Stanmore Business Park
and
Proposed Stanmore Garden Village.

Employment-Led Development of a Garden Village Community

View of Stanmore Business Park looking southeast

MacMullen Associates

Stanmore Business Park

Planning Background

Shropshire Council is undertaking a Review of its Local Plan. In the context of Bridgnorth, the **Shropshire Local Plan** comprises the **Core Strategy 2011** and the **Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan 2015**. These guide development up to **2026**. The local authority is required to plan for the long term and to review plans every 5 years to take account of changes and maintain local control over planning decisions. The local plan is therefore being reviewed to cover the period to 2038.

The Review has already been through consultation stages on the strategic **Issues and Options facing Shropshire** (early 2017); the **Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development** (late 2017); and **Preferred Sites** (late 2018/ealry2019). The strategy remains as before an 'urban focused' distribution of development, which includes Bridgnorth as a Principal Centre serving a wide hinterland.

An area of land at Stanmore, east of Bridgnorth has been identified in the Local Plan Review and included as a Preferred Site, suitable for an extension to the town of Bridgnorth, designed using Garden Village principles, providing 850 houses with local facilities and linked to the existing Stanmore Business Park (59,000 m2) which is proposed to be extended, roughly doubling its size over the Plan period to circa 115,000 m2 and balancing the increase in employment with new housing.

1 Introduction

1.1 Following discussions with two large occupiers on the Business Park (both of whom had made preliminary enquiries about additional space requirements) , Stanmore Properties (owners of Stanmore Business Park) arranged the submission **in early 2017**, of a request under the SLAