

- Legal I Marriott – agreed.
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** (*If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps*)

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Stratford on Avon Area Committee - 16th May 2007

Warwickshire County Council Response to Stratford-upon-Avon Urban Design Framework

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy

Recommendation

Supports the publication of an urban design framework to guide the future proposals for Stratford-upon-Avon and endorses the County Council Officers' response to the draft Urban Design Framework as set out in **Appendix A**.

1. Background to the Urban Design Framework for Stratford-upon-Avon

- 1.1 Stratford-upon-Avon's aspiration to become a world class town necessitates physical change so as to accommodate the required facilities and a better environment that realises its historic legacy and associations. Public realm, environmental quality and transportation issues in the town are negatively affecting enjoyment of the town and so as to arrest and address this, significant improvements, including development and change is required.
- 1.2 The Urban Design Framework for Stratford-upon-Avon provides a strategy that is aimed at delivering change over the next 20 years. It is therefore essential that the spatial strategy as defined in the document of movement, public realm and development is reviewed in the policy context of arresting economic decline. The review must also address factors that ensure the long-term sustainability of the world-renowned brand of Shakespeare's legacy and Stratford's heritage.
- 1.3 The Urban Design Framework (UDF) is a vision for Stratford that is being steered by the World Class Strategy Group of which Warwickshire County Council is a partner. The UDF has been prepared on behalf of the Partners by consultants Urban Practitioners. The UDF document is a welcome starting point for translating **World Class Stratford** into a reality.

2. Strategy, Benefits and Merits

- 2.1 The Local Plan for Stratford-upon-Avon was adopted in July 2006, and work is now underway to produce the Local Development Framework which will eventually replace it.

- 2.2 The UDF seeks to translate the World Class Vision into physical and spatial projects which when taken together will transform the town. It is a statutory requirement that the draft UDF has a significant amount of formal and informal consultation.
- 2.3 The final Framework will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by Stratford District Council. It will be used by planners, developers and the community to guide planning and design decisions, providing clarity and certainty. In particular the document is intended to assist the control of development on key identified sites.
- 2.4 Redevelopment of the Bridgeway area is the most important opportunity for Stratford, particularly in view of its strategic location and being a convergence area for various forms of traffic and tourist activities. Whilst the development is an absolute necessity, the UDF recognises that change promoted to the Bridgeway area and riverfront corridor may not be within the spirit of the Area of Restraint identified under Local Plan Policy EF3 where exceptional circumstances have to be demonstrated for development.
- 2.5 There are three parts to the Framework – a movement strategy, a landscape and public realm strategy and a development strategy. It is intended that together these three elements will steer the town towards a bright economic future and help deliver a world class environment.
- 2.6 Key aspects of the UDF are referenced below. **Appendix A** lists detailed officer comments already passed to SDC and response received from the Consultants.

3. Movement Strategy

- 3.1 The Movement Strategy within the UDF aims for a world class transport system, but recognises that with a population of only 25,000 this is a challenge. Nonetheless given the high daytime visitor population, commuter and tourist demand could potentially support a high quality public transport strategy.
- 3.2 The movement strategy seeks to establish strategic guidance to key movement objectives facing the town in the short and long term future. It also seeks to assist in the ongoing review of the County's Local Transport Plan.
- 3.3 The two key objectives of the movement strategy are to promote walking and cycling above other means of transport for the benefit of residents and visitors and to enhance the arrival experience at Stratford along with smooth transition arrangements for movement to the town centre and the various visitor attractions.
- 3.4 The report talks of the town's compact nature and the flat topography that encourages high quality pedestrian environment and cycling. It stresses the need for the town to respond favourably to the needs of the pedestrians and cyclists particularly in view of the congestion on its key radial routes. However it fails to identify a clear walkable core that is equally supported by parking nodes to facilitate movement from cars to the intended pedestrianisation.

- 3.5 The document also fails to highlight the role of the proposed new foot/cycle bridge as a strategically important and traffic-free link which would significantly improve pedestrian and cycle access to employment, education, shopping and leisure facilities for Stratford residents in Bridgetown and Tiddington east of the River Avon. The consultants agree that text will be amended to reflect the above point.
- 3.6 Cycle parking in Stratford is sparse and the County advocates and supports further provision and suitable parking would encourage more cyclists, particularly in the most popular leisure destinations in the town such as at Waterside. There is currently a WCC proposal to allow cycling on Henley Street during the hours when it is closed to motorised vehicles. This is a common feature outside the UK and should be encouraged in Stratford to avoid cyclists having to mix with motorised vehicles on increasingly busy external routes.
- 3.7 A southern park and ride, to the south of the town on the Shipston Road, is identified in the document. In reality there will need to be a dramatic reduction of long stay parking in town, to make the existing Bishopton Park and Ride more successful before a southern park and ride is further investigated.
- 3.8 The document recommends that the option for reinstatement of the Honeybourne Line be kept open. This is however not consistent with the Local Transport Strategy, which says this would not be of local benefit to Stratford because of significant engineering, environmental and road traffic impacts, and therefore it is considered that the option should be dropped from the document to avoid raising expectations.
- 3.9 A new vehicular bridge over the River Avon is referred to as a means of relieving congestion on Clopton Bridge. This is being looked at as part of the review of the Local Transport Plan.
- 3.10 The document also recommends that the feasibility of implementing a mini tram system is investigated following the success of the pilot in 2003. The County Council is considering this.

4. Landscape and Public Realm Strategy

- 4.1 The landscape and public realm strategy provides an overview of how Stratford's distinctive landscape corridor along the river front and the towns' streets and public spaces should be improved.
- 4.2 The consultation findings summarised in the document highlight the areas of need as felt by those consulted. Some of the needs such as the potential for waterfront, river-related development and link creation; under utilised landscape resources and better access to the river and the lack of a real river promenade to enjoy the waterside which relate to the Landscape and Public Realm Strategy have not been addressed so as to provide a holistic framework. The document is seen as being very aspirational and broad brush and does not go into detail of some of the implications.

- 4.3 The document does not address the evening economy and 24/7 activities where parking, access, security and lighting, etc are required through all hours of the day.
- 4.4 The walkable core in the Central Area Strategy is too loose and not closely defined. It does not define the interface between the private vehicular modes of transport and the pedestrian experience of the town and specifically also does not address the needs of the evening and leisure economy activities, especially along the Waterside where access, parking, lighting, safety, etc are required to suit visitors to the area.

5. Development Strategy

- 5.1 The development strategy provides a coordinated strategy to help bring forward key sites in the town for redevelopment. Key elements of the economic rationale that support the strategy are the diversification of Stratford's brand to broaden the range of town's attractions; supporting evening economy with a small number of high class operators; enhancing the quality of hotel offer in the town with associated conference facilities and supporting the financial delivery of proposals whilst addressing housing need within the town.
- 5.2 The development strategy identifies key opportunity sites which are the Bridgeway and the River Corridor; Town Centre and the Canal and Station Area. An options appraisal on the Bridgeway and River Corridor site considers three options – Garden option, Arena option and the Gateway option. A leaflet showing the three options is attached in **Appendix B**.
- 5.3 The Garden option is focused around a central formal garden which takes its cue from Bancroft Gardens and the historic town centre spaces which characterise the town. The Arena option places new leisure/arts destination venues at the heart of the new development. The Gateway option creates a central avenue around which new development is focused and orientated.
- 5.4 The vision for Bridgeway needs to be made clear and more explicit - (i.e. it would involve part-time closure and treatment of Bridgefoot, Bridge Street, High Street and Waterside south of Sheep Street). All three options for the Bridgeway consider a new access road off Warwick Road.
- 5.5 This shift in behaviour is the 'price' the public should be aware is required to achieve the vision for the area. The vision will only be achievable if there are much more drastic reductions in long-stay parking than those suggested by the report, coupled with a reduction in short-stay parking instead of an increase. Only then could other modes such as park and ride hope to compete with the private car. If the travelling public are prepared to change their behaviour and use sustainable modes, the vision for a World Class Stratford would be much more achievable but this needs to be spelt out.
- 5.6 Whilst the three options are discussed in the draft, it is felt that the focus of the final report should relate to the comparative advantages and disadvantages of each option for Bridgeway and why a preferred option has been selected.

- 5.7 Town Centre development options examine the development of the Rother Triangle and Market, Windsor Street and Town Square. Key components of the development strategy for the Rother Triangle include Civic Hall replacement or relocation, quality frontages and proposals for new mixed residential development. Windsor Street development involves its integration to form a new visitor gateway to the town continuing on to the Town Square where proposals to develop a new retail quarter is examined.
- 5.8 Key components of the Canal and Station area improvements include developing the Cattle Market and Arden Street sites, which examine options for a high quality public transport interchange, commercial, employment and minor retail space. The development strategy for the canal quarter includes examining options for employment space, new residential community, live-work units and redevelopment of existing commercial space on Western Road. The NC Joseph site offers the potential opportunity to accommodate a New Leisure Centre alongside the development strategy for the site which includes new residential community, employment space and a new pedestrian and cycle connection to the rail station via the canal.

6. Benefits and Delivery

- 6.1 The UDF proposes a large number of significant changes to the town fabric and infrastructure. Whilst 'blue sky' thinking has its merits in putting forward the unusual and potentially exciting ideas that have never seen the light of day; the County Councils' response considers four key processes to determine viability:-
- 6.2 **Prioritisation:** What do consultees want, and even more importantly, why do they want the chosen proposals. The 'why' question needs to be measured against the perceived benefits to the common good – for WCC this is likely to be improvements to the economy, the environment and the functionality of the town.
- 6.3 **Funding:** Given a set of priorities where does the funding to pay for the activity come from? This requires an analysis of the priorities of the funding agencies, and the likely sums they can deliver. In particular projects of the scale envisaged require the intervention of significant resources, not available to smaller players. Some ways of addressing these could be:-
- (i) **Advantage West Midlands** -
 - (ii) **Warwickshire County Council** - The LTP is already committed to 2009/10, and capital projections are only reliable on a three year rolling programme basis - given the pressure on this allocation countywide it is unlikely that significant additional funds to those already earmarked will be secured for Stratford.
 - (iii) **Other external funders** – e.g. Lottery, Living Landmarks.

- (iv) **Joint Ventures, Private sponsorship and intervention** A successful strategy for funding the UDF should incorporate both private and public sector interventions through some form of joint venture agreement.. There is a need to identify the commercial opportunities and lead developers to think broadly within their market driven economy.
- 6.4 The commercial development sector could be attracted to Stratford by the publication of the UDF. This then provides an attractive match funding vehicle for Advantage West Midlands to use to continue to invest in the town, and also conforms to the intent of the Regional Economic Strategy.
- 6.5 It could also provide a hook for both Councils to use in their capital programmes. However our ability to obtain much more investment from this source in the next three years is less optimistic because both have invested scarce resources in Stratford already. Both SDC and WCC have committed over £1 million each into the project to 2009/10.
- 6.6 **Setting of timescales** - These are a function of 6.2 and 6.3 above. Projects are funding driven, and funders timescales and policy imperatives will drive what gets done first. The key to success is the creation of a series of scenarios which will both satisfy the planner, and relate to funding availability.
- 6.7 **Implementation** - A project of this size requires drive and energy from an effective management team and strategy group. The inspired individual and a strongly supportive group is known to be the key to success in large ventures - look at the success of the Eden project, and the failure of the Dome. We need to ensure we have this in Stratford. Project leadership is currently being examined and it should be a priority.

7. Conclusion/Recommendation

- 7.1 At the heart of the Urban Design Framework is a Masterplan for Stratford-upon-Avon. The intention is to use the town's existing assets as building blocks for its development. The UDF will be delivered through a partnership of key public sector agencies, private sector organisations and community stakeholders working together to deliver change.
- 7.2 The detailed comments from WCC officers are intended to strengthen the Framework; the response has been noted by the consultants and many concerns are being addressed where possible and appropriate. There is an ongoing dialogue with various officers to address and resolve any issues arising.
- 7.3 The final Framework will be adopted by Stratford District Council as a Supplementary Planning Document after it is presented at SDC Executive on 2nd July 2007 and SDC Full Council on 23rd July 2007.

7.4 It is recommended that members note the above and endorse the County Council officers' response on the UDF.

JOHN DEEGAN
Strategic Director for Environment and Economy
Shire Hall
Warwick

4th May 2007

Stratford on Avon Area Committee - 16th May 2007

Warwickshire County Council Response to Stratford-upon-Avon Urban Design Framework

Warwickshire County Council's response to the Urban Design Framework for Stratford-upon-Avon

A World Class Town and a Context for Evolution

The Urban Design Framework for Stratford-upon-Avon provides a strategy that is aimed at delivering change over the next 20 years. It is therefore essential that the spatial strategy as defined in the document of movement, public realm and development is reviewed in the policy context of arresting economic decline. The review must also address factors that ensure the long-term sustainability of the world-renowned brand of Shakespeare's legacy and Stratford's heritage.

The Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) response to the Urban Development Framework (UDF) starts with general comments that may be applicable to the document as a whole, followed by details reviews based on the chapters set out in the document.

The document is very aspirational and broad brush and does not go into detail of some of the implications arising from the proposals. This will become apparent as specific issues are reviewed. It specifically does not address evening economy and 24/7 activities where parking, access, security and lighting, etc are required through all hours of the day. The plans and conceptual diagrams shown are often too small. Plans and maps are generally not easy to understand, especially where no keys, key road numbers or names are shown which would help to orientate. Quality of many photographs is not that good, and their locations need identification. Pictures are generally far too small. There is lots white space on pages, may be best to use for content. They lack detail, key, legend or annotations that would be helpful in interpreting the message. The size of text and its paleness is challenging for those with sight difficulties. In short it is too loose and not the quality of a 'world class' document!

Section 1.1 - page 7; 1st paragraph; UDF *being produced is a partnership approach as part of the World Class Stratford initiative ...* Part approach to what? What does this mean? Suggest - *partnership approach under the World Class Stratford initiative ...*

3rd paragraph - refers to Waterfront Masterplan - why not just state the Phase 1 projects for clarity? Suggest ... Phase 1 projects currently being implemented are ...

Section 1 does not state anywhere about enhancing the river environment for a range of uses, encourage cafe culture, new uses etc which is the main objective of the Waterfront Masterplan.

Page12 - Plan looks incomplete, needs annotation

Page 12 - Movement Strategy Overview – amend last sentence of to read - *In doing so, it will inform the LTP Stratford Transport Strategy (STS) Review which is now underway.*

Please note that the LTP itself is not being reviewed only the STS part of it - this is correctly referred to on page 55 but needs to be consistent throughout the document.

Page 13 - text blocking part plan; major road numbers on plan would be useful

Page16 Text far too small, plans not clear, what are they supposed to show?

Page17 - what is this plan saying?

Page 25 Plan is not clear – it seems that there are more than 3 character areas shown. The idea conveyed is not clear

Page 28 plan not clear - needs key, the text or figure do not show how the re- knitting of the historic fabric is relevant through its outstanding setting.

Movement and Development Strategy

Page 36 – paragraph 1 – although Stratford has a small resident population it has an extremely large daytime visitor population. This is recognised later on the same page but needs to be brought out more clearly in the introduction as demand from commuter and tourist markets generated outside the town could potentially support a high-quality public transport spine route within Stratford, (see below).

There is also significant potential to increase walk/cycle mode share for short-distance local journeys given the town's relatively compact urban form and generally flat topography. These 'internal' trips account for around one-third of all morning peak-hour car trips in Stratford.

Page 38 - bullet point 3 - remove the word 'blanket'.

Page 41 - paragraph 1 – the currently protected access route connecting Birmingham Road with Alcester Road as defined under Local Plan Policy PR.10.7 should be retained but as a traffic-free facility for pedestrians and cyclists. The route as currently protected also includes buses and changing this protection to include pedestrians and cyclists only would need to be formally approved by WCC.

If a new bridge were to be provided as part of a redevelopment proposal across the canal, connecting the western end of Wharf Road with the 90° bend midway along Western Road, this would create an additional route for pedestrians and cyclists and increase the number of sustainable access options available.

As suggested in the report, it may also be possible to route buses over the new canal link, (see comments on 5.6.1 below).

Page 42 – paragraph 1 – this should highlight the role of the proposed new foot/cycle bridge as a strategically important and traffic-free link which would significantly improve pedestrian and cycle access to employment, education shopping and leisure facilities for Stratford residents in Bridgetown and Tiddington east of the River Avon.

Page 42 – paragraph 3 – WCC through its LTP Cycling Strategy aims to improve conditions for cycling on the carriageway where possible. However, as suggested in paragraph 5 on the same page, road conditions or the type of cyclists likely to use a particular route may mean that on-carriageway cycle facilities are not appropriate, and provision of off-carriageway facilities alongside the road may be more suitable.

Page 42 – paragraph 5 – Pedestrian priority crossings is a controversial subject which always raises safety concerns especially from safety auditors. It is not the norm in Warwickshire and is coming under increased scrutiny in Europe. Accident statistics show that junctions are where most accidents occur and drivers not being used to cycle priority are not always able to avoid impacts.

Page 42 – paragraph 7 – cycle parking in Stratford is sparse and we would support further provision. There are stands at the Rother Street and Ely Street ends of Town Square, which are underused, mainly because they are out of the way. The pedestrian barriers on Bridge Street and Rother Street are well used but the Library and High Street end of Ely Street stands are the most popular.

Cycle parking needs to be secure, preferably under CCTV camera view and overlooked by the public. Six years ago there were over 200 cycle parking movements in the town centre between 08:00 and 18:00 with limited availability of cycle parking spaces. More suitable parking would encourage more cyclists.

There is a particular need for more cycle parking at Waterside which has only two Sheffield stands but is one of the most popular leisure destinations in the town.

Page 42 – paragraph 8 – we would support provision of shared space for pedestrians and cyclists as suggested in the report. Segregation is also unlikely to be effective in these areas as pedestrians may ‘encroach’ into dedicated cycling areas which can lead to confrontation. Simple notices reminding users of the space that it is shared could encourage more acceptable behaviour.

There is currently a WCC proposal to allow cycling on Henley Street during the hours when it is closed to motorised vehicles. This is a common feature outside the UK and should be encouraged in Stratford to avoid cyclists having to mix with motorised vehicles on increasingly busy external routes.

Page 43 – Walkable core identified and discussed in p 40 is too loose and not focused enough. It needs focused nodal points within the boundary identified that serve as transfer points within the core whereby vehicular-pedestrian interface is facilitated to a more human scale; especially that which relates to evening and leisure economy activities.

Figure 3.2 page 43 shows a walking and cycling route through Bancroft Gardens. Perhaps it is a conceptual representation, but may not be appropriate as there is a ban on cycling on the tramway bridge. Perhaps the route should be shown along Waterside in line with the proposals for the area.

Page 43 – paragraph 2 – the narrow nature of the canal towpath makes it unsuitable for cycling and measures to improve the widths and accesses would be extremely expensive and difficult to engineer.

Page 44 – Quality Bus Partnerships – we would support buses dropping off and picking up on the edge of a pedestrian priority area in principle, provided there were convenient bus stopping and waiting facilities on its edge.

Bus operators would need to be convinced of the economic and operational benefits of such a scheme, as existing town centre bus stops are conveniently located in the main town centre shopping streets.

Pages 44-45 – Rail/bus interchange - the 'high quality public transport spine' would be the Park and Ride (P&R) route and not 'replace it'.

The preferred route for the P&R spine would be "Northern Park and Ride - Maybird Centre - Steam Railway Centre - Railway Station - Town Centre - Leisure Centre - Southern Park and Ride". Operating the route in this way would increase the potential for operational and financial/economic viability and therefore delivery. An annotated map to accompany this would be most useful.

Pages 45-46 - Park and Ride – there is an urgent need to dramatically reduce the availability of long-stay parking to make Bishopton P&R more financially self-supporting, and to enable options for a southern P&R to be investigated.

The report still refers to a 'gradual reduction' in long-stay parking, but this is unlikely to encourage existing car users entering Stratford from the north and west to switch to P&R and needs to be strengthened.

Unless the quantity of long-stay parking is significantly reduced and/or charges substantially increased, it is unlikely that a southern P&R would attract sufficient patronage.

A further P&R site to the west of Stratford is considered inappropriate for the foreseeable future as it would have a potentially damaging effect on the economic viability of the existing P&R site at Bishopton, which is currently operating at a considerable financial loss.

If however a further western P&R site is to be included as a long term possibility in the UDF, the caveat must be that in order to be deliverable, WCC would need to be convinced by its business case that its operation would not involve abstraction of patronage or revenue from existing P&R services.

Page 48 – paragraph 2 – the Warwickshire Quality Rail partnership has a limited budget and is unlikely to provide sufficient resources to make Stratford a ‘World Class’ station. It would be helpful if the report could outline what improvements would be required to achieve this status and what the likely costs would be with reference to UK or international examples.

Page 48 – reinstating the Honeybourne Line – the Local Transport Plan is very clear on this - it would not be of local benefit to Stratford in view of the significant engineering, environmental and road traffic impacts which the scheme would create – in particular:

- The proximity of the route to a substantial number of residential properties; and
- The likely impact on the Evesham Place roundabout and the A4390 Seven Meadows Road.

The rail industry has no interest in reconnecting Stratford to the south west, and it should be deleted from the UDF to avoid raising expectations.

Network Rail are phasing out level crossings and are therefore unlikely to agree to providing a new facility in Stratford. This would make it difficult for a reinstated line to cross Evesham Road and Evesham Place, with a tunnel or a viaduct being the only alternatives. Both would involve massive cost which would not be possible to justify in the absence of scheme benefits.

A tunnel floor would have to be at least 5 metres deep and even at a gradient of 1 in 100 with transitions at each end would require an inclined length of at least 750 metres, too much to enable it to pass below Evesham Place roundabout.

A tunnel would need to pass beyond the Seven Meadows Road roundabout. It would resurface dangerously close to Stannells Bridge and within the flood plain of the Avon, with obvious problems after periods of heavy rain. Also, normal drainage of a tunnel below river level could prove problematical.

To comply with traffic clearance criteria, a viaduct would need to be 5.5 metres above existing road level at the roundabout, plus appropriate construction depth. This would have significant visual impact. There would also be significant disruption to local residents during construction, and operating noise and vibration, particularly if freight traffic were to run on the line at night.

If a link to the station is omitted, a 'Heritage' railway line along the Greenway would significantly reduce the attractiveness of the existing pedestrian and cycle route.

Page 49 – Stratford Parkway – it is not anticipated that a Stratford Parkway station would affect the use of Stratford town station. Warwick Parkway has not had a noticeable effect on overall use at Warwick station.

Page 50 - Park and Float – this would need to be a private sector venture but it would have been useful as previously suggested to have developed at least an initial idea of its potential economic viability before presenting it as a possibility to the public.

Page 52 – Ring Road – the report continues to present major new road building to provide outer ring roads to the north east and west/south west of Stratford as a possibility, albeit one which is dependent on large scale release of land for development, but they are not in reality. The difficulty of delivering such options needs to be made much clearer in line with earlier comments on previous versions of the report.

Page 54 – Bridgeway/Bridgefoot/Warwick Road Gyratory – see comments on 5.4.1.

Page 55 – is the heading number 3.7 or 4.7?

3.8 Parking – it is not clear what length of parking duration is being assumed for 'short-stay' – over two-hours duration should be classified as long-stay.

Page 68 – 1st line – assume figure above refers to map on page 66? Can the two be related and the relevant details mentioned in the text shown graphically with key/legend.

4.6 Shared Surfaces – the definition of traffic routes must be clearly delineated and understandable for blind and visually impaired persons.

5.4.1. Bridgeway area - general comments

In the absence of detailed traffic modeling, it would be better to remove the estimated traffic flow figures from the diagrams in the final report as they may be misleading. It is also unclear from the diagrams what time period they actually relate to.

In the final report, the focus should instead relate to the comparative advantages and disadvantages of each option for Bridgeway and why a preferred option has been selected.

The vision for Bridgeway needs to be made clear and more explicit - (i.e. it would involve part-time closure and treatment of Bridgefoot, Bridge Street, High Street and Waterside south of Sheep Street). The surface treatments shown on the 3 diagrams may be interpreted as implying a full-time closure in Bridge Street.

All 3 options for Bridgeway seem to involve the partial street closures listed above. If implemented, these would have significant and widespread traffic impacts even during the inter-peak period. What must be made crystal clear, therefore, is that closures could only be delivered if there was a radical shift in travel behaviour away from car to alternative modes, (walk/cycle/public transport).

This shift in behaviour is the 'price' the public should be aware is required to achieve the vision for the area. The vision will only be achievable if there are much more drastic reductions in long-stay parking than those suggested by the report, coupled with a reduction in short-stay parking instead of an increase. Only then could other modes such as park and ride hope to compete with the private car.

If the travelling public are prepared to change their behaviour and use sustainable modes, the vision for a World Class Stratford would be much more achievable but this needs to be spelt out.

The issues surrounding a delivery lorry ban are due to be investigated as part of the Stratford Transport Strategy review which is now underway. We have also agreed to give a view on the WCS aspiration for a ban on coaches in the historic core of the town in 6 months time (from December), and if we think it is viable, the timescale it might take.

5.4.1 Bridgeway Area – objectives – bullet point 7 - should read 'to create'.

5.4.1. Bridgeway area - gateway option (page 118)

Delivery of any period of closure of Bridgefoot and other town centre streets is unlikely to be achievable in traffic terms without a new Warwick Road link forming a through route.

5.6.1 Cattle Market and Arden Street

Page 138 – Western Road remains our preferred means of access for a possible P&R spine service on the section between Birmingham Road and an interchange facility provided at the station.

However if a new canal bridge were to be provided as part of redevelopment proposals in and around the Canal Quarter, it may be possible to consider using it as an alternative to Western Road on a future P&R spine route.

The diagram on page 138 shows a two-way connection between the station and Birmingham Road over a new canal bridge via Maybrook Road. It would only be possible to use Maybrook Road for outbound journeys; (current S278 drawings for the Maybird Centre show an 'ahead only' arrangement for inbound movements on Birmingham Road via a single lane, with two outbound lanes and a right turn ban into Maybrook Road).

5.6.2 Canal Quarter and 5.6.3 NC Joseph Site

Pages 146 and 150 – policy context – the report recognises that the protected route under Policy PR.10.7 between the rail station and the NCJ Site should be accommodated through any development of the above sites.

Protection of the route as currently shown in the Local Plan is consistent with our preferred option for a segregated pedestrian and cycle facility between the rail station and Birmingham Road, provided that the ability to open up Western Road to allow buses to access the station is retained.

Page 150 - Options and key components – we would not support a new vehicular crossing over the canal unless it was restricted to pedestrians, cyclists and buses, (as indicated on the diagram for the Canal Quarter on page 147).

Landscape and Public Realm Strategy

It is pleasing to see that the lack of street trees has been identified and suggestions have been made for planting and art along the approach corridors and gateways - this will help to alleviate the monotony of the suburban approaches and add some vitality.

The consultants have suggested a clear simple treatment for the central streets, which is both functional and contemporary along with the de-cluttering of the streets. The limited palette of materials for paving is also favourable as there is a unified approach. However, there is concern that granite and York stone slabs as suggested are far from sustainable, in addition to being very costly. Good quality concrete paving would perhaps be more contemporary? (It is pleasing to see that red block paving has not been considered).

It is very good to see that the pedestrian's needs are being considered as important as the motorist's in the urban setting, and that in the civic spaces; the emphasis is on the pedestrian.

Development along the canal and in the wetland area will reveal the existing potential and provide more attractions for tourists and residents alike. It is hoped that provision is made for canal side moorings, so that visitors can stop off, enjoy the town and contribute to the economy.

Lighting will also have an effect on the local economy. If Stratford is to be World Class, it will need to embrace and welcome contemporary, urban lighting and the colour and new perspective that it brings.

Tourism and Events

There is much to agree with, these comments therefore focus on matters that give some cause for concern; this may be because the meaning or location is not clear in the document but are worth raising. Overall the tourism chapter is light on solutions to the key issues.

Looking at the 3 main options for Bridgeway:

They all offer a combination of common features. Many of the ideas appear to be re-hashed from a SDC bid to the Living Landmarks fund. But in particular:

- Has any feasibility work been done about the need for a new arts destination venue?

Proposed new hotel: It either has to be 5 star or budget/mid range. The report elsewhere cites over supply of 4 star type accommodations, however it should be led by the South Warwickshire Tourism's response. If we are to go for 5 star, the Garden Option of hotel amongst the car park is not ideal. If 5 star, how about having it near (within) the wetlands centre?

The Gateway Option C cites a world class hotel - what is meant by this? It's very subjective. If 5 star is that's the aspiration, it is to be noted that Belfry hotel in N. Warwickshire is hoping to upgrade to be the region's first 5 star hotel.

All the Bridgeway options cite a **new hi tech visitor centre**. Is this intended to be a replacement for the current Tourist Information Centre and providing the same facilities but enhanced? If so, location is crucial. It needs to be on the main pedestrian route from the car and coach park to the main attractions.

All the Bridgeway Options propose solutions for the traffic and gyratory. Something does need to be done. An inclination from the tourism's view point would be to have the road on the "outside" with parking and facilities on the "inside" (townside) so that there is less of a barrier and the pedestrian approaches are more attractive.

Section 1.2 cites that Bridgeway is the most significant opportunity for change. Perhaps it's easiest to bring about change here, but improvements are badly needed in Bridge St/Wood St to reduce traffic, the impact of parking and open the area up to be more pedestrian friendly. This should encourage visitors to linger and appreciate the buildings which provide the town's historic character. Overall the document doesn't really seem to tackle this problem. The 2005 visitor benchmarking survey showed that visitors felt intimidated by the traffic.

Strategic Context 2.2. AWM actually has a Visitor Economy Strategy published in 2004; the impression given here is that the consultants couldn't find anything. There is also a sub-regional visitor economy strategy if that's relevant here.

Movement Strategy The aim to keep cars out of the town centre is laudable but our public transport system needs to be more customer focused if this is to succeed without killing the town. In particular:

- The current park & ride (north) is cannot be used 24/7 by visitors to the theatre as buses stop at 7pm.
- We want to encourage visitors to spend the day/afternoon here, have dinner, and go to the theatre. No option but to park in town.
- Same applies if we want to encourage the evening economy without cars in the centre.
- Need to consider the impact on town centre hotels and guest houses.
- Guests expect to be able to drive in, drop off luggage and park in security nearby.

It's good that a coach strategy has been mentioned. But it has already caused outcry. Coach tourism is vital to the town's international reputation. Tourism industry needs to be seen to work with the rest of the industry. Not allowing City Sightseeing to pick up at the Park & Ride doesn't help relations. There need to be information points at the coach drop off points.

Buses - a direct link to Birmingham airport would be good - not the proposed one that would treat all our visitors to 2 hours of stopping at various industrial estates. This could help the overnight market.

Mini-tram – there is concern that this would bypass the new Tourist Information Centre.

Rail link towards Bath to be welcomed, studies show this is an important in-route. The proposed Parkway station could welcome visitors if there are good connections to the town centre.

Parking: The proposal to halve the number of long stay spaces is a particular concern, especially if the Park & Ride retains its existing hours of operation.

Landscape: some good ideas on gateways and public art. Is there any consideration to the Forest of Arden connection?

Development: On the retail side, it's vital to keep the reputation for independent and niche retailers rather than being a clone town.

5.1 mentions possible over-supply of upper scale hotels. Trends are for hotels rather than guest houses so mid-range is necessary. We also have a mature-aged visitor profile, whilst keeping these cheaper hotels could attract the younger market

Tourism: There should be mention that Stratford's role also is to disperse visitors to the wider area once they have visited the town.

Page 155 first bullet point “re-position” should be replaced by the word “regain”.

Page 157 the second and third bullet points appear repetitive, certainly not clear what is meant in the 3rd. It's good to see a reference to world class management and service. Without investment in this a lot of the WCS project will be pointless. What are we doing to fund this side?

Page 158 Stratford and the World class brand. Visitors recognise Stratford and Shakespeare as brands. Tacking World Class on to that for visitors etc will confuse. The UDF has perhaps worked on an earlier version of South Warwickshire tourism Corporate Plan and has perhaps misrepresented the sense.

The conference market is important economically. To attract large international conferences we need larger venue(s) and better transport links from Birmingham airport.

Benefits and Delivery

The UDF proposes a large number of significant changes to the town fabric and infrastructure. Whilst 'blue sky' thinking has its merits in putting forward the unusual and potentially exciting ideas that have never seen the light of day, we must now go through four key processes to determine viability.

1. **Prioritisation:** What do consultees want, and even more importantly, why do they want the chosen proposals. The 'why' question needs to be measured against the perceived benefits to the common good - in WCC terms this is likely to be improvements to the economy, the environment, the good order, and the functionality of the town.
2. **Funding:** Given a set of priorities where does the funding to pay for the activity come from? This requires an analysis of the priorities of the funding agencies, and the likely sums they can deliver. In particular projects of the scale envisaged require the intervention of significant resources, not available to smaller players. Some ways of addressing these could be :-
 - **Advantage West Midlands** - refer to the Regional Economic Strategy and the Action Plan (currently under revision). Currently the tourism economy is seen as a means of sustaining growth and economic benefit in Stratford. BUT the funding

projections of the Agency need study - will they be willing to spend more? If so when? Already the funding streams are committed to 2010 and beyond.

- **Warwickshire County Council** - The LTP is already committed to 2009/10, and capital projections are only reliable on a three year rolling programme basis - given the County's priorities in more deprived areas it really is difficult to see significant funds being willed to Stratford.
- **Stratford on Avon District Council** - unable to comment.
- **Specialist contributors** - particularly various forms of the Lottery. This has been known to deliver large sums, but in very tightly defined circumstances. An exercise needs to be carried out to explore this. Stratford DC did bid into the Living Landmarks £25m pot, but the bid did not succeed.
- **Joint Ventures, Private sponsorship and intervention** A successful strategy for funding the UDF should incorporate both private and public sector interventions through some form of joint venture agreement.. There is a need to identify the commercial opportunities and lead developers to think broadly within their market driven economy. This could be a key factor in getting things done quickly - but there will be a price to pay in terms of compromising the commercial with the ideal.

We believe that the commercial development sector could be attracted to Stratford by the publication of the UDF, as, indeed, they were, and still are, to Nuneaton because of the Master Plan. A real opportunity could exist to partner development with locally based major developers (AMEC and Arup come to mind), and we should be looking to the Steering Group to make the necessary introductions.

This then provides an attractive match funding vehicle for AWM to use to continue to invest in the town, and also conforms to the intent of the Regional Economic Strategy.

It could also provide a hook for both Councils to use in their capital programmes. However our ability to obtain much more investment from this source in the next three years is less optimistic because both have invested scarce resources in Stratford already. Both Stratford DC and WCC have each put in over £1m each into the project to 2009/10.

3. **Setting of timescales:** These are a function of (1) and (2) above. Projects are funding driven, and funders timescales and policy imperatives will drive what gets done first. The key to success is the creation of a series of scenarios which will both satisfy the planner, and relate to funding availability.
4. **Implementation** - A project of this size requires drive and energy from an effective management team and strategy group. The inspired individual and a strongly supportive group is known to be the key to success in large ventures - look at the

success of the Eden project, and the failure of the Dome. We need to ensure we have this in Stratford.

Action Plans – It is a key part of the document and should be bigger and bolder. List into short, medium, longer term actions under each section i.e. movement, public realm etc, currently they are all mixed up

Identify WCS Phase 1 and 2 Projects – projects are not written in a consistent way projects i.e. in Movement 2, bridge doesn't mention WCS, AWM