

South Kidderminster Enterprise Park Green Infrastructure Concept Statement

Draft Version 1

"Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. It is the open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage and open countryside. Green Infrastructure provides multiple benefits for the economy, the environment and people."

West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus (nd)

The South Kidderminster Enterprise Park Concept Statement has been prepared by a working group of the Worcestershire Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Steering Group including Worcestershire County Council, Natural England, Environment Agency, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and The Forestry Commission.

While the Concept Statement has benefited from scrutiny and input from stakeholders, it is not a statutory document and holds the status of a guidance paper to provide framework for the master planning of a comprehensive multifunctional green infrastructure.

Policy Context

Comments below should be read in line with CP13 and CP14 policies in the Core Strategy DPD, policy SAL.UP5 in the Site Allocation and Policies DPD.

Site Context

The northern boundary of the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park site is adjacent to a set of former rail sidings and the Severn Valley Railway line. It is bordered by the Stourport Road to the West and Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal to the East. To the South the site is neighboured by industrial land.

Please note that the site boundaries for this Concept Statement are different to the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park Local Development Order.

Green Infrastructure Principles

Blue Infrastructure

Proposals should protect and enhance the quality of the water environment, including nationally and locally designated sites. These include the Wilden Marsh and Meadows and Stour Floodplain SSSI's and the River Stour and Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal LWS.

Developers should contribute to mitigating the effects of floods by minimising the risk of surface water and fluvial flooding. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be utilised to manage rainwater close to its source; encouraging retention and infiltration where appropriate through techniques such as green roofs, swales and ponds as part of a multifunctional green infrastructure network.

The area has a long history of industry. Therefore land contamination will be a significant issue that will influence the need for site investigation, remediation and appropriate building (foundation) and drainage design (based on the appropriateness of ground conditions) at all sites. This is particularly important as the area is located on a Principal Aquifer of regional strategic importance and within the combined Source Protection Zone for a number of public water supply boreholes.

The water quality of the River Stour has seen much enhancement in recent years with improved levels of biodiversity and ecology. However, under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) the River Stour is currently classified as poor ecological status. The ecological status includes chemical and biological data to give this overall classification. The Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal is currently less than good ecological potential (artificial or heavily modified water bodies are expressed as 'potential' rather than 'status'). The WFD objective is to improve the status of water bodies to achieve overall good status or potential by 2027. Proposals should meet the requirements of WFD by improving water quality through the development of multifunctional SuDS. The provision/re-instatement of suitable buffer strips adjacent to the River Stour and the improved naturalisation of the River Stour Corridor, where appropriate, can contribute towards improved biodiversity value, water quality and flood risk betterment (i.e. restoring and improving functional floodplain).

Proposals should be informed by the Water Cycle Strategy to ensure that the required environmental infrastructure and capacity is in place to cope with the new

development and that it is designed in accordance with appropriate national and local guidance, ensuring compatibility with specific catchment and ground characteristics.

Where practicable, opportunities should be sought to utilise clean surface water run-off for the enhancement of water levels in the adjacent Wilden Marsh and Meadows SSSI.

Biodiversity

Proposals should protect and enhance existing areas of ecological interest, including nationally and locally designated sites. These include the Wilden Marsh and Meadows and Stour Floodplain SSSI's and the River Stour and Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal LWS. Proposals should consider how they can enhance these areas, through proposals taking opportunities to enhance or create connecting and fringing semi-natural habitats, or direct enhancements to the sites themselves.

Throughout this site, proposals should utilise and enhance ecological features such as hedgerows, trees, verges, banks, watercourses including the canal, any remaining ponds, and areas of semi-natural habitat, to provide an ecologically robust Green Infrastructure network that enables species movement and colonisation and makes sensitive use of ecosystem services including soft SuDS. The biodiversity priorities for the site include:

- River Stour and its tributaries
- Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal
- Woodlands, hedges and street trees
- Grasslands and wet grassland habitats

The river and canal corridors include significant records of protected species, including otters, bats and great crested newt. All proposals should as a minimum seek to protect the corridors and commuting routes, but should also enhance them wherever possible.

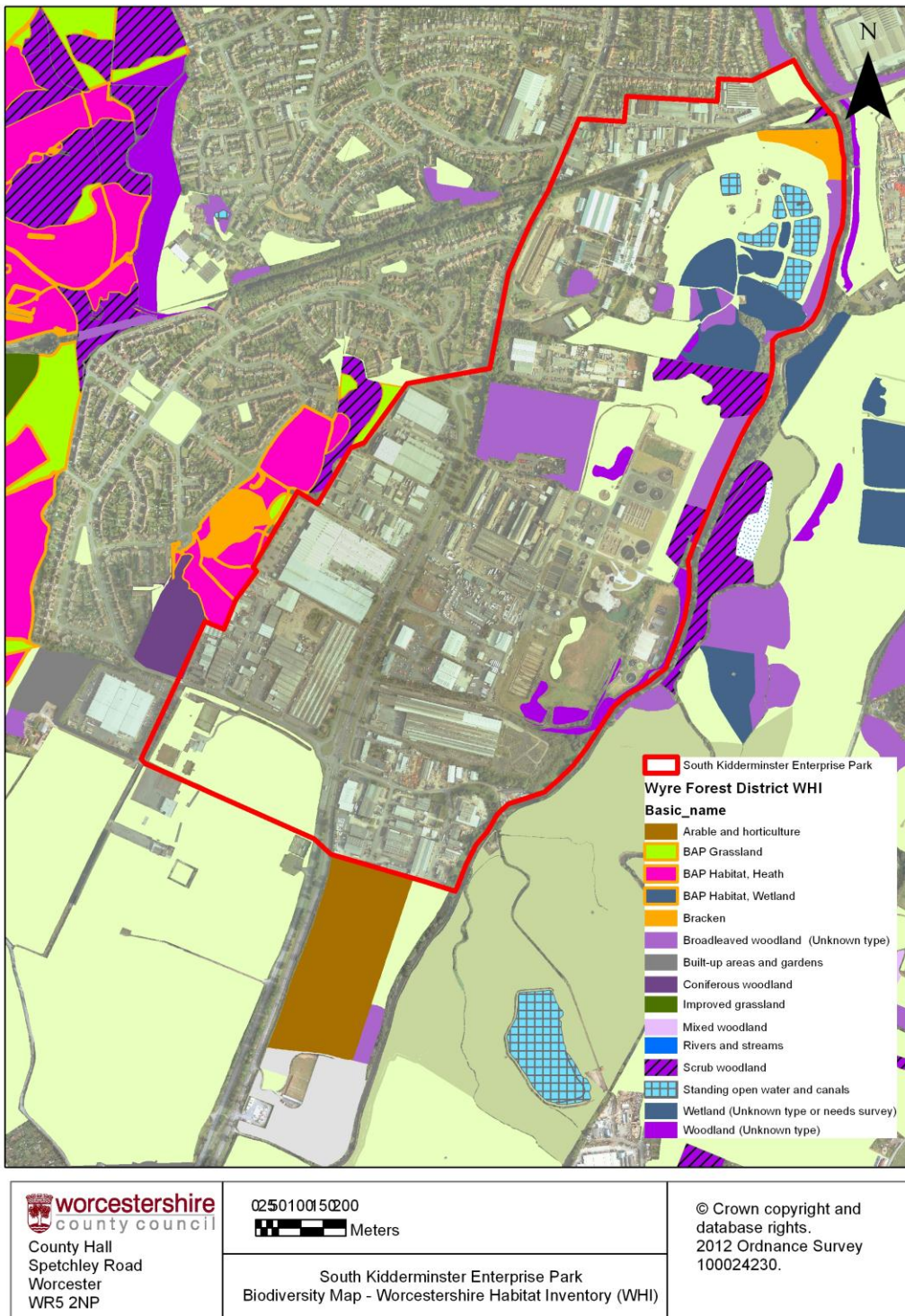


Figure 1 – Biodiversity Map – Worcestershire Habitat Inventory (WHI)

Please note that 6 ponds to the North of the site no longer exist, having been filled in as a result of site remediation.

Historic Environment

New developments should:

Use landscaping of new development to retain the association of the historic Oldington Wood in the north of the site in order to enhance the local historic landscape character. Historic small irregular woodlands are a key characteristic of the wider landscape setting.

Buffer the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal to preserve and enhance its setting, which remains rural in character despite the close proximity of industrial works.

Explore opportunities to create viewpoints west towards the historic Stour Vale meadows and east towards Vicarage Farm Heath Nature Reserve; an area of historic heathland that provides a distinctive backdrop to the immediate setting.

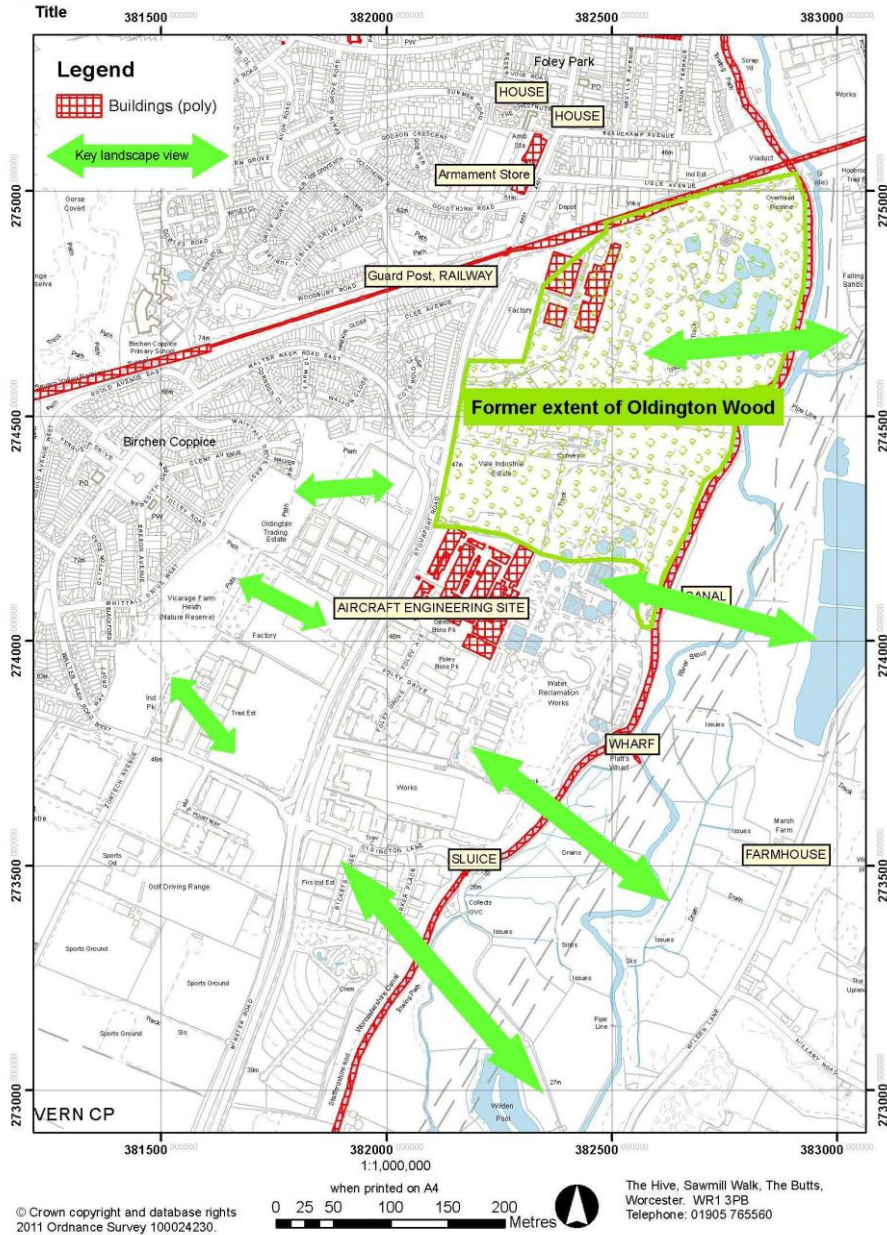


Figure 2 - Historic Environment Green Infrastructure Map

Access and Recreation

Opportunities to include new greenspace or enhance existing spaces should be explored as a part of development proposals.

There are no public access greenspace sites within the proposed development area due to its previous land-use. There is a need to create accessible greenspace within or adjacent to the site for use by both residential and business populations.

The creation of community orchards, which are open and accessible at all times, can become the focal point for community activities and recreation.

The location of any new recreational sites needs to consider:

- Proximity to centres of population
- Public transport provision
- Proximity to integrate to the Rights of Way network, cycle network and recreational way marked routes.
- Ability to accommodate appropriate facilities necessary for the use and enjoyment of the site.

There are no public footpath and bridleway links within the proposed development site to the rights of way network in the wider countryside. A network of footpaths and cycle ways should be created to provide a sustainable network that links all parts of the community and areas of greenspace as well as linking into external routes. Using existing rights of way, circular walks could be created from the development area to encourage people to venture into the wider countryside.

