

Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan

Framework SPD Consultation

Comment Form



The consultation document can be viewed on the District Council's website at www.stratford.gov.uk/gatewayspd.

The consultation provides the opportunity for any interested party to comment on all aspects of the SPD. **Please read the consultation document carefully before completing this form.** You can respond to this consultation electronically via the above web address, attach it to an email and send it to policy.consultation@stratford-dc.gov.uk, or post it to Planning Policy, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford -upon-Avon CV37 6HX.

Please complete this form using black ink or typeface. If you require more space please continue on a separate sheet.

If you make comments in a letter or other separate document please state which topic(s) you are referring to.

Put your contact details in the box(es) below – please use BLOCK CAPITALS

Person(s) or Organisation Submitting Comments		Agent (if applicable)	
Name		Name	
Organisation (if applicable)		Organisation	
Address		Address	
Tel No.		Tel No.	
Email		Email	
Please put an 'X' in this box if you wish to be kept informed on future planning policy consultations within the District.			
If you opt-in above, you can email planning.policy@stratford-dc.gov.uk at any time to ask to be removed from our mailing list. Please note that such a request does not mean that responses you have made to previous policy consultations will be removed from our online Consultation Viewer .			

If you are using an Agent, future correspondence will be sent to them unless informed otherwise.

Please note that your comments cannot be treated as confidential

Date

Comments should be submitted by 5.00pm on Friday 1 December 2023. Those received after that deadline will not be considered.

Thank you for contributing your views.

Please note that your response will be published on the District Council's website. However, this will exclude the postal address, telephone number and email address of individual members of the public. The details of respondents will only be retained by the District Council for the purposes of preparing and consulting on its planning policy documents and will not be used for any other purpose. For details on how we will use your information and personal data please see Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Policy Consultation Privacy Notice at <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/planning-building/privacy-notice.cfm>.

Guidance

In making your comments please follow the guidelines below:

- A **separate form should be completed for each topic you comment on**, this includes the front sheet with your details. If your details are not provided on the form we cannot accept it.
- The specific section you are commenting on must be written clearly in the comment box.
- For the support/object boxes click the relevant box and insert an 'X' as appropriate.
- The contents of the Plan are set out below to help you identify sections for comment.

Contents

- 1. Introduction & purpose - p4-6**
- 2. Vision - p7-10**
- 3. Planning policy - p11-14**
- 4. Understanding context - p15-31**
- 5. Masterplan framework - p32-41**
- 6. Delivery - p42**

Please specify which section of the SPD you are commenting on:

Section/Subsection: Context CHALLENGES page 30 diagram

Paragraph:

Please provide your comments below:

The plan should “overlooking from and towards neighbouring buildings” in respect of Arden Street Car Park if it is intended to alter the levels and possibly other places on the plan in the same way as those that are shown.

The extent of “pedestrian/traffic conflict should not include the Birmingham Road as this has been redesigned and re-laid and includes cycle provision.

The extent of pedestrian/traffic conflict in Arden Street should be extended to include all the way to the junction with Mansell Street. Windsor Street is correctly shown.

Please provide your comments below:

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

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Section/Subsection:

Page:

Paragraph:

Please provide your comments below:

1. Introduction & purpose - p4-6

There are 5 vehicular gateways to the town of Stratford upon Avon and others on foot or cycle or by rail and water. Whilst the Birmingham Road is an important way into the town centre it is also part of interconnections used by traffic and pedestrians with other destinations as are the other roads.



Please provide your comments below:

All of the gateways to the town centre have a certain amount of dysfunctionality about them because of the conflicting movements and they do not necessarily lead directly there. Take the railway station as an example.



This is a pedestrian gateway but although it points at the centre of the town (the short cut through a housing estate and past the hospital being the other one) both arrive at Arden Street and in this case two junctions in the Alcester Road have to be negotiated.

But the point made in the SPD is that the Birmingham Road needs improvement which would benefit that gateway to the town centre and this would be generally accepted and that would also apply in principal to the remainder of the area subject to the SPD albeit that this only that part of that gateway nearest to the town centre.

2. Vision - p7-10

Page 8 Community Benefits

Building new homes.

There is little opportunity to increase the housing stock. Affordable means 'how much money have you got? That is the price. But housing is a part of this.

Improving connections.

To where? Your attention is drawn to the "Areas of pedestrian/traffic conflict" on page 30.

A new piece of the town.

This depends on which "Community" you are in. Would you recognise it if it stood in front of you? Does this represent a "Community" interested in this development to the exclusion of others?

A greener place.

Not very the colour green but could be made more sustainable in the future. This is an opportunity.

Creating jobs.

Hopefully. This is another opportunity.

Events and experience.

Hopefully visitors will return and this is related to "Creating jobs" and to the tourist economy generally.

Spaces to dwell.

Be very careful of more of the same. A Shakespeare Centre should have a unique offer but there may be competition for everything else.

Educational facilities.

The present Shakespeare centre is not fit for purpose in many ways. This is another opportunity.

