



# A Worcester Headquarters for Great British Railways

## Expression of Interest – March 2022





Cllr. Simon Geraghty  
Leader  
Worcestershire County Council

## WELL-CONNECTED – REINVENTING – GROWING – A PROUD HISTORY

# Introduction and Executive Summary

1. Great British Railways (GBR) offers new, integrated industry governance and close focus on rail's role in supporting extensively growing economies, communities and a sustainable, green environmental future.
2. Worcestershire will grow by 64,000 homes and 150,000 people by 2040, and our six District/City Council areas are all in Levelling Up Priority 1 or 2 with several LUF awards/bids. We thus welcome the potential represented by GBR.
3. With Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership we have invested positively in the National Rail network, opening our third party-funded Worcestershire Parkway station and a transformed Kidderminster Station in 2020.
4. In 2022 we are promoting masterplans for Worcester Shrub Hill and Redditch stations and, via the North Cotswold Line Task Force, a wider role for this main line from Worcester which serves the areas where thousands of our new residents will live and work.
5. Supported by a Towns Fund award and a Levelling Up bid we are working with Worcester City Council to re-invent the 'Shrub Hill Quarter in Worcester' with substantial numbers of homes and new jobs. We own extensive historic rail industry buildings next to Shrub Hill Station, and these can offer GBR modern, bespoke, attractive, sustainable and flexible choices for its Headquarters.
6. Worcestershire is at the very heart of Great Britain, well-connected by both rail and the strategic highway network. We are determined to see our direct rail connectivity evolve and improve with GBR's close engagement, taking maximum benefit of both our multi-million Worcestershire Parkway and Shrub Hill Station schemes.
7. Worcestershire County Council would be delighted to host GBR's Headquarters here in the beautiful cathedral City of Worcester with its proud Great Western and Midland railways heritage, supporting our determined and essential county-wide Levelling Up agenda, and our ongoing ambitions for continuously improving rail connectivity across Great Britain.

# Expressions of Support



*Having won £40m of once-in-a-generation government investment in Worcester's renaissance and levelling-up, we are ready to warmly welcome GBR's HQ to our revitalised, well-connected Shrub Hill Quarter, set amidst its great railway history.*

**Cllr. Marc Bayliss – Leader, Worcester City Council**



*Worcester is a well-connected city at Great Britain's heart. It is a great, growing place to locate GBR's HQ which in turn will support our ambitious Levelling Up agenda.*

**Robin Walker MP, Worcester**



*Our 5-counties/LEPs partnership is driving delivery and funding innovation for transformed Marches-Worcestershire-Oxford/Cambridge Arc-London rail connectivity. There will be compelling mutual benefit with a Worcester GBR HQ.*

**Lord Faulkner of Worcester, Chair, North Cotswold Line Task Force**



*With Worcestershire's economy and population expanding by 20% by 2040 and schemes such as Worcestershire Parkway widening our GB-wide connectivity, GBR's HQ will build on our Shrub Hill place-making investment and our ideal blend of urban and rural life.*

**Gary Woodman, Chief Executive  
Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership**

*Worcestershire is at the heart of the country and the heart of the Great British rail network and Worcester Shrub Hill will put Great British Railways at the beating heart of a vital national rail regeneration.*

**Harriett Baldwin MP, West Worcestershire**

*All of Worcestershire falls within Levelling-Up Priorities 1 and 2, with Worcester and Wyre Forest in Priority 1. GBR's HQ in Worcester would further support the range of successful 2020 LUF awards to Wyre Forest, Wychavon and Bromsgrove.*

**Mark Garnier MP, Wyre Forest**

*The fantastic new interchange and GB-connectivity at Worcestershire Parkway highlights the County's rail innovation. Worcester will be a well-informed host for GBR's HQ.*

**Nigel Huddleston MP, Mid-Worcestershire**

*Worcestershire is ideally placed for GBR's HQ given its connections to Birmingham, the North, the South-West, Wales, the East Midlands, the South-East and London. The new HQ in Worcestershire will be a statement of intent in the rail industry's mission to help level up all regions.*

**Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid MP, Bromsgrove**

*Rail is essential to sustainability of the County's modern economy and its growing communities. GBR's HQ here will visibly show the newly re-integrated rail industry's success in supporting post-COVID recovery and growth.*

**Rachel Maclean MP, Redditch**



Worcester Shrub Hill Station Masterplan

# One: Application Location and Proposed Headquarters Site

Our proposed site for Great British Railways' headquarters is the **Shrub Hill Quarter in Worcester**, a central location of re-invention in an historic, beautiful and vibrant cathedral city, rooted in two millennia of the British story and the entrepreneurial, innovative creation of two great railways – the Great Western and the Midland.

The application is made by **Worcestershire County Council** (WCC) as both an ambitious transport authority and the owner of extensive Grade-II listed rail industry buildings immediately adjacent to Worcester Shrub Hill Station, with the support of **Worcester City Council** (WoCC) and **Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership** (WLEP), our partners in the Shrub Hill Quarter Masterplan, regeneration and Levelling Up scheme.

Our application is supported by the County's six Members of Parliament, Lord Faulkner of Worcester (Chair: North Cotswold Line Task Force) and community passenger groups.

Purchased in 2019 in response to development market failure, WCC owns the extensive and iconic 19th century '**Engine Works**', immediately adjacent to the Grade-II listed Worcester Shrub Hill National Rail Station, together with the 1930s art-deco '**Isaac Maddox House**' opposite to the station, together offering up to 110,000 square feet of commercial and office space.

