

Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan Background Document Rail Freight Background Document

September 2018

Contact: Minerals and Waste Planning Policy
Directorate of Economy and Infrastructure,
Worcestershire County Council,
County Hall,
Worcester,
WR5 2NP

Email: minerals@worcestershire.gov.uk
Tel: 01905 766374

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Worcestershire has a good rail network with links to the north, south, east and west. However, there are currently no rail-linked quarries or freight depots in the county and there are some significant constraints in terms of network capacity and gauge-clearance for freight.
- 1.2. Whilst shifting freight to rail is a priority in various local and national policies, there is little clear commitment to any actual projects in Worcestershire, and it is unlikely that Worcestershire's mineral resources or market demands will justify the cost of developing such facilities.
- 1.3. Nonetheless, the Minerals Local Plan should include a positive policy framework to encourage and enable movement of freight by rail and to safeguard any facilities, as required by national policy, during the life of the plan.

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 2 |
| 2. INTRODUCTION | 5 |
| Context | 5 |
| 3. INTRODUCTION TO RAIL FREIGHT | 5 |
| Rail freight in Worcestershire | 7 |
| 4. RESPONSIBLE BODIES | 8 |
| Department for Transport | 8 |
| Mode Shift Revenue Support scheme | 8 |
| Network Rail | 9 |
| Freight Network Long Term Planning Process | 9 |
| West Midlands & Chilterns Route Study: Advice and choices for funders | 10 |
| Network Rail Strategy for the Midlands | 10 |
| Midlands Connect | 11 |
| Midlands Connect Strategy: Powering the Midlands Engine | 11 |
| Midlands Connect/Jacobs (April 2017) Freight Narrative Report: Final | 11 |
| 5. POLICY CONTEXT | 11 |
| European policy and support | 11 |
| European rail network for competitive freight | 11 |
| Shift2Rail | 12 |
| National policy | 12 |
| National Planning Policy Framework | 12 |
| Planning Practice Guidance | 13 |
| Local policy | 14 |
| Worcestershire LEP Strategic Economic Plan | 14 |
| Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Strategic Economic Plan | 15 |
| West Midlands Cross-LEP Statement on Transport | 15 |
| Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 4 (2018-2030) | 18 |
| Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy | 18 |
| Local Plans | 18 |
| Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 | 18 |
| Redditch Borough Local Plan No. 4 | 19 |
| Wyre Forest Core Strategy 2006-2026 | 19 |
| South Worcestershire Development Plan 2006 - 2030 | 19 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Surrounding authorities | 19 |
| Black Country (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) | 20 |
| Birmingham | 20 |
| Gloucestershire | 20 |
| Herefordshire | 21 |
| Shropshire | 21 |
| Staffordshire | 21 |
| Solihull | 21 |
| Warwickshire | 21 |
| | |
| 6. LOCAL ISSUES | 23 |
| | |
| Current proposals | 23 |
| | |
| Rail freight potential for minerals in Worcestershire | 24 |
| Importing minerals | 26 |
| | |
| 7. SAFEGUARDING | 27 |
| | |
| 8. CONCLUSIONS | 28 |

2. Introduction

Context

- 2.1. Worcestershire County Council has a statutory duty to produce a Minerals Local Plan (MLP) to deliver minerals development. The current Hereford and Worcester MLP was adopted in 1997 and needs to be updated to reflect current policy, practice and guidance. The new Minerals Local Plan will replace the existing Minerals Local Plan and will be a Development Plan Document which is used to guide new development and determine planning applications.
- 2.2. The average road delivery distance for aggregates is around 50km (approximately 30 miles)¹, with about 80% of mineral products being used within 30 miles of the quarry.² Over these distances, road freight is inherently more cost-efficient than rail and enables delivery to multiple end-users. However road transportation of minerals can increase the potential for accidents, congestion, visual intrusion, air pollution, carbon emissions, noise, dust and vibrations.³ Although alternative transportation methods do not remove these impacts altogether, we need to consider whether alternative methods that can minimise them are available and viable to enable longer-distance movements of minerals to or from Worcestershire.
- 2.3. This document provides background evidence to inform the development of the Minerals Local Plan. It includes information relating to national, regional and local policy and explores potential opportunities for the transportation of minerals by rail in Worcestershire.

3. Introduction to rail freight

- 3.1. Many businesses in the UK rely on rail as a quick, green, safe and efficient means of transporting raw materials for manufacturing, fuel and consumer goods. Rail transport of construction and intermodal freight has generally increased since 1998, but coal freight has declined significantly as the use of coal for power generation is phased out. Rail transported 17.2 billion tonne kilometres of freight in 2016/17, equating to 11% of freight surface transport⁴.
- 3.2. Industry forecasts predict that rail freight could increase by 33% between 2013 and 2023, growing from 24.4bn net tonne kms to 32.4bn net tonne kms⁵. The expansion of rail freight will require government policy on

¹ Mineral Products Association, *Transport*
<http://www.mineralproducts.org/sustainability/transport.html> [accessed 30.08.2018].

² Mineral Products Association, *General issues: Transportation of mineral products*, available at http://www.mineralproducts.org/iss_key01.htm [accessed 30.08.2018].

³ Quarry Products Association, British Marine Aggregate Producers Association, British Geological Survey, Entec UK Ltd, *Planning4Minerals: A Guide on Aggregates*

⁴ Freight on Rail, Useful facts and figures, available at <http://www.freightonrail.org.uk/FactsFigures.htm> [accessed 30.08.2018]

⁵ Rail Delivery Group (2015) *Freight Britain: Continuity and certainty for rail freight*.

improving the rail network for freight and maintaining mode-shift grants for rail and water.⁶

