

Concept Plan Narratives for Strategic Allocations

An Overview

Introduction

The Concept Plans for Worcestershire Parkway, Throckmorton, Mitton and Rushwick demonstrate how these Strategic Growth Allocations (SGA) will be developed. The plans provide a high-level visual representation of the vision, aims, spatial development objectives and development policy for each strategic allocation. These concept plans set out key design considerations and site features. It is important to note that these plans have been refined overtime to reflect ongoing evidence base submissions.

The Concept Plan sets out:

- The spatial interpretation of the vision for each Strategic Growth Area and how it will evolve and be implemented.
- The themed concept principles for each Strategic Growth Area.
- The main design considerations/development parameters. A clear foundation to prepare a spatial framework, more detailed masterplans and site-specific design codes.



To assist navigation of the Concept Plans, the legend symbols have been included beside each heading to enable easier cross referencing, locating and reading of each element on the plans.

Worcestershire Parkway Strategic Growth Area

Concept Plan Narrative

Introduction

Worcestershire Parkway is a Strategic Growth Area (referred to hereafter as 'SGA' or 'The SGA' in this text) sitting partly within the parishes of Norton Juxta Kempsey, Littleworth, Stoulton and Drakes Broughton and Wadborough, located 2km south-east of Worcester and bordered north-west by the M5 (Junction 7), by the A44 to the east and the railway line to the south east. At its heart is the Worcestershire Parkway Railway Station which is serviced by the Cross-Country Line and the North Cotswold line with services to Birmingham, Bristol and London. The strong transport connectivity makes it an excellent place to focus a new sustainable settlement.

The landscape and heritage settings are significant assets for the SGA and the natural and visual backdrop supports a wealth of historic, biodiversity and wildlife that needs to be protected and enhanced. Therefore, it has been vital to adopt the landscape led approach for Worcestershire Parkway where the integration of these environmental and historic features will contribute to making a distinctive sense of place that will be exemplar and sustainable.

The Vision for Worcestershire Parkway

'Worcestershire Parkway is a new town which provides a rewarding place to live, work and play. It is developed in accordance with the garden town and villages approach, is carbon neutral and will reach an estimated population of 24,000 by 2060.

As development is landscape-led, the new town and its neighbourhoods are harmonious with the natural and heritage environment through significant investment in new green infrastructure, part of which forms a new Community Park.

Comprehensively planned, the new town is underpinned by a vibrant and viable town centre which supports a wide range of uses. At its heart, and close to the town centre, is the public transport hub, including the railway station, which provides the new community with a full range of accessible local services, as well as the choice to live a sustainable car free lifestyle.

The settlement is well connected, with a strong active travel network both within the settlement and out to the surrounding areas.'

The key elements of the Worcestershire Parkway (WP) Concept Plan are:



Landscape Led

Worcestershire Parkway (referred to hereafter in this narrative as 'WP') has three distinct landscapes, the east includes the Stoulton Brook and wildlife buffer, the boating lake, archaeological potential, historic farmsteads and the Millennium Way feature. The west includes Historic Parkland associated with Spetchley Park and Gardens, Wood Hall and Norton Hall Parklands, with features present ranging from well preserved orchard remnants, veteran and ancient trees and good examples of ridge and furrow which provides a reference for future enhancement and restoration. Both of these areas have a more undulated topography. Unlike the east and west areas, the southern area is characterised by open, plain-like agricultural landscape with far reaching views to the Malvern Hills and Bredon Hill and has less tree cover and hedgerow definition. Key bordering features are the Stoulton Buffer and Cooksholme Meadow though the SSSI is bound by the railway lines and this area presents a significant opportunity to restore and improve the biodiversity value, through the provision of new SuDS and GI linkages.