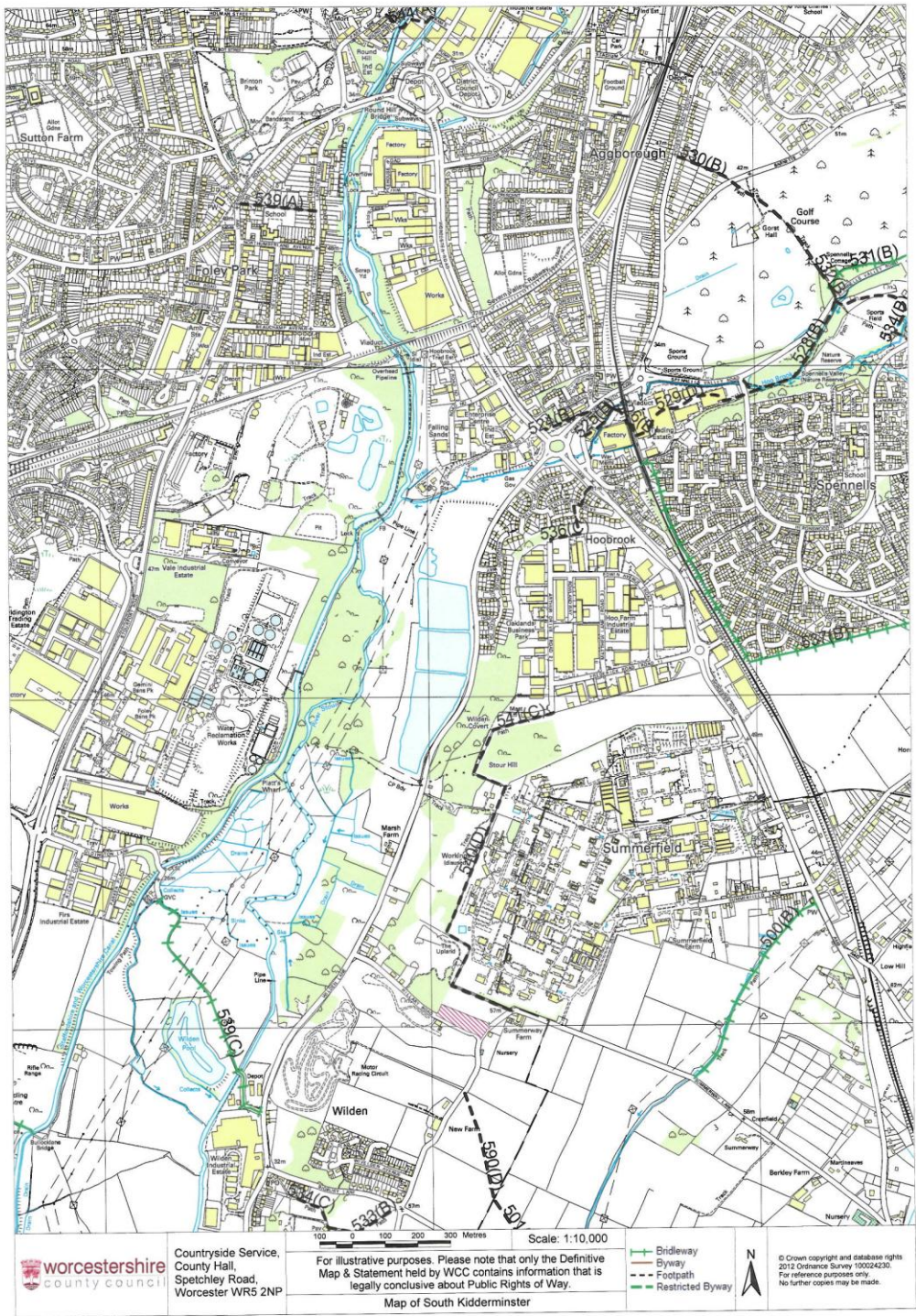


Figure 3 – Public Rights of Way

Built Environment

New developments should include water efficiency techniques and incorporate green landscaping, encouraging biodiversity habitats and incorporating SuDS.

Landscaping can form part of open spaces and recreation areas for employees.

Landscaping areas are ideally located onto public areas close to front entrances of main frontages.

Caveats

The above comments are based on the best information available. They are based on Worcestershire Habitat Inventory data extracted in 2009, which is primarily derived from a 2005 aerial photographic interpretation and from a walkover survey of parts of the site also undertaken in 2005. The WHI data provides a partial baseline only. Site design and layout must be informed by a formal ecological appraisal, which should inform detailed habitat and species survey requirements.