

# Whittington Parish Council response to Wychavon Town Supplementary Planning document Survey (SPD)

## SPD quotes

*'Wychavon Town – a naturally designed, perfectly placed new town. Designed to set the standard nationally of new town developments, inspired by landscape setting harmonious with environment'*

*'A memorable and attractive 'front door' to arriving traffic'*

*'An all-modes boulevard – attractive street'*

*'Woodhall – retention of existing hedgerows, trees and irreplicable habitats – forms basis of landscape framework'*

The parish council welcomes the Wychavon Town SPD and its recognition of the importance of landscaping, green buffers, and the retention of key views and natural features. Proposals such as structural planting, playing fields to buffer existing properties, the protection of hedgerows and trees and the early implementation of the 'Boulevard' are all fully endorsed as they will enhance the character of the area and benefit both new and existing communities.

However there are a number of areas that are of extreme concern to existing communities and the parish council which need more careful consideration. It is felt that the SPD does not go far enough to safeguard the needs of existing residents or to ensure the timely and practical delivery of supporting infrastructure.

Traffic management, particularly during construction, remains unclear, with risks to the B4084 and surrounding local roads. Existing communities, especially within Whittington, are not sufficiently recognised, with community benefits being unevenly distributed, and proposed employment uses raise concerns regarding compatibility with residential areas and long-term HGV impacts. These issues require further careful consideration before the SPD is finalised.

## Boulevard and Traffic Management

The document provides no clear detail on how construction traffic will be managed or the proposed sequencing of development.

Later-stage planning proposes the introduction of the "Boulevard," potentially not until after 2041. Until that point, all construction and development traffic would be expected to use the B4084. This does not represent a sound or sustainable plan, given the likely impacts in terms of noise and air pollution, road safety, pedestrian safety, and the suitability of a B-road for sustained high volumes of heavy goods vehicles.

Page 73 states: "This is particularly the case for early development of the reimagined B4084 corridor which will underpin sustainable movement throughout the new settlement." Early delivery of this corridor is essential during the construction phase and beyond. However, the Merton College planning application appears to disregard the Boulevard concept entirely, undermining the SPD's stated objectives.

It should be recognised that construction HGVs are likely to operate at gross vehicle weights of up to 44 tonnes, or under Special Types General Orders (STGO), for which there are no standard size or weight limits. These vehicles will be required to transport large cranes and specialist construction equipment and should not be regarded as typical or average HGV traffic.

Paragraph 4.74 refers to adapting the network over time and achieving an optimal long-term design "as and when needed." This approach creates the potential for incremental expansion of the B4084

into a dual carriageway rather than a landscaped boulevard, particularly when read alongside paragraph 5.33, which refers to increasing highway capacity “if required.”

Page 136 states that M5 Junction 7 “needs to be a dual carriageway.” This has significant implications for traffic volumes and road infrastructure that are not adequately addressed elsewhere in the document.

Paragraph 4.75 states that the B4084 will be adapted to minimise impacts on existing residents, but provides no explanation of how this will be achieved or what specific mitigation measures are proposed.

Rapid development of employment land is referenced, yet there is no corresponding commitment to early delivery of the Boulevard, improvements to the B4084, or housing infrastructure (paragraph 4.44), creating a clear imbalance in development priorities.

Paragraph 5.34 states that the B4084 corridor allows local authorities, landowners, and promoters to achieve the outcomes they require; however, there is no clear consideration of the impacts on existing residents or how their interests will be protected.

An alternative option (Option 2), involving two all-modes streets through the Northern and Western neighbourhoods, is considered but rejected on the basis that it may conflict with a proposed new primary school. As neither the roads nor the school have yet been built, this option could represent a viable and less harmful alternative to placing significant traffic impacts on existing communities. The rationale for rejecting this option is unclear, particularly given the stated intention to consider the needs of current residents.

Paragraph 5.44 proposes shuttle-working traffic signals on the bridge until at least 1,500 homes are built. It is questionable whether this would be a workable or safe solution, particularly given the size and frequency of construction vehicles expected during this period.

The SPD continues to show a traffic junction opposite existing residential properties on Pershore Road. This proposal has been widely objected to as part of the Merton College planning application and remains a significant unresolved concern and a high priority for local residents and the parish council.

Pages 32–34 identify active travel routes connecting to Church Lane, Whittington, and Woodbury Lane, Norton. Both roads currently function as dangerous rat-runs and are unsuitable for increased pedestrian and cycle movements without significant safety improvements.

Pages 35–38 consider vehicle movements but omit Woodbury Lane and Church Lane, despite both routes being busy at present and likely to experience increased traffic as a direct consequence of the new town development. This will occur both during construction and post-completion, as drivers seek to avoid congestion, increased traffic volumes, and roadworks on main routes.

Page 178 discusses S106 infrastructure contributions. These will impact the Whittington traffic island and two major “rat runs” (Church Lane, Whittington and Woodbury Lane, Norton). S106 funding should be considered to deliver traffic-calming measures, including:

- Traffic lights at peak times on Whittington traffic island
- Pedestrian crossing on the northbound slip road of the M5, Junction 7
- 20mph zones on Church Lane and Woodbury Lane

## **Parish of Whittington and Existing Communities**

SPD Page 161 (Figure 66) refers to a “historic village” but does not appear to acknowledge or include current residents living in the area. Clarification is required as to why existing communities are excluded. Additionally, the proposed naming of the new settlement area as “Whittington Fields” is wholly inappropriate, as the site does not lie within the parish of Whittington.

