



Stratford-upon-Avon neighbourhood plan

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REGENERATION PROJECT BRIEFING NOTE

Issued 14 June 2013

Townspeople have expressed a concern about the over-development of Stratford. Feedback the Steering Group has received is that residents:

- ✦ want brownfield land developed before greenfield for housing;
- ✦ do not want uncontrolled housing development on the Town Fringes;
- ✦ want housing development to be lower density towards the Town boundary with the countryside;
- ✦ want improved traffic flows, and reduction in congestion;
- ✦ want improvement to the environment and to maximise natural resources.

However, the Steering Group recognises that for Stratford to maintain a healthy population mix and to thrive economically there will have to be future development for housing and employment uses, the question is where this should best be in the interests of the Town.

Due to the past expansion of Stratford, many business/industrial/employment uses in the town are now poorly located within residential areas, or have poor ease of access, or result in HGV traffic that has to pass through the Town unnecessarily (eg car sales in Western Road/ Warehousing and Distribution in Timothys Bridge Road/ Industrial in Masons Road/ Builders Merchants in Wharf Road/Maybrook Road).

Many commercial properties on Masons Road, part of Timothys Bridge Road and Western Road are now of poor quality, according to the District Council's Employment Land Assessment, and need significant investment to bring them up to a good standard so as to compete with employment land sites in other main towns elsewhere in the region, but they are in the wrong place to attract the necessary investment.

Proposal:

Create a purpose-built Business and Employment Area (or areas) close to the A46, the main trunk road serving the town, and to the Stratford Parkway Station and Park-and-Ride. This could absorb the unneighbourly and inappropriate uses in Town, provide for the future growth as previously envisaged in the Core Strategy, and encourage new entrepreneurial and high-value businesses.

While this Business & Employment Area itself may have to be built on a greenfield site on the fringes of the Town, this could free previously developed land close to the town for residential uses which could be built at higher housing densities than would be acceptable on any greenfield site.

What would it need?

- ✦ A new Business & Employment Area (or areas) to replace dispossessed existing sites and allowing for expansion (estimated at up to a total of 30-35 ha (gross));
- ✦ A number of sites have been suggested and 4 areas are considered worthy of examination and Stratford District Council is now seriously considering 2 of them.

What could it achieve?

- ✦ An improved business and employment environment assisting in attracting inward investment and new businesses.
- ✦ Residential or mixed uses on the Canal between Birmingham Road (One Elm) and Timothys Bridge (an extension to the Canal Quarter already being considered in the Core Strategy);
- ✦ Regeneration of Canal area and creation of a leisure corridor as an attractive feature for the town;
- ✦ Residential uses on Masons Road (replacing existing unneighbourly industrial uses);
- ✦ A first estimate is that between 720 and 1,200 new homes could be created in these Regeneration Areas but this needs further detailed examination.

We recognise that much more work would be needed before firm land allocations could be proposed as policies in the NDP, but the Steering Group, the Town Council and organisations we have briefed agree that the proposal is sound in principle. We are hoping it would be included as an acceptable strategic direction in the Core Strategy and will then lead to acceptable policies in the NDP. Failure to grasp this regeneration opportunity would most likely lead to a progressive decline in the quality of employment areas and the subsequent loss of jobs and inward investment, and the further loss of greenfield sites on the edge of Town to housing.

Update as at 30 July 2013

The Stratford District Council approved the Intended Proposed Core Strategy (CS) at its meeting on 22 July 2013. The CS included a Stratford Regeneration Zone (SRZ) and 2 employment areas in its proposals SUA.1, SUA.2 and SUA.3. Maps are attached. It should be noted that the SRZ effectively covers the Zones 1–4 included in the Neighbourhood Plan team's proposal, with the addition of the building on the corner of Clopton Road/Birmingham Road (ex Intrum Justicia – Warwick House?), but does not include Zone 5 (Masons Road north of the canal bridge) so would not allow the effective completion of a Canal corridor. **The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group welcomes the SRZ but would recommend that Zone 5 should be included in the SRZ for its long term completion and to be included in a Master Plan for the regeneration of the area.**

The Stratford on Avon Strategic Transport Assessment Phase 2 Modelling Report that was accepted into the evidence base at the same Council meeting, had modelled the traffic effects of housing in the SRZ, concluding that there would be an increase in volume and journey times on all routes through the town at peak morning and evening times (ie an increase in congestion), but had not factored in any mitigation measures that might reduce the impact. **The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group welcomed the recommendation in the Report that an isolated assessment of the impacts of the SRZ policy application, specifically in terms of localised impacts on delay and queuing, should be undertaken with a view to determining a localised mitigation strategy to accompany the SRZ, but that this assessment should also take account of the effects of relocating the employment areas into sites close to the A46.**

As the SRZ is now a specific proposal in the CS, it becomes the responsibility of the SDC to undertake formal consultation, with which the Neighbourhood Plan team are cooperating, and to undertake any sustainability appraisals thus relieving the Neighbourhood Plan of that responsibility. The Neighbourhood Plan intends, however, to apply policies that relate to the design and integration of development in the SRZ and proposed employment areas. There is also the need to ensure that Use Classes B2 and B8 are adequately accommodated in the new employment areas.