The aim of the concept plan is to safeguard the existing green infrastructure and to ensure the design of new development will respect both the local rich and diverse landscape character and the local historic character. This will give a strong sense of place from the outset. The settlement will harmonise with the natural environment through the conservation and improvement of the important ecological and landscape features such as around Norton Hall, Wood Hall Farm, Mucknell Abbey, Stoulton Brook and Upper Wolverton Farm, village of Stoulton and Wadborough Park.



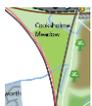
Green and Blue Infrastructure

The green and blue infrastructure is fully embedded in the planned layout and will protect and enhance the landscape biodiversity, flood risk and its connectivity. The structure creates a natural boundary defining the edges for the compact town, neighbourhoods which will be multi-functional with recreational paths and active travel routes to enhance the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors alike.



Increased Biodiversity GI Corridors

The concept plan provides a comprehensive network of open spaces, wildlife areas, ecological corridors/buffer that include wood pasture parkland, tree and hedgerow, field boundaries, and water features to support biodiversity, including opportunities to create new habitats. Retaining and enhancing these features will be a key asset for the new settlement and will provide a biodiversity net gain for the new development.



Cooksholme Meadow Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI)

Biodiversity assets such as Cooksholme Meadow will be buffered by wider GI areas and community orchards/allotments to increase the separation of development with this SSSI site and to improve overall biodiversity connectivity.



Climate Resilience and Flood Risk

In addition to the distinct Landscape character of the SGA, Worcestershire Parkway is also defined by flood zones 2 and 3 and surface run off, the Stoulton Brook and other minor courses and field drains which have been integrated into green infrastructure. This presents wider opportunities to improve biodiversity and amenity as well as climate change adaptation. These opportunities for flood defence, and management of surface water, through the green infrastructure will ensure that the new settlement takes account of climate change. The management and recycling of grey water in properties and on the employment land will contribute to minimising the use of potable water in the home.



Community Park

Existing landscape features such as the boating lake located to the north of Mucknell Abbey and the existing blue and green infrastructure network will be utilised and incorporated into the design of the Community Park. The brook corridor will also become part of the multifunctional SuDS network to assist with water management to the north.

This new 54+ hectare community park will provide a place to enjoy the outdoors with a natural, rural informal atmosphere with the potential for a visitor centre with a café and educational facilities, themed paths and trails, picnic areas, fishing and boating, play spaces and quiet spaces for nature. Establishing the Community Park in Phase 1 will provide an open space asset for the first residents of Worcestershire Parkway and the surrounding area to enjoy early on and provide a suitable buffer to the setting of Mucknell Abbey site.



Heritage and Archaeological Assets

The Concept Plan seeks to safeguard heritage and archaeological assets and their setting as part of retaining the character and identity of the place. This includes the former parkland landscape of Wood Hall and Norton Hall, setting of Mucknell Abbey, Stoulton Village, historic lanes, traditional farm buildings and routeways which are amongst the oldest heritage assets will be integrated into the wider green infrastructure network.



Stoulton Buffer

The buffer has been placed to protect the historic character and setting of the church, including the conservation area, historic buildings, Stoulton Woods, existing fields and public rights of way to preserve the overall setting of Stoulton Village. The concept plan does provide opportunity to connect the village with the new settlement and its facilities through the active travel network, new development road to reduce through traffic and a dedicated mobility hub.



Crookbarrow Hill

The concept plan seeks to protect principal views and connected sightlines between the Scheduled Monument of Crookbarrow Hill and its setting. The hill makes a strong contribution to place, landscape character and offers opportunities for creating multifunctional corridors through the development area.



Allotment and Community Orchards

Each neighbourhood and the town centre will be within easy walking distance of a community allotment and orchard. These will be a combination of retained historic orchards, the reinstatement of lost orchards and creation of new ones. Each will provide garden plots combined with an orchard to grow produce, facilitate regular events and 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 contributes to reducing carbon emissions and air pollution.



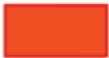
Sport and Recreation

The new settlement will provide formal parks and informal open spaces that will host outdoor activities such as football, rugby, cricket and tennis. In addition, local and neighbourhood equipped play areas will be pepper potted across the SGA in an easy 5 to 10 mins walk.



