

## **Worcester Parkway Settlement Parking Strategy (draft)**

### **Introduction**

As set out in its draft Spatial Framework document, the Vision for Worcestershire Parkway (WP) is a new town which provides a rewarding place to live and work for all. It is developed on Garden Settlement principles, such that, on completion in 2060, it will be a carbon neutral functioning town with an estimated population of 22,000. The new town will be comprehensively planned and underpinned by a vibrant and viable town centre, focused on the Parkway station, itself that will provides the new community with a full range of local services, employment and leisure opportunities. The Parkway vision is for an exemplar development for future generations.

The new WP settlement is focused on offering mixed-tenure homes and housing types, with a significant percentage that are affordable, a new town centre, local neighbourhoods, together with a range of local jobs accessible by sustainable travel, all set in a green environment. The development also includes cultural, education, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable local centres, with their own strong identities. The overall movement strategy for WP is to develop a 20-minute neighbourhood settlement, with local services, meeting daily needs, such that a high degree of trip internalisation is achieved.

Design and provision of facilities can influence the need to undertake a private vehicle trip in the first place. Thereafter, sustainable movement will be prioritised, both within the new settlement, and by attractive, functional connections to nearby trip attractors and urban areas. Active travel will be the preferred method of travel within the settlement and to local trip attractors and high-quality active travel routes are essential, given the links to the environmental and health benefits of walking and cycling. Sustainable modes of travel will be given priority, so they are easier and more attractive to use, so driving becomes less of a logical choice. 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. An important element of the overall movement strategy for WP will be a parking strategy, as parking contributes to traffic generation.

This is an early draft of what is seen as a working copy of the document, which is likely to be reviewed and updated as the WP masterplan is developed in more detail. It purposefully does not seek to be too rigid at this time but acts as a catalyst for innovative parking solutions to help achieve the ambitious sustainable movement targets. Proposed measures within this document are options at this time as the Parkway Parking Strategy will be subject to an approvals process, so no final decisions have been taken.

### **Parking Strategy Principles**

#### *Context*

The WP movement strategy does not seek to stop use or ownership of private vehicles but looks to provide a framework, supported by infrastructure, giving people choice. For some, this can encourage them to live without needing a private vehicle. The WP parking strategy can support the WP movement strategy in a positive way.

In line with national policies, the policies of the WP parking strategy shall aim to use car parking provision and control as a direct management tool to help reduce growth in private car travel. Free or very cheap parking tends to encourage traffic movements and contribute to congestion. Also, public space in densely built-up areas has higher social, economic and environmental value if used for something other than free parking for cars.

Trip generation will be influenced by the extent of how the following are delivered:-

- Home working

- Delivery of goods
- Local day-to-day services and facilities
- Walking and cycling infrastructure
- E-bike and (potentially) e-scooter use, including hire
- Public transport
- Car Club/Share
- Private vehicles

Implementation of a Parking Management Plan is deemed necessary to help ensure delivery of a highly sustainable development where walking and cycling are considered the priority choice of travel. Restricting free parking, especially within the town centre and its immediate surrounding areas will help achieve this objective. 'Park and stride' should be seen as the norm within the settlement for both residents and visitors, being the concept of parking further away from a location and walking the last part of the trip.

Whilst the WP development is seeking to offer people a lifestyle choice, it is unreasonable to expect a major culture change regarding car ownership and car use overnight when WP first starts to be built out when the wider benefits of the settlement are not yet fully realised and various commercial concerns are acknowledged. Whilst prospective residents and businesses will have choice over locations, the vision for WP is about a healthier community and sustainable lifestyle. Also, it is important to try to seek to set sustainable travel patterns early, as trying to encourage people out of their cars later on is likely to provide more challenging. This could possibly be addressed by introducing a spatial element to the Parking Strategy, to reflect the varying characteristics, functions, and multi-modal accessibility of different areas of the site.

#### *Residential*

Studies support the conclusion that residential parking can have a significant influence on private car use

([https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=ENV/WKP\(2019\)4&docLanguage=En](https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=ENV/WKP(2019)4&docLanguage=En)  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352146517306737> ).