With a joint WCC/WoCC blueprint for their regeneration, supported by major public realm and station/Quarter interchange transformation, a £10m Towns Fund award and a £25m Levelling Up Fund (2) bid, either location will provide flexible, modern and green headquarters space tailored to GBR's immediate and evolving needs.



# One: Application Location and Proposed Headquarters Site

WCC, WoCC and WLEP's **Shrub Hill Quarter** blueprint sees an exciting re-birth of one of the largest Midlands brownfield sites, bringing new homes and thousands of new jobs.

Set in Worcester City Centre, directly served by National Rail and with a rich diversity of historic and commanding listed buildings alongside the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, the **Shrub Hill Quarter** can provide a special setting for the GBR Headquarters and, in turn, its success be supported by GBR as a principal anchor tenant.

The presence of GBR's HQ will raise Worcestershire's national visibility, place its name on people's lips, and enhance its already-strong tourism and visitor economy. It will be a vanguard in the blueprint plan for the radical re-birth of the Shrub Hill Quarter. It will create a fresh and integrated focus on Worcestershire's evolving rail connectivity needs, and illustrate the essential and transformative role the railway plays in economy, regeneration, employment, innovation and place making.

The **Shrub Hill Quarter in Worcester** is best suited for the GBR HQ for multiple reasons:

- Worcestershire is in the Midlands heart of Great Britain and accessible to all.
- The County is rail-connected to London, the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, Birmingham, the South West, Wales and the East Midlands, with GB-wide Cross Country services capable of calling at the new Worcestershire Parkway (opened 2020).
- Worcester is a vivid example of the need for Levelling Up, with its strong proactive economic and community development vision capable of delivering real change.
- It is a city on the River Severn at the forefront of confronting climate change.
- Worcester is a railway city with a multiplicity of heritage buildings being conserved and adapted for contemporary use, made 'up to the minute' and green.
- It can showcase GBR's new integrating purpose given Worcester's railway history and present-day reality of multiple railway companies, regions and boundaries.



Engine Works, Shrub Hill Quarter



# One: Application Location and Proposed Headquarters Site

**Choices** Connected – Aesthetic – Adaptable – Green



**Worcester Shrub Hill Station Masterplan 2017**

Oxford, Worcester & Wolverhampton and Midland railways (1850)



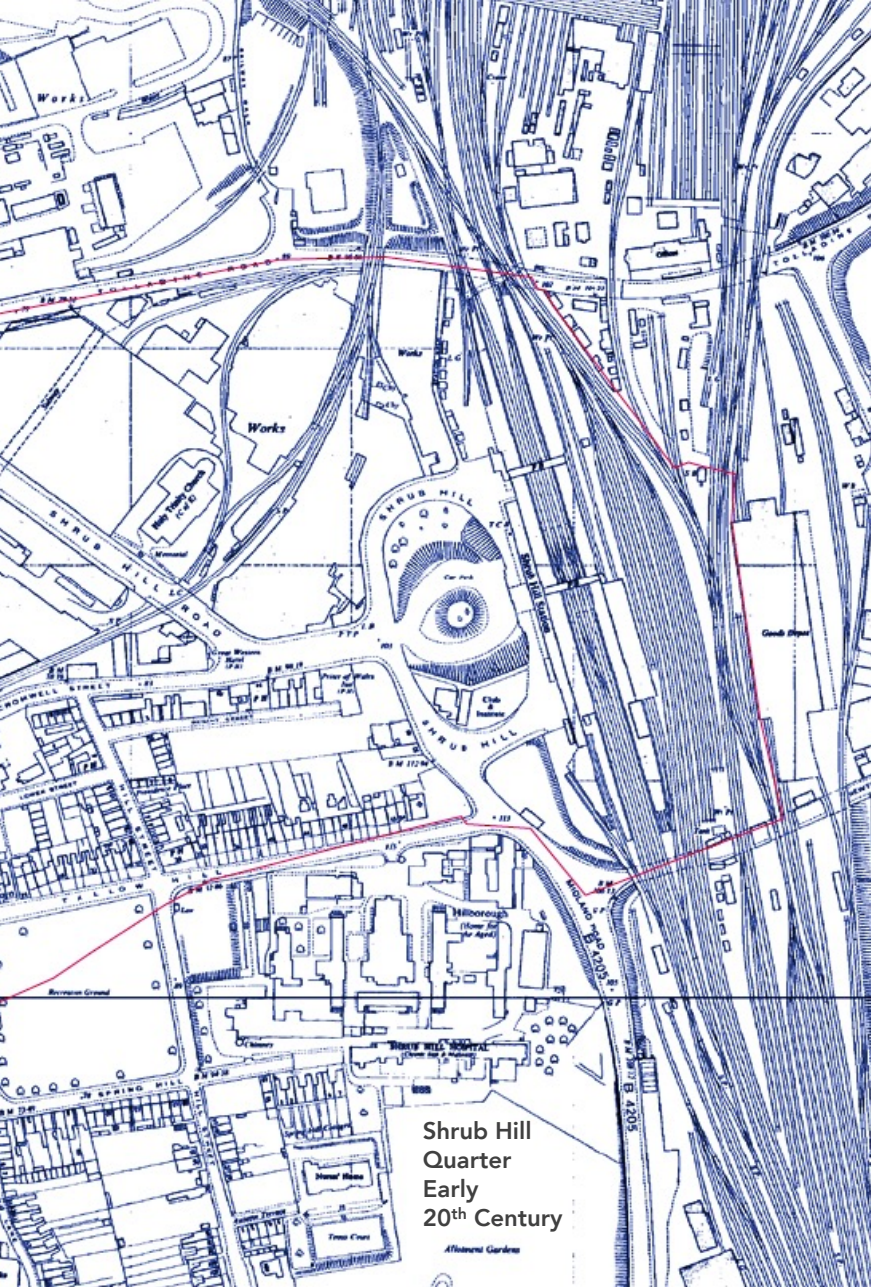
**Isaac Maddox House**

Heenan & Froude Rail and Engineering (1938)