Sports Hub and Leisure Centre

The leisure centre will be incorporated into the Sports Hub and will provide a swimming pool, gym facilities and indoor sports hall (guidance provided by Sport England). The Sports Hub which will be linked to the phase 2 secondary school and be part of the main sports hub for the residents of the new town and its neighbourhoods. It is envisaged that the sports hub will provide, pitches for rugby, football, cricket with pavilion and changing rooms, athletics track, 3G pitches and tennis courts.



Town Centre

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

The town will have a mixed-use environment that is directly linked to the train station by a series of high-quality public spaces. The town will be easy to navigate round where higher-density development will be prevalent to ensure 24/7 activity and vitality.

The town will provide a healthcare hub, dental practices, nurseries, park and stride facilities, a variety of small and medium shops, pubs, restaurants, cafes, and range of small to medium sized foodstores. Buildings and the public realm will be climate resilient and will be high quality through the use of distinctive architecture and high-quality local building materials.

It is imagined the town will provide a range of residential accommodation up to densities of 40 to 60 dwellings per hectare (dph), with some pockets of further intensity within the commercial centre up to 80 dph. Residents of the town will have access to a range of homes including extra care accommodation that will meet their changing physical and financial needs as they move through life.

One of the defining features for the town will be the central Linear Park that will utilise the existing water feature and landscape that runs through the centre with new attractive bridges where walking and cycling will be the priority movement mode. The town will have excellent

access to the wider landscape, Community Park, the Stoulton Brook corridor promoting healthy-living principles and a sense of place rooted in the landscape.

Buildings and public spaces across the settlement will be locally distinctive and exemplar to provide a high standard of sustainable living. Homes will be built for the future using the fabric-first approach using new technologies and environmental practice to ensure these homes will be both highly energy efficient and future proofed to respond to changing lifestyles.

Local Centre

Each local centre will be fostered through the clustering of uses in the form of a hub and will have a strong community focus. These uses will include community and social space, a primary school, convenience facilities and open space. Each neighbourhood will have a strong sense of identity and a distinct character and will have a range of density up to 40 dph with some slight intensity around the local centre. All amenities will be within 10-to-15-minute walking distance to create a healthy and active community.

Primary Education

Primary Schools are centralised within the loosely defined neighbourhoods to ensure they are within a short walk or cycle journey. They will come into operation alongside the early construction of the residential areas.

Secondary School and Sixth Form Provision

The Secondary School and the Sixth Form facility will be located within the town centre and form part of the vitality of the town and provide all higher education needs for the settlement for both phases of development.

Phase 2 education

Land will be safeguarded for the phase 2 Secondary School and has been positioned adjacent to the Sports Hubs for shared use with the Secondary School and provide easy access for the southern neighbourhood communities. Noting that the stretches of the B4084 near to these facilities will be cycle and public transport priority with traffic calming measures.

The Special School

The Special School will be located on the edge of the town centre and with direct access off the new development road as most of the pupils will arrive by car. The location is especially good for access to the Community Park and the community orchards/allotments.

Employment

The new settlement will deliver a variety of employment opportunities from micro to medium scale that will be within easy walking and cycling distance of residential areas, town centre and the transport interchange (train station) to ensure a high level of living locally which creates a more self-sustaining settlement.

50 hectares of logistics and industrial employment will be concentrated close to M5 Junction 7 whereas innovative Agritech employment will be located in the east, close to the A44 and

the new development road. All of which can be delivered in Phase 1 to ensure immediate access to a variety of local employment opportunities.

Residential development will be designed to accommodate home working, including the provision of good home office facilities, a high-speed broadband/cellular network. Each neighbourhood will meet the needs of remote and hybrid workers, such as local shared offices spaces/co-working hubs within a short walking distance.

Traveller Sites

The two Traveller will each contain 10 pitches in a phased approach. The sites have been located close to the new development road to ensure good access to a local centre and to the services and infrastructure such as education and health facilities provided within the neighbourhoods. This location will also be well-connected to the town centre by walking, cycling and public transport. The sites will be suitably landscaped and relatively secluded to respect the surrounding landscape.



Movement Principles

The concept plan encourages sustainable, socially inclusive travel patterns from the outset that reduces the reliance on the private motorised vehicle and promotes internalisation of trips to support the delivery of net zero carbon by 2050. The residents of Worcestershire Parkway will all benefit from being able to live locally and meet their daily needs within a 20-minute walk/cycle/of where they live. Good connectivity by all modes to the train station as a major public transport asset is still required as this is an essential facility to serve the settlement and the wider area.

Private motorised vehicular travel to/from and within the settlement will be given least priority, while recognising this mode will still have a limited role. The design of the settlement will minimise its impacts on the existing highway network by fully supporting sustainable modes, however it is necessary to retain private vehicle access, but this will be planned to be more indirect.



Public Transport Interchange/Station and existing Park and Rail

The train station is a key asset of the new garden community and to the wider area where residents and visitors can arrive and commute by train/public transport. In combination, the rail and local bus services will be the key mode for medium and longer journeys. The public transport hub will be fully integrated with the active network to ensure most localised journeys are by sustainable means.

The existing Park and Rail facility will remain in its current position with further expansion to manage the wider commuter demands by constructing a space saving decked car park. In addition, Park and Stride facilities will be strategically placed in proximity to the station to ensure good levels of sustainable patronage.



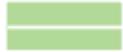
Dualling of the Oxford Worcester and Wolverhampton (OWW) Line

Land is safeguarded to ensure the future delivery of the dualling of Oxford Worcester and Wolverhampton (OWW) Line when complete this will increase train services across the North Cotswold Line from Worcester to Oxford.



Additional Park and Rail

The site off Woodbury Lane is earmarked on the Concept Plan for additional Park and Rail facilities with easy pedestrian and cycle access to the rear of the station. This is supplementary to the expanded main Station Park and Rail site.



Active Travel Routes (ATR)

The plan sets out a high-level network of high quality, safe and direct active travel routes that will be provided throughout the development and out to the surrounding countryside. These routes will connect the neighbourhoods, town centre and train station by a network of high-quality greenspace, cycle and footpaths including other key trip attractors within the site to Worcester and Pershore, as well as to the employment corridor to the east of Worcester making use of and improving upon the local 'Sustrans' National Cycle Network (NCN) routes. The sustainable mobility infrastructure will be designed to prioritise the modal shift to walking, cycling (active travel, leisure, exercise) and integrated public transport.

Neighbouring communities of Stoulton, Whittington, Norton, Hawbridge, and other villages will also benefit from access to schools, facilities and employment within the new settlement.



Millennium Way

The Millennium Way is an existing public right of way that will form a starting point and be interconnected with longer themed trails around the SGA. Important long-distance views from key high points in the SGA to the Malvern Hills, Bredon Hill (Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). These can be experienced along the strong network of public rights of way including the regionally important Millennium Way.



Highway Infrastructure

The new development road between B4084 and A44 will provide appropriate transport infrastructure, providing access to the town and the railway station early on in the first phase of development. The southerly development road will provide access to the southern neighbourhoods and will redirect traffic away from Stoulton Village in the second phase. Both of these roads will be designed to accommodate all modes of movement.

Improvements to the stretch of the B4084 between Junction 7 and the village of Stoulton will plan to create better pedestrian and cyclist safety, prioritise public transport along this route, accommodate the neighbourhood access from Spetchley Estate Land and Merton College Site and create a traffic calmed street between the new town centre and the Station/public transport interchange.

Roads and some wider active travel routes will accommodate for community transit services as part of the sustainable movement infrastructure. The integrated site-specific community transit system will reduce internal journeys taken by car to further support the move to sustainable travel patterns.

