

## SAMDev Preferred Options Report to LJC meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012

### Introduction

The SAMDev proposals were discussed at a public meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, with 50-60 members of public in attendance. The main issues raised at the meeting are summarised below, together with the actions being taken to explore the points made.

| Issues raised at the public meeting   | Investigations so far   |
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| <p><b>Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about the impact of additional housing/population figures on the local schools. Helen advised that the education authority had no concerns as at present the schools are accepting children from out of catchment and local children would always take priority.</li> <li>An increase in additional traffic should not be allowed in the Curriers Lane area past the school.</li> </ul> | <p>Residential development locally may actually <i>reduce</i> the number of people who drive to school, as more pupils will live locally.</p> <p>Traffic problems around schools can be addressed through school Travel Plans, which seek to change behaviour as much as providing engineering solutions.</p> <p><i>Options for further consideration include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would parking restrictions on Curriers Lane help by preventing all day parking, allowing more room for dropping-off?</li> <li>Would an alternative teachers' car park help?</li> <li>What change in pupils', parents' &amp; teachers' behaviour might be sought to ease the problem?</li> </ol> <p>These issues may be best addressed through the school Travel Plan.</p> |
| <p><i>Alternative routes across Shifnal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why can't Shifnal have a bypass?</li> </ul>  | <p>The M54 and the A5 already provide bypasses for through traffic. The key issue appears to be alternative routes to Aston St and Curriers Lane for local use. Among the responses received so far to SAMDev is a suggestion that development at Haughton Lane and north of Idsall School could provide an alternative east-west route across the town. Realistically, such a route would have to be comprised of residential roads that formed part of any development, and therefore would be unlikely to be significantly faster than either Aston St or Curriers Lane. Residents will take the routes that are most convenient to their own journeys, so this solution will not necessarily reduce traffic elsewhere.</p>  |

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| <p><i>Traffic &amp; Accessibility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major highways considerations to take into account when looking at the Aston Street option.</li> <li>Stuart West stated that there needed to be a fresh look at the road structure required for Shifnal in conjunction with any large scale development.</li> </ul> | <p>The SAMDev preferred sites are in locations that are likely to encourage the use of sustainable transport (ie. walking, cycling, bus and rail).</p> <p>The junction of Aston St/ Victoria Road/ Bradford St is acknowledged to be difficult, particularly for HGVs. In particular, lorries manoeuvring from Victoria Rd to Aston St struggle to make the left turn followed immediately by a right turn, and sometimes hit the listed building on the corner of Aston St. There can also be problems in passing lorries on the narrower sections of Aston St.</p> <p><i>Options for further consideration include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Control the junction with traffic lights (4-way signal control junction).</li> <li>Alter the junction to provide a straighter line between Victoria Rd and Aston St, relocating the town clock in the process.</li> <li>Reduce the number of directions of traffic flow by pedestrianising the southern end of Bradford St, allowing loading and bus access only.</li> <li>An HGV ban for through traffic. This would not affect delivery lorries for the shops, but it would force other HGVs to use junction 3 of the M54 to access Shifnal from the east regardless of the fact that many traffic movements are west to Telford and the M54 Stafford Park junction 4.</li> </ol> <p>The width of Aston St is similar to streets in other town centres in Shropshire that take greater quantities of traffic. An increased volume of traffic does not present a technical problem, despite local perception, and is acceptable in highways terms.</p> |
| <p><i>Church Street</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern was expressed about the movement and speed of traffic along Church Street.</li> </ul>   | <p>The parking bays introduced on Church Street have a chicane effect, slowing traffic. Additional traffic calming could be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy, if that were considered a priority. The annual Place Plan Review provides the mechanism for identifying local priorities for infrastructure investment &amp; the use of CIL monies.</p>   |

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| <p><i>Lamledge Lane Industrial Estate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gordon Tonkinson said that Lamledge Lane should be invested in and improvements made to this industrial area and demolishing good factories on Aston Street seems unnecessary.</li> </ul>   | <p>The Council's Economic Development and Planning teams are in discussions with the landowners at Lamledge Lane Industrial Estate regarding options for improving the estate.</p> <p>The amount of employment land allocated in Shifnal could be increased in SAMDev, if required.</p>  |
| <p><i>Town Park including a footpath &amp; cycle link under railway line</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The idea of Shifnal having a town park that is split into two by a railway embankment is not really what people wanted. Limited highway access for school. Helen advised that the park would be a multi functional greenspace and would hopefully encourage people to walk to school.</li> <li>Gordon Tonkinson asked if the right of way under the railway bridge had been secured yet. Helen said that it hadn't be finalised yet but Network Rail were being positive.</li> </ul> | <p>In other parts of Shropshire the use of a car park adjoining a play area has proved popular with parents as a 'Park and Stride' solution to alleviating parking pressure at a school. There may be scope for such a scheme to be incorporated in the proposed Shifnal Town Park on the Aston Road site.</p> <p>The preferred allocations would facilitate the creation of a pedestrian &amp; cycle route, which would be adopted and maintained by Shropshire Council.</p> <p>Network Rail have agreed in writing to the principle of allowing public access under the railway line, subject to commercial terms, necessary trespass-proof fencing and arrangements for the long term maintenance of the bridge by the Council. The Council are currently pursuing the matter with Network Rail.</p> <p>Under the existing planning consent, Taylor Wimpey will shortly be making a financial contribution of £31,500 towards the cost of the footpath link. The SAMDev preferred sites would finance the full cost, including any necessary arrangement with Network Rail.</p> |
| <p><i>Swimming Pool</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation continues to identify need for a swimming pool in Shifnal. Helen advised that she would need to double check the Place Plan for details of the swimming pool.</li> </ul>   | <p>The Shifnal Town Plan contains an aspiration for a community swimming pool, and this is reproduced in the 2012/13 Place Plan but no concrete proposal is yet included in the delivery table. Costs on the Sport England website range from £2.9 million for a 25 x 8.5 metre pool to £4.7 million for a 25 x 17 metre pool. This could be part funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy, which would provide around £1.28 million from a 400-home development.</p>   |
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| <p><b>Impact on the Town Centre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aston Street development would take business away from the high street.</li> <li>• Concern that the impact on high street of a new supermarket would be detrimental to the local butchers, greengrocers etc. This conflicts with revitalising town centres.</li> <li>• Some people supported supermarket development especially if petrol station included.</li> <li>• Gordon Tonkinson said that he was concerned about the loss of the town centre. There is an abundance of eating places and he feels that there is an issue where shops should be shops and not just frontages for other office based businesses.</li> <li>• Shifnal suffers from people shopping out of town (85%) – building a new supermarket and keeping half of these shoppers in the town would be a massive improvement.</li> <li>• Questions were asked on the size of the proposed supermarket and the total employment opportunities at the supermarket and petrol station. One of the developers indicated that the plans would be for an area around 25-30,000 sq ft gross (5x bigger than the current co-op) and they would be looking to employ around 40-50 employees at the supermarket and around 12 at the petrol station.</li> <li>• Gordon Tonkinson said that Shifnal needed to learn from Newport's mistakes where they had now withdrawn plans for a petrol station.</li> </ul> | <p>National planning policy, the Shropshire Core Strategy and the Bridgnorth Local Plan policies require a “sequential approach” whereby retail should preferably be in the Town Centre, but if no suitable sites are available retail development should be located as close as possible to the Town Centre. The Springhill site is about 250metres walking distance from the town centre, and would be acceptable <i>unless</i> an alternative site that is closer to the town centre became available for retail development.</p> <p>A retail impact assessment to assess the effect on the town centre will be required of developers as part of any planning application. The relative mix of food / non-food retailing will be important to the impact assessment, as will the likelihood of shoppers undertaking linked trips to the town centre.</p> <p>Core Strategy Policy CS15 requires development to positively contribute to town centres, and there may be scope for a retail development to contribute to improvements to the main shopping area on Bradford St/Cheapside through a s106 legal agreement, as part of mitigating any identified impact on the current shopping area.</p> <p>There is evidence that a local supermarket would keep expenditure in Shifnal, and reduce shopping journeys to other towns. The Bridgnorth District retail study (2006), produced by Bridgnorth District Council's retail consultants, found that only 14.8% of residents' main food shopping was contained within the study area (ie. Bridgnorth District). The remaining 85.2% was “leakage”, primarily to Telford.</p> |
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| <p><i>Medical Centre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern about plans for medical practice and the Taylor Wimpey site. Helen confirmed that S106 details secure the land as a medical centre and that Shifnal is on the priority list although the PCT currently have no money. If an alternative scheme arose for a medical centre elsewhere, then an alternative use of the original land identified for the medical centre would have to be considered.</li> <li>There is a prime site for the medical centre next to the village hall and move the industrial units to Lamledge Lane.</li> </ul> | <p>A meeting with the PCT has established that Shifnal is now in the top 2 on the PCT's priority list for permission for submitting a business case for improving their GP premises, which means the Shifnal GPs are reasonably likely to be successful in making a case to the PCT for increased rent &amp; rates. The PCT has confirmed that no subsidy from the Community Infrastructure Levy would be involved in the provision of a medical centre. GPs are responsible for their deal with the provider of a new building (whether to buy or to rent), with the PCT reimbursing them a reasonable level of rent and rates from the PCT's revenue budget.</p> |
| <p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern expressed that compulsory purchase could be used to buy up land. Helen advised that this process was not on the radar at the moment for Shifnal.</li> <li>Schools, roads, power supply, sewage system, flood plans all have to be taken into account when considering development and it is essential to get infrastructure achievable before sites are formally allocated.</li> <li>We want mixed use development</li> </ul>   | <p>A pedestrian &amp; cycle link between the developments south of the railway line and Lamledge Lane industrial estate remains an objective, to encourage local residents who work there to walk or cycle.</p> <p>To comply with the European Water Framework Directive, the sewerage works for Shifnal may require a substantial upgrade. Discussions are ongoing to establish whether or not this will limit development in Shifnal.</p>  |

### Next Steps

The SAMDev consultation period ends on 20<sup>th</sup> July. Responses are invited using the easy-to-use "Survey Monkey" form on the Council's webpage at [www.shropshire.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planningpolicy) by following menu path Site Allocations & Management of Development / SAMDev Preferred Options: Shifnal. Comments received will inform the next stage of the SAMDev, leading to publication of a Final Plan in mid 2013.

A summary of issues raised through the formal responses will be provided in due course. Investigations into the issues will continue as part of proactive planning for Shifnal's future. **One option for discussion is whether Shifnal could accept more than 800 homes, and therefore accept a larger number of site allocations?**

The Place Plan annual review process provides a mechanism for discussing delivery with the Town & Parish Councils. A training session on the Place Plan process will be held for Shifnal & Sherrifhales local Councillors in July (date to be agreed).

*Andrea McWilliams (notes of SAMDev meeting) / Helen Howie (planning officer investigations)*