Paragraph 5.12 states that the Stoulton green buffer will be retained to provide a settlement gap between the new development and the historic village. Existing residents in the Whittington area are also part of an established and historic settlement, yet are not afforded the same level of consideration or protection. This apparent inconsistency needs to be adequately addressed.

The SPD does not clearly set out how key impacts on existing residents will be mitigated in practical and measurable terms, including noise, light pollution, air pollution, vibration, traffic disturbance, and the cumulative effects on health and wellbeing.

On Page 15, the SPD states that the development will “improve health and wellbeing.” It is unclear to whom this benefit applies, as there is no explicit consideration of how the health and wellbeing of current residents will be protected or enhanced.

Page 72 proposes a Gypsy and Traveller site beneath Junction 7, forming part of the gateway to the new town and adjacent industrial and warehouse development. Subjecting new traveller residents to sustained high levels of noise, light pollution, air pollution, and increased traffic volumes in this location raises serious concerns regarding living conditions and wellbeing.

Page 171 states that existing users and properties within Wychavon Town should be retained, protected, and incorporated into the design in a sensitive and positive manner. It also emphasises the need to demonstrate a positive spatial and functional relationship with existing communities adjacent to Wychavon Town. This approach is supported.

## **Landscaping and Green Space**

There is no clear explanation of the benefits this development will deliver for the Parish of Whittington. In particular, the SPD does not identify any additional provision of green space, allotments, parks, or recreational facilities within the Whittington parish boundary.

Page 123 refers to the retention of views towards the Malvern Hills and Crookbarrow Hill (Whittington Tump). These views are unlikely to be preserved if warehouse development is permitted south of the B4084 at Junction 7. The SPD also refers to the retention of existing hedgerows and protected trees (TPOs), which again does not appear to be reflected in the Merton College planning application.

Page 124 supports the retention of existing hedgerows, which is welcomed. However, the statement regarding the “use of new structural landscaping and existing topography to relate new development sensitively to existing residential uses on Pershore Road” lacks clarity. Further explanation is required to demonstrate how this approach would work in practice and how it would effectively protect existing residents.

Page 125 proposes playing fields to provide a buffer to existing properties, incorporating existing hedgerows. This approach is welcomed as a means of protecting current residents.

Page 127 references new structural planting to provide protection for existing residents. This is supported and should be implemented as a priority.

Page 129 proposes a green gateway at the M5 arrival into the town, primarily landscape-focused but including visible residential and smaller-scale employment uses to reinforce welcoming elements. This is supported, and the gateway should be designed to deliver a strong visual impact with the “wow” factor.

Pages 161–163 address the preservation of views towards Crookbarrow Hill. Retention of these views will depend on the height and positioning of warehouses, particularly those on higher ground close to the B4084.

Page 81 addresses parks and green community space. Residents of Whittington village, Wildmore, Whittington Walk, and nearby areas of Worcester have historically enjoyed access to green space and farmland via public rights of way. Much of this green space will be lost due to business parks,

employment land, and housing development. While the new Wychavon Town neighbourhoods are provided with parks and community green space, existing communities such as Whittington and nearby Worcester areas appear to have been excluded. Consideration should be given to using S106 funding to address this imbalance, for example through the purchase and protection of Church Farm as publicly accessible green space.

### **Planned Employment Opportunities**

Page 36 refers to the provision of “regional scale logistics.” The introduction of a regional logistics facility adjacent to, or within, a residential area is fundamentally at odds with the stated aspiration to support local employment opportunities and reduce vehicle movements. Regional logistics uses are likely to generate significant HGV traffic from across the country, directly undermining these objectives.

Page 36 (Figure 16) identifies an area of “strategic employment” that appears to encompass existing residential properties, which are clearly not suitable or intended for warehouse or industrial use. This raises serious concerns about whether current residents are being adequately recognised and considered, or effectively omitted from the SPD’s spatial analysis.

Appendix 1 (Page 104) refers to Use Class E(g), noting that light industrial uses should be capable of operating within residential areas without detriment. It is unclear how this principle will be enforced in practice, particularly as it does not appear to be reflected in the Merton College planning application. Clear safeguards and criteria are required to ensure compliance and to protect existing residents from adverse impacts.

### **Green Spaces**

The Parish Council was previously advised that a Green Space Officer would be engaged to help inform the management and design of the proposed green areas. To date, this has not occurred. Given that Whittington will have limited green space as part of the proposals, the Parish Council considers it important to understand why such a small allocation has been made and how these areas are intended to be designed, managed and used in practice. Greater clarity on this matter would be welcomed.

### **Additional Comments**

The SPD does not clearly set out a foul wastewater strategy. Further detail is required to explain how wastewater will be managed, including capacity, phasing, and any necessary infrastructure upgrades.

The framework masterplan refers to a “consensus masterplan”; however, it is unclear whether all landowners and developers have agreed to this approach. Current planning submissions, including the Merton College application, suggest that this consensus has not been achieved.

There is uncertainty regarding the practical value and enforceability of the masterplan. Clarification is needed as to whether Wychavon District Council, Worcester City Council, and Malvern Hills District Council will actively require and deliver the masterplan’s principles, or whether it functions merely as an aspirational document with limited weight in decision-making.

In conclusion, Whittington Parish Council reaffirms its support for the Wychavon SPD, yet critical ambiguities remain. We urge a more robust commitment to mitigating impacts on existing residents in Whittington and Worcester—both on the B4084 immediately east of M5 J7 and also those to the west of the motorway junction.