

Stage 2 Hearing Statement
Matter 26 (Bridgnorth) regarding Employment Allocations and Transport
Links (Tasley Garden Village)

By Andrew Coley (B-A079) for BRIDGNORTH CIVIC SOCIETY

11 September 2024

- 1) In its "Summary", Shropshire Council (SC) stated that Bridgnorth benefits from strong road links to the Black Country via the A454 corridor. Bridgnorth Civic Society (BCS) commented that we considered that this is misleading and deeply inaccurate. The roads between Bridgnorth and Wolverhampton, Dudley and Stourbridge are already choked with congestion, especially at peak times, at the pinch-points at the boundary of Wolverhampton (A454), at Himley on the border of Dudley (B4176), and at Stourton (A449). The A454 has to absorb the additional commuter traffic from nearby Perton, and the B4176 already has extra traffic from the new garden village built at Wombourne. The development of BRD030 would inevitably lead to substantial extra traffic to and from the Black Country and would be counter to Sustainability Objectives 5 (encourage the use of sustainable means of transport) and 6 (reduce the need of people to travel by car). BCS commented that public transport links are very limited (just an hourly bus service to Wolverhampton, and there has been no rail service for over 60 years). We noted that the 500 dwellings to be built at Tasley Gateway (a site near to BRD030) will add considerably to traffic needing to use the Bridgnorth By-Pass. We estimated that the proposed 1,050 new dwellings at BRD030 would further add around 2,000 vehicle movements along the Bypass and most of these may reasonably be assumed to be between Bridgnorth and the Black Country.
- 2) We were disappointed that SC in its "high-level" response only stated that a robust and proportionate site assessment process has been undertaken, referring to "identified appropriate sites to accommodate the proposed contribution to the unmet needs forecast to arise in the Black Country". SC completely failed to address our specific concerns about the inadequacy of road links between BRD030 and the Black Country.
- 3) We note, however, that by its response to this matter, SC appears to admit that the new dwellings to be built at BRD030 would likely be occupied by people intending or needing to commute to the Black Country for work purposes. However, we disagree with SC that its assessment process has been robust concerning BRD030 in respect of transport links to the Black Country. By its location, being to the North-West of Bridgnorth, all commuting traffic to the Black Country would need to use the Bridgnorth Bypass, which is already busy on working days at peak periods. The Bypass would thereby no longer be a bypass, but a road within the Bridgnorth conurbation. Even disregarding this important consequence, we believe that SC's assessment has been undertaken without consideration of actually trying to travel from Bridgnorth into the Black Country during morning peak period and returning in the opposite direction. The roads between Bridgnorth and Wolverhampton, Dudley and Stourbridge are already very congested from where the West Midlands conurbation begins. The location of BRD030, and its likely occupation by residents needing to commute to the Black Country, would only serve to considerably worsen already congested roads, contrary to any notion of "sustainability".

**Bridgnorth Civic Society,
11 September 2024**