Page 10 is an "Area of pedestrian/traffic conflict" and is another example of creeping pedestrianisation. If carried out without other measures this simply moves the point of conflict. I am considering what nickname the Shakespeare Centre shown would be called.

3. Planning policy - p11-14

What in terms of planning policy is left out of the list is the adopted Stratford-upon-Avon Area Transport Strategy 2018. In the introduction to this policy, it states "This document sets out Warwickshire County Council and Stratford District Council's shared transport strategy for Stratford-upon-Avon and the town's immediate environs and key strategic links"

Is the Gateway via the Birmingham Road a 'key strategic link'?

Is Arden Street an area of pedestrian/traffic conflict?

Is Windsor Street an area of pedestrian/traffic conflict?

Obviously, the answer to all three of the above is a definite 'yes' if only because this draft SPD says so in not so many words but the introduction to the strategy goes on to say more.

In preparing this strategy, the County and District Councils listened to the public and talked to interest groups and organisations to better understand their concerns and requirements from the transport network. This engagement showed that there is a high level of agreement on what the key issues are, with a primary concern being the increasing level of traffic congestion and the impact of future housing and employment growth will have on the character of the town and a transport infrastructure already operating under considerable strain. The strategy goes on to tackle congestion and improve the transport system and town environment to meet the development needs and benefit residents, businesses and visitors.

There is no evidence that any action has been taken under the Stratford-upon-Avon Area Transport Strategy 2018 since or that this draft SPD has taken it into account. So how do you square the intention to deposit coach visitors in Rother Street with the market and existing traffic only to face a different pedestrian/traffic conflict in Wood Street or Greenhill Street?

4. Understanding context - p15-31

Page 15

Para 4.3 should say "the SPD boundary has been extended westwards from the Gateway site" and "extended eastwards to encompass a smaller surface car park."

To make the intent of the alterations clear.

If this is the Gateway Masterplan are these car parks in the Gateway? What is the future use of the Boston Tea Party car park?

Para 4.4 if the "Birmingham Road forms part of the major artery into the town however the sense of arrival into the town centre is underwhelming and non-descript" and is a true comment, what does that say about all of the others?

There is a similar problem with the junction of Arden Street and Greenhill Street. Surely this is also a gateway?

This is in addition to the comments on transportation above.

Para. 4.6 refers to the coach park and multi-storey car park. The removal of these from the site represents an opportunity for a proposed heritage centre and also to open the space where the car park is with lower level development of an open space or both which is the sort of thing shown in the draft SPD. But the removal of both bus and coach parking is problematic in itself and the creation of a multi-storey car park in Arden Street just moves the problem across the road. One of the problems with the present car parks and with the draft SPD is that both are next to existing buildings. This is not shown correctly as "overlooking from and towards neighbouring buildings" on page 30 of the draft SPD.

On page 16 the current multi-storey site, the houses recently constructed are not shown in outline on the south side of it but the former garages are. There is a potential overlooking problem here which should be shown on page 30.



In Arden Street the overlooking problem is obvious and dependent on levels there is a similar problem with housing on the other side of the access to the hospital on the southern side. What would make you assume that the pedestrian traffic generated would all want to cross Arden Street at the northern end? The potential for pedestrian/traffic conflict is obvious.

Page 23. LISTED BUILDINGS IN A CONSERVATION AREA

The comments about listed buildings within the conservation area in the draft SPD are noted. Conservation of privately owned buildings within the town and conservation area has been inconsistently applied to say the least. The fact that some of these neglected parts of the conservation area may also be listed structures and in clear view of members of the public, be they residents or visitors does not seem to make any difference.



Ironically, there are three gateways to the former Mason Croft property in the vicinity of Elizabeth House. One is certainly listed and obscured. One has received some attention and is in good condition. One requires attention. All are within the conservation area and it just goes to show how haphazard the policies are being implemented under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 within the conservation area.

37 to 43 Birmingham Road have been out of use for a very long time. Too long. The listing of 45 Birmingham Road should be pursued with the intent of a block listing and restoration of 5 town houses which would be near to the town centre. There was an access to 45 Birmingham Road from the street but this has been removed with the construction of the former Conrad Construction building on the corner and would be very awkward for use with the current road layout. The curtilages to the rear are within the conservation area and vehicular access can be gained from the rear outside the present curtilages from adjacent to 37 Birmingham Road. The potential sales value of town houses should not be missed to be set against the costs. Other uses should be discouraged. There are more than enough hotels and planned hotels in a town which are within commuting distances from many cities and there is potential for small shops other than in the Birmingham Road should that be thought necessary.



45 Birmingham Road is a rare example in Stratford of Victorian architecture, partly similar in style but not the same as found in Union Street (1860s) or at the railway station which is standard GWR Romanesque. It is later than the houses adjoining it to the left in the photo above and is of the period of the Artisan's Cottages in Mansell Street and Arden Street of J J Nason's Labours Dwellings Company of 1875 and what appears to be late gothic of 2-7 Arden Street but are of 1866.