**Worcester Engine Works Company (1860)**







## Two: Aligning with and Demonstrating Levelling Up

Our **Levelling Up Vision for Worcester and Worcestershire** is driven by three key factors:

- **Levelling Up is really needed** – The City of Worcester and Wyre Forest District are in the government's LU Priority 1 areas, and the County's other four districts in Priority 2, with urban and rural deprivation higher than the England average. Both City and County need levelling up together.
- **Growth** - The County is growing dramatically – 64,000 houses and 150,000 people by 2040, adding 25%+ to the current 600,000 population, mostly on our rail corridors.
- **Drive** - Our ambition, determination, modernity and proactive railway investment.

Preparation of a comprehensive, radical, dynamic and innovative regeneration 30 year blueprint is well **underway**, with extensive, flexible capacity for a GBR HQ, including:

- **Shrub Hill Station Masterplan** - for this expansive, Grade-II listed, benignly neglected station, and a first component of thinking on its rail connectivity and as an iconic gateway to transformative urban regeneration in the Quarter (WCC 2017).
- **Shrub Hill Quarter Masterplan** - within Worcester City Centre Masterplan, setting the vision for the city's growth, economy, community and environment (WoCC 2019).
- **Engine Works and Isaac Maddox House** – £9m purchase (WCC 2020) of major key buildings/sites (immediately adjacent to Shrub Hill Station) blighted by market failure, facilitating and unlocking development of the Quarter.
- **Towns Fund Award** – A £19.6m award to WoCC (2021) focuses £10m on the Quarter's public realm, connectivity and key buildings/sites; a £1m **Brownfield Land award** (2021) to WCC enables it to prepares Quarter land for a first phase of new homes.
- **Levelling Up Fund (1) bid** – WCC £25m bid (2021) for Shrub Hill Station Masterplan Phase one, delivering Equality Act 2010 access to the station, new passenger and staff facilities, bus and cycle integration, a new public realm plaza and new Active Travel Corridors. A LUF (2) bid will be submitted in 2022 supported by the evolving blueprint.
- **Blueprint (2022)** – integrating our WCC/WoCC/WLEP plans for new homes, thousands of new jobs and re-invention of Quarter buildings, the station and its evolving connectivity.



# Two: Aligning with and Demonstrating Levelling Up

Other **Levelling Up**-related initiatives are in progress and delivery across the County, illustrating Worcestershire's highly proactive ambition and direct investment including:

- **Future High Street Fund** – Worcester £17.9m (2020).
- **Towns Fund** - Worcester £19.6m (op. cit) and Redditch £15.6m (2021).
- **Levelling Up (1) 2021 awards** - Wychavon £9m, Wyre Forest £17.9m, Bromsgrove £14.5m.
- **New and Regenerated Stations** - Worcestershire Parkway £22m+ (2020); Kidderminster Station £4.3m (2020).
- **North Cotswold Line Task Force** – faster, more frequent Worcestershire-Oxford-Cambridge Arc-Thames Valley/Heathrow-London connectivity - £213m scheme and Third Party financing under development (WCC as lead of five local authorities).

A multiplicity of **Levelling Up** opportunities would be supported by GBR HQ including:

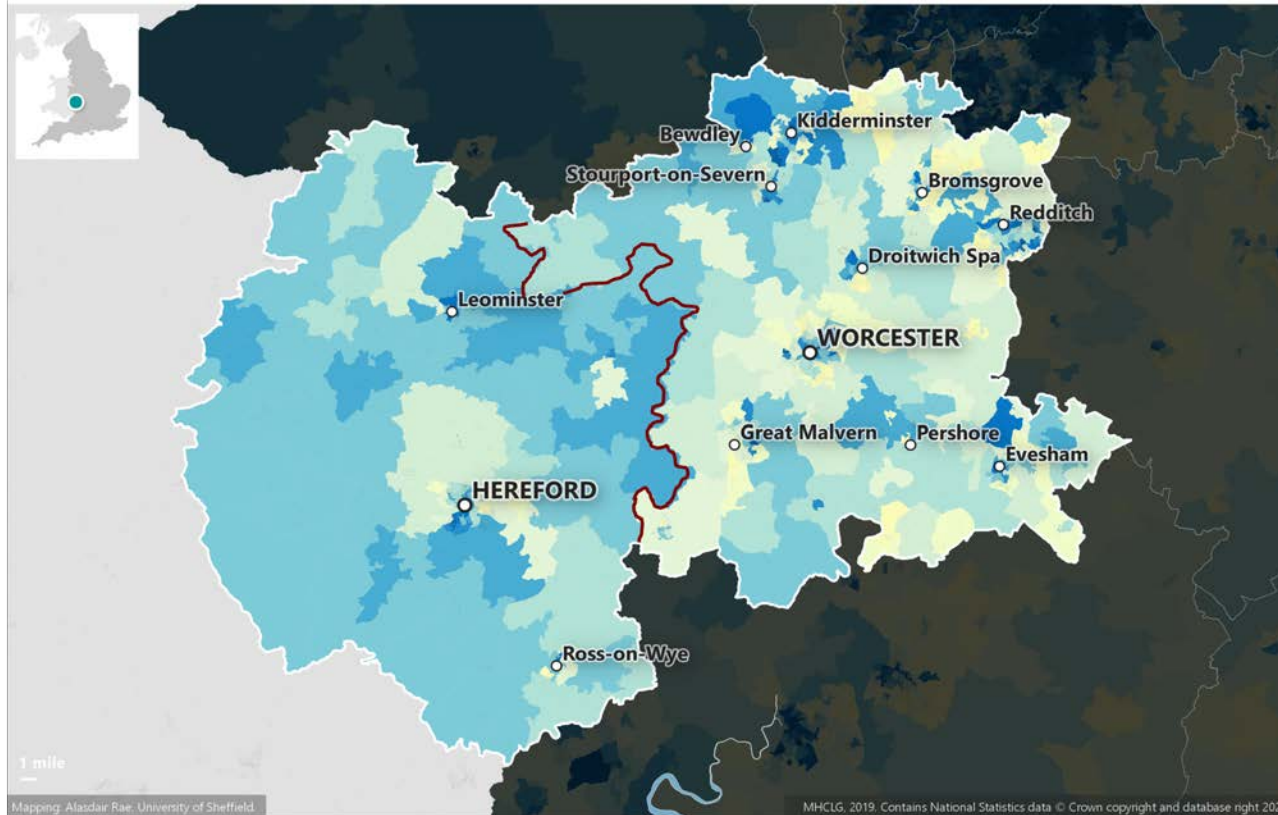
- **The Sparks Effect** – Announcing GBR HQ in Worcester would powerfully galvanise public visibility of Levelling Up's momentum across County, City and Quarter.
- **Early** - Delivery of the Quarter's new jobs and homes would be advanced, with GBR HQ being a vanguard of confidence in the developing blueprint, its scale and pace of change, and its attraction as a place for business and new residents to move to.
- **Worcestershire Parkway Strategic Growth Area** – In turn the GBR HQ effect will support delivery of the dramatically-scaled, adjacent Parkway SGA, its 10,000 homes and 23,000 people, with the Quarter offering green-accessible employment for new residents.
- **Places for Growth** - GBR HQ would establish the clear potential, capacity and bespoke design quality of the Quarter to accommodate a GB-accessible major civil service re-location, with affordable housing in a beautiful City and County.
- **A better, more integrated rail network** - There would be a mutually beneficial relationship between GBR HQ's Worcester presence and delivering the rail connectivity and supporting upgrade of 1970s layouts and 1870s signalling so essential to rail taking a full 21<sup>st</sup> Century role in this key part of the Midlands.





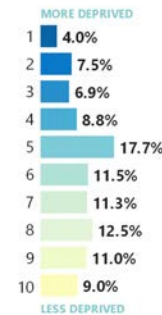
# Two: Aligning with and Demonstrating Levelling Up

High levels of multiple deprivation  
in Worcester, north and south Worcestershire



## CCG profile

% of LSOAs in each national deprivation decile



More deprived

Less deprived

Relative level of deprivation

Version 1.0 - 28 September 2019

Source: Ministry of Housing and Local Government (2019)  
for Herefordshire & Worcestershire  
NHS Clinical Commissioning Group  
— Worcester/Herefordshire Border

# Three: Connected Across Great Britain and Easy to get to

Worcester is a great and historic city **at the heart of Great Britain, well connected** by national, regional and local rail routes and services (although the County is determined to see these continuously improve over the next 20 years) and right on the National Highways strategic GB-wide network, 2.5 miles from M5 Junction 7.

