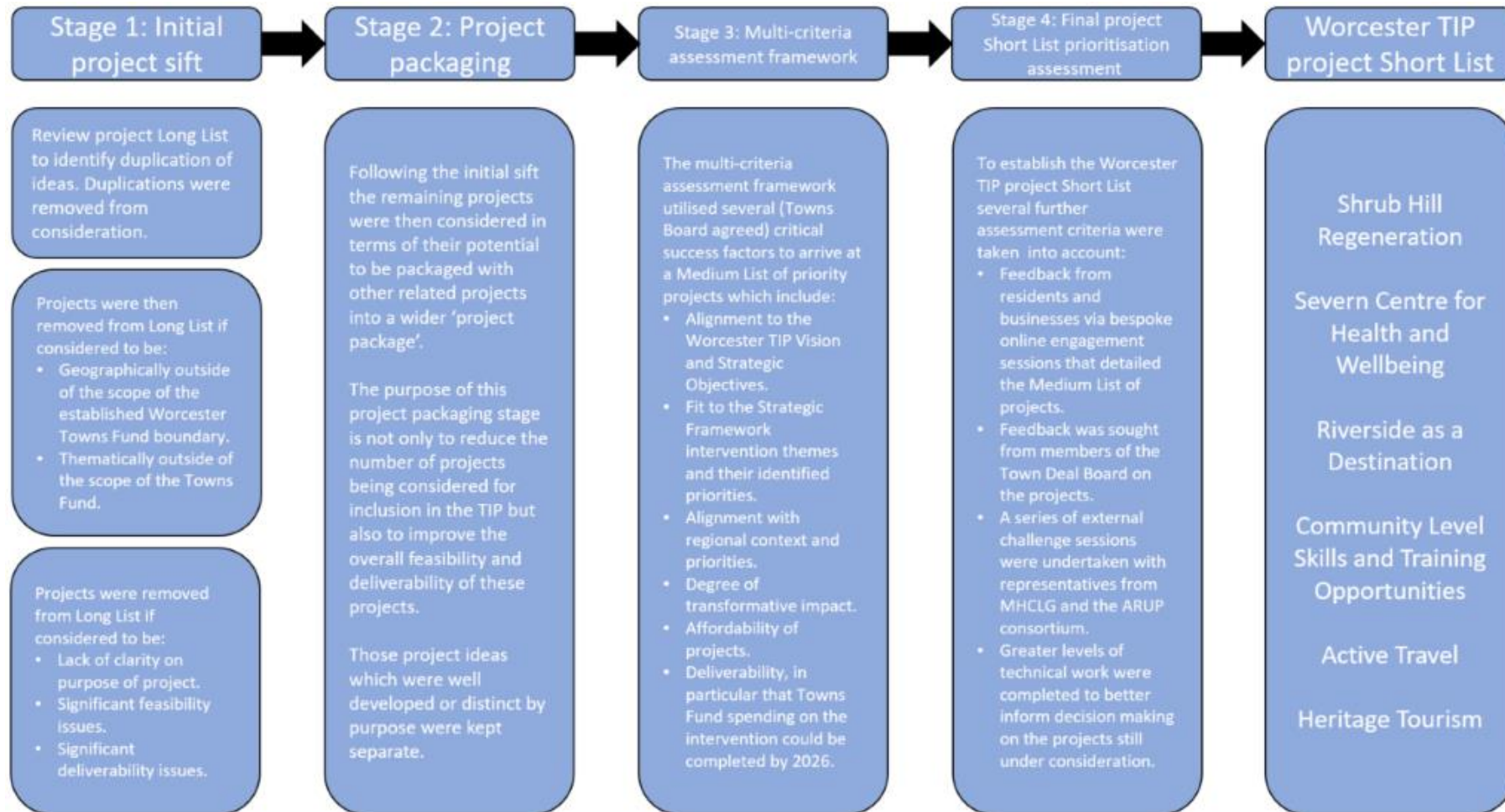
**Figure 1.1: Planned prioritisation stages**



This Worcester TIP Project Prioritisation Plan outlines in detail the process and methodology used to select a shortlist of priority projects for inclusion in the Worcester TIP. A summary of this process is shown in Figure 1.2.



**Figure 1.2: Worcester TIP project prioritisation methodology summary**



## 2 Collation of project longlist

To begin the project prioritisation process for the Worcester TIP it was necessary to collate a longlist of potential projects for inclusion.

### 2.1 Methodology

The longlist of potential projects considered for inclusion in the Worcester TIP was collated from a range of sources including:

- Submissions from the public via the #MyTowns portal.
- Submissions from members of the Worcester Town Board.
- Submissions from other sources such as the Worcester Riverside Sports Association.

Following the project submission deadline on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020, all the project ideas and more detailed project proformas were formatted, standardised and where required clarifications were sent to the identified project leads.

### 2.2 Results

At the completion of the collation process a total of 177 projects were included in the Worcester TIP longlist. Three quarters (73%) of projects originated from the #MyTowns portal which allowed members of the public to submit ideas and suggestions.

**Table 2.1: Sources of the Worcester TIP project longlist**

Source	Number of projects submitted
#MyTowns	129
Submission from Worcester Town Board	46
Other	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>

These 177 potential projects were then divided into the six Towns Fund intervention themes outlined in the Towns Fund guidance. The assignment of interventions into the six themes was based on the *principal* focus of the investment in the event that a project aligned with multiple themes. The purpose of this division was to provide a greater understanding of what areas the public and key stakeholders wanted investment from the Towns Fund to be spent on.

Three quarters of projects included in the Worcester TIP longlist were accounted for in either the Local Transport (34%) or the Urban Regeneration, planning and land use (42%) themes.

**Table 2.2: Worcester TIP project longlist by Towns Fund intervention theme**

Towns Fund intervention theme	Number of projects
Local Transport	60
Digital Connectivity	4
Urban Regeneration, planning and land use	74
Arts, culture and heritage	20
Skills infrastructure	9
Enterprise infrastructure	10

## 3 Stage 1: Initial Sift

Once a longlist of potential projects had been established an initial sift was carried out to determine which projects met basic criteria to enable their funding through the Towns Fund.

### 3.1 Methodology

The Stage 1 initial sift of the projects was a 'pass-or-fail' test that required projects to meet the most basic requirements of the Towns Fund. This initial sift focused on three means of assessment as outlined in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Initial Sift methodology**

Initial Sift Stage	
Initial Stage 1: Removal of duplicates	Review project longlist to identify duplication of ideas and suggestions. Duplications were removed from further consideration.
Initial Stage 2: Removal of projects considered outside of Towns Fund scope	Projects were removed from longlist if considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Geographically outside of scope of established Towns Fund boundary.</li><li>• Thematically outside of scope of the Towns Fund.</li></ul>
Initial Sift Stage 3: Removal of projects considered to have significant barriers of delivery	Projects were removed from longlist if considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of clarity on purpose of project.</li><li>• Significant feasibility issues.</li><li>• Significant deliverability issues.</li></ul>

### 3.2 Results

The results of the Stage 1 initial Sift by Towns Fund intervention theme are outlined in Table 3.2.

Following the Stage 1: Initial Sift, 116 projects remained with 79% of projects accounted for in either the Local Transport (34%) or the Urban Regeneration, planning and land use (45%) themes.

**Table 3.2: Summary of results of Stage 1: Initial sift**

Towns Fund intervention theme	Total number of projects	Removal of duplicate projects	Removal of projects geographically outside of scope	Removal of projects thematically outside of scope	Removal of projects with significant barriers of deliverability	Total number of remaining projects
Local Transport	60	18	1	2	0	<b>39</b>
Digital Connectivity	4	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>
Urban Regeneration, planning and land use	74	11	1	10	0	<b>52</b>
Arts, culture and heritage	20	6	0	1	0	<b>13</b>
Skills infrastructure	9	3	0	2	0	<b>5</b>
Enterprise infrastructure	10	4	0	4	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>116</b>

## 4 Stage 2: Project Packaging

Following the Initial sift in Stage 1, the remaining 116 projects remaining for consideration for inclusion in the Worcester TIP were considered in terms of their potential to be packaged with other related projects into a wider 'project package'.

