

Cllr Barbara Jones-Williams March 2024 report

Inspectors provide update on SWDP Review process

I thought I should keep you updated on the SWDPR process, Inspectors scrutinising the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review have provided an update to the three South Worcestershire Councils on their progress.

The Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent scrutiny towards the end of last year, a process known as examination.

Dates for public hearings to provide inspectors with the opportunity to ask questions on parts of the plan and the evidence supporting it were expected to be announced this month.

But while inspectors say they have made good progress on preparing for the hearings they have asked for some evidence documents to be updated first. This will avoid delays further in the process and ensure people making representations at the hearings have the latest information available to them.

In a letter to Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils, inspectors raised concerns that some of the evidence was 'at risk of being overtaken by events' since work on the plan started and recent changes to planning rules and regulations needed to be included.

Inspectors are also requesting more information about the impact of increased traffic generated by the plan on the surrounding road network. They also want to review the analysis of the Worcestershire Strategic Transport Model.

Worcester City, Malvern Hills District and Wychavon District Councils are now working on a timetable for providing the new and updated evidence.

Reallocation of HS2 Funding

See below a Government reallocation of HS2 funding, I strongly recommend that your Parish Council and myself lobby our County Councillor also Harriett Baldwin MP, to secure funding for projects such as; A44 calming and signage etc through Cotheridge etc..

The Government has announced that the North will receive £2.5 billion and the Midlands £2.2bn from a new local transport fund.

The investment has been announced as part of Network North - to improve local transport connections.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said: “We have a clear plan to level up our country with greater transport links that people need and deliver the right long-term change for a brighter future.

“Through reallocating HS2 funding, we’re not only investing billions of pounds directly back into our smaller cities, towns and rural areas across the North and Midlands, but we are also empowering their local leaders to invest in the transport projects that matter most in their communities - this is levelling up in action.

“The local transport fund will deliver a new era of transport connectivity. This unprecedented investment will benefit more people, in more places, more quickly than HS2 ever would have done, and comes alongside the billions of pound worth of funding we’ve already invested into our roads, buses and local transport services across the country.”

The cash will be made available from 2025 to give local authorities enough time to develop their funding plans and prepare to hit the ground running to ensure they are delivered as soon as possible.

With the funding delivered over the next seven years, up to 2032, ministers say it will be spent on a range of transport improvements, including building new roads and improving junctions; installing or expanding mass transit systems; improving roads by filling in potholes and better street lighting for personal safety; and increasing the number of EV charge points.

Barbara