

Hearing Statement – Matter 26 All Employment Allocations.

Tasley Garden Village.

On behalf of Bloor Homes Ltd and Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd.

Date: September 2024 | Pegasus Ref: P20-1800_R017v1_PL_JB/JB

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TASLEY GARDEN VILLAGE

An architectural rendering of the Tasley Garden Village. The scene depicts a row of multi-story residential buildings with red-tiled roofs and light-colored facades. The buildings are interspersed with large, mature green trees. In the foreground, a paved walkway and a road are visible. A person is walking on the left, and a cyclist is riding on the path. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny, with a clear sky and soft shadows.



Document Management.

Version	Date	Author	Checked/ Approved by:	Reason for revision
1	September 2024	Jonathan Burns	Jonathan Burns	-



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1. Introduction.

- 1.1. Pegasus Group is instructed by Bloor Homes Ltd ('Bloor') and Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd ('Taylor Wimpey') to prepare Statements in respect of their land interests at Tasley Garden Village, Bridgnorth. Tasley Garden Village is identified as an allocation with the draft Shropshire Local Plan as a comprehensive mixed use sustainable urban extension (BRDO30), identified under Policy S3 – Bridgnorth Place Plan Area.
- 1.2. This Statement deals with Matter 26 All Employment Allocations which addresses the following issue:

Issue – Whether the proposed are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

2. Matter 26 Questions – All Employment Allocations.

2.1. The following provides a response to some of those questions identified in the Stage 2 Matters, Issues and Questions document (ID40). These are dealt with in the order that they appear within ID40. These comments relate to our clients' land interests (BRDO30) which includes a draft employment allocation as part of the wider Tasley Garden Village development.

1. What is the background to the site allocation? How was it identified and which options were considered?

2.2. Shropshire Council's EVO13 provides a summary of the options considered and background to the site allocation BRDO30.

2. What is the scale and type/mix of uses proposed?

2.3. The draft allocation and associated Development Guidelines seek to deliver 16ha of employment land. The Development Guidelines suggest that this employment floorspace provides an opportunity for freehold employment land targeted towards office and research and development uses.

3. What is the basis for this and is it justified?

2.4. The inclusion of Tasley Garden Village (BRDO30) to deliver employment land/development is justified.

2.5. However, as previously set out in previous representations to the Regulation 19 draft of the plan (A0609) we do not consider that the specific requirement for the employment land to be targeted towards office and research and development uses to be justified. This policy requirement will potentially unnecessarily restrict or slow the delivery of employment floorspace on the site.

2.6. The draft policy Development Guidelines suggests that this approach is to; *'compliment wider employment opportunities in Bridgnorth and contribute towards the objectives of the economic growth strategy'*. However, we have been unable to identify further justification beyond this commentary in the Development Guidelines.

2.7. It is expected that the wider employment opportunities referred to are in relation to the Stanmore Industrial Estate and proposed employment allocations STCO02 and P58a, with the intention of Tasley Garden Village to provide a different offer to the originally intended function of those draft allocations at Stanmore Industrial Estate. As set out in the Updated Green Belt Topic Paper (GC46) the intention of allocations STCO02 and P58a is to expand its role as a 'centre of excellence for engineering and advanced manufacturing'. This was partly reflected in the proposed Development Guidelines within the submission version of the Local Plan confirming that within sites STCO02 and P58a; *'Development will be within primary use class B2, B8 and appropriate sui generis uses. It will be targeted towards the engineering and advanced manufacturing sectors'*.

- 2.8. However, MM081 proposes amendments to this specific development guideline provide greater flexibility for sites STCO02 and P58a with the amended wording supporting all employment generating uses and introducing more flexibility to the Development Guidelines.
- 2.9. Given this proposed change to the uses planned within allocations STCO02 and P58a, this undermines any justification for the Tasley Garden Village employment floorspace to specifically be targeted towards office and research and development uses.
- 2.10. In addition to this, it is noted that Employment Topic Paper (EV112) and specifically Table 36 within that document suggests that the supply assumed for the site would be a mix of employment generating uses and not specifically focused on office and research and development uses. For ease of reference, we have reproduced a copy of this table below:

Table 36: Proposed Allocations - Distribution of Supply

Place Plan	Site Location	Use Classes					Sui Generis & Other uses	TOTALS
		B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8		
		hectares						
Market Drayton Rural	Clive Barracks, Tern Hill	3		3				6
Shrewsbury	Adjacent to A49	5		10	10	15	5	50
	Mytton Oak Road	2.5		2.5				
Ludlow Rural	South of The Sheet			2.5	2.5			5
Bridgnorth	Tasley Garden Village			4	5	5	2	27.5
	Stanmore Industrial Estate - North				7			
	Stanmore Industrial Estate - East				4.5			
Shifnal	East of Shifnal Industrial Estate	5		10	10	10	4	39
Ironbridge	Former Power Station	3		3				6
TOTAL		19		35	39	30	11	134

- 2.11. As such, there is clearly a lack of justification for this suggested focus on office and research and development uses at Tasley Garden Village (BRDO30) and such an approach could stifle delivery and fail to provide the necessary flexibility to ensure that the new employment site can respond to potential market demand. As such, we would seek the removal of that reference within the Development Guidelines for BRDO30. We do however continue to support the proposed employment uses/allocation within the Tasley Garden Village allocation.

4. What is the current planning status of the site in terms of planning applications, planning permissions and completions/construction?

- 2.12. As set out in respect of our Matter 9 Hearing Statement, Bloor and Taylor Wimpey are in the process of preparing a planning application for the site with the view to submitting an outline application in early 2025. An EIA Scoping Opinion request was submitted in respect of the site on 23rd July 2024 (ref. 24/O2859/SCO) with a response provided on 5th September. As discussed in respect of question 11, this Scoping Opinion request followed a slightly different boundary for the site than that shown on the draft policies map.

5. What are the benefits that the proposed development would bring?

- 2.13. The proposed development would deliver a comprehensive mixed-use development capable of delivering associated infrastructure and services to meet the needs of future and existing residents. The employment development will create floorspace and development opportunities for existing businesses and to help attract new businesses to the town. Based on the assumed split of uses set out within EV112, the development could support up to 1,400 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs along with significant business rates

payable to Shropshire Council. The benefits associated with the residential allocation within the site are dealt with through Matter 9.

6. What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

- 2.14. As set out in respect of our Matter 9 Hearing Statement; potential adverse impacts and their mitigation are addressed in the Development Guidelines for BRDO30 as set out in Schedule S3.1(i). This allows for mitigation through the construction and operational phases of the development. In addition a wide range of technical assessments have been undertaken to inform the draft allocation and the future planning application which have not identified any technical issues that cannot be mitigated.
- 2.15. The loss of agricultural land is an adverse impact that cannot be mitigated in terms of potential food production however this would be the case of any development on existing agricultural fields.

8. What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

- 2.16. As with the potential adverse impacts, the Development Guidelines for BRDO30 identify the necessary infrastructure requirements for the proposed development. As only some of these are of relevance or relate to the proposed employment uses on the site the following infrastructure requirements are identified:
- Green infrastructure and open space;
 - Highways infrastructure including new accesses into the site and associated crossings;
 - Off-site highways improvements;
 - Sustainable drainage features;
 - Extension of bus network to and through the site.
- 2.17. These infrastructure requirements would all be delivered or funded by the development/developers. As part of the preparation of the planning application these infrastructure requirements have been costed as part of the initial due diligence in respect of the land deal and the forthcoming planning application. These infrastructure requirements are not unusual for a development of this scale the work done to date demonstrates that these can be delivered by the development.
- 2.18. No other constraints to development have been identified.

9. Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

- 2.19. Yes. The broad viability of the site is demonstrated through the viability appraisal work carried out to inform the Local Plan process in EV115 and GC49. In addition, both the viability and deliverability of the scheme is demonstrated by the commitment by Bloor Homes and Taylor Wimpey through both the promotion of the site through the Local Plan and the planning application currently being prepared alongside willing landowners.

Specifically in relation to the employment uses Bloor Homes as part of the due diligence assessments and advice has been sought from local surveyors to better understand demand, the appropriate mix of uses and overall viability, this work has concluded that there is strong immediate and future demand for such development and that this would be viably delivered alongside the wider site.

- 2.20. As set out in respect of Question 8, viability work undertaken by the developers as part of their due diligence and to support the planning application preparation confirm that a policy compliant development could be delivered.

10. What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?

- 2.21. The delivery of the employment land would also be delivered within a similar timescales to the rest of the development. Given the nature of such uses and noting that the fact that development may, in part, respond to specific occupier requirements and respond to market demand; we have not identified an average delivery rate per annum. Nevertheless, the development is expected to be complete before the end of the current draft plan period.

11. Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there any justification for amending the boundary?

- 2.22. As set out in the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG13), the boundary of the draft site allocation as currently drafted was informed by an initial masterplan prepared by Taylor Wimpey through the Local Plan process.
- 2.23. Since that masterplan was prepared, Bloor has assumed control of the majority of the Tasley Garden Village site and associated Potential Future Direction of Growth area. As such, Bloor is now leading on the overall promotion and delivery of the scheme. Taylor Wimpey has maintained control over a smaller part of the site and will be a development partner of Bloor moving forward.
- 2.24. Consistent with the proposed Development Guidelines for the site, Bloor and Taylor Wimpey are currently reviewing the masterplan to inform the potential sustainable development of the site. This review will ensure that the development achieves proposed site guidelines, wider policy requirements, and responds to the change in land control and implications this will have on the phasing of development. This work is ongoing with an expectation that Bloor and Taylor Wimpey will engage with the local planning authority and undertake consultation prior to the Matter 26 and Matter 9 Local Plan examination hearings.
- 2.25. Through this ongoing masterplanning process consideration is being given to the design, layout and the suitable phasing of development and infrastructure delivery. Based on the masterplanning work emerging it is expected that the revised masterplan will identify an opportunity to improve the development and associated phasing and therefore it is expected that an amendment to the proposed Tasley Garden Village allocation boundary, and potential future direction of growth boundary, will be sought and considered appropriate.

12. Are the detailed policy requirements effective, justified and consistent with national policy?

- 2.26. In general the policy requirements are considered to be effective, justified and consistent with national policy. However, we do have some concerns regarding certain elements of the policy as per the draft in MM081 in respect of the employment uses which are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 2.27. As set out in the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG13); we do not consider that a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that is currently required within the Development Guidelines is necessary or justified. The requirement for an SPD is inconsistent with Development Guidelines for other similar sized allocations elsewhere in the draft Local Plan and would not achieve any additional controls, or deliver a better scheme, which could not be achieved through the allocation Development Guidelines and preparation of an agreed masterplan and design code for the site. Instead, and consistent with Development Guidelines for other larger allocations within the draft Plan, there should only be a requirement for a masterplan to be agreed to inform the future development of the site; rather than an SPD.
- 2.28. As highlighted in respect of Question 3, we do not consider the requirement for employment floorspace to be targeted at office and research and development uses to be justified.

3. Conclusions

3.1. Amendments are sought to the draft policy wording and development guidelines as set out in this hearing statement, the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG13) and previous representations. For ease of reference the following amendments are sought:

- Removal of requirement for an SPD to be prepared in support of the allocation, to be replaced with a requirement for a masterplan.
- Amendments to the allocation boundary to reflect updates to the site masterplan and expected phasing.
- Inclusion of identified Potential Future Direction of Growth within the Tasley Garden Village allocation for development within and beyond the current plan period.
- Removing the requirement for employment floorspace to be targeted at office and research and development uses.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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