- 3.3. A number of factors have contributed to the rise in rail freight since the mid-1990s, including increased competition brought about since the privatisation of rail freight operations, increased investment in efficient locomotives, wagons and terminals, and network-scale investment in infrastructure. Increased road congestion and rising fuel costs have also helped push freight back to the railways.
- 3.4. Rail freight has traditionally been associated with heavy, bulky goods and construction materials, including aggregates and minerals, due to the economies of scale over longer distances, the increased weight capability of rail over road transport, and the ability to transport a greater volume in one journey. A freight train fully loaded with construction materials (including aggregates) can replace 77 Heavy Goods Vehicles, and one gallon of fuel can move a tonne of material 246 miles on the railway, but only 88 miles by road⁷. Rail freight can also play an important role in mitigating climate change, with rail producing around 0.05 kg of CO₂ per tonne per km compared to around 0.17 kg of CO₂ per tonne per km for road transport.⁸ It is also better for air quality, as it produces fewer harmful emissions and fine particulates than road transport.
- 3.5. Despite changes in the aggregates market through the second half of the 20th century, which saw smaller quarries and gravel pits close and the consolidation of the industry to larger 'superquarries', the sector's demand for rail remains strong, with the minerals products industry being the second biggest user of rail freight after coal.⁹ Notwithstanding this, rail freight is increasingly moving towards carriage of container cargoes rather than bulk loads, with a recent report stating that "dramatic changes are occurring in the rail freight sector" and that "In the last year the volume of coal carried has plummeted by around 50%, but the number of containers carried is growing strongly. Continued strength in trade through ports and the development of new Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges is forecast to increase rail freight volume and see a change from a freight railway focused on bulk commodities to one dominated by the movement of food and consumer goods"¹⁰.
- 3.6. Whilst rail freight has grown, road freight is still the dominant form of transport over other types of freight movement in the UK, due to the relatively short distances that freight travels. This is likely to have a bearing on whether new minerals developments within Worcestershire would

⁶ Freight Transport Association, *Logistics Report 2018*

⁷ Network Rail (2013) *Value and Importance of Rail Freight* [online] available at <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/10439.aspx> [accessed on 30.08.2018]

⁸ Freight on Rail, *Useful Facts and Figures – Environmental Arguments for Rail Freight*, available at <http://www.freightonrail.org.uk/FactsFigures-environmental.htm> [accessed 30.08.2018]

⁹ Mineral Products Association, *General issues: Transportation of mineral products*, available at http://www.mineralproducts.org/iss_key01.htm [accessed 30.08.2018]

¹⁰ West Midlands Combined Authority (2016) *West Midlands Freight Strategy: Supporting our Economy; Tackling Carbon*

consider investment in developing rail transfer infrastructure to be cost-effective.

Rail freight in Worcestershire

- 3.7. Whilst the Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy makes a commitment to "continue to support the use of rail to transport freight for the congestion reduction and air quality benefits that it brings"¹¹, the practicalities of accessing the rail network may limit the scope of minerals movement by rail within the county.



Figure 1: Loaded scrap wagons passing Abbotsford (photo copyright Andrew Smith, 2011).

- 3.8. There are currently limited opportunities for rail freight within Worcestershire. The nearest major rail freight facilities are in Coventry, Daventry and Swindon, with freight currently transported between Worcestershire and these locations by road.

¹¹ Worcestershire County Council (2016) *Rail Investment Strategy*.

4. Responsible Bodies

Department for Transport

- 4.1. Two support schemes are available to aid the shift from road to rail under the Mode Shift Revenue Support scheme. The budget for these grants is around £16 million per year (2016/17 to 2019/20 inclusive) for England¹².

Mode Shift Revenue Support scheme

- 4.2. The Mode Shift Revenue Support scheme (MSRS) is administered by the Department for Transport¹³ to assist companies with the operating costs associated with running rail or inland water freight transport instead of road, where those methods are more expensive. It operates in two parts:
- MSRS (Intermodal) for the purchase of intermodal container movements by rail; and
 - MSRS (Bulk and Waterways) for the purchase of other freight traffic movements by rail and all movements by inland waterway.
- 4.3. The MSRS scheme has approval from the European Commission to operate until 31 March 2020 and therefore grants may be limited by this date. Prior to this date the scheme will be evaluated to ascertain whether it could be extended.

MSRS (Intermodal)

- 4.4. This is designed to support the movement of intermodal containers by rail in Great Britain, providing support for the deep-sea, short-sea and domestic intermodal container business that moves by rail. It is available to all traffic carried in standard intermodal units (containers, swapbodies or piggyback trailers) on railway infrastructure as defined in the Railways Infrastructure (Access and Management) Regulations 2005, with the exception of Channel Tunnel traffic.
- 4.5. However, construction materials (including cement, clay, stone, granite, sand, timber) and minerals including (coal, lime potash, gypsum, rock salt) are ineligible for MSRS (Intermodal)¹⁴. Therefore it is unlikely that any movements of minerals into or out of the county will be eligible for MSRS (Intermodal).

¹² Department for Transport (February 2016) *Update on Proposals for Administrative Changes to the Mode Shift Revenue Support Scheme in England* [Online] available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/500199/msrs-consultation-response.pdf [accessed 30.08.2018]

¹³ For flows entirely within England and for cross border flows where the majority of environmental benefits fall in England.

¹⁴ Department for Transport (2015) *Guide to Mode Shift Revenue Support (MSRS) Scheme* [online] available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mode-shift-revenue-support-msrs-scheme-2015-to-2020> [accessed 30.08.2018]

MSRS (Bulk and Waterways)

- 4.6. This is designed to support the movement of non-containerised freight by rail (and all freight on inland waterways) where it would otherwise move by road. The grant is limited by the value of identified environmental benefits and/or the financial need for grant (demonstrated by a financial appraisal). Each application for support from MSRS (Bulk and Waterways) is assessed on an individual basis.
- 4.7. Traffic moving on rail infrastructure as defined in the Railways Infrastructure (Access and Management) Regulations 2005 is eligible for consideration for MSRS (Bulk and Waterways), with some exceptions, including where the best alternative mode of transport is other than by road (e.g. coastal shipping), the service can be commercially justified without MSRS (Bulk and Waterways) support or would proceed in any event without it, or the use of rail or inland waterways is a planning or other legal requirement on the site from where the freight is to be carried¹⁵.
- 4.8. The scheme works on the principle that a traffic flow is entitled to grant support if the environmental benefits justify it and the cost of using rail (or inland waterway) is greater than the cost of road, highlighting a 'financial need'. Environmental benefits measure the effect of removing freight from the road network. Financial need is the difference between the door-to-door cost of road instead of rail (or water), where the latter is more expensive.

Network Rail

Freight Network Long Term Planning Process

- 4.9. Network Rail's Freight Network Study is part of its 'Long Term Planning Process'¹⁶. This process was established in 2012 as an evolution of the previous Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) process¹⁷. It assesses the future requirements for the rail freight market and sets out the short, medium and long-term schemes that have the potential to be funded, or part funded, in the period beyond 2019.
- 4.10. The Freight Network Study provides a range of options for improvement projects across the country, including "Increase freight linespeed through Worcester station area".

¹⁵ If the freight will move by road to or from a different site rather than the one restricted to rail or waterway, MSRS (Bulk and Waterways) can be considered.

