

RUSHWICK PARISH COUNCIL

SOUTH WORCESTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW – PREFERRED OPTIONS

Comments from Rushwick Parish Council December 2019

SECTION 17.3 SWDPR 51 RUSHWICK EXPANDED SETTLEMENT

At a public consultation event held by Worcester City, Malvern Hills and Wyre Forrest Councils (attended by approx. 350 persons) and at subsequent public meeting held by Rushwick Parish Council (attended by approx. 100 persons) much interest was shown by attendees and great dismay, consternation and anger expressed. The Parish Councils comments are derived from feedback offered at the above meeting.

The concept of providing a rail station with 500 car parking spaces to move transportation from the road to rail is flawed and unrealistic.

The new rail halt will not reduce road vehicle use; providing car parking for 500 vehicles is similar to providing a 'Parkway' facility similar in size to Parkway stations at Warwick and Tiverton, which are both located outside settlements, near to significant towns on railway lines with direct access to London. The size of car parking is also similar to the number of parking spaces at the newly developed Worcester Parkway station which has been designed to provide direct access for commuters to Birmingham and Bristol. It will encourage traffic into an area which is already congested and will incur further congestion once the 2150 houses proposed at Temple Laugherne (SWDP45/2) are completed.

Unless public transport journeys are equally convenient to that of car use and journeys to ALL areas of Worcester's residential, workplace and shopping areas then this transport policy will fail. In particular the major employment centres in Worcester are in the Blackpole, Ronkswood and Nunnery Wood areas east of the city. None of these are served by rail. Access to these areas from Rushwick requires a train followed by at least one bus connection.

Consequently, we feel that Worcester's wider public transport services and networks are not sufficiently developed, connected or co-ordinated to make this public sector transport-based initiative usable, effective nor successful

RUSHWICK PARISH COUNCIL CONSIDER THE LOCAL RAIL LINK TO BE FLAWED FOR LOCAL TRAVEL.

The meeting felt the premise of encouraging walking and cycling to the proposed new rail halt given the distances between built areas in Rushwick's wider rural setting to be unrealistic. The only walking that is likely to be encouraged was that of people arriving by car to use rail halt, parking in Rushwick built areas to avoid parking fees at halt

carpark and then walking to the halt. This will create a safety hazard within the village.

Rail transport is not going to attract new passengers given current experience of rail passengers, as seen in the news, of expensive fares, overcrowded carriages, cancelled services and underperforming Rail Franchises.

Rushwick Parish Council (RPC) considers that what Worcester requires is better road infrastructure initiatives as in the West of Worcester 'Northern Relief Road'.

The use of road vehicles is only going to increase, as can be seen in other Central Government initiatives in planning for all new dwellings and workplaces to be provided with external charging points for vehicles, as are all public bodies, buildings, services and parking areas.

The populist move away from high street buying to online purchasing is ever expanding in all sectors. This expansion in the range of goods, commodities and services will bring more and more delivery vehicles to our motorways, main roads, highways, streets, leafy lanes, and byways.

Rail will do little to meet this need, RPC therefore consider this flawed.

RPC believes that what is required in Worcester and Malvern Hills area is for the use of derelict and unused brown filed sites in Worcester City to be 'built out' before any further green field sites in our rural villages and towns are developed, where good public transport links already exist.

To help preserve Category2 Villages like Rushwick, Settlements like Broadmore Green and Villages like Powick, Leigh Sinton, Lower Broadheath and Broadheath our planners and strategic thinkers need to be more creative and innovative and consider the creation of a new town, in an area with a good motorway link, access to other centres for employment, education, rail network, commerce and leisure. EG, land at M5-J8 with good links to and from North Wales, Gloucester and Cheltenham centres.

Failing that to deliver the Northern Relief Road to complement road infrastructure improvements already delivered in the area and to do it in the time line of this SWDPR. Infrastructure improvements need to be planned out, fully costed and delivered prior to SWDPR plan actions are delivered. Delay until after rail halt is completed with the attendant car park, new dwellings and employment initiatives will only cause further road chaos in the area and delay any commercial new developments bringing employment opportunities to the area.

Section 7.22 Parking Policy

RPC believe current parking policy to be flawed and not addressed in this Review.

The narrow estate roads currently permitted within developments, the use of 'shared surfaces' and an insufficient requirement for householder car parking standards is already being experienced in Rushwick, in the new developments of Callows Orchard, Rushwick Gardens and through our Village streets. This 'on curb' parking is now the norm and instances of 'neighbour dispute' are common. This type of nuisance is being reported by emergency services and refuse collection crews, who experience impeded access to properties.

RPC echo comments from Lower Broadheath Parish Council and commend them to ALL Officers/Inspectors considering this feedback.

RPC reproduce here those they feel particularly relevant to Rushwick.

"Intercity

We support this initiative but also point out some operational reservations.

A key out of town commuter journey will be to Birmingham or Worcester Parkway to access the additional East and North / South rail link. An examination of the current timetable shows that such a link to Worcester Parkway from Rushwick has either an hourly service or on occasions a 30 min service, provided by the single line working from Hereford.

To make commuting attractive a more frequent service is needed for both train and bus to the major employment centres at peak times. The timetable illustrates that there is adequate time for a tram or light rail service to interpose between the longer distant trains. Such a light rail addition could also encourage rail commuting between Throckmorton (Via Pershore) and Worcester Parkway / Malvern and onwards to Birmingham / Bristol."

"Does rail travel encourage additional employer's?

The concept is significantly flawed in terms of exploiting the Industrial land and employment opportunities for Rushwick and West Worcester in general.

Commerce entirely depends upon road transportation. Despite the introduction of the duelling of the A4440, the bottleneck caused by the A38 cross-traffic at the Ketch will continue, supplemented by the extra traffic from 800 homes in Malvern and 2375 homes at Temple Laugherne.

Increased, well paid employment, will not be achieved by the addition of a rail station at Rushwick.

We consider that the West of Worcester Link road currently under consideration coupled to a further extension to the Hallow road A443, to be a superior investment for the longer-term industrial growth, business rate revenue and well-being of the communities on the west side of the Severn."

“1000 new homes in Rushwick

Before this comes to pass there is another serious situation that requires urgent attention.

Some of the land proposed in support of the expansion of Rushwick is located upon either side of Claphill lane. The access to Claphill lane from the A44 is hard by the current location of the proposed development entry roundabout proposed by the Hallam Land application 13/01049/OUT. The Outline planning permission decision is currently extended until January 2020

Claphill Lane

A 44

Outline planning permission should not be granted until the road system is rationalised into one which will suit both Rushwick and Hallam land sites; the traffic flow along the A44 and to the proposed West Worcester Link Road.

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Settlement Hierarchy

Rushwick Parish Council notes that the SWDP review has classified Rushwick as an Urban Area (3) which ranks us to a similar settlement to Pershore (2011 population 7125), Tenbury Wells (3800) and Upton upon Severn (2900) and is defined as a settlement with a ‘local service centre function’.

In the current retail climate and because of the closeness of Rushwick to facilities in St Johns and Worcester centre and the lack of history of any ‘High Street retail facilities (which is contrary to the other settlements which have a long-established history) we believe this ill-considered scheme to be flawed, unrealistic and undeliverable. The provision of an additional 1000 houses will only result in further car journeys increasing the existing and foreseeable congestion in this area.

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