

Morville Parish Council: response to the Taylor Wimpey consultation on the proposed Garden Village at Tasley

Morville Parish Council acknowledges that the outcome of the Local Plan Review will affect the future of not only Bridgnorth but also the surrounding parishes, particularly Tasley, Worfield and Morville.

- We accept that there is a need for more housing but would question the scale being proposed by Shropshire County Council. In this time of uncertainty as to the long term effects of the coronavirus pandemic on health and employment patterns, coupled with the outcome of the Brexit trade negotiations, we feel that a more cautious and staged progression regarding housing needs should be adopted.
- With reference to the uncertainty related to employment patterns and consequent effect, not yet known, on job losses and potential for job creation, Morville Parish Council has reason to doubt the claims related to job creation stated in the Taylor Wimpey proposal. Proposals for 'Garden Villages' have employment potential as a vital component – in the current economic crisis it seems unlikely that such ideals would be met. There is no point in building areas for business that would lay unused and empty. There is an area of industrial development in Bridgnorth (Stanmore Industrial Estate) and Morville Parish Council believe that further industrial development in a town as small as Bridgnorth could be clustered in the same area, close to road links to the urban areas of Wolverhampton and Dudley.
- For Bridgnorth, the issue has been more complex as up until March 2020 the Stanmore Garden Community proposal was the only option for consideration regarding housing/industrial development. When Taylor Wimpey submitted their proposal for a Garden Village at Tasley, after the deadline for future housing developments had closed, it coincided with the outbreak of coronavirus which severely impacted the ability of those who would be affected to gain full knowledge of this late proposal and respond accordingly. No opportunity to have a public debate and question the Taylor Wimpey proposal; is this how democracy works during a pandemic? We consider that such a large-scale development which would affect the whole character of Bridgnorth as an historic market town and a recognised tourist centre and the subsequent changes such a development would make, should not be decided when not all residents are fully aware of the scale and implications.
- Tasley Parish Council, in June 2020, submitted their response to the Taylor Wimpey proposed Garden Village at Tasley. This is a robust and informed response covering all the implications that such a large scale development would impact on Bridgnorth and surrounding areas. As a Council, we support and agree with their submission which can be read on the attachment below. Rather than repeat all this information, our concerns remain that Taylor Wimpey are looking to expand future building towards Morville; the ability of Taylor Wimpey to deliver a sustainable village community in the longer term and the consequent loss of agricultural land.

- The future of the Livestock market could be in jeopardy. Mr Rob McCabe of Nock Deighton has said that their thriving livestock business could not operate from a site which is so close to residential homes. He also makes the point that ‘a recent study has identified auction marts as having a positive effect on the mental health of the rural community, bringing people together.’ The historic market town of Bridgnorth would not serve and support its rural community without this facility. The Taylor Wimpey proposed development does not address the issue of proximity of housing to the livestock market.
- The Taylor Wimpey proposal is completely inappropriate for a rural community. The Council for the Protection of Rural England objects to the Taylor Wimpey proposal.
- It has recently been highlighted that Garden Village proposals fall very short of the ideals they intend to meet. (Transport For New Homes June 2020 report: Garden Villages and Garden Towns: Vision and Reality) Morville Parish Council strongly objects to the town of Bridgnorth embarking on a building proposal based on a concept which does not work. Garden Village proposals often do not fulfil the visions set out in the planning principles. It is not constructive or forward thinking to start a 25 year building project based on a highly unsatisfactory model – our community does not want that.
- When the 500 homes already allocated for Tasley on the current livestock market site are completed, a reassessment of the implications that a development of that size brings in terms of pressure on highways, medical facilities, schools and community centres needs to be undertaken. A Local Housing Needs Assessment should be carried out. On the basis of that review, the implications that an additional 1050 homes at Tasley, if approved for development, can be extrapolated and only then a decision made.
- The town of Bridgnorth would face a possible 35% increase in population with the Tasley development. It is misleading to propose the plans are a Garden Village. It is a large suburban development on the outskirts of a market town.

Due to the exceptional circumstances we are currently experiencing in our community - coronavirus and the Brexit effect on a farming area/import controls which may require alternative uses of agricultural land - we strongly feel that any decisions should be deferred until there is more opportunity for public discussion.

Those who have engaged are vehemently against the Taylor Wimpey proposal. The opportunity for normal community engagement is not possible due to these exceptional circumstance – this is not a democratic approach.