¹⁶ Network Rail (April 2017) *Freight Network Study Long Term Planning Process*, available from: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/long-term-planning/> [accessed 28.08.2016]

¹⁷ Office of Rail and Road, *Long term planning process* [online] available at <http://orr.gov.uk/rail/economic-regulation/regulation-of-network-rail/network-licence/long-term-planning-process> [accessed 30.08.2018]

West Midlands & Chilterns Route Study: Advice and choices for funders¹⁸

- 4.11. This document provides an evidence base to inform funders considering rail industry investment for the medium and long term, to 2043. It states that "The railway in the West Midlands plays an important role in moving goods, and reducing the number of lorries on the roads. Traditionally the railways have focused on moving heavy goods, including coal, but this market is declining, with energy policy being a major driver. Future growth is expected in the intermodal market moving goods from ports to freight terminals and onward distribution across the country. There is a number of existing important freight terminals in the study area, as well as proposals for new ones including at Cannock and Four Ashes".
- 4.12. The study notes that "the railway between Birmingham, Worcester and Hereford serves a number of markets; it carries freight traffic, commuter services into Birmingham, and long distance passenger services between the South West and the North. The line also features one of the steepest gradients on the main line rail network, between Bromsgrove and Blackwell Summit, known as the 'Lickey Incline'. This presents unique capacity challenges, particularly for freight services". In respect of the Birmingham to Worcester/Hereford via Bromsgrove route, it identifies five main issues for the future:
- Longer trains to meet forecast growth in passenger numbers
 - Development of interchange facilities at Kings Norton
 - Accommodating future freight growth from the South West
 - Upgraded station at University
 - Improved Sunday and evening services
- 4.13. The study identifies a number of constraints to achieving its aims for 2043 (known as the Indicative Train Service Specification), including the number of longer distance services operating through the Bromsgrove area. It states that "Depending on the levels of freight growth there may be a requirement to separate passenger and freight flows on this corridor. An option was developed for grade separation on this corridor. This should be considered alongside the potential for changing freight routeing, potentially via a reopened route between Stourbridge and Walsall. Any future development should take forward the best value for money option".

Network Rail Strategy for the Midlands¹⁹

- 4.14. Network Rail's strategy for the Midlands forecasts freight growth of 65% by 2023 and 350% by 2043. The strategy states that "Key flows for the Midlands include intermodal container traffic from Felixstowe ports to the West Midlands and transfer of construction materials from Peak District

¹⁸ Network Rail (August 2017) *West Midlands & Chilterns Route Study: Advice and choices for funders* Available from: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/long-term-planning/> [accessed 28.08.2018]

¹⁹ Network Rail (2017) *Enabling progress and facilitating growth: A rail strategy for the Midlands*.

quarries to London. This positive demand is projected to continue in the future".

Midlands Connect

4.15. Midlands Connect is a pan-Midlands partnership of local transport authorities, local enterprise partnerships and local business representatives working with the Department for Transport and its key delivery bodies. The Partnership now forms the transport component of the Midlands Engine for Growth²⁰.

Midlands Connect Strategy: Powering the Midlands Engine

4.16. This strategy sets out that major growth in freight traffic is expected on three routes: "the West Coast Main Line, the Midland Main Line and the route via Leicester and Peterborough to Felixstowe. Capacity is expected to become available on the West Coast Main Line with the opening of HS2, and works are already committed to restoring the four-track railway on the Midland Main Line which will enhance capacity for freight".

Midlands Connect/Jacobs (April 2017) Freight Narrative Report: Final

4.17. This report looks at freight in more detail than the Midlands Connect Strategy, and notes that "The movement of construction materials by rail is forecast to grow strongly, providing opportunities for quarries and cement plants in the Midlands to increase their market by serving other regions efficiently by rail and by using rail to serve major projects such as HS2". No specific issues or projects are identified within Worcestershire.

5. Policy context

European policy and support

European rail network for competitive freight

5.1. EU Regulation 913/2010 '*A European Rail Network for Competitive Freight*' requires that member states with railways connected to the European railway network must "be able to benefit from a good quality and sufficiently financed railway infrastructure, namely, one which allows freight transport services to be provided under good conditions in terms of commercial speed and journey times and to be reliable".²¹

5.2. The Regulation requests member states to establish international market-oriented rail freight corridors to meet three challenges:

²⁰ Midlands Connect (March 2017) Midlands Connect Strategy: Powering the Midlands Engine

²¹ European Commission (2010) Regulation 913/2010: 'A European Rail Network for Competitive Freight'

- strengthening co-operation between infrastructure managers on key aspects such as allocation of path, deployment of interoperable systems and infrastructure development;
- striking the right balance between freight and passenger traffic along the Rail Freight Corridors, giving adequate capacity and priority for freight in line with market needs and ensuring that common punctuality targets for freight trains are met;
- promoting intermodality between rail and other transport modes by integrating terminals into the corridor management and development.²²

Shift2Rail

- 5.3. In June 2014, the EU Council adopted the Shift2Rail Regulation. Shift2Rail²³ is a joint effort by the European rail sector and the European Union to create a step change in rail technology in order to meet three major targets:
- Enhancing the capacity of the European rail system to cope with increased user demand,
 - Increasing the reliability and quality of rail services, and
 - Significantly reducing the life cycle cost of the overall system.
- 5.4. This partnership will encompass €920m of research, innovation and demonstration activities, seeking to make rail transport more attractive to both passengers and freight users and boost the competitiveness of rail transport.

National policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.5. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning policies to "safeguard existing, planned and potential sites for: the bulk transport, handling and processing of minerals; the manufacture of concrete and concrete products; and the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material".²⁴
- 5.6. The NPPF states that "Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in

²² European Commission, *Rail; The European Rail Network for Competitive Freight* [Online] Available at

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/infrastructures/rail_freight_oriented_network_en.htm

[accessed 30.08.2018]

²³ Information about Shift2Rail can be found at <http://www.shift2rail.org/>

²⁴ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2018) *National Planning Policy Framework* (paragraph 204(e)).

both plan-making and decision-making"²⁵. Encouraging the transfer of freight from roads to railways has the potential to reduce CO₂ emissions, traffic congestion and HGV accidents.

- 5.7. Opportunities for sustainable modes of transport to be taken up may depend on the nature and location of the site but could reduce the need for major transport infrastructure. Improvements to the transport network (including railways) might cost-effectively limit significant impacts of development.
- 5.8. The NPPF states that "All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed".²⁶ Transport Statements or Transport Assessments should demonstrate how opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been considered and whether improvements to the transport network can be undertaken to cost-effectively mitigate the significant impacts of the development.
- 5.9. Where large-scale transport facilities, such as rail freight interchanges, are required, the NPPF states that these should be developed "through collaboration between strategic policy-making authorities and other relevant bodies".

