Stanmore Consortium

Summary of consultation and engagement

For and on behalf of the Stanmore Consortium

1.1 Introduction

This feedback report outlines the Stanmore Consortium's approach to public consultation on its proposals for the **development of Stanmore Village**. It summarises the Stanmore Consortium's community engagement activity on its proposals from September 2019 to September 2020 and details the actions it has undertaken.

1.2 Approach to public consultation and stakeholder engagement

The Stanmore Consortium recognises the importance and value of involving local residents and organisations in the planning and development process and has taken a broad approach to engaging with stakeholders on its proposals for Stanmore Village.

Its consultation programme has engaged, informed, explained and involved stakeholders and members of the community. The principal activities undertaken by the Stanmore Consortium were to support the site's allocation in Shropshire Council's Local Plan. This included:

- Engaging with and holding political briefings with local elected members
- Holding three days of public exhibitions on the proposals on:
    - Wednesday 25 September 2019, 12.30pm-7.00pm, Marches Centre for Manufacturing & Technology, Stanmore Industrial Estate;
    - Thursday 26 September 2019, 2.00pm-8.00pm, Castle Hall, Bridgnorth;
    - Saturday 28 September 2019, 10.00am-4.00pm, Low Town Community Hall, Bridgnorth
- Inviting local residents, business stakeholders and elected members to the public exhibitions
- Providing a variety of feedback mechanisms and channels of communication for enquiries
- Responding to queries and requests for more information where appropriate

1.3 Local stakeholders and community groups

Prior to the public exhibitions a series of political briefings were coordinated with Philip Dunne MP and local ward members including:

- Councillor Michael Wood, Shropshire Council ward member for Worfield
- Councillor Elliot Lynch, Shropshire Council ward member for Bridgnorth West & Tasley; Bridgnorth Town Council ward member for East
- Councillor Les Winwood, Shropshire Council ward member for Bridgnorth West & Tasley

- Councillor Christian Lee, Shropshire Council ward member for Bridgnorth East & Astley Abbots
- Councillor William Parr, Shropshire Council ward member for Bridgnorth East & Astley Abbots
- Councillor Tina Woodward, Shropshire Council ward member for Alveley and Claverley

Also prior to the public exhibitions a briefing was held with members of Worfield Parish Council. The council included many local residents, as well as a number of members of the local group Save Bridgnorth Greenbelt.

1.4 Publicity for local residents

Ahead of the public consultation, the Stanmore Consortium sought to maximise awareness of its emerging proposals in order to engage as many local residents and stakeholders as possible. A range of communication mechanisms were used to achieve this as detailed below:

- **Invitational flyer** – local residents, site neighbours and occupiers of both residential and commercial properties were sent a double-sided flyer inviting them to the public exhibitions. This was issued to approximately 7,500 properties across Bridgnorth and Worfield.
- **Media advertising** – two quarter page adverts were placed in both the *Shropshire Star* and *Bridgnorth Journal*.
- **Project website** – a dedicated project website went live prior to the exhibitions.

1.5 Feedback mechanisms

<u>Feedback forms – paper and online</u>

Feedback forms were available at the exhibitions for attendees to submit their comments up until Saturday 26 October 2019. A postal address was provided for people to send forms to for those not wishing to submit their feedback on the days of the events. An identical online version of the form was also made available on the project website. Both paper and online feedback forms could also be submitted to a dedicated consultation email address.

2.0 Participation and feedback

A total of 201 people attended the public exhibition over the three days. Most visitors took the opportunity to speak with at least one member of the project team during their visit.

A number of local councillors were present at the exhibitions, which included:

- Councillor Elliot Lynch, Shropshire Council ward member for Bridgnorth West & Tasley; Bridgnorth Town Council ward member for East
- Councillor Christian Lee, Shropshire Council ward member for Bridgnorth East & Astley Abbots
- Councillor Heather Kidd, Shropshire Council ward member for Chirbury & Worthen

- Councillors David Cooper and Geoffrey Davies, Bridgnorth Town Council ward members for Castle
- Councillor Clive Dyson, Bridgnorth Town Council ward member for Morfe

A total of 18 feedback forms were filled out and put in the ballot box during the exhibitions, and a further eight were later submitted electronically via the website or by post – making a total of 26 forms received.