### 4.1 Methodology

The Stage 2: Project Packaging exercise was undertaken not only to reduce the number of projects being considered for inclusion in the Worcester TIP but also to improve the overall feasibility and deliverability of these projects. The exercise was conducted using professional judgement to assign related projects into a wider 'project package'. This stage was reviewed and agreed with WCC.

This stage was conducted in a fully accountable manner, with each of the 116 projects allocated a unique ID thus allowing for a clear audit trail for project leads to be able to understand how WCC has incorporated their ideas and suggestions throughout the process.

### 4.2 Results

The results of the Stage 2: Project Packaging exercise by Towns Fund intervention theme are outlined in Table 4.1. Following the Stage 2: Project Packaging exercise 29 projects remained.

**Table 4.1: Summary of results of Stage 2: Project Packaging**

Towns Fund intervention theme	Number of projects post Stage 1: Initial sift	Number of projects post Stage 2: Project Packaging
Local Transport	39	7
Digital Connectivity	4	1
Urban Regeneration, planning and land use	52	13
Arts, culture and heritage	13	6
Skills infrastructure	5	1
Enterprise infrastructure	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>29</b>

## 5 Stage 3: Multi-criteria assessment framework

Following sifting and packaging exercises, a third stage was commenced focusing on a detailed project prioritisation assessment of the remaining 29 projects. This stage of the project prioritisation assessment was deemed necessary because the total estimated Towns Fund ask far exceeded the £25,000,000 ask being requested from the Worcester TIP.

To further prioritise these remaining projects a bespoke multi-criteria assessment tool was developed by Mott MacDonald specifically for the Worcester TIP.

### 5.1 Methodology

The tool utilised several agreed upon critical success factors to arrive at an Intermediate List of projects. Each of these critical success factors were scored on a 3-tier system (High, Medium, Low) and then combined into one overall total numerical score. The projects were then ranked based on this total score in descending order.

An example of this method of scoring within the bespoke multi-criteria assessment tool in action is shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Example of scoring in the Multi-Criteria Assessment Tool

