

Statement from Much Wenlock Town Council, A0028 B-A223

Matter 19

Much Wenlock Town Council makes the following comments in respect to Stage 2 Matter 19:

MUW012VAR

This will be the largest development Much Wenlock will ever have seen. As highlighted by others, the Town is a Rapid Response Catchment and as a result extremely vulnerable to flooding. This site has flooded on numerous occasions, with overland flows from this site also flooding the existing Hunters Gate development. With extreme weather events increasing in frequency and severity the development of this land has the potential to exacerbate the situation. We understand that some flood mitigation measures are proposed and that the Place Plan Development Guidelines requires any planning application for development to demonstrate how properties will be protected from flooding.

There has been no opportunity for consultation with the Town Council or other groups to engage on this matter and the Town Council contends that consultation and valuable local insight should have been taken onboard ahead of the site obtaining an Allocation. Furthermore, there has been no consultation in respect to the Site Allocation being enlarged from 80 units (Site MUW012) to 120 units, which appears to be entirely arbitrary and takes the development boundary from beyond existing, natural features into open countryside.

The Local Plan also states that a roundabout access will be provided from the A458. It has been claimed that a new roundabout on the A458 Bridgnorth road is "*needed for gateway and calming purposes.*" It is also proposed that this new roundabout will provide access and egress to the MUW0012VAR residential development. It should be noted that a new roundabout in this location is not mentioned anywhere in Shropshire Council's *Much Wenlock and Surrounding Area Place Plan 2019-2020*.

For the avoidance of doubt, the introduction of a brand-new roundabout is never actually a requirement, or *needed*, for gateway or calming schemes; in fact, a roundabout in this location on the A458 would introduce additional noise, be detrimental to air quality, require street lighting and generate its own significant environmental impact whilst attempting to introduce an improved one in Much Wenlock.

Sensible, well-designed gateway and/or calming schemes are not uncommon in Shropshire (designed by Shropshire Council Highways) and in many other places in the UK and the rest of Europe. Numerous case-studies and technical reports exist and are easily referenced. For example, speed reduction and gateway measures can be as simple as moving a 30mph sign; this can be reinforced with additional signing (eg countdown signing), slight road narrowing (with road markings) and landscaping that clearly confirms a change to the driving environment. Calming of this type has already begun on the A458 in Much Wenlock.

Importantly, the Town Council has carried out a technical assessment that clearly demonstrates that a roundabout is certainly not needed to accommodate 80 peak-hour car trips. It is clearly an overdesign and is only being proposed to allow future continuous development along the A458.

We have further concerns about the level of traffic that might arise from development proposed in the Local Plan and in particular in relation to the notorious Gaskell Arms junction. Extensive technical work has been undertaken to evidence the issue and further details can be provided if required. The Development Plan Strategy for the Much Wenlock Place Plan Area should therefore make specific reference to road infrastructure improvements over the Plan period.

The Town Council has a Neighbourhood Plan that is currently under review. We are therefore in a position to review any Site Allocations as part of this process and would welcome any devolution of decision making to the Local Community that could arise from any changes to the relevant Local Plan policies under examination.