Planning Practice Guidance

- 5.10. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)²⁷ outlines that Transport Assessments and Transport Statements are ways of assessing and mitigating the negative transport impacts of development in order to promote sustainable development.
- 5.11. Transport Assessments are thorough assessments of the transport implications of development, and Transport Statements are a 'lighter-touch' evaluation to be used where this would be more proportionate to the potential impact of the development (i.e. in the case of developments with anticipated limited transport impacts).²⁸
- 5.12. Depending on the scale of a proposed development, either a Transport Assessment or a Transport Statement may be required.

²⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) *National Planning Policy Framework* (paragraph 103).

²⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) *National Planning Policy Framework* (paragraph 111).

²⁷ Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2014) *Planning Practice Guidance: Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements in decision-taking* [online] Available from: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> [accessed 30.08.2018] (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 42-001-20140306)

²⁸ Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2014) *Planning Practice Guidance: Travel plans, transport assessments and statements in decision-taking* [online] Available at <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> [accessed 30.08.2018] (Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 42-004-20140306)

Local policy

Worcestershire LEP Strategic Economic Plan

- 5.13. The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has produced a Strategic Economic Plan called 'World Class Worcestershire', a ten-year plan for jobs, growth and the economy. The goal of the plan was to secure new money from the Government to help deliver strategic projects in the county. In July 2014, the LEP was awarded £47 million through the Growth Deal²⁹.
- 5.14. Improving transport and making the most of Worcestershire's geographic location are key parts of the SEP. Under the heading of 'Creating a world class business location', it highlights a proposed Transport Investment Programme to address lack of capacity on the road network and improvements to the rail network which include a new Worcestershire Parkway station³⁰.

²⁹ Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (2014) *Worcestershire Growth Deal great news for the county* [online] Available at <http://www.wlep.co.uk/worcestershire-growth-deal-great-news-county/> [accessed 30.08.2018]

³⁰ Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (2014) *World Class Worcestershire: Our ten year plan for jobs, growth and the economy* [online] Available at <http://www.wlep.co.uk/resources/document-library/> [accessed 30.08.2018]

Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Strategic Economic Plan

5.15. The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP³¹ has produced a Strategic Economic Plan called 'A Greater Birmingham for a greater Britain'³². The plan includes a commitment to "harness the transformational opportunity presented by HS2", stating that "Greater Birmingham will be home to two world-class, landmark stations, each acting as destinations in their own right and will be catalysts for regeneration and growth in their own localities and across the wider region. The development zones surrounding the stations will complement the overall strength of the Midlands as the place to visit, live and do business".

West Midlands Cross-LEP Statement on Transport

5.16. The Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) of the Black Country, Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Coventry and Warwickshire, the Marches, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, and Worcestershire sit at the centre of the country, and an "extensive sub-national and cross-national transport infrastructure, facilitating movement for close to a quarter of UK GDP"³³. Whilst each LEP has produced an individual Strategic Economic Plan, they have also agreed a cross-LEP Statement on Transport to support and complement their individual growth strategies and to ensure the effectiveness of their own transport plans, and that of the West Midlands as a whole.

5.17. This document recognises road and rail congestion as a key challenge. It states that "whilst road freight accounts for just 6% of all road trips, the impact of road congestion on those freight movements costs our economy some £600M per year"³⁴. It also highlights the importance of exports and advanced manufacturing to the region and their reliance on good transport networks due to their geographical location in the centre of the country. Local transport improvements in this area can have an impact on a much larger economic area.

5.18. The document identifies a number of strategic rail projects, mainly related to maximising the benefits of rail devolution, HS2 and increased capacity from the West Coast Main Line. The individual Strategic Economic Plans for each of the LEPs further detail these commitments to infrastructure.

³¹ The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area includes Bromsgrove District, Redditch Borough and Wyre Forest District in Worcestershire.

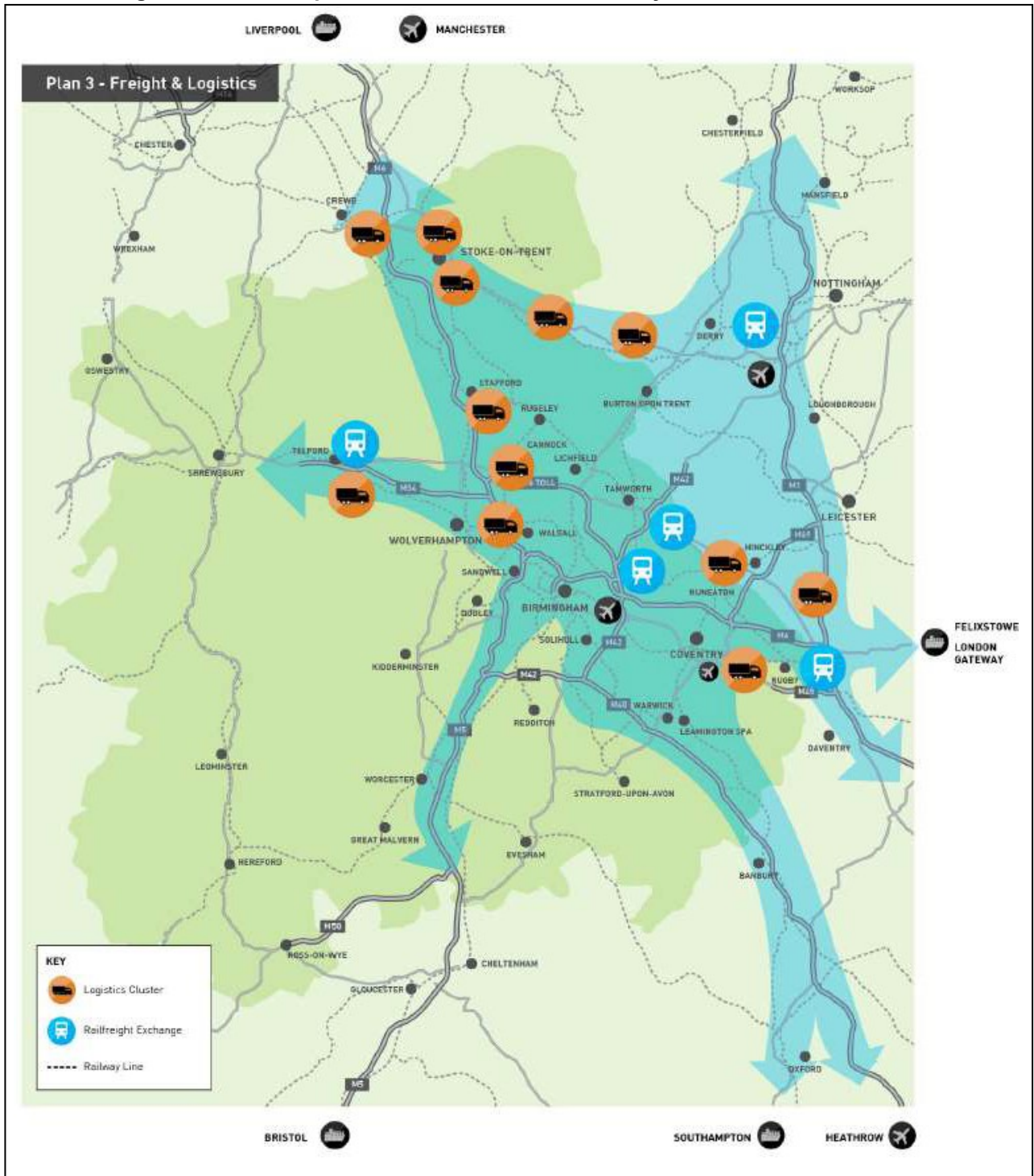
³² Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (2016) *Strategic Economic Plan 2016-30: A Greater Birmingham for a Greater Britain*

³³ West Midlands LEPs (2014) *West Midlands Cross LEP Statement on Transport* [online] Available at <http://centreofenterprise.com/2014/04/14/six-west-midlands-leps-join-forces-to-present-unified-vision-for-transport-investment/> [accessed 13.05.2014] p.1

³⁴ West Midlands LEPs (2014) *West Midlands Cross LEP Statement on Transport* [online] Available at <http://centreofenterprise.com/2014/04/14/six-west-midlands-leps-join-forces-to-present-unified-vision-for-transport-investment/> [accessed 13/05.2014] p.2

5.19. Figure 2 illustrates the key freight and logistics locations, as well as rail freight interchanges, airports and ports across the West Midlands. It highlights the importance of the motorway network to transport goods to markets, and the critical role of rail freight. However, it also demonstrates the lack of rail freight in the Worcestershire area.

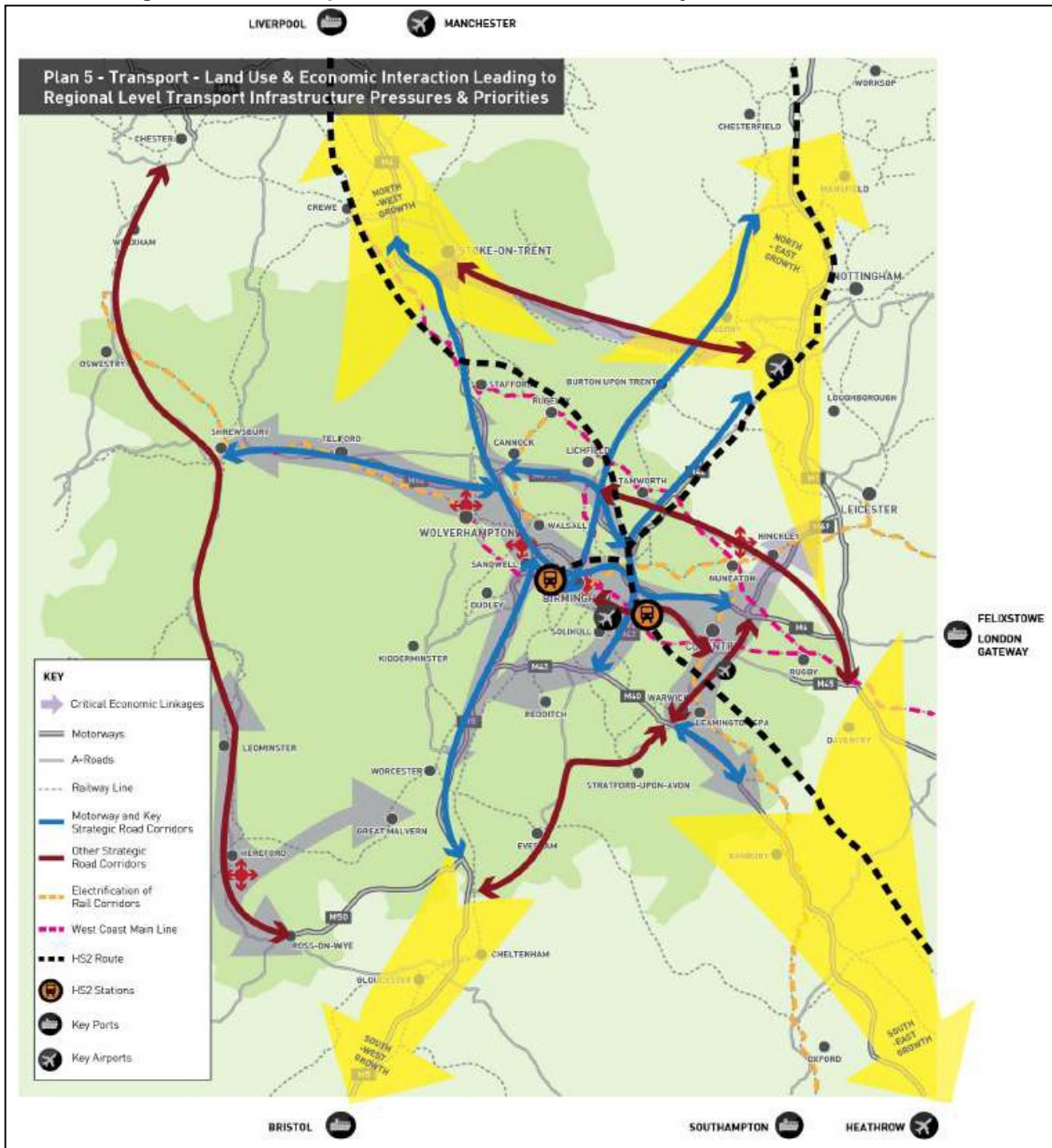
Figure 2. Plan 3 from the West Midlands Cross-LEP Statement on Transport. The darker green area of the plan indicates the area covered by the West Midlands LEPs.



5.20. Figure 3 highlights the collective pressures and priorities for the six LEPs in the West Midlands. Motorway junctions, HS2, electrification of rail lines and

investment in rail freight will "dramatically improve the movement of people and goods throughout the region and in between key centres"³⁵. These two plans represent an approach to integrated transport infrastructure planning which supports the specific plans of the six LEPs.

Figure 3. Plan 5 from the West Midlands Cross-LEP Statement on Transport. The darker green area of the plan indicates the area covered by the West Midlands LEPs.



³⁵ West Midlands LEPs (2014) *West Midlands Cross LEP Statement on Transport* [online] Available at <http://centreofenterprise.com/2014/04/14/six-west-midlands-leps-join-forces-to-present-unified-vision-for-transport-investment/> [accessed 13.05.2014] p.9

Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 4 (2018-2030)

5.21. Worcestershire County Council has adopted a Local Transport Plan for 2018 to 2030 (LTP4) in which "Worcestershire County Council acknowledges the critical importance of rail as a key enabler of economic activity and growth, directly connecting economies and strengthening network resilience". LTP4 is primarily focussed on passenger transport and does not include specific rail freight policies, but it is supported by a dedicated Rail Investment Strategy³⁶.

Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy

5.22. Worcestershire's Rail Investment Strategy identifies that there are currently freight movements along three rail lines that pass through the county:

- The Bristol to Birmingham Line is a major freight artery, with 2 freight paths per hour in each direction. Some of these are occasionally routed via Worcester Shrub Hill.
- The Worcester-Kidderminster-Stourbridge-Round Oak or Birmingham route has 9 to 10 freight paths per day.
- There is one freight train path per day along the North Cotswold Line serving the Long Marston depot.

5.23. The Strategy "will continue to support the use of rail to transport freight for the congestion reduction and air quality benefits that it brings", although it does not identify any actions specific to rail freight. As in some other document, the strategy recognises the challenge to freight traffic posed by the gradient of the Lickey Incline.

Local Plans

5.24. As with the LTP4, the transport policies within Worcestershire's city, borough and district Local Plans are primarily focussed on passenger transport, but they nevertheless provide support for a shift in freight/goods movements to modes that are more sustainable than road haulage.

Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030

5.25. The Bromsgrove District Plan includes policy BDP16.7, which states that "Retail and employment development should make proper provision for freight delivery and collections and should consider using sustainable methods of freight transport". The text supporting the policy states that "proposed improvements at Bromsgrove Railway Station may potentially offer improvements leading to greater efficiency in the movement of freight through the District". The plan also includes Strategic Objective SO6, to "Encourage more sustainable modes of travel and a modal shift in

³⁶ Worcestershire County Council/Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (2017) *Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy*

transport, for example encouraging walking and cycling and promoting a more integrated, sustainable and reliable public transport network across the District".

- 5.26. Policy BDP1.4 states that when considering proposals for development in the district, regard will be had to the ability of the local road network to accommodate additional traffic, implications for air quality, and cumulative impacts on infrastructure provision, as well as potential impacts on the natural environment, residential amenity, climate change and the historic environment.

Redditch Borough Local Plan No. 4

- 5.27. The transport policy in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 (Policy 19: Sustainable Travel and Accessibility) is concerned only with passenger transport. The Plan does not address any freight transport issues. Objective 5 is to "encourage safer, sustainable travel patterns, improve accessibility and maintain a balanced road hierarchy and reduce the need to travel".

Wyre Forest Core Strategy 2006-2026

- 5.28. The Wyre Forest Core Strategy states that traffic congestion is rapidly increasing within the district and is prevalent within the three towns. The urban areas are experiencing declining air quality and there are two designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Minerals developments have the potential to exacerbate these problems, particularly as many of the major roads in the district pass through the urban areas.
- 5.29. Core Policy CP03 "Promoting Transport Choice and Accessibility" requires development proposals to have regard to the traffic impact on the local highway network and major development proposals to demonstrate that they have fully considered access by all modes of transport. It also expects impacts on air quality to be considered.

South Worcestershire Development Plan 2006 - 2030

- 5.30. Policy SWDP4 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan, 'Moving Around South Worcestershire' requires proposals to demonstrate that the location of development will minimise demand for travel, offer genuinely sustainable travel choices and improve road safety. The focus of the plan is generally more on public transport than on freight.
- 5.31. The plan identifies the need for further investment in rail infrastructure and services in order to continue to support economic growth in the county, but it does not provide any further detail on the implications for rail freight.

Surrounding authorities

- 5.32. This background document considers the potential for transporting minerals on Worcestershire's rail networks, but most of these networks are not confined to one county and provide links across boundaries to other counties and major urban areas, including Gloucester, Stratford-upon-Avon, and Birmingham.

5.33. Rail networks might provide a means for minerals to be transported across the county boundary, both into and out of Worcestershire, and therefore it is necessary to consider whether this would be supported by surrounding authorities' planning and transport policies. It is possible that minerals could be transported to or from further afield but, as minerals are relatively inexpensive to produce and therefore transportation costs have a greater impact on the final price of the mineral - particularly for aggregates - it becomes less cost effective to transport minerals over long distances. This is especially so in light of the high capital cost of improving rail freight facilities.

Black Country (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton)

5.34. The Black Country Core Strategy (adopted 2011) was produced jointly by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Borough Council, Walsall Council and Wolverhampton City Council. Dudley Metropolitan Borough is adjacent to the northern boundary of Worcestershire. The Core Strategy broadly supports the principle of transporting minerals by other than the road network although opportunities for this are somewhat limited within the Black Country.

5.35. One of the spatial objectives of the plan is to deliver a first-class transport network, and improvements to the freight railway network are specifically mentioned. Core Strategy Policy 5 'Transport Strategy' states that improved access to the freight railway network is key, and identifies a new freight railway between Stourbridge and Walsall and Walsall to Lichfield as a key transport priority.

Birmingham

5.36. Birmingham is a major through-route for rail freight, and there are a number of active rail freight facilities within the city. The Birmingham Development Plan includes policy TP38 'A sustainable transport network' that says the delivery of a sustainable transport network will require, among other things, "improvements and development of road, rail and water freight routes to support the sustainable and efficient movement of goods".

5.37. The plan also includes a dedicated policy on freight - policy TP42 - that seeks to protect existing, and support new, inter-modal transfer facilities, new rail sidings and rail freight facilities.

Gloucestershire

5.38. Gloucestershire borders Worcestershire to the south and there are rail links between the counties. Gloucestershire County Council is also producing a Minerals Local Plan. The Publication Version of the Minerals Local Plan states that "There are no active commercial freight depots or terminals present within the county although significant volumes of freight pass through the Gloucestershire rail network". The plan recognises that, although alternatives to road transport of minerals may be possible, this is

unlikely due to the location of the minerals relative to the rail network and the scale of investment in rail infrastructure that would be required.