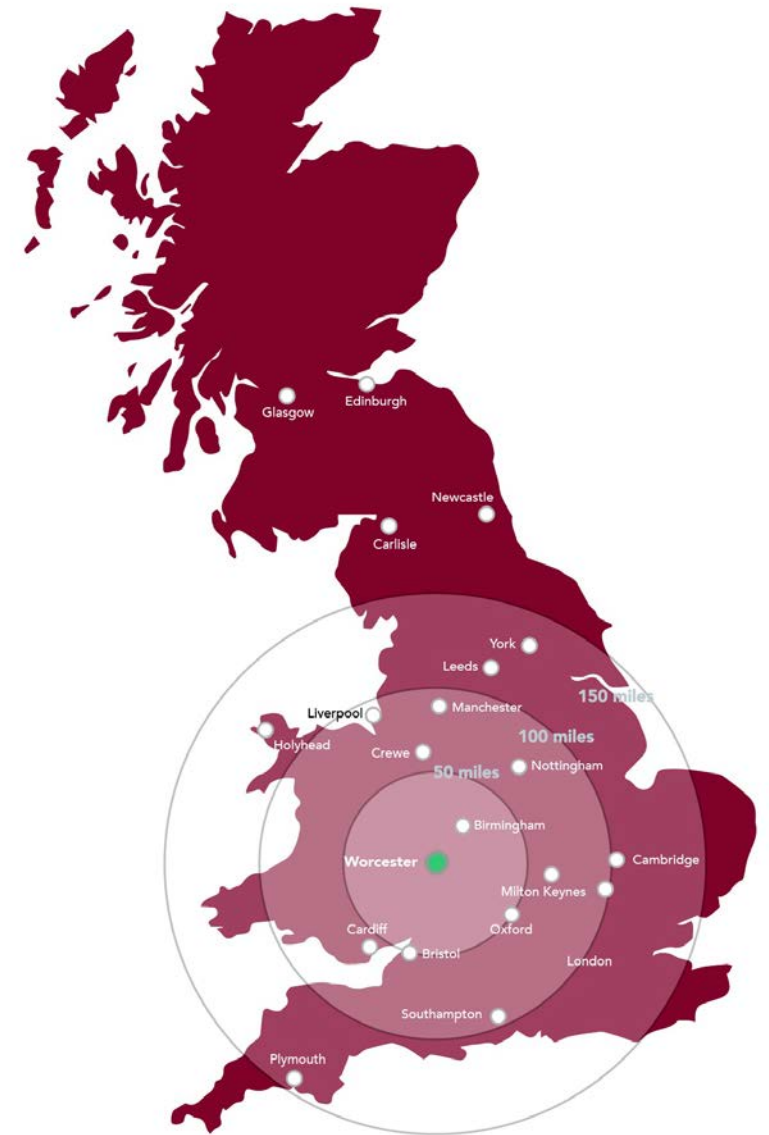
**Worcester Shrub Hill Station** provides **direct rail connectivity** to London, Oxford, Cheltenham Spa, Gloucester, Bristol, the south-coast, Hereford, locally in the county, and to Central Birmingham at both New Street and Moor Street, the latter which will become an integrated part of High Speed 2's Curzon Street Station in the 2030s.

A 5-minute rail journey from Shrub Hill connects to **Worcestershire Parkway**, today offering CrossCountry services to South Wales and the East Midlands, and capable of supporting future calls in CrossCountry's extensive GB-wide connectivity between the South West, the Midlands, North West, North East and Scotland.

Opened in 2020, and developed, financed and delivered by Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Parkway both connects the County across Great Britain and in its 3rd-Party investment illustrates the County's scale and breadth of applied ambition.

The **Shrub Hill Quarter** developing blueprint sees ongoing transformation of **easy accessibility**:

- The **Towns Fund** award to WoCC supports an attractive, revitalised City Centre-Station pedestrian corridor and extensively opened-up, connected, green Quarter public realm.
- WCC's **Levelling Up Fund** bid proposes full Equality Act 2010-compliant Quarter-Shrub Hill Station access (which simply does not exist today). Passenger facilities on the station will match DfT/Network Rail's Control Period 6 (2019-24) 'Access for All' investment in platform-to-platform access (currently requiring use of a barrow crossing, unacceptable for a city centre station). A new public realm plaza, bus interchange and two new Active Travel Corridors integrated with the Worcester and Birmingham Canal towpath, will be provided.







Kidderminster new station building  
Locally financed and delivered 2020

## Three: Connected and Easy to get to

Within the **Shrub Hill Quarter** blueprint the two prospective buildings of choice for the GBR HQ, the **Engine Works** or **Isaac Maddox House**, will be re-generated to meet modern accessibility legislation, standards and expectations for all members of society.

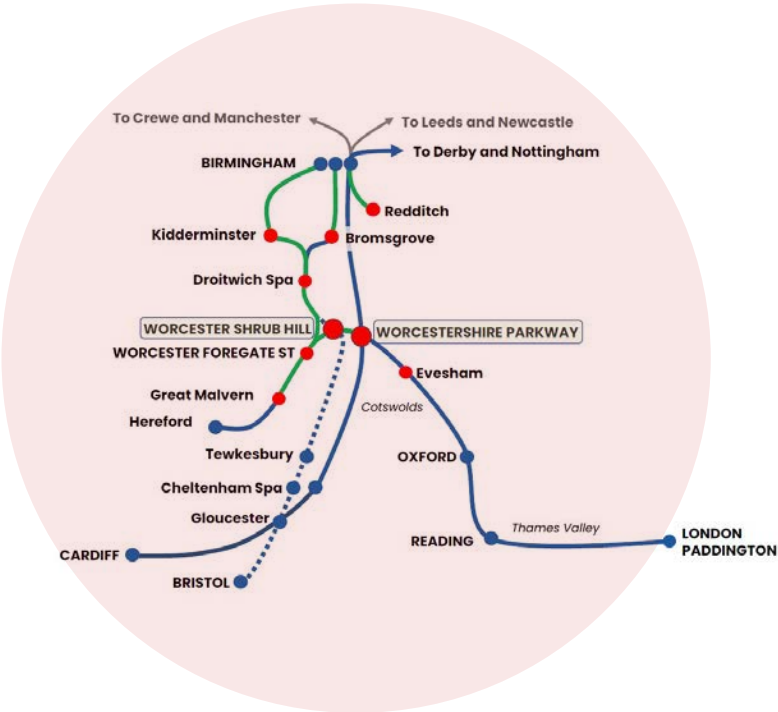
Doing so is intrinsic to the **values** being applied across the Quarter's re-birth, and to the **sensitive mix of conservation, aesthetics and modernity** in bringing these great 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial and 1930s art deco buildings alive and back into contemporary use.