The average private car is stationary most of the time and relatively expensive to run, so owning a car can be seen as being convenient but inefficient. For the Worcester Parkway settlement, there is an opportunity to encourage residents to re-evaluate the need to own a car and parking arrangement can play a part.

Development of the settlement provides the design opportunity for areas of the site to generally move away from the provision of private car parking within the curtilage of a property, often a driveway or garage, which is a common layout and tends to be first choice for many residential developments. Otherwise, this tends to create fairly standard housing estates that are car dominated. In addition, the traditional residential scheme layout with lots of on-street parking bays should be avoided, with streets designed to be more people-friendly.

Alternatives to car use shall be dominant and this includes street layouts that make car travel longer and slower than walking, cycling or using some form of public transport. Residential streets should be a mix of pedestrian-friendly, Home Zones (road space is shared, with speed and dominance of cars reduced) and Living Streets (designed in interests of pedestrians and cyclists) where the car is either generally excluded or can only visit for short periods.

Consideration does have to be made for residents with mobility impairments and some streets can be designed to include on-street parking but more sympathetically designed into the urban environment. However, this is not meant to be prescriptive and designs can change, depending on location within the wider site. Many residents within the town centre or close to it may be able to live without a private car

so do not require parking, whilst edge of settlement locations can tend to be more flexible in their parking arrangements.

Whilst some plot parking will still be permitted and designed to be flexible in terms of land use, some of the residential parking will be encouraged to be provided in blocks, either on a communal, allocated or mixed basis and can be designed to be secure. Large areas of surface parking are generally unattractive and also take up valuable space that can be better used for other purposes. Whilst having a higher construction cost and requiring further investigation, underground or multi-storey parking reduces footprint, compared with larger surface car parks thereby freeing up land for development, and tend to be more secure. If designed appropriately, multi-storey buildings can fit into the local environment. Such parking arrangements need flexible perimeter blocks to accommodate clustered parking solutions, which can support potential higher density housing. Also, further away from the town centre, some of the individual plots can be more flexible and give residents the opportunity of choice and curtilage parking may be more appropriate and acceptable.

Having some parking separate from dwellings allows them to be delinked, thereby giving the opportunity to implement alternative parking regimes, such as the buying or renting of parking spaces. This can be another method to encourage prospective residents to review and question the need to own a private car. There is also an opportunity to link up with employment areas and share parking.

Residential developments should have easy access to Car Club vehicles, which should be located in more convenient parking locations spread across the whole site, so within easy walking distances. This provides users with the ability to have access to a car for certain trips, without the need for ownership. This forms one element of the mobility network measures to be provided throughout the Strategic Growth Area.

If WP is to be an exemplar active travel settlement, then cycle parking must be of a high standard, being accessible, secure and covered, ideally provided within buildings. Sufficient space must be provided to accommodate full cycle parking need easily. For example, a family home should have sufficient storage space for each member of a family to have a bicycle each. The cycle parking needs to be easily accessible but also secure. As the sales of ebikes continues to grow, consideration needs to be given to the provision of charging facilities within a residential property that are convenient for maintaining ebikes. However, most ebike batteries can be charged via standard plug socket.

### *Employment*

The success of WP as a sustainable settlement will very much depend on the ability of people to 'work, live and play' in a local attractive environment. This will be influenced by local employment opportunities creating a range of job types readily accessible by active travel modes of transport. However, although there will be a range of travel options, it is recognised there is still likely to be some need for car parking associated with employment. Whilst it cannot form part of the Parking Strategy, businesses employing local people and being readily accessible from the rail station can reduce the amount of car parking required, which is a potential cost saving for those businesses.

Employers will be required to implement travel plans and there is an opportunity to set up Travel Plan Groups, probably on a neighbourhood basis, rather than WP-wide basis, in order to pool ideas and resources. Examples could include (i) passenger transport, (ii) on demand and community bus services, (iii) communal parking, (iv) shared deliveries and (v) shared staff discount schemes.

Businesses will be required to justify the amount of car parking they wish to provide, based on evidence of operational need. Depending on the particular business, there should be more consideration given to encouraging sustainable travel, through incentives, together with use of pool cars, car-share schemes and access to Car Club vehicles, which WP should embrace.

Nearby roads should have waiting restrictions in order to discourage indiscriminate on-street commuter parking. Consideration could also be given to making the whole or specific areas of WP a 'workplace parking levy' (WPL) zone, where employers have to pay some form of tax for parking spaces. Income should be ringfenced to fund measures that encourage employees to use active travel or passenger transport. The scale of any WPL scheme will be influenced by the level of sustainable transport options from external areas, which will influence those employees' travel behaviours and could, potentially, be offset by other incentives to encourage sustainable travel. A WPL scheme will be one of a number of factors prospective businesses will consider when deciding if to locate to WP. It is appreciated a WPL scheme is likely to be contentious and, to date, only Nottingham is the only UK location to have implemented such a scheme. But other UK cities are considering it, as part of Climate Emergency responses. Employers and businesses also need to consider their corporate responsibilities in terms of addressing carbon reduction.

Employers will be required to provide covered and secure cycle parking, together with changing rooms, showers and lockers, to encourage active travel. Travel plan incentives, such as cycle/equipment/clothing loans, shall be considered the norm.

#### *Worcestershire Parkway Railway Station*

The railway station is an important factor in the selection of WP as a strategic growth area site. Its position within the settlement provides the opportunity for the majority of WP users to access the station by active travel means of travel if rail is an appropriate option. Walking and cycling routes will connect the neighbourhoods with the station and bus services shall also serve the station. 'Kiss and Ride', where a passenger is dropped off, can be accommodated but WP residents should be discouraged from driving to the station and parking.

However, the station is also a regional facility that serves a much wider catchment area than just WP. There is a need, therefore, for car parking to be provided for longer distance commuters and other users accessing the services. The station has dedicated parking, currently 500 spaces, and access needs to be retained, with regular parking surveys undertaken to monitor its use. Station patronage is forecast to increase, not just as a result of WP being built but from its wider catchment, and it is anticipated there will be the need to provide additional car parking for the station, with up to 1,000 further spaces forecast in the long-term. The amount of additional station parking does depend on future service provision.

It is important that cycle parking is provided at the station to accommodate demand. This needs to be of good quality, being accessible, safe, covered and secure, for long-stay cycle parking, ideally linked to some form of cycle hub facility.

#### *Town Centre*

The town centre will be a major trip attractor for both WP residents and people living in the surrounding area. As the settlement is to be developed on the 20-minute town principle, where it is envisaged many trips to and from the town centre will be undertaken by active travel by a short, convenient and attractive walk or bike ride. This means that high levels of public cycle parking need to be provided throughout the town centre and near key trip attractors. Together with high quality walking and cycling routes and infrastructure to permit safe access. Public transport routes will look to provide frequent bus services into the town centre from the surrounding areas, both within WP and beyond. The railway station is also immediately adjacent to the town centre and connected by a short walk, potentially encouraging many people to visit the town centre by train. All these factors mean a reduced need to provide extensive town centre car parking.

To provide a busy and attractive town centre, it is envisaged some areas will be pedestrianised. The hours of operation would need to be considered in relation to delivery requirements, with existing schemes commonly banning motorised vehicles between 10:00am and 4:00pm. It is also linked to possible 'last mile' delivery options, if smaller electric vehicles were utilised, then maybe permitted

access during restricted hours. Some parking facilities to accommodate the needs of Blue Badge holders will also need to be provided.

Some car parking for the town centre is likely but the majority should be located on its edges rather than within the centre, to act as 'Park and stride' facilities, with users parking and then walking into the centre. This will help restrict vehicle movements on town centre streets.

Similar as for residential, the type of parking for retail and leisure needs to be considered, as surface car parks can take up a lot of valuable land, which might be better served as attractive environmental public spaces and development land. Consideration should be given to the provision of some underground or multi-storey parking facilities in appropriate locations. Car parking management regimes will be required, which may include parking charges to discourage commuter or all-day parking. Charging regimes will require assessment and agreement and should be applied to any private car parks. National retailers, including supermarkets are likely to resist this policy but if the viability of the centre is to be balanced for independent businesses, a charging regime needs to be applied equally. However, establishing an evening economy will be more marginal, especially in early years, so consideration needs to be given to low or no evening charging, certainly initially.

To ensure a vibrant town centre, homes will form part of the mixed uses within the town centre. Within this area, low car ownership can be encouraged, through initiatives such as Car Club vehicles and parking should be provided within easy access. Storage for bikes needs to be carefully integrated and walking routes should be safe and well lit. Bus stops should be carefully designed and located to encourage usage of public transport.

#### *Schools*

It is recognised that school-runs have often contributed to peak-period traffic congestion, especially during the mornings, with lower traffic flows occurring during school holidays. Schools will have to meet mandatory student mobility needs, but these should be designed in a manner that does not encourage general parking opportunities. Whilst WP is to have a primary school provided within each local neighbourhood that will be readily accessible by walking and cycling, it is still likely some parents will seek to drop off students by car then continue to work or undertake some other activity. Layout design can help make the drop-off/pick up less convenient and school travel plans can encourage sustainable travel. Implementation of waiting restrictions within the proximity of a school, either operating permanently or during select time periods, can be an option, although it often requires enforcement until education makes the message clear.

A secondary school can generate less vehicular traffic as students become more independent and prefer not to be dropped off or collected by car. But similar solutions can be applied, as for primary schools. Special educational needs schools tend to have different requirements, as many of their students have to travel by car, taxi or minibus, because of particular mobility issues.

#### *Motorbikes*

Two wheeled motorised vehicles, commonly referred to as mopeds, motorbikes or motorcycles, can have a role to play, as they take up less road space. Suitable parking facilities, in terms of number, space and security, shall be provided throughout the WP settlement.

#### *Taxis*

Parking for taxis, which, ideally, should be ULEV, shall be provided at appropriate locations and suitably controlled. On demand bus services could be a potential option, as well.

#### *Residents' Parking Zones*

Consideration shall be given to the introduction of RPZs within the WP settlement. This will assist with controlling and limiting any indiscriminate on-street parking within residential areas, which can create issues and conflict.

### *Ultra-low Emission Vehicles*

As the WP settlement is seeking to be an exemplar development, in terms of sustainability, it will be seeking to work towards being a carbon neutral town. As transport is a key contributor to carbon emissions, measures need to be incorporated to reduce these. As the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles is to be phased out, they are likely to be replaced by ULEV, such as electric vehicles. To accommodate this, significant numbers of ULEV charging spaces will need to be provided, together with the infrastructure to future-proof the installation of more easily, as required. There needs to be a mix of public and private charging facilities, with quick-charge hubs eventually replacing traditional petrol filling stations.

To help availability of charging facilities, it is acknowledged residential locations provide dedicated charging points. This connects with the need to provide a range and mix of residential parking design options and, in suitable locations, plot parking and charging will be an appropriate solution.

### *WP Parking Standards*

It is recommended specific parking standards are developed for the WP development, with the objective of supporting the sustainable vision for the new settlement. The standards shall be consistent with ensuring the private car has the lowest priority of all transport movements.

### *ITS and VMS*

An intelligent transportation system (ITS) is an advanced application that aims to provide innovative services relating to different modes of transport and traffic management and enable users to be better informed and make safer, more coordinated, and 'smarter' use of transport networks. ITS can have a role to play in controlling motorised vehicular traffic around and through the WP settlement.

ITS can be combined with Variable Messaging Systems (VMS) to guide and control traffic to available parking, as well as provide current traffic information. This can be linked to on-the-ground technology that allows real time information on parking spaces to be managed efficiently.

### *Archaeology*

Any new parking sites may be subject to archaeological evaluation or mitigation. Hence, it is recommended early liaison with District, County and Worcester City archaeologists be undertaken to provide clear information regarding the archaeological potential of such sites.