

Throckmorton Strategic Growth Area

Concept Plan Narrative

Introduction

The Throckmorton Strategic Growth Area (referred to hereafter as SGA or 'The SGA') is centred around the former RAF Pershore Airfield, immediately west of Throckmorton Village and close to the nearby settlements of Bishampton and Pinvin. The existing Pershore railway station is just beyond the southwest corner of the Strategic Allocation boundary ensuring that, with the planned travel infrastructure in place, the Throckmorton new settlement would satisfy SWDPR criteria as a sustainable location.

The area surrounding the airfield is largely rural in character apart from the current landfill site which already has a significant area designated for biodiversity enhancement. This area will be incorporated as part of the green infrastructure of the new settlement.

The Vision for Throckmorton

Throckmorton Strategic Growth Area is an exceptionally high quality, well-designed, carbon-neutral community, initially of 2,000 dwellings (leading to 5,000 beyond the Plan period) offering its residents a safe, comfortable and distinctive place to live, work and enjoy; with easy access to a network of green spaces, schools, employment opportunities, leisure, community and health facilities with a thriving local centre leading to a town centre beyond the Plan period.

The new settlement is based on Garden community principles designed in a manner that minimises the need to travel by car for all users by offering alternative, sustainable travel choices, by the provision of a network of walking and cycle ways and mobility hubs with links to Pershore Railway Station. Private motorised vehicle travel to/from and within the settlement is given least priority.

Landscape buffers protect the integrity of Throckmorton village and the surrounding villages of Pinvin, Bishampton, Lower Moor, Upper Moor and Wyre Piddle and new green infrastructure created for the benefit of the community creates a high quality and biodiverse environment with robust ecological networks throughout the new settlement.

Existing heritage and non-designated assets are safeguarded, including the Scheduled Monuments at Throckmorton and the Control Tower and areas with strong archaeological history are protected.

The entire community is powered using Renewable Energy technology giving priority to minimising the impacts of climate change and innovative and fully integrated SuDS schemes provided for all aspects of the development.

The Key elements of the Throckmorton Concept Plan are:



Landscape led

Throckmorton Strategic Allocation occupies a plateau-like area in the landscape with the low-lying Avon Valley to the south and the rising topography of Bishampton Bank and The Lenches to the east and northeast. The Piddle Brook and its surrounding green infrastructure (GI) buffer forms most of the western boundary, and the A44 forms the southern boundary.

The design of new development will be landscape-led, respecting both the local rich and diverse landscape character and the local historic character. The settlement will harmonise with the natural environment through the conservation and improvement of the important ecological and landscape features including the Piddle Brook, Biodiversity Action Plan Sites (BAP) grassland areas, DEFRA pits, landfill site Biodiversity Enhancement Area and Key County Reptile Site. This has been complemented by a comprehensive network of open spaces, Town Park, orchards and wildlife areas which provide support for biodiversity.



Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity

A GI /ecological buffer along the Piddle Brook is already in place and this would be enhanced where required as part of the ongoing development of the site.

Within the former airfield site there are several remnants of tree and hedgerow boundaries that the concept plan adopts as Active Travel Routes, enhanced with further planting, to provide non-vehicular access to the two Local Centres to the northeast and southwest of the Town Centre.



Grassland Meadows and DEFRA Site (Grey symbol)

Marked on the Concept Plan are areas of green space adjacent to the former runways. These are protected areas of grassland meadows and form part of Worcestershire County Council's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Their inclusion and retention as part of the Concept Plan demonstrates that, in tandem with the 'Carbon Neutral' aims of the Strategic Allocation and the ecological/habitat constraints that helped shaped this development and have further strengthened its sustainability credentials. The BAP site south of the central section of east/west runway also contains DEFRA burial pits and so precludes any built development.



Greenways

The reuse of the airfield runways as 'greenways' opens the possibility of tree planting along these 60m wide routes and the transformation of some sections to include features such as changes in levels, rain gardens with ecological water attenuation ponds or channels that could also form the basis of a cross site sustainable urban drainage system.

The Concept layout also utilises the existing runways by repurposing them as Active Travel Routes, providing an active travel framework for the new town centre. These runways (or 'greenways') extend into the new residential areas and green open spaces that are part of this development and allow for further connectivity to employment areas, neighbouring settlements, open countryside and the wider transport infrastructure.

Town Park

A Town Park is shown on the Concept Plan adjacent to the All-Through School and Town Centre. Despite currently being overgrown, the area contains many fine mature trees that will be incorporated into this public park to provide a formal green open space at the heart of the Town centre.

Throckmorton and Pinvin Buffers

These villages are immediately adjacent to the proposed new settlement and the authority will maintain their integrity as individual settlements by creating substantial GI buffers that will exclude development but would still allow for pedestrian and/or cycling connectivity between the existing and new settlements and provide new playing fields. These areas would be afforded policy protection in the future to prevent any inappropriate built development within them.