Worcestershire's drive for continuously improving city connectivity, easy access for all to the National Rail network, and an accessible and green re-born Shrub Hill Quarter draws directly upon our strong track record of **successful collaboration** with other bodies in furthering social, economic and transport objectives, examples including:

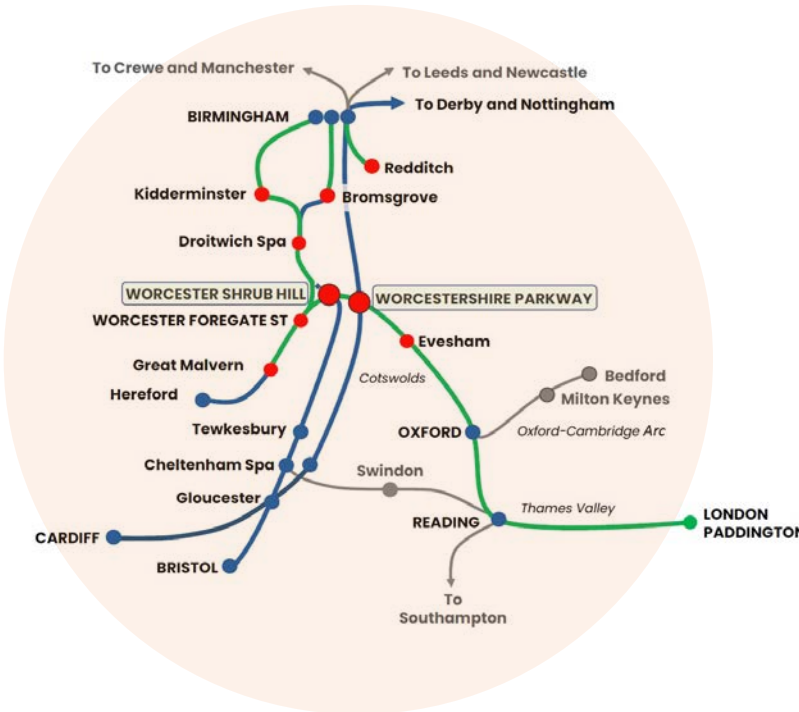
- **Worcestershire Parkway Station** – with two Network Rail routes, two train operating companies, the Office of Rail and Roads, the Department for Transport, Worcestershire LEP and Wychavon District Council to deliver this £22m+ WCC-led and financed new station interchange on two GB-wide main line routes (opened 2020).
- **Kidderminster Station** – with rail industry partners and funded with Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEPs to create a new £4.3m fully accessible gateway to Kidderminster, supporting pride in the town, interchange with the important tourism-based 'Severn Valley Railway', and Levelling Up of the Wyre Forest economy (2020).
- **Bromsgrove Station** – innovatively taking joint WCC ownership and Station Facility Operation of the relocated, expanded station with West Midlands Combined Authority (2016), ready for Network Rail-led electrification (2018).
- **North Cotswold Line Task Force** – WCC as lead of 5-authority/5 LEP partnership devising 3<sup>rd</sup> Party development and financing of Oxford-Worcestershire connectivity upgrade and £213m infrastructure scheme (at Outline Business Case stage 2022).
- **Shrub Hill blueprint itself** – At the core of this GBR HQ EoI is the shared understanding, drive and determination of WCC, WoCC and WLEP to bring new jobs, homes, prosperity and connectivity to Worcester, supported by our joint energy to make this happen.

# Three: Evolving Rail Connectivity

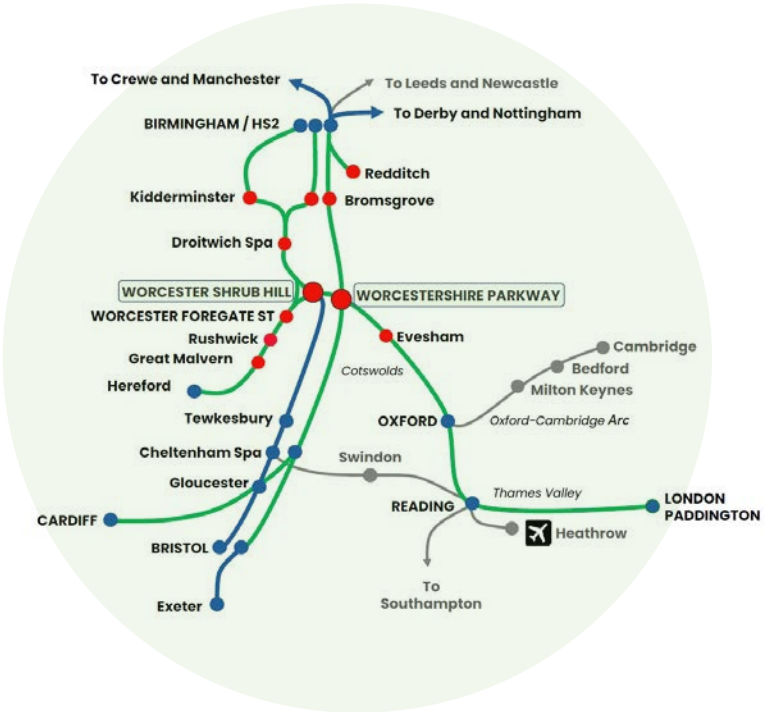
- Direct Worcestershire services – more than one train/hour
- At least one direct train/hour
- Less than one direct train/hour
- Connecting services
- Principal Worcestershire stations



2022



2027



2034



# Four: Opportunities for Great British Railways

A Worcester GBR HQ will take powerful advantage of its GB-central Midlands location, its GB-wide rail connectivity, the space, flexibility and choice offered by the substantial Shrub Hill Quarter buildings, and their position adjacent to the National Rail network at both Shrub Hill Station and Worcestershire Parkway.

