

The Much Wenlock Civic Society generally supports the Refresh Group submission and what we believe is the current Town Council's submission on traffic.

The Society would like to emphasise three points which it believes makes the use of MuW012VAR an unsound choice to deliver a suitable preferred site.

Firstly, the Much Wenlock Civic Society challenges Shropshire Council to clarify when the necessary public consultation took place to consider the extension of preferred site MUW012 to the much larger MUW012VAR. The Society objects to the designation of this preferred site which is demonstrably not necessary to meet the local target for housing completions. There appears to be no record of a vote even by Much Wenlock Town Council, let alone by the public, to support this very major change. The extended site, apparently necessary to accommodate enlarged attenuation features, means that many of the homes will be located, inappropriately, more than a 15minute walk from the town centre facilities. This increases the likely creation of an undesirable 'urban extension'. Such a development, disconnected from the town as a whole, was what Planning Inspector Mr Cundale sought to avoid (page 307) in his decision in 2006 when examining the Bridgnorth District Plan.

Secondly, the Society believes flood attenuation to the degree required for MUW012VAR and that end of the town generally, if it is indeed deliverable, should be led by the County Council and not by a developer. At an evening's presentation of couple of grainy maps, it appeared to consist of an attenuation pond which takes up virtually all the space not allocated to housing and therefore will not provide the useable open space of which the town is very short. This is old evidence. The deficiency in open space was noted by Bridgnorth District Council before the County became unitary. It is noted in Shropshire County Council's open space needs assessment appendix for the county average open space per 1000 of population. Much Wenlock has a deficit of 2.49 Hectares. The town has seen some affordable housing built to attract young local families and would like to attract more. In particular with the exception of the Gaskell Field the present open space is unsuitable for children to run around and kick a ball.

Thirdly, the County Council is well aware that Much Wenlock's is an ageing population and the need for housing in the town is for smaller properties near the centre to downsize to. This would free up larger family homes. Opportunities to build this type of property on small sites in the town or by dividing larger properties makes it likely that Much Wenlock will exceed the total required even though this number has already been increased twice by the County Council. As well as the pressure on services that are felt everywhere there is the added problem of Much Wenlock being a Rapid Response Flood Catchment Area.