Herefordshire

5.39. Herefordshire lies to the west of Worcestershire. While there are rail connections between Worcestershire and Herefordshire, there are no rail freight services. This is due to gauge constraints arising from the tunnels at Colwall and Ledbury which effectively prevent freight traffic from using this route.³⁷

Shropshire

5.40. Shropshire lies to the north west of Worcestershire. Shropshire's Adopted Core Strategy seeks to facilitate freight movements and encourage greater freight movements by rail. It specifically highlights that the geography of the rail network in the national rail system means there are opportunities to encourage greater freight movements by rail for mineral and waste operations.

Staffordshire

5.41. Worcestershire shares only a small part of its northern border with Staffordshire, and the two counties are not well connected by rail. The adopted Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire (2015 – 2030) states that "all aggregate minerals are transported to their markets via road transport" and only contains reference to the possibility of transporting minerals by rail in relation to one minerals site.

5.42. The Freight Strategy appendix (appendix L) of the county's Local Transport Plan identifies that the West Coast Main Line through Staffordshire as one of the main rail freight routes in the country, and establishes that the county is relatively well-served by rail freight networks. It identifies a number of opportunities for improvement to rail freight, including rail transfer hubs and increasing capacity.

Solihull

5.43. Policy P8 of the Solihull Local Plan promotes and encourages the use of sustainable modes of transport. The plan also states that the movement of freight by sustainable modes will be encouraged, particularly via rail and canal networks.

Warwickshire

5.44. Warwickshire's publication consultation Minerals Plan contains a draft objective "to minimise the impact of the movement of bulk materials by road on local communities and where possible encourage the use of alternative

³⁷ Atkins (2014) *The Marches Rail Study Final Report* [online] Available from: <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/Reports/reports/140328-The-Marches-Rail-Study-Final-Report.pdf> [accessed 29.08.2018]

modes of transport". There are two rail freight terminals in North Warwickshire. However, rail links between Warwickshire and Worcestershire are very limited.

6. Local Issues

- 6.1. A number of factors have brought more attention to modal shift as a topic worthy of serious consideration, including a more environmentally aware society, rising fuel prices, more customer-focused and competitive rail and water freight operators and heightened road congestion.
- 6.2. These issues underpin much of the local support for investment in rail freight opportunities, though commitment to specific projects in Worcestershire and across the West Midlands is still relatively weak.
- 6.3. Worcestershire sits in a potentially strategic position in the country, with lines connecting the south west with the midlands and the north east, and the Cotswold Line running through the county from Herefordshire in the west to Oxford and London in the south east.³⁸
- 6.4. However, the potential for freight services is limited by available capacity on the network and by physical constraints in some locations. Travelling between Bromsgrove and Birmingham is limited by the Lickey Incline which is one of the steepest sections of mainline railway in the country, meaning that some freight trains require the assistance of a banking locomotive to reach the top,³⁹ and gauge constraints provided by the tunnels at Colwall and Ledbury effectively prevent freight traffic from using the route between Worcestershire and Herefordshire.⁴⁰
- 6.5. In addition, although the Cross-Country line passes through the county, passenger access is only available by making connections at Birmingham New Street and Cheltenham Spa. This is part of the justification supporting the development of Worcestershire Parkway Station.⁴¹

Current proposals

- 6.6. At present the County Council is working on several schemes to improve rail facilities in the county, though these are mainly passenger-focused and do not specifically involve improvements for freight.
- 6.7. The Council has been working in partnership with Network Rail, the Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster Railway Museum, London Midland, Centro and Bromsgrove District Council bus and rail operating companies and the Wyre Forest District Council on projects to improve station facilities at Kidderminster and Bromsgrove Stations.

³⁸ Some of these lines are extremely busy, and paths may only be available at times of low passenger activity. High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) has the potential to free capacity on traditional lines and therefore release paths for freight services. However, as the first services are not due to run until 2026, this is unlikely to have a significant impact during the lifetime of the Minerals Local Plan.

³⁹ Worcestershire County Council (2017) *Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy*.

⁴⁰ Atkins (2014) *The Marches Rail Study Final Report* [online] Available at <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/Reports/reports/140328-The-Marches-Rail-Study-Final-Report.pdf> [accessed 30.08.2018]

⁴¹ Worcestershire County Council (2017) *Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy*.

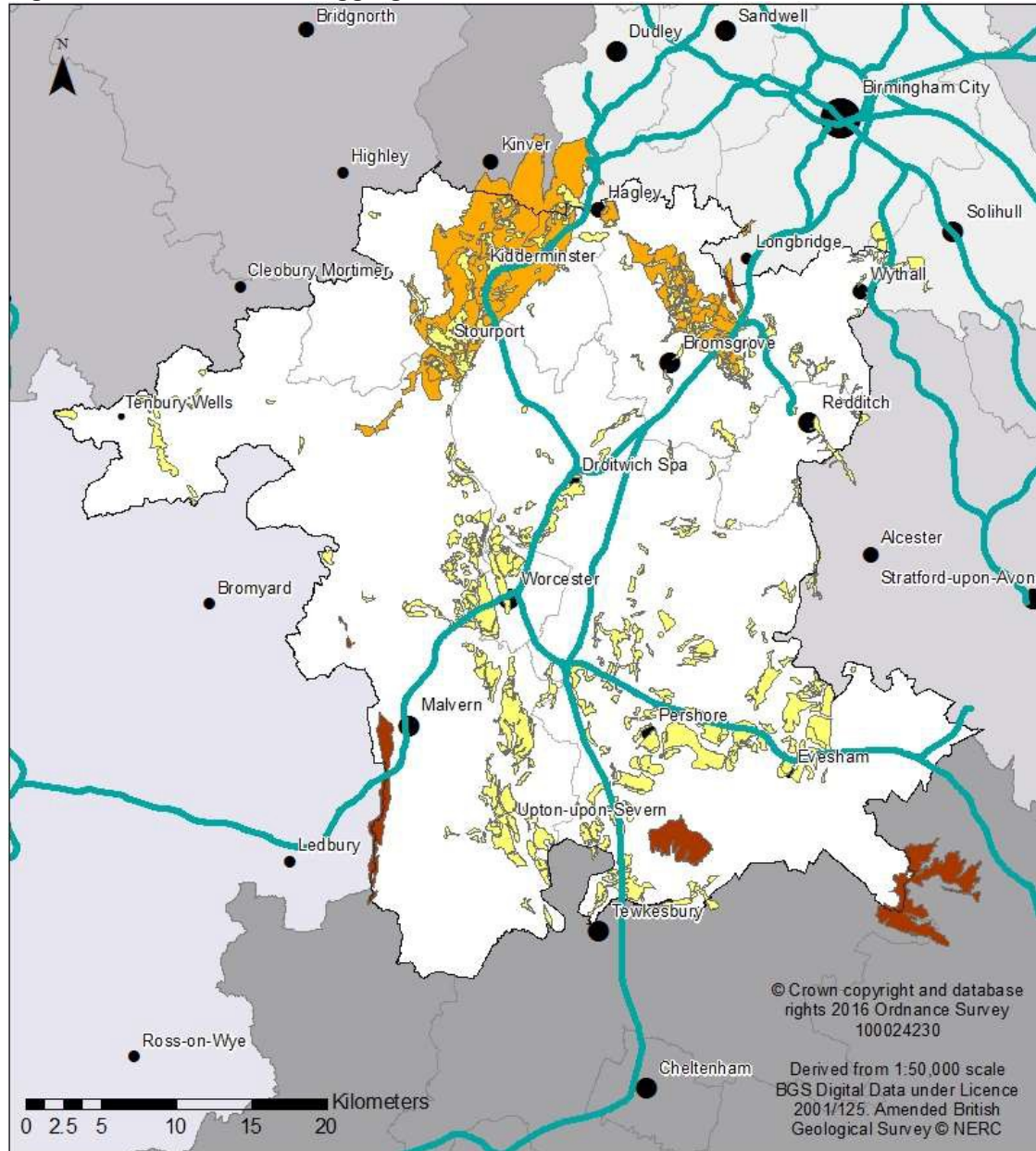
- 6.8. Construction of the new Worcestershire Parkway Station at the intersection of the Worcester to London (North Cotswold) and Birmingham to Bristol railway lines and the B4084 near Norton is underway. The station is a priority for Worcestershire County Council, the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Members of Parliament and Worcestershire District Councils and is supported in a number of the local policy documents mentioned above, including the LTP4 and the Worcestershire SEP.⁴² Planning permission for the development was granted in August 2015. The proposals are focused on passenger improvements and reducing journey times to London and do not include provision for a rail freight terminal.