Community Orchards and Allotments

Each neighbourhood and the town centre will be within easy walking distance of a community allotment and orchard. Each will provide garden plots combined with an orchard to grow produce and facilitate regular events / workshops. These facilities will be used by nearby schools and other education groups, provide volunteering opportunities, picnic and BBQ areas for groups and families. Equally important these spaces bring communities together, promote community led health and wellbeing, provide a place for wildlife to thrive and contribute to reducing carbon emissions and air pollution.

Playing Fields – Sports Pitches

The new settlement will provide formal parks and informal open spaces. Outdoor activities such as football, rugby, cricket and tennis have been clustered to the north and south of the SGA. In addition, local and neighbourhood equipped play areas will be pepper potted across the SGA within an easy 5 to 10 mins walk.

Biodiversity Enhancement Area

At the southern end of the allocation site an enhanced GI corridor is proposed, encircling the existing landfill uses. This will become a backdrop to the Biodiversity Enhancement Area as that gradually comes into being with the eventual re-appropriation of the landfill site area when current uses come to an end and any contamination issues are afforded mitigation.

Key County Reptile Site

Within the south-eastern corner of the Strategic Allocation this GI corridor will also provide additional ecological and habitat benefits to the existing GI surrounding the Key County Reptile Site.

Archaeology

In addition to the constraints/context of landscape, topography, ecology and contamination, the other important aspect of this development is its historic context. The Throckmorton Strategic Allocation is rich in archaeology, and this has also informed and shaped the proposed development. Assessment of potential archaeology has been factored into the

phasing and development of the site and will form part of the ongoing process as a requirement.



Scheduled Monument & Heritage Assets

Throckmorton village is situated within the Scheduled Monument (green boundary) of a moated medieval manorial site and contains three listed buildings that are local landmarks. These are the Church, Throckmorton Court and a barn at Throckmorton Court. Collectively these heritage assets and their settings are notable landmark features that create a special sense of place. Three farmsteads and a development of early 20th century housing make up the rest of this small settlement set within the Scheduled Monument earthworks. The Concept Plan includes potential for creating pedestrian and cycle links into the village, whilst ensuring the Scheduled Monument status and heritage assets within it are not affected by the proposed development



Control Tower and Hanger 3

The Concept Plan seeks to retain the non-designated heritage assets including the runways and key buildings (Control Tower and Hanger 3) to help ‘tell the historic story of the site’. These locally significant landmark buildings will provide a unique and distinctive identity that combines the old with the new at the heart of the settlement. It is also proposed that an interpretive trail of the aviation history of the site will be included as part of the development.



Town Centre

The delivery of the town centre at an early development stage will ensure the establishment of a sense of place and provide key facilities for the entire settlement as it grows.

The centre of the town will be a compact, mixed-use environment that is linked to Pershore railway station by a primary Active Travel Route. The town will be fine-grained where higher-density development will be prevalent. The Town Centre will include shops, pubs, cafes, restaurants, and commercial development with residential above. Extra Care provision, if required, will also be included at the Town Centre along with an All-Through School with future Sixth Form provision.

A defining feature for the town will be the existing infrastructure of the ‘greenways’ (former airfield runways) that will be repurposed as Active Travel Routes. Walking and cycling will be the priority movement mode. This will provide excellent access to the wider landscape and surrounding settlements promoting healthy-living principles and a sense of place rooted in the landscape.



Education Facilities

Four Primary Schools are required for the entire settlement, and these will be dispersed within the loosely defined neighbourhoods as illustrated on the Concept Plan and will come into operation alongside the phasing of the residential areas. In phase 1, two Primary Schools will be built, one at the All-Through School site at the centre of the development and the other adjacent to the new development road to serve the first neighbourhood. In Phase 2, the Primary School on the All-Through School site will be transferred to the safeguarded land to the north. All primary schools are located to ensure they are within a short walk or cycle journey of the centre.

Primary School Safeguarded Land

Land will be safeguarded for a fourth primary school and built out once the All-Through School is firmly established as a secondary school and phase 2 commences.

All-Through School and Sixth Form Provision

The All-Through School is centrally located within the Town Centre for ease of access for the whole settlement. It will be operational early in phase 1, starting life as a combined Primary and Secondary School (All-Through School) and transition to a Secondary School (with space reserved to provide for the necessary future Sixth Form requirements) as the scheme is built out as part of Phase 2. At this timepoint standalone Primary School provision will be operational at locations within the scheme as indicated on the Concept Plan.

Residential Neighbourhoods

The whole settlement will be consistent with the 20-minute neighbourhood principles and garden community principles. Design of buildings will be both locally distinctive and innovative, using local materials as part of 'the mix' in accordance with design policies in the SWDP and National Planning Policy Framework guidance.