2.1 Feedback form analysis

To gauge the overall reaction towards the exhibition, respondents were asked to select the option best suited to the statement *"I have found this exhibition."* A breakdown of the results **from those who answered this question** are as follows:

- 16 (62%) respondents found the exhibition very informative
- 7 (27%) respondents found the exhibition quite informative
- 0 respondents found the exhibition not very informative
- 0 respondents answered not sure/don't know
- 0 respondents indicated that they did not attend but still submitted a form
- 3 (11%) respondents did not answer the question

Respondents were then asked four open-ended questions to provide their general thoughts and feedback on the proposals:

- *Please tell us what you think about the proposals.*
- *Do you have any comments on specific aspects of our outline plans e.g. relating to housing need or type, employment, green open space, Stanmore Country Park, community facilities (schools, doctors' surgery etc), or any other issue?*
- *Stanmore Country Park will not be used for development and will remain within the Green Belt. Are there any improvements or new facilities you would like to see at the Country Park?*
- *Are there any other comments you would like to make?*

A summary of the common issues and broad themes to emerge from each question are summarised in the table below:

Please tell us what you think about the proposals.	
A	**Development**
	• 17 respondents (65%) commented on their reaction towards the development. Of these, 12 respondents (46%) made positive or accepting comments about the proposals. These included: ▪ The site is in a suitable location. ▪ The proposals meet the need for more housing in the area and may attract more young families. ▪ The proposals were well thought out.

	• The remaining 5 respondents (19%) raised the following concerns:
	  ▪ The disruption to quiet, rural living, as well as the wildlife which inhabits the proposed development area.
	  ▪ Potential increase in crime.
	  ▪ Influx of people would destroy the appeal of a traditional small market town.
	• General concerns were raised that the Stanmore Consortium may not deliver the infrastructure that is being proposed.

B	**Housing**
	• 10 respondents (38%) commented on housing. • Of these, 6 respondents (23%) confirmed the need for more housing in the area as proposed by the plan. • 1 respondent (4%) commented that there was no need for 850 new homes, especially as the ageing population of Bridgnorth results in empty homes. • General concerns were raised that the potential population would increase beyond the estimated figure of 2,200. • General comments that houses should be affordable in order to attract young buyers.
C	**Transport**
	• 8 respondents (31%) made comment on the impact of the development on transport. • Concern that development will bring extra vehicles to the area, exacerbating the existing issues of traffic congestion and sparse parking. • Concern about the use of narrow lanes in and out of Bridgnorth. Particular concern about the single car width of Brook Lane – running between the development and Roughton – and consequent effects of increased traffic on the road and its lack of designated parking. Suggestion for access only, diverting traffic onto 'A' roads. • Respondents supported the necessity for better public transport and emphasised the need for regular and reliable bus routes.
D	**Green Spaces**
	• 7 respondents (27%) discussed green spaces, either green belt land or Stanmore Country Park. • 4 respondents (15%) made positive comments about the provision of green spaces in the plan and the exclusion of the Country Park from development. • Comments from 3 respondents (12%) expressed dissatisfaction with the proposal to build on green belt land.
E	**Social Infrastructure and Amenities**
	• 4 respondents (15%) mentioned issues relating to social infrastructure and amenities.

	• 2 respondents (8%) commented that the proposals were positive but expressed concerns that public amenities should be secured in the early plans and not added as an afterthought to housing. • 1 respondent (4%) suggested the inclusion of additional amenities, namely a hotel, a pub, and a police station.
F	**Industry and Employment**
	• 1 respondent (4%) commented that the claim of 2,000 jobs was 'bribery'.
G	**Environment**
	• 1 respondent (4%) commented on the environment, suggesting provision of green buses and electric charging points for cars.

Do you have any comments on specific aspects of our outline plans?	
A	**Development**
	• 2 respondents (8%) made specific comments on the development in its entirety: ▪ 1 respondent (4%) commented that building standards should be monitored throughout the project. ▪ 1 respondent (4%) discussed the need for 'architectural congruency' and consideration of aesthetics, particularly how the outlook from Bridgnorth would be affected.
B	**Housing**
	• 8 respondents (31%) made specific comments on housing. Of these respondents, 3 (12%) commented that houses should be affordable, particularly to attract younger people to the area. • 3 respondents (12%) proposed that priority for housing should be given to local residents and those with connections to the area (i.e. work/family). • Other comments included: ▪ A variety of homes should be provided, including consideration of occupants with disabilities. ▪ Five-bed houses were too big for a large estate and were therefore unsuitable. ▪ The proposed houses should be an expression of excellent design and architecture. ▪ Brownfield land in Telford should be used for housing instead of green belt land in Bridgnorth.
C	**Transport**
	• 7 respondents (27%) made specific suggestions regarding transport. These included: ▪ Access for cyclists and pedestrians to nearby industrial estates and other local employers. ▪ Improvement of national walk routes/creation of new routes.