Rail freight potential for minerals in Worcestershire










- 6.9. Mineral resources are well dispersed across Worcestershire, meaning there is significant overlap between resources and the rail lines running through the county (see Figure 4). However, Worcestershire currently has no rail-linked minerals sites and no rail freight terminals.

⁴² Worcestershire County Council (undated) *Worcestershire Parkway Regional Interchange* [online] available at http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20254/infrastructure_and_improvement_schemes/995/worcestershire_parkway_regional_interchange [accessed 30.08.2018]

Figure 4. Rail network and aggregate resources in Worcestershire



Legend

| | | |
|---|---|--|
|  Rail Network Line |  Sand & gravel resources |  County of Herefordshire |
| |  Solid sand resources |  Gloucestershire County |
| |  Crushed rock resources |  Shropshire County |
| | |  Staffordshire County |
| | |  Warwickshire County |

6.10. Information from the minerals industry suggests that rail transportation of sand and gravel is unlikely to ever be viable in Worcestershire as the scale of reserves and production volumes are insufficient to make a rail scheme viable, stating that an operator would need reserves of at least 20 million

tonnes to consider it.⁴³ Whilst this comment only referred to movement of sand and gravel, it is unlikely that any other minerals will be worked in the county at this scale.

Importing minerals

- 6.11. Whilst Worcestershire is a net exporter of sand and gravel, it is an importer of crushed rock.⁴⁴ With no extant crushed rock workings in the county and a very low likelihood of any being developed in the foreseeable future⁴⁵, it is likely that importation will continue. At present, all imports are by road.
- 6.12. Significant housing, employment and infrastructure development is proposed in the adopted and emerging Local Plans in the county which will require mineral resources, but the scale of this development is unlikely to justify a specific facility for mineral transport by rail or modal transfer. We are not aware of any plans to develop any general freight terminals in the county, but should any proposals be developed they should give consideration to enabling the movement of minerals.

⁴³ Mineral Products Association comment on *Sand and Gravel in Worcestershire* background document in response to 2nd Call for Sites, Infrastructure and Consultation on Background Evidence, summer 2015 (response reference D024-1899)

⁴⁴ Worcestershire County Council (2018) *Worcestershire Local Aggregates Assessment: Data covering the period up to 31/12/2016*

⁴⁵ The *Worcestershire Local Aggregates Assessment* published in 2018 states that it is unlikely that Worcestershire will be able to provide crushed rock for the foreseeable future, due to constraints and "the lack of interest in Worcestershire's resources shown by the minerals industry over many years, and the fact that no sites for crushed rock have been proposed in response to four "calls for sites"."

7. Safeguarding

- 7.1. The National Planning Policy Framework requires planning policies to safeguard, among other things: "existing, planned and potential sites for: the bulk transport, handling and processing of minerals".⁴⁶
- 7.2. Planning Practice Guidance⁴⁷ further clarifies that planning authorities should safeguard existing, planned and potential storage, handling and transport sites, in order to:
 - "ensure that sites for these purposes are available should they be needed; and
 - prevent sensitive or inappropriate development that would conflict with the use of sites identified for these purposes."
- 7.3. Planning Practice Guidance further clarifies that, in two-tier authorities such as Worcestershire, "responsibility for safeguarding facilities and sites for the storage, handling and transport of minerals in local plans will rest largely with the district planning authority. Exceptions will be where such facilities and sites are located at quarries or aggregate wharves or rail terminals. Planning authorities should consider the possibility of combining safeguarded sites for storage, handling and transport of minerals with those for processing and distribution of recycled and secondary aggregate. This will require close co-operation between planning authorities."
- 7.4. There are no existing and no planned or potential rail heads, rail links to quarries, or handling and processing facilities for the bulk transport of minerals or substitute, recycled or secondary aggregate materials in the county. Policies in the Minerals Local Plan will therefore need to be flexible enough to safeguard any facilities if they are planned or developed over the life of the plan.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) *National Planning Policy Framework* paragraph 204(c).

⁴⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (revision date 06 03 2014) *Planning Practice Guidance: Minerals*, Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 27-006-20140306

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. The Minerals Local Plan can and should promote the movement of minerals freight by rail through its vision, objectives and policies, and any site allocations should be informed by opportunities to make use of sustainable transport. Reducing the need to move minerals by road should be an integral driver behind any sustainable transport objectives.
- 8.2. When assessing mineral extraction proposals, locations should be assessed for the possibility of connections to rail transport networks and policies should require the consideration of rail transport as part of transport assessments or statements.