Car free zones will be created within the town centre and neighbourhood hubs. Infrastructure for Electric Vehicle charging will need to be commonplace throughout the development, including for visitors.

Mucknell Abbey Access

A new vehicular access to and from the Mucknell Abbey site will be constructed early as part of the layout of the new town centre. Parts of the original Mucknell Farm Lane will integrate with the Town Centre street layout.

Mobility Hubs

An Interconnected Work and Mobility hub network across the SGA and into nearby villages will be designed to house the community transit system and shared mobility modes such as car sharing, carpooling facilities, car, taxi and digital travel information. These hubs will have easy access to cycle hire and secured cycle parking. Some hubs will be more strategic and have more facilities such as those located in the town centre and the public transport interchange.

New Railway Bridge - Active Travel Route

A new bridge over the railway line will be located north of the train station to improve connectivity between the western neighbourhoods and the Town Centre separate from the B4084. The bridge will be primarily for walking, cycling, community transit services and emergency vehicles. This bridge will be planted with trees, shrubs and other vegetation to enable safe wildlife passage providing truly multi-functional connectivity.

New Railway Underpass - Active Travel Route

A new underpass underneath the Cotswolds Line between the town and southern neighbourhood will increase the connectivity between the town centre and the southern neighbourhoods including access to the sports hub and phase 2 secondary school. This underpass will be primarily dedicated to active travel, community transit services and emergency vehicles.

Phase 2 Railway Bridge – Active Travel Route

The existing pedestrian level railway crossing between Littleworth/Hatfield areas and the southern neighbourhoods will be improved by the construction of an active travel bridge in phase 2 in line with the development of the far southern neighbourhood.

Solar Farm and Renewable Energies

SWCs are committed to delivering a carbon neutral settlement from the outset, in line with the vision and the advancing net zero national and international agenda (UKGBC, 2019; World Green Building Council, 2021). This will include opportunities to create decentralised community/neighbourhood energy hubs for heat and power, including district networks, to supply low-carbon energy to homes, businesses, and public buildings. An on-site smart grid network will be implemented to help manage the generation, distribution and storage of energy and enable decentralised generation of renewable energy.

The existing Wind Turbine's life expectancy is approximately up to 2025-30 and its location and refurbishment will have to be reviewed.

Development Phasing

Land within the strategic allocation at Worcestershire Parkway will be developed in two phases to deliver approximately 10,000 new dwellings consisting of 6 neighbourhoods and 4 local centres in total up to 2060. The whole settlement will be consistent with the 20-minute neighbourhood principles and community garden principles.

Phase 1

Phase 1 will deliver approximately 5,000 dwellings in this Plan period up to 2041, consisting of the Town Centre and 3 interconnected neighbourhoods that have 2 local centres. These neighbourhoods are positioned and scaled appropriately to serve the northwest and south of the town centre. These local centres will be highly connected to the public transport network, train station, the town centre and the wider SGA. Key infrastructure elements within Phase 1 will include the first secondary school, four primary schools and an 'Age 16+' further education provision in the centre of town. In addition, a Sports Hub will be delivered within the plan period (up to 2041) and a Special Needs education facility will be delivered towards the end of phase 1 (up to 2041) and at the beginning of phase 2 (beyond 2041). Phase 1 will also include the new development road linking the B4084 and A44 and the new access to Mucknell Abbey, the primary network of active travel routes and a community transit system to establish sustainable travel patterns from the outset. The expansion of the existing Park and Rail facility will also be delivered in the first phase to address the wider strategic commuter demands.

Phase 2

Beyond 2041, Worcestershire Parkway will grow to become a sustainable settlement of 10,000 homes in total with a further 3 neighbourhoods and 2 local centres in the south and east of the SGA, an additional secondary school, three primary schools, the extension of the active route network, highway network and community transit system to all parts of the settlement. The delivery of the southern development road will bypass Stoulton and serve the southern neighbourhood.