At section 5 below we highlight the ease of cross-Britain access that Worcester offers to the wide range of rail industry public and operational partners. This is as applicable to the rail industry research, innovation and private sector supply chain sectors which employ more than 49,000 people here second only to London, together with the wider logistics industry of the West and East Midlands with more than 109,000 staff (source: West Midlands Combined Authority). The green rail technology, light rail and bus sectors are equally well-represented, with innovative approaches to rail decarbonisation at the Universities of Birmingham and Warwick, and in private sector bodies in Warwickshire, Shropshire and Coventry. It is, of course, also the case that the car industry has its heart in the Midlands, itself generating what may be seen as travel choices both consistent with and competing with rail.

The rail and transport skill set of professionals in the Midlands is wide and deep.

**A Worcester GBR HQ would be set within the heart of one of Great Britain's principal rail and transport innovation and operations centres.**

With the rivers Severn and Avon running through Worcestershire, the County also has extensive and inevitably challenging experience of the impact of climate change and the increasing frequency and impact of major flooding. GBR being based in Worcester brings it to a place in which, along with neighbouring Severn authorities, Worcestershire is leading on mitigation, planning and behavioural change in response to the climate emergency.



Vivarail battery train on test on the North Cotswold Line at Honeybourne, Worcestershire



# Five: Railway Heritage and Links to the Network

Worcestershire's and the Shrub Hill Quarter's rich railway history is rooted in the 1840s competition of three founding companies – the **Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway** (OWW), **Midland Railway** (MR) and **Birmingham and Gloucester Railway** (BG).

Subsequently the **Great Western Railway** (GWR) absorbed the OWW and the **Midland** the BG, with these operating and developing the county network until the 1923 'Grouping' where the GWR continued intact and the Midland part of the **London Midland & Scottish Railway**.

In 1948 at nationalisation Worcestershire was split between **British Railways Western** and **London Midland** regions. From privatisation in 1996 this remained at **Railtrack** and then **Network Rail**. In 2021 the Worcester Area transferred from **NR Western** to **Central Route**, with their boundaries shifting south and east within the County.

**Shrub Hill Station** was opened by the OWW/MR in 1850, becoming GWR/MR joint in 1863. **Isambard Kingdom Brunel** was engineer to both the OWW and GWR, and was supervising engineer at the station's inception (and often unsung in the West Midlands). Its 1848 undercroft '*represents a unique example of an experimental major station ... designed under Brunel's supervision at the peak of his abilities*' (M. Napthan - Heritage Statement for WCC 2017). Its Italianate stations buildings, now Grade-II listed, are '*a rare example of a fairly complete 1840s first class station with later additions in keeping with the original design concept*' (Napthan).

Shrub Hill was also at the heart of **railway engineering**. From 1857 **Vulcan Iron Works** occupied the site of today's **Isaac Maddox House**, becoming worldwide signalling engineers **McKenzie & Holland** 1870-1921. Locomotives and rolling stock were constructed at the Italianate Grade-II listed **Engine Works**, between 1864-71. It became the railway signalling works of **Dutton & Co** 1889-1901 (absorbed into McKenzie & Holland), and then home of railway and general engineers **Heenan & Froude** until 1970.

These buildings offer a **remarkable railway legacy for vibrant, modern use** by the Shrub Hill Quarter and the National Rail network, and a powerful heritage location for GBR's HQ.



**Worcester Shrub Hill Joint GWR/MR Station**



**Dutton/McKenzie & Holland Signalling Works/Engine Works**



# Five: Railway Heritage and Links to the Network

Worcestershire, Worcester and the Shrub Hill Quarter are closely linked geographically and organisationally to **railway employment and industry sector bodies**, including:

- **Birmingham - 30 minutes away** - The new HM Government Office (2021); headquarters of HS2, Network Rail Central, Midlands Connect Sub-National Transport body, West Midlands Rail Executive/Combined Authority, CrossCountry Trains, West Midlands Trains, and University of Birmingham Centre of Rail Research.
- **High Speed 2** - Worcestershire's proximity to HS2's Birmingham Curzon Street Station, supported by industry plans for faster, more frequent connectivity from Worcester.
- **Wider GB links** – The County's direct rail connectivity links to bodies such as Welsh Government/Transport for Wales, Network Rail Western and Wales HQs, West of England and East Midlands Combined Authorities, England's Economic Heartland/Oxford-Cambridge Arc/Milton Keynes and, of course, London and all its key functions via the North Cotswold Line. And as we have noted Worcestershire Parkway station enable existing CrossCountry South West/North West/North East/Scotland long distances services to serve both the County and GBR HQ's functions and teams.
- **Organisationally** – WCC is a full, active and enthusiastic member of both Midlands Connect and West Midlands Rail Executive.
- **Railway employment** – Shrub Hill is a vital depot for West Midlands Trains (WMT) and GWR drivers and train managers, GWR on-train catering, WMT Light Maintenance, GWR stabling and a local Network Rail depot. It is a vibrant and lively operational location.

The West Midlands is both at the heart of Great Britain and the operations and governance of the railway. Locating GBR's HQ in Worcester would bring the dual benefits of close proximity and connectivity in the West Midlands and being a clear statement of the breadth and spread of Levelling Up across the country's geography.



