

Stratford Gateway SPD Response

Vision

WCC welcomes the SPD as a fantastic opportunity for the town, and supports the vision presented therein. We believe there is scope to broaden the sustainable aspects of the vision to recognise the importance of responding, through regeneration programmes, to climate change. We agree on the importance of creating a sense of arrival to the town and would like to see a greater emphasis on the parts of the SPD which focus on the people who will be using the space as residents, tourists, and business owners. Finally, we believe the vision would benefit from greater clarity over priority setting – for example, if the visitor offer is the priority, then what will arrival and use look like? If the focus is regeneration, how will businesses/residences be serviced and accessed, and what facilities or services will be available?

Context

The chance to address some of the issues around Birmingham Road is a welcome one, and we are pleased to see the emphasis on active travel and prioritising pedestrian spaces. We would encourage colleagues at SDC to engage with WCC Transport Planning at the earliest opportunity to help develop this aspect of the plan and mitigate the overall impact on the network. WCC has recently developed an updated traffic model for the Stratford Area and an assessment of the implications of any changes to the highway network will be required to support the proposals and will need to consider all modes. Any traffic modelling to support the development of the proposals should consider the full implications of the masterplan rather than assessing individual components in isolation, and we would look to agree the methodology and scope for the traffic modelling and Transport Assessment with you during pre-application discussions. To assist with developing this aspect of the plan, and given the potential impact of the proposals on travel and the strategic location of the development site within the local transport and movement network, WCC suggest it would also be appropriate for the Masterplan to reference the key national and local transport policy documents within the planning policy framework including:

National: Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain; The National Bus Strategy; Gear Change - A Bold Vision for Walking and Cycling

Local: Local Transport Plan; Bus Service Improvement Plan; Warwickshire Rail Strategy; Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan

There is also potential to better utilise the Stratford Park and Ride to provide transport to and from the new site, and answer some of the issues around parking. We speculate that there may be some resistance to changes in vehicular access, both from private vehicles and coaches, and we would recommend consultation with the coach companies to address this, if they have not already been engaged in the process.

We welcome the improved connectivity this would provide for Stratford Hospital from the town but are concerned that the SPD has not addressed the question of ensuring infrastructure meets the challenge of the demographic so it is accessible to the community as a whole. We would like to see a commitment on co-production to ensure that what is delivered is of benefit to the whole community, and that both the findings in the 2023 Chief Medical Officer's annual report ([Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2023: health in an](#)

[ageing society - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) and the recommendations in the upcoming JSNA on Aging Well (due Jan 2024) be considered in the final designs.

There is a further question around predicted visitor numbers to the World Shakespeare Centre, and the impact that would have on transport, whether through increased traffic at the site, or increased demand for parking. We would suggest a greater consideration of the opportunities for wider connectivity, particularly to the train station, to build on the 'Welcoming' theme. Further detail on connected cycle routes, a more attractive bus arrival/departure area, and a greater emphasis on how the new site would connect to the Canal Quarter SPD could help to present a coherent vision of the town.

From a public realm perspective, there are excellent examples of the integration of flood risk management and green/blue corridors in the Sheffield Grey to Green Scheme which could be taken as a guide to create an attractive space which increases biodiversity and improves water management. We encourage attempts to integrate SUDS wherever possible (new buildings or retrofitting to the current landscape), particularly multi-benefit SUDS which will help improve the area and the drainage. There is help and advice in the WCC SUDS guide, available here: [WCCC-453486374-170 \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/WCCC-453486374-170). We suggest looking to use the urban greening factor metric within Natural England's Green Infrastructure framework in addition to the mandatory biodiversity net gain metric for ecological development, to ensure that the new development presents a significant improvement on the existing site. It also seems worthwhile to consider the possibility of some element of energy generation for district heat provision.

Framework

In general, we agree with the principles, and feel there is a clear opportunity to improve resident and visitor experiences of the town and increase length of stay. We would like to see more detail on the wider use of the site beyond the World Shakespeare Centre and wonder if the development of the site may pose a risk to the wider town offer – if visitors will come to the Gateway, “see Shakespeare” and leave again, without connecting with the rest of the town. A particular emphasis on visitor journeys and wayfinding may be of use to mitigate this and consider how visitors will experience the town as a whole. We also suggest an additional principle be added, relating to a mix of uses for the site to create a diverse space, supporting active frontages and a vibrant public realm.

We welcome the Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment and note the caveat relating to archaeological remains not being part of the study. We would highlight that this site is in an area of significant archaeological potential, with most of the site lying within the probable extent of the planned medieval borough of Stratford-upon-Avon (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA9582). There is a potential for archaeological features to survive across this area, and to be disturbed or destroyed by any proposed redevelopment. This could include archaeological features worthy of conservation. A detailed archaeological assessment of the site should be undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced archaeological specialists, the first phase of which should comprise detailed desk-based assessment. This should be followed by a programme of evaluative fieldwork, the scope of which should be informed by the initial phase of assessment. This will help to define the character, extent, state of preservation and importance of any archaeological remains present, and will also provide information useful for identifying potential options for minimising or avoiding damage to them.

We would recommend that this be undertaken at the earliest opportunity to help ensure that the results can inform any design proposals being brought forward. We would recommend that this be highlighted in the Supplementary Planning Document.

We would also highlight that the red dashed circle on the first plan on page 19 of the draft Supplementary Planning Document incorrectly suggests that the site lies further to the north than it does. The circle appears to define the same area as a black dashed circle used elsewhere in the report to denote the 'gateway' area, but in the absence of a key, and as a similar circle is used on the final plan on the same page to correctly indicate the general area of the site, most readers will presume that it is indicating the site location and therefore presume that the majority of the site lies outside of the area of medieval planned town shown on this plan and referred to in the text below.

We would also note that it is not clear what the 'archaeological interest zone' referred to in para. 4.57 is, where it is located, and where further information on this zone can be obtained. It is also not clear on what information this presumably defined zone is based.