

MORVILLE PARISH COUNCIL

COMMENT ON OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION 25/01722/OUT PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT LAND TASLEY BRIDGNORTH SHROPSHIRE

Morville Parish Council (MPC) unanimously **opposes** this planning application, a position strongly supported by parishioners of Morville Parish, and requests that Shropshire Council refuse the planning application in its current form..

There are many underlying issues which remain unresolved with further investigations and assessments yet to be carried out and submitted for approval.

General:

MPC has concerns about many aspects of the application but does **not** support it for the following specific reasons:

1. Size and Location of the Development:

Residential Dwellings: The proposed development is too large, not proportional to the size of Bridgnorth, is separated from the town by a major road and does not meet the needs of the town.

Employment Land: The proposed development allows for 14.6 ha of employment land to be developed. This is not needed as there is sufficient employment land either unfilled, under construction or already approved.

Location: The proposed development is taking residential development away from the main employment areas of the town and the region (eg Stanmore, Wolverhampton and Telford). Other more suitable and smaller locations should be considered.

2. Infrastructure:

Roads and Highways: The proposed development is out of proportion to the existing local infrastructure and existing transport links which are not capable of supporting much growth in population and business activity without significant investment of which there is little sign.

Vehicle Access and Pedestrian / Cycleway Provision: MPC has serious concerns with the proposed access points off the A458 and B4364 and does not support the proposal to use signal controlled crossings of the A458 and B4364 for pedestrians and cyclists.

Water Resources - Sewerage Network: Severn Trent Water (STW) has confirmed that the sewerage network is near capacity. The Proposed Development will see a substantial increase in foul flows yet no plans have been made to ensure that increased flows can be accommodated. MPC does not support any proposed development until such plans have been made and approved. Work on site should not start until these plans are in place.

3. Ecology: MPC has concerns that the massively increased human and dog footprint would be disastrous and far outweigh any possible biodiversity benefit from the proposed country park.

MPC reserves the right to make further comments after the current consultation closes on 18 June 2025.

Details:

1. Size and Location of the Development:

- a. **Residential Dwellings:** The proposed development is for 1,500 dwellings “in a variety of sizes, types and tenures to meet local need” of which 20% would be affordable housing.

When considered, in conjunction with the planning approval already given for 500 dwellings north of A458 (Tasley Gateway), it would allow for **2,000** dwellings to be built.

MPC does **not** believe that this large number of dwellings is proportional or ‘meet local need’. MPC **recommends** that a Local Housing Needs Assessment is carried out to establish what is the ‘local need’?

According to the 2021 census the population of Bridgnorth was approximately 11,857. Using the calculation provided in the Outline Planning Application, the 2021 Census data indicate an average household size of 2.3 in Shropshire. Therefore the proposed developments will increase the population of Bridgnorth by **4,600 people** which represents an increase of **39%**.

MPC does **not** support the development of a single, large development which is separated from Bridgnorth by a major road and **recommends** that several smaller sites be considered.

MPC does **not** believe the town of Bridgnorth and surrounding areas have the infrastructure to support a 39% increase in its population size.

- b. **Employment Land:** The Proposed Development will provide up to 14.6 ha for a mix of B2, B8a, E(g)ii and E(g)iii employment uses.

This does **not** include the 6.6 ha of land south of the A458 which has been approved for the re-location of the Livestock Market together with its existing or alternative ancillary uses. In addition, a further 6.7 ha adjoining the area reserved for the Livestock Market has also been approved for a business park for Class B uses.

In total **27.4 ha of employment land** has been allocated to the Tasley Garden Village and the Tasley Gateway.

Stanmore Business Park covers just over 17 ha in area and is not at full capacity. More buildings are being constructed within the Park and there is room for further development if needed. In addition, work to develop Chartwell Business Park has recently started.

Bridgnorth has poor logistics with no infrastructure and no evidence of future funding being made available for improvements. It takes approximately one hour to get from Bridgnorth to one of the motorways and can take longer if traffic movement is slow. Why would any business which is reliant on fast, efficient road networks choose to set up in Bridgnorth? Telford for example has land available, is close to the M54, has a mainline railway station and is already an industrial hub.

Assuming the employment land earmarked for Tasley Gateway is built in addition to that being constructed at Chartwell Business Park, MPC does **not** support the proposal for a further 14.6 ha of employment land as outlined in this planning application.

- c. **Location:** MPC accepts that there is a need for more housing in the Bridgnorth area but they need to be built in the right place including the use of brown field sites.

The Outline Planning Application for the 'Tasley Garden Village', when considered in conjunction with the already approved Tasley Gateway, is more akin to a large suburban development but with no supporting infrastructure.

MPC does **not** support the development of a single, large development and recommends that several smaller sites be considered, including the original location of Stanmore, once the needs of the town and surrounding areas have been identified.

Before the draft Local Plan was published the area around Stanmore was the favoured location. MPC **recommends** that this area should be reconsidered as a possible location.

2. **Infrastructure:**

- a. **Roads and Highways:** The proposed development, together with the already approved Tasley Gateway, will provide a total of 2,000 dwellings. Assuming a minimum of one car per dwelling, (a conservative estimate), these developments will put at least **2,000 additional vehicles** onto roads which the Council admits are inadequate and in reality most households will have more than one vehicle per dwelling. In addition, the proposed employment land in Tasley will increase the number of vehicles coming in and out of Bridgnorth, many of which will be large vehicles supplying or working from the B class units proposed for these areas.

Previously, Shropshire Council acknowledged that there were topographical and landscape restraints within Bridgnorth and its surrounding areas which severely restrict development and road improvements: the town is bisected by the River Severn, there are only two bridges across the river in the Bridgnorth area which are accessible to vehicles thus creating natural pinch points, High Town sits on an escarpment as does the A442 to Telford. In addition the A roads to Telford, Wolverhampton, Stourbridge, Kidderminster and Shrewsbury are mainly single, winding carriageways and therefore slow.

Existing local infrastructure, transport links, public facilities and services are not capable of supporting much growth in population and business activity without significant investment of which there has been little. There have been no major improvements to the road network since the bypass was opened in 1985.

Approximately 60% of people in Bridgnorth travel to work outside Bridgnorth mainly to Telford, Wolverhampton and Kidderminster and a similar percentage of jobs in Bridgnorth are filled by travelling in to the town. This is unlikely to change significantly despite the proposed employment land earmarked for development.

The proposed sites at Tasley (Tasley Gateway and Tasley Garden Village) are taking residential development away from the main employment areas of the town and the region (eg Stanmore, Wolverhampton and Telford). Whilst some employment is to be provided on site, the majority of the residents in Bridgnorth and surrounding areas will continue to travel to work at Stanmore, Wolverhampton and Telford. Some of those who choose to live in the proposed new residential areas will take up employment in the new settlements but many will choose to travel to the larger, better paid jobs on offer in the West Midlands. Many of those who choose to work in the proposed new settlements will be travelling into the area from where they already live.

MPC believes that the A roads leading to Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton, Telford, Stourbridge and Kidderminster are already close to their capacity, especially at peak times, and are not capable of supporting the growth in population and business activity outlined in the planning application.

MPC **recommends** that a strategic highways assessment for the Bridgnorth area takes place and that any recommendations are committed to and funded before further development occurs. Any such assessment should include the repercussions of the Tasley Gateway development which has already been approved.

MPC does **not** support the development of a large, single development until the roads and highways are improved so that they are capable of catering for the large influx of vehicles which will be generated by this development.

- b. Vehicle Access and Pedestrian / Cycleway Provision:** The Proposed Development is envisaged to be served by three principal vehicular access points; two to serve the residential areas, and a separate access for the employment area.

In addition, the proposals seek to retain the existing Private Rights of Way (PRoW) crossing the Site and will be enhanced with new footpaths/cycle links to provide additional connectivity.

Crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists across the A458 and B4364 will be by signal controlled crossings assisted by a reduction in speed limits.

The A458 which forms the Bridgnorth bypass, is a very busy road and crossing from the proposed TGV development to the new development north of the A458 (Tasley Gateway), and to Bridgnorth, is dangerous.

MPC does **not** support the proposal to use signal controlled crossings of the A458 and B4364 and recommends that crossings are by footbridge.

- c. Vehicle Access to the Playing Fields:** It appears that the developer has come to an agreement with Bridgnorth Spartans FC on the use of the playing fields and clubhouse. If this is correct, MPC notes that access to the grounds and clubhouse is through the residential area. The amount of additional sports related traffic will be significant, particularly on match days, and the proposed car park at the club house is likely to be inadequate. This will result in vehicles being parked in the residential area.

If the development goes ahead MPC **recommends** that a separate access point be built to avoid unnecessary congestion and possible health and safety issues in the residential area and that car parking provision be reviewed to ensure vehicles do not encroach into the residential area.

- d. Water Resources:**

Sewerage Network. Severn Trent Water (STW) has confirmed that the sewerage network is near capacity. STW informed Shropshire Council that they have some concerns about the proposed development, advising that the whole development (including the Tasley Gateway development) would have a significant impact on the network. STW have confirmed that they need to carry out investigations to understand what improvements would be required to the sewerage network to accommodate the development and have advised a formal Development Enquiry be submitted to them for this site.

In Section 9 of the Environment Investigation it is stated that “Following occupation of the Proposed Development there will be an increase in foul flows. Correspondence with STW

... has demonstrated that modelling is required to determine the impact the Proposed Development will have upon the Application Site. STW is yet to progress, however they have confirmed that this will have no bearing upon the planning application. It is anticipated that the modelling will progress as the Application Site progresses through planning which will inform the required improvements to the public network that will be necessary to cater for the anticipated additional foul flows.”

MPC does **not** support the proposal that work commences before appropriate investigations have taken place and a plan to ensure that the sewerage network can accommodate the development has been approved.

3. **Ecology:**

The outline proposals include a 19.5 ha country park with woodland, pools and a network of footpaths along Tiddlebrook. Although a potential public amenity, any biodiversity net gain would be severely diminished by the high level of recreation disturbance.

The public footpath network would inevitably funnel people and dogs onto the 110 acre wildlife reserve south of Mor Brook. This site includes endangered species and priority habitats and the increased human and dog footprint would be negatively impactful and far outweigh any possible biodiversity benefit from the proposed country park.

MPC **recommends** that Shropshire Council's Ecology Department carry out a site visit in conjunction with the National Trust and Shropshire Wildlife Trust to discuss ways to mitigate the potential damage that could be caused by people and dogs.