Worcestershire Parkway

# Five: Railway Heritage and Links to the Network

The prospective role of GBR's HQ in conservation and enhancement of Worcestershire's rail heritage is broad and varied:

- **Railway people and railway purpose** – GBR people, cross-industry and industry-external engagements, meetings and visits for strategic GB-wide railway purposes will re-establish a railway purpose in these heritage buildings whilst building confidence and new enterprise in the Quarter and City.
- **A heritage that works for today** – 'Benight neglect' and market failure may ironically have protected these iconic and extensive rail industry buildings. Conservation now needs to align in mutual respect with modern purpose. GBR's HQ can be in the vanguard making these historic buildings work for 21st century needs.
- **A railway that works for today and the future** – Worcester's heritage 1870s manual signalling, signal boxes and 1970s layouts need urgent updating to enable expanding connectivity to meet major population growth and decarbonisation. A Worcester GBR HQ will powerfully raise the profile of this essential modernisation.
- **A railway beyond boundaries** – Worcestershire's 175 year history of 'joint' railways and boundaries cutting across its geography limited industry recognition of the County as an 'integrated whole', perhaps then and now.

Legacies of 19<sup>th</sup> century decisions, such as the Bristol-Birmingham Main Line passing just east of Worcester, continue to restrict access to Cross Country GB-wide services. Worcestershire Parkway offers a very real opportunity to remedy this, transforming national, regional and local connectivity for the County's growing population.

A GBR Worcester HQ and GBR's industry integration and economic development purposes can illustrate delivery of such change for beyond industry boundaries, and remedy some negative historic legacies.



1875 Henwick Signal Box, west of Shrub Hill, designed by McKenzie & Holland in Worcester, and still in use on the National Rail network.



'Ancient and Modern' – Worcester Shrub Hill Signal Box.





GWR service leaving Worcester

## Six: Value for Money

**Value for Money** is an intrinsic and essential component of the Shrub Hill Quarter's development, embedded in the cases for local authority purchase of sites of market failure, in our bids for government regeneration funds, and in our station and railway service investment business cases.

Good use of public money is thus at the heart of our values, as is looking to maximise innovation in 3<sup>rd</sup> Party/private sector/developer contribution and risk sharing. The Quarter's success will not only be rooted in its integrated development of jobs, homes and transport but in the added value each funding pot offers to the other. A Worcester GBR HQ can both benefit from and contribute to this added value.

The Worcester and Shrub Hill Quarter location offers specific financial efficiencies to GBR in factors such as the City's overall competitive office space costs, its GB-wide travel costs being equalised as far as practicable by its central GB location, the partnership context between GBR and local government, and, in essence, the clear understanding (in railway operational parlance) that is clearly possible given our common ambitions for the role of the railway in supporting and levelling up economies and communities in an environmentally sustainable way.

In generating **public value** the significant control and influence of ourselves as the public sector partners in the Quarter means we are committed to embedding a 'public value' approach within the development vision. This balances economic, social and environmental value and outcomes alongside commercial and financial ones. Ultimately, we are adopting a long term approach where partners are committed towards a shared vision for the area, develop the best opportunities to unlock this vision, and do so in a way which delivers maximum outcomes for residents, businesses, investors and strategic partners alike.

# Seven: Public Support

The railway is deeply important to local communities across Worcestershire, with proactive user and promotion groups for each of its core routes, a strong 'Worcestershire Rail User Group Association' (WRUGA) bringing these together and a Community Rail Partnership established in 2020 working with the County's 4 principal train operators and station adopters.

Notably the Cotswold Line Promotion Group, recently 40 years old, is the second largest user group in Britain, whilst a partnership of user groups across Worcestershire and Warwickshire successfully won a Restoring Your Railway bid in 2020 to examine the case for reopening the Stratford-Honeybourne/Cotswold Line route.

The County's user groups are positive, constructive and serious. **Their support for the GBR HQ location in Worcester is strong.**

Worcestershire and Worcester people are proud of their railway history, its Brunelian inheritance, special historic stations such as Worcester Shrub Hill. The highly successful tourism-based Severn Valley Railway runs in Worcestershire and reflects that county pride.

Public interest is strong, with extensive engagement in processes such as WCC's economically evidenced Rail Investment Strategy in 2017 and development and delivery of its modern new or regenerated stations such as Bromsgrove, Worcestershire Parkway and Kidderminster.

WCC will be further engaging closely with the public, rail users, cycling, pedestrian and access groups in the community in the preparation of the Levelling Up (2) bid for Shrub Hill Station Masterplan, and this will include their views on the GBR HQ opportunity.

The Worcestershire Rail User Groups Alliance strongly supports the bid for the City of Worcester to be the site of the new GBR Head Quarters. Worcester has a long history as a railway centre with rail routes to the east, west, north and south, as well as close proximity to the M5. The Shrub Hill Quarter redevelopment would provide an ideal location for the Head Quarters and the City itself will offer a vibrant home for relocated staff with easy access to the Malvern Hills and the Cotswolds

**Colin Major, Chair  
Worcestershire Rail User Group Association**

Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership strongly supports the location of the headquarters of the Great British Railways to be in Worcester. As a newly formed Community Rail Partnership we are keen to promote rail in the County particularly as a leisure destination. The location of offices in Worcester City Centre would also assist the regeneration of the area around Worcester Shrub Hill Station which is an ideal rail link for those employed at GBR wishing to travel to Worcester from the surrounding area.

**William Whiting, Chair  
Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership**



# Images

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