

Hearing Statement – Matter 1 Legal/Procedural Requirements (Policy SP3).

Tasley Garden Village.

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

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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.

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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 1 Legal/Procedural Requirements which addresses the following issue:

Issue – Whether the Council has complied with the relevant procedural and legal requirements?

2. Matter 1 Questions – Updated Sustainability Appraisal.

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.

2. Does the updated SA test the Plan against the preferred options chosen and all reasonable alternatives?

2.2. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) does not test the Local Plan against all reasonable alternatives. This is due to the failure to consider an option that is the equivalent to the housing requirement contained in the Submission draft Shropshire Local Plan (30,800 dwellings) plus the proposed contribution of 1,500 dwellings to the Black Country unmet needs – a total of 32,300 dwellings or around 1,468 dwellings per annum.

2.3. Concerns have been raised through the examination process that that the SA had failed to properly consider the Black Country unmet needs contribution and that the 30,800 dwelling (1,400 dwellings per annum) figure contained in the draft submission plan related solely to Shropshire’s housing needs and did not appropriately allow for the Black Country unmet need contribution (Examination Ref. ID28 – paragraphs 11/12). The previous iteration of the Updated SA (Examination Ref. GC29) included such an option referred to as “Housing Requirement Option 5: High Growth (Variation 3)”. However, the revised Updated SA (CG44) no longer includes this following the clarifications provided in ID37.

2.4. Whilst there is specific reference to a 15% uplift over and above the 2020 baseline local housing need through examination correspondence having regard to what was tested through the original SA (SD006); this level of housing requirement was not what was submitted through the actual draft Submission Local Plan. Instead the 1,400 dwelling figure contained in Policy SP2 equivalent to a 19% uplift assuming that this excludes the Black Country unmet need contribution.

2.5. As such, we are concerned that the Updated SA has failed to consider this as a reasonable alternative noting that it is the only option that properly reflects Shropshire’s identified housing requirement as set out in the draft Shropshire Local Plan plus the Black Country unmet need contribution. Clearly the same can also be said of the employment options considered in the Updated SA.

3. Have any concerns been raised about the updated SA methodology and what is the Council’s response to these?

2.6. As noted previously by the Council, specifically in Paragraph 17 of the Council’s response to ID1 and ID2 (Examination Ref. GC4), concerns have previously been raised relating to the SA scoring of sites set out in the SA. At that time, the Council confirmed that they had reviewed the comments and concluded that the corrections/changes would not alter any site’s overall rating (i.e., whether they were considered as Poor, Fair or Good).

2.7. The Updated SA (Examination Ref. GC44) confirms at Para 12.46 that all sites have been re-assessed. However, it appears that issues previously raised in respect of Tasley Garden Village (Site ref. BRD030) have not been corrected or updated through this re-assessment



process. The failure to address these through the updated SA is an issue as the ratings have been used to provide a sustainability conclusion in relation to each site's 'Overall Black Country Contribution'.

- 2.8. As set out in our previous Matter 1 Hearing Statement and in detail within our regulation 19 representations – Chapter 8 our concerns remain in respect of the following matters:
- Criterion 3 – tree preservation orders (TPO) – we have we have checked this with the relevant officers at Shropshire Council and can confirm that there are no TPO's within Tasley Garden Village or on the site boundary. As such, the site should have not been scored a minus for this criterion.
 - Criterion 5 – children's playground (housing assessment only) – the site is within 480m of a children's playground.
- 2.9. Corrections made to these scorings would result in an overall sustainability score of –6 for housing, and –5 for employment. It is noted that this revised scoring would not alter the Sustainability Conclusion for either the Bridgnorth or Black Country Contribution Sustainability Conclusion categories, with the site remaining within the 'fair' range for both. However, as ratings were determined based on ranges for each settlement area and the Black Country 'relevant assessment area', it is unclear whether any corrections or changes made to the scoring would have affected the overall ranges for the relevant settlement area, and in turn would affect a specific site rating. As such, it would be useful for the Council to confirm that these corrections would not affect the ranges for both settlement areas and the Black Country 'relevant assessment area'.

3. Matter 1 Questions – Plan Period.

7. Is the Local Plan period of 2016 to 2038 consistent with national policy? If not, is there justification for this?

- 3.1. As we have highlighted in our representations to the additional submission documents, the plan period should be extended to 2040 to accord with NPPF Paragraph 22 to ensure that the plan looks ahead to at least a 15-year period based on an assumed adoption sometime in 2025.
- 3.2. Although no doubt the Council will providing further comment on this through the examination process, it is noted that they have already provided a summary response on this point through their Summary of Responses document (Examination ref. GC52). Whilst this is no doubt for discussion through the hearing sessions, the repeated suggestion in GC52 that the NPPF requirement for 15-year minimum plan period as being a 'preference' is understating the requirement of paragraph 22 of the NPPF.
- 3.3. Whilst it is reasonable for the Council to be cautious about causing unnecessary delay to the adoption of the Local Plan and subsequent delivery of draft allocations, it is considered that any additional work required to ensure the plan provides the necessary minimum 15-year plan period from adoption could be carried out alongside the examination process and needn't delay the adoption of the plan.
- 3.4. In considering this, it is important to highlight that there are already existing draft allocations that are expected to deliver some development beyond the 2038 plan period as well as land identified as Potential Future Direction of Growth controlled by our client adjacent to Tasley Garden Village (BRDO30). These sites, alongside the strong windfall development levels in the earlier years of the plan¹ would no doubt go a considerable way in demonstrating that the Local Plan could meet an additional two years of housing requirements without substantial additional work or site assessments being required.

¹ As demonstrated through the updated Housing and Employment Topic Paper (GC45).

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

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