	▪ Frequent and reliable bus services to provide links to nearby areas. • Concern about efficient access to housing estate from main roads. • Concern that the proposed cycle routes and footpaths are unrealistic due to the gradient of the landscape across the development area.
D	**Green Spaces**
	• 3 respondents (12%) discussed green spaces. • 1 respondent (4%) reacted negatively to the development proposals on green belt land and questioned where recreational green space would be provided. • 1 respondent (4%) welcomed the 'Garden Village' concept, as well as the decision to protect the Country Park from development. • 1 respondent (4%) disliked that the Hermitage Ridge and the meadow leading down to Birchlands Estate were within the designated developable area and was concerned that the natural walking paths may be made 'more accessible' and thus lose their wild beauty which the walkers of Bridgnorth enjoy.
E	**Social Infrastructure and Amenities**
	• 13 respondents (50%) mentioned issues relating specifically to social infrastructure and amenities. • All respondents agreed there is a need for more local infrastructure, with 5 respondents (19%) citing the already oversubscribed status of existing facilities, including local healthcare services and schools. • 1 respondent (4%) raised concerns that the local police would not be able to cope with the increased demand for resource that a new housing development may bring. • 6 respondents (23%) raised concerns about proposed infrastructure, particularly doctors' surgeries and schools. These included: ▪ Ensuring these potential facilities, listed in the plan, are secured. ▪ Securing people to work at these facilities. ▪ Securing the funding for them.
F	**Industry and Employment**
	• 5 respondents (19%) discussed industry and employment specifically. • 3 respondents (12%) commented on the necessity of providing shops, businesses, petrol stations etc., with 2 out of these 3 (8%) suggesting preference should be given to start-ups and independent businesses. • 1 respondent (4%) questioned the need for 2,000 new jobs in the town.
G	**Environment**
	• 4 respondents (15%) specifically commented on the environment. The issues included: ▪ Ensuring that sustainability and carbon issues are at the forefront of planning. ▪ Concerns about sewage removal and the impact on existing sewage sites. A suggestion was made to emulate a nearby Bio Digester unit. ▪ Acknowledgement of flooding preparations in the plan but concerns about drought preparations.

	▪ Concerns about the increased CO2 emissions that could come from new residents commuting to Wolverhampton and Telford.

Stanmore Country Park will not be used for development and will remain within the Green Belt. Are there any improvements or new facilities you would like to see at the Country Park?	
Suggestion	**Number**
Visitor centre	5
Café/shop	4
Toilet facilities	4
General park maintenance - *including pond and planting*	4
Children's play area/outdoor education facilities	3
Improved footpaths - *including maintenance during snowy or wet weather.*	3
Facilities for dogs - *bins, water for bowls.*	3
Cycleways/ cycle racks	3
Waste bins	2
Seating	2
Sports facilities	1
Lighting	1
Information board – *including information on biodiversity*	1
Water features to attract wildlife	1
Enhancement of RAF memorial	1
Management plan	1

Are there any other comments you would like to make?	
A	**Development**
	• 8 respondents (31%) made final comments about the development in its entirety. • 1 respondent (4%) saw no advantage to the development, and suggested council tax should be adjusted to compensate for the loss of a quiet, rural location and disruption to wildlife. The same respondent also raised concerns about depreciation of property value at The Hobbins as a result of nearby development. • 1 respondent (4%) raised a concern about crime and queried the presence of police on the proposed development. • Other comments pertained to the future of the development. These included: ▪ The state of future land ownership. ▪ Concern that the project could be abandoned in the future. ▪ A proposal for a community panel consisting of local residents and representatives from the Stanmore Consortium and the local authority to ensure delivery of proposals and overall maintenance. ▪ A proposal for a “Design Guide” to ensure consistent standards between the numerous developers / housebuilders involved. ▪ General concerns about provision of infrastructure.