Project Title	Technical Criteria						Town Fund Alignment		Alignment with Worcester TIP Vision				Scores						
	Project feasibility / viability (e.g. level of demand, market analysis)		Project deliverability (e.g. potential legal / planning / environmental / other constraints)		Project affordability (e.g. availability of funds, match funding envelope) / Financial Sustainability- Revenue requirement?		Degree of Alignment with Towns Fund requirements (Intervention Framework Outcomes)		Alignment with 'A Connected City' theme		Alignment with 'Quality of Life' theme		Alignment with 'Economic Diversity' theme		Technical Criteria Score	Town Fund Alignment Score	Alignment with Worcester TIP Vision Score	Final Weighted Score	Rank
Severn Campus For Health, Wellbeing and Inclusive Sport	Low	Unknown at this stage	Low	Unknown at this stage	High	Some funding already found from other sources including the LEP. Town Fund to make up £10m or remaining £27m.	High	Aligns with the urban regeneration and local transport themes of the Town Fund. Has potential to improve connectivity between communities and key economic/social facilities. Support health of population through promotion of active travel and provision of agents facility. Initiative.	High	Project has the potential to strongly align with the 'A Connected City' vision theme. Project will have in-built physical connection routes enabling local communities to use facilities on this site. Transport links will also become part of a wider transport network.	High	Project has the potential to align with the 'Quality of Life' vision theme. Project will provide additional social and economic facilities for residents. Project is also located in the River Severn area providing a distinct destination.	Low	Project has limited alignment with the 'Economic Diversity' vision theme.					1
Riverside and wider green infrastructural corridor Package	Low	Unknown at this stage	Low	Unknown at this stage	Low	Unknown at this stage	High	Aligns with the urban regeneration and local transport themes of the Town Fund. Has potential to improve connectivity between communities and key economic/social facilities. Support health of population through promotion of active travel and provision of agents facility. Initiative.	High	Project has the potential to strongly align with the 'A Connected City' vision theme. Project will have in-built physical connection routes enabling local communities to use facilities along the riverside. Transport links will also become part of a wider transport network. Improved signage will also benefit connectivity in the city.	High	Project has the potential to align with the 'Quality of Life' vision theme. Improvement in aesthetic of area as well as enhancing natural environment will also improve quality of life for local residents.	Medium	Project has the potential to align with the 'Economic Diversity' vision theme. Improved riverside infrastructure will make the area more attractive and encourage business growth in this area.	2	2	4	8	1
Digital Connectivity Package	High	Worcester has a good internet broadband connectivity, in comparison to the national average (86.2%) or the regional average of 76.2%. However, just 58% of premises in Worcester are served by ultrafast - below the proportion in Worcestershire (51.8%), West Midlands (72.2%) and the national (81.3%) average. Close analysis suggests this is also the case for Full Fibre FTTP. Please see the	Low	Unknown at this stage	Low	Unknown at this stage	High	Aligns with the digital connectivity theme of the Towns Fund.	High	Project has the potential to strongly align with the 'A Connected City' vision theme. This project is the only digital connectivity project being considered for the TIP and fits the criteria relating to this area.	Medium	Project has the potential to align with the 'Quality of Life' vision theme through improved digital connectivity. Project will provide additional economic and social facilities for residents.	Low	Project has limited alignment with the 'Economic Diversity' vision theme.	0	2	6	7	2
														2	2	3	7	3	

The agreed upon critical success factors used to assess the 29 projects include:

- alignment to the Worcester TIP Vision and Strategic Objectives.
- fit to the Strategic Framework intervention themes and their identified priorities.
- alignment with regional context and priorities.
- degree of transformative impact.
- affordability of projects.
- deliverability, in particular that Towns Fund spending on the intervention could be completed by 2026.

It should be noted that prior to the implementation of the multi-criteria assessment tool on the remaining 29 projects, further project-specific information emerged that disqualified 10 projects due to feasibility and/or viability issues. As such, only 19 projects from the Intermediate list were processed at Stage 3.

## 5.2 Results

The results of the Stage 3: Multi-criteria assessment framework are outlined in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Summary of results of Stage 3: Multi-criteria assessment framework**

Project	Score	Rank
Riverside as a Destination	8	=1
Shrub Hill Regeneration Package	8	=1
Active Travel	8	=1
Community facilities package	6	=2
Digital connectivity	6	=2
Enterprise support and Business Start Up Package – Isaac Maddox House	5	=3
Copenhagen Street Development Package	5	=3
Bus Network Package	5	=3
Townscape and Urban Realm enhancements	4	=4
Highways Improvement Package	4	=4
Severn Campus for Health, Wellbeing and Inclusive Sport	3	=5
Historical Tourism Package	3	=5
Community Gardens Package	3	=5
Hydrogen Centre for Excellence	2	=6
Expanded residential offer package	2	=6
Athletics Track Package	2	=6
Car Park at Worcester Royal Hospital	1	7
Cultural and Local Events Package	0	=8
Renewable energy	0	=8

The projects detailed above were subject to ongoing development following the Stage 3 assessment. As such, whilst the core components (i.e. the basis of the scoring) remain intact, some of the projects that progressed into Stage 4 were (in some cases) altered either by removing less well aligned components or absorbing higher scoring elements of projects not selected for further examination due to the financial constraints of the fund. This is reflected in the slight project name variations between stages 2 and 3.



## 6 Stage 4: Final prioritisation assessment

Following the project ranking, the Intermediate list of 19 projects still under consideration were put through a more detailed level of assessment on a project-by-project basis. This more detailed assessment was required because the total estimated Towns Fund ask far exceeded the £25,000,000 ask being requested from the Worcester TIP.

### 6.1 Methodology

To establish the final shortlist of priority projects from the Intermediate list of 19 projects, several further factors into account, which included:

- Feedback from residents and businesses via online engagement sessions that detailed the Intermediate list of projects (outlined in the Worcester TIP Stakeholder Engagement Plan).
- Feedback from members of the Town Deal Board on the projects (outlined in the Worcester TIP Stakeholder Engagement Plan).
- A series of external challenge sessions were undertaken with representatives from MHCLG and the ARUP consortium.
- Greater levels of technical work were completed to better inform decision making on the projects still under consideration.

The Intermediate List was then re-assessed to establish the final shortlist of priority projects within the Worcester TIP.

### 6.2 Results

Following this completion of this comprehensive project prioritisation process a final shortlist of six priority projects were selected for inclusion in the Worcester TIP.

The six priority projects included in the Worcester TIP are:

- **Community Skills and Enterprise** – this project will equip existing and new facilities in the heart of our communities to deliver skills and training opportunities to those who need to most, working with a number of educational and vocational training providers to try to make the offer as attractive as possible to our hard to reach learners. We will build on the many successes of Worcester's Network of Community Centres develop additional Construction & Green Technology Skills provision in the West of the City.
- **Severn Centre for Health and Wellbeing** – delivery of a regionally significant centre for skills across the health professions led by the University of Worcester. State of the art specialist clinical simulation and health education facilities – that support Research and Development activities in the region – will be created in the fully refurbished, attractively clad former and dilapidated Worcester News building.
- **Shrub Hill Enterprise and Regeneration** – firing up the revival of the Shrub Hill Quarter that currently acts as poor gateway for those arriving in the city via the train station. The investment will have a significant local impact, addressing negative perceptions engendered by a dilapidated, under-utilised major entry point to the city. The vision for the Shrub Hill area, endorsed within the Worcester City Centre masterplan, is to deliver a new high-quality mixed-use quarter for the city. The Towns Fund element involves three key projects:

- **Redevelopment of Bus Depot** – regeneration of a 1.1ha site as part of a canal side mixed use scheme to include approximately 350 new homes and 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial / employment space.
- **Public Realm** – 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of high-quality public realm following the line of Cromwell St from Shrub Hill Road to Pheasant Street to provide a new connection between the Shrub Hill Railway Station, Shrub Hill Regeneration area and onward to the city centre.
- **Enterprise Centre** – regeneration of a 1.15ha site to include a 3,000m<sup>2</sup> Enterprise Centre and approximately 100 new homes. The Enterprise Centre will provide training and business support that help residents and small businesses develop business ideas into real opportunities.
- **Heritage Tourism** – development of the heritage attraction and interpretation of the City, complementary to the Riverside project and our successes with our cultural capital projects, so that our tourism economy grows to support weekend and week-long stays. We will achieve this by greater and integrated use of heritage sites, public realm enhancements and digital media. There is also an opportunity to further develop the Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum to create a destination museum which is a place for visitors and families alike.
- **Riverside as a Destination** – as part of our investment in our tourism economy and for our own residents' health and wellbeing, this project aims to bring out the natural heart of the city, the River Severn. It will be achieved through a number of distinct projects which draw in some of the city's best known organisations as delivery partners and overall will combine to improve the visitor experience at the riverside, boosting the economic impact of this important asset and benefitting the city as whole.
- **Active Travel** – provision of new and upgraded walking and cycling infrastructure in Worcester providing greater local connectivity between communities, social facilities and employment opportunities across the city. A particular emphasis of this project is linking deprived communities to employment centres in the city. Currently the public transport linkages and severance created by the train lines, the river and A roads create a disconnect between the city centre and Worcester's more deprived areas.