The settlement would have an overall site-wide average net density of up to 40dph with higher density development (serving all age groups) situated within and around the new local/town centre and lower density development across the site where appropriate, in accordance with SWDPR 15 which shall be determined through the masterplanning and development management processes.

The built form and the public realm will be climate resilient and will be high quality through use of distinctive architecture and high-quality local building materials and will include re-purposed airfield buildings

Local Centres

The residential proposals include two small Local Centres providing community facilities, such as a small convenience store for the surrounding neighbourhoods. These are located to the northeast and southwest of the main Town Centre.

Traveller Site

A site for Travellers containing 10 pitches will be located close to the main access road leading through the settlement, a Local Centre and the Town Centre, in particular education and health facilities. This location is well-connected to the town centre by walking, cycling and public transport. The site will be relatively secluded and designed to respect the surrounding landscape.

Employment

The Concept Plan includes employment uses along the A44 with a junction from the new development road into the Strategic Allocation. This ensures that any large vehicles connected with employment uses will have direct access onto primary connective highway routes (i.e. the A44, M5, M40) without the need to use secondary roads. It is planned that existing and

new employment uses within, and adjacent to, the airfield boundary will be part of a coordinated relocation to the A44 during the first phase of development.



Active Travel Routes

Reducing reliance on the car for residents of the new settlement is one of the guiding principles underlying the development of the Concept Plan. Therefore, it is important that the whole settlement is consistent with the 20-minute neighbourhood principles so residents can meet their everyday needs within a short walk or cycle.

As described previously, the site includes the unique benefit of the former airfield runways that will be adapted and re-purposed as 'greenways' to promote active travel and as an opportunity to create multifunctional corridors which will include tree planting, rain gardens and innovative SUDs, recreational activities and, because their width allows, certain road connections. Roads would also allow for community-led bus services as part of the movement infrastructure.

Internally, active travel connections link the town centre to schools, homes, green open space and employment, but also integrate with the surrounding countryside and neighbouring settlements of Throckmorton village, Pinvin and Bishampton so that those communities can benefit from schools, facilities and employment within the new settlement.



Active Travel Bridges

The Primary Active Travel connection would be between the settlement and Pershore railway station, a distance of approximate 2.8km from the new Town Centre that includes a new active travel bridge over the A44 near the station. In addition to this, another active travel connection will provide pedestrian and cycle access to the employment areas including a bridge over the A44 close to Upper Moor and Lower Moor.



Pershore Station and Park and Ride Expansion

Pershore station is on the North Cotswold Line and one stop from Worcestershire Parkway station which provides excellent connectivity for both commuters and visitors to Worcester and its neighbouring towns. This includes longer distance accessibility by train to major destinations, including Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, London, Oxford and Nottingham. Additional car park facilities will be created with more than 300 spaces at Dawes Way once the bridge work has been completed during Summer 2023.



Mobility Hubs

An interconnected Work and Mobility hub network is designed to house community transport and shared mobility modes such as car sharing, carpooling facilities, taxi and digital travel information, and provide easy access to cycle hire and secured cycle parking across the SGA.



Development Road

The A44 is the primary highway route that will serve the new settlement as Long Lane/Throckmorton Road are country lanes with very limited capacity to deal with additional vehicular movements from the new settlement. For this reason, a development road, with a new traffic island on the A44, will connect up the new settlement. The new road will include a junction to serve the employment uses along the A44 before it continues north, following the

contours of the rising land here, through a new residential neighbourhood and school, before aligning with the former runway layout towards the new Town Centre.

Renewable Energy

The Concept Plan indicates potential locations for renewable energy plants that will provide power to supply the entire new settlement, a guiding aspiration of this development within the 'Vision', to help minimise the impact of 'climate change'.

Phasing of Development

Land within the strategic allocation at Throckmorton will be developed to deliver approximately 5,000 new dwellings (up to 2060) in two phases. The whole settlement will be consistent with the 20-minute neighbourhood principles and garden community principles.

Phase 1

The new traffic island and development road will be built out first to serve approximately 2,000 homes from 2030 up to 2041. This will include the dedicated active travel route and active travel bridge to connect the first phase of development and the new town centre to Pershore Station. The Town Centre and the All-Through School will progressively be built out. Land will be safeguarded for the Sixth form within the curtilage of the secondary school site. Initially, 20 hectares of employment land will be delivered along the A44 utilising the current civic amenity access and access off the new roundabout. This will enable the relocation of employment uses away from the main part of the airfield.

Phase 2

From 2041, a further 3,000 homes will be built alongside three more primary schools, the Sixth Form and the All-Through School for secondary ages and post 16 will be running at full capacity. A further 40 hectares of employment will be delivered along the A44.