It should also be pointed out that access to the proposed heritage centre or Henley Street would be limited by or not be via this part of the Birmingham Road if the proposals in the draft SPD were carried out but this is a major route through the town. Residents and visitors would benefit from bringing these properties back into use. Historic England guidance on Vacant Historic Buildings is “the best way to keep a building is to keep it occupied, even if the use is on a temporary or partial basis.” It goes on to say “However such buildings may become centrepieces of future regeneration and safeguarding will allow them to fulfil their social, cultural and economic potential.”

Now these 5 buildings are not the centrepiece of the Gateway project but they are very visible and prominent and this was commented on by passers-by when I took the picture of 45 Birmingham Road. This has gone on for far too long.

Page 26. PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS

This needs to be redrawn and thought out again. Cycle routes are shown that are not marked out, some are shown that are and at least one that is marked out is not shown. It also needs to be considered in conjunction with the drawing on page 30 showing areas of conflict which also needs to be redrawn.



For example one of these is a cycleway in the Alcester Road and the other leads to the Alcester Road but is not marked as such.

Page 27. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Clearly the information provided for the draft SPD was out of date. There seems to be no public transport input into this SPD. The bus stops shown should be checked before issue. 5 of them shown no longer exist or are not used and the temporary bus stop in Windsor Street could not be used if pedestrianisation as proposed took place as per the SPD.

No account has been taken in this draft SPD of the regular street closures in the town centre. The coach park is used as the bus terminus on these occasions. If the coach park is removed then there is not enough room in Windsor Street for bus passengers and coach passengers. So with the stops in Bridge Street and Wood Street as shown taken out there is only Guild Street left which becomes another area of pedestrian/traffic conflict because these (only one shown) are also temporary.

Something rarely considered by the tourist industry is the subject of users of public transport. This is even if they are coming to their own sites or events. If “William Shakespeare is one of the major cultural assets in the UK” as stated on page 7 it must be asked how do the punters attend the event? You would think that public transport would be a priority given the congestion of the town on normal day with added street closures on others. You cannot do all of these things at the same time without causing confusion. The differences between the numbers of streets closed are a cause of confusion in themselves. One solution has been suggested would be to make the vacant site in Windsor Street (Guyvers/cinema) a bus stop and this could be achieved via an amendment to the SPD. But even this could not be used when Rother Street and Greenhill Street are blocked.

This needs to be thought through carefully in conjunction with the approved SDC Transport Strategy 2018 otherwise all you are doing is moving an existing problem to another street.

Para 4.58 There is the opportunity to provide a World Class Shakespeare Centre but only if the existing uses can be accommodated elsewhere.

Para 4.59 The sense of arrival depends as much on redevelopments within the Canal Quarter as in the Gateway. In the adopted Canal Quarter SPD the corner of Arden Street and Birmingham Road is seen as a long term project.

Para 4.60 This 'architectural landmark' is within the Canal Quarter area and is shown as 'long term' in it.

Para 4.61 The pedestrian connection shown further complicates the Arden Street pedestrian/traffic conflict. It does not lead anywhere. In the Canal Quarter SPD there is an indication of a secondary street, the block on the corner of Arden Street is shown as 'mixed use' with an "opportunity for a future landmark building" but is shown as "long term" in the SPD. The connection shown neither leads to the coaches nor the cars nor the shops. There has to be some attraction at the northern end of the site to attract the visitors if not the locals. So we are looking at two 'landmark buildings' facing each other at the junction.

Para. 4.62 Remove the traffic from Windsor Street just adds to the same problems elsewhere. This is just another pedestrianisation in a constrained town centre.

Para 4.63 Removing the car parking to the other side of Arden Street just makes it one more road to cross and further to walk to the town or the Shakespeare Centre.

Para 4.64 Improving the surrounding realm could be by providing an open space link towards the Canal Quarter where the multi-storey car park is but this is not as shown in the SPD. Unfortunately, the opportunity for development was lost when the houses were built on either side of the car park and its removal would be to their advantage. This could leave a possibility of construction of low-level buildings on site or an open space. Then the modern office building beyond that which is currently occupied would also have to be removed or the usable site would be very narrow. Years ago, before all of these buildings mentioned were built you could walk down the ramp shown from directly opposite the car park in Arden Street below and round the car park to Windsor Street but then it was shut off.



Para 4.65 Some traffic removed will make little impact of neighbouring streets but the buses and coaches will.

Para 4.66 Yes during the tourist season but not all of the year which leaves the concept of an empty precinct.

Para 4.67 The route through is very narrow as shown and there is little scope for greenery at ground level and the point about roofscapes is noted.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the site would have been easier to plan if the recent neighbouring developments had not taken place. Moving things off site in most cases creates the same problems elsewhere and the same applies to expanding tourism versus other users and occupants of the town centre. The real problem is trying to do too many things in a constrained space.

Even without a Gateway Masterplan the worst thing of all is the unoccupied premises on site and in particular the 5 houses which could be brought back into use. Then there is the problem of the unoccupied commercial premises which even if they were demolished would leave a long space facing Arden Street and the road junction. There could be many potential purchasers of a vacant site but not all would want to build something acceptable in the position as a gateway to Stratford. These matters should be resolved before this process can go any further.