	▪ Concern that businesses will not want to trade from Bridgnorth due to its poor transport links compared to Telford. ▪ General concerns about people moving into Bridgnorth from outside the town.
B	**Housing**
	• 4 respondents (15%) made final comments on housing. These included: ▪ The importance of affordable housing for low income families and young people. ▪ Concerns about the general impact of the proposed development on local infrastructure.
C	**Transport**
	• 2 respondents (8%) made final comments on the impact of the proposed development on transport. • These comments included: ▪ Concerns that an extra 2,000 vehicles would cause congestion on the surrounding roads. ▪ Concerns that Bridgnorth is not suitable for development due to its poor transport links.
D	**Green Spaces**
	• 1 respondent (4%) discussed green spaces. They discussed improving the overgrown / blocked footpaths between the Cemetery / High Rock area and the Hermitage Ridge.
E	**Social Infrastructure and Amenities**
	• 1 respondent (4%) mentioned final issues about social infrastructure and amenities. They suggested outdoor exercise facilities.
F	**Industry and Employment**
	• 1 respondent (4%) expressed concerns that Bridgnorth is not suitable for industrial development as businesses will favour Telford.
G	**Environment**
	• No respondents commented on the environment.

2.2 Verbal feedback analysis

The vast majority of visitors at the public exhibitions took the opportunity to speak with at least one member of the project team.

Common issues and themes to emerge from verbal feedback and discussions	
A	**Principle and need for housing**
	• Concern that there is no need for additional housing and employment in Bridgnorth • Concern that the proposed development is an attempt to satisfy housing need in Birmingham and the Black Country • Questions about how much of the proposed residential development would be 'affordable' • Questions about the style and density of housing • Many visitors questioned why green belt land should be developed in Bridgnorth when there is brownfield land in Telford
B	**Traffic**
	• Concern that congestion in the town would be exacerbated by development • Concern that there are plans to stop up the A454 • Suggestions that a bypass road should be built to ease congestion on the A442 through Low Town • Concern that development will make the A454 dangerous and increase rat-running on local B roads • Questions around how the development would be linked to Low Town
C	**Public amenities and social infrastructure**
	• Many visitors expressed concerns that the already oversubscribed local doctors' surgery would not cope with an influx of new residents. Visitors largely agreed that a new doctors' survey is essential. Concerns were also raised as to where new GPs would be found to operate a new surgery • Concern regarding the need for a new school as part of the development and what type of school it should be • Many visitors were concerned that the infrastructure proposed would ultimately not be delivered once the site is allocated • Suggestion that a supermarket should be provided as part of the development to avoid exacerbating congestion around the existing retail offering in Bridgnorth • Requests for recreational facilities such as an all-weather sports pitch
D	**Ecology**
	• Confusion as to the intention for safeguarded land • Concern for wildlife currently using the proposed development area
E	**Other**
	• Questions around how the Stanmore Consortium can guarantee that Garden Village principles are adhered to

3.0 Stakeholder engagement during 2020

The Stanmore Consortium has continued to engage with stakeholders and the wider community through 2020.

Key briefings have included:

- Regular update briefings and virtual meetings with Philip Dunne MP
- Meetings and updates with Shropshire Council officers
- Presentation to members of Shropshire Council's Cabinet
- Presentation to Mark Barrow and supporting Shropshire Council officers
- Presentation and update briefings for local Shropshire Councillors including members for Worfield, Brown Clee, Much Wenlock, Bridgnorth West & Tasley, Bridgnorth East & Astley Abbots, and Chirbury & Worthen
- Presentation and project updates to Bridgnorth Town Council
- Project updates and information to Morville Parish Council, Tasley Parish Council and Worfield Parish Council

Bridgnorth Town Council
In responding to Shropshire Council's Local Plan Review, Bridgnorth Town Council during its Extraordinary meeting of 9th June 2020 agreed that Stanmore Garden Community site is its preferred site. The Stanmore Consortium was not present at this meeting.

3.1 Apley Estate engagement

During this period Apley Estate has also presented proposals for Stanmore to the following organisations:

- Marches Local Enterprise Partnership
- Shropshire Wildlife Trust
- The Woodland Trust
- CPRE Shropshire
- Sporting Bridgnorth
- Bridgnorth Sustainability Forum
- Country Land & Business Association
- Buglife
- Forestry Commission / Forest England

3.2 Communicating changes to proposals

The Stanmore Consortium has continued to develop and evolve its proposals. It has communicated changes and enhancements as part of a regular programme of updates to the local community and interested stakeholders. Communications activity has included:

- Updating and revising the project website – www.stanmorevillage.co.uk
- Launching a new Vision document based on new reduced area masterplan
- Providing a video comparing Stanmore and Tasley / Develeoping a comparison document comparing Stanmore / Tasley
- Providing regular press releases on project development including the appointment of Lord Matthew Taylor in the *Shropshire Star* and *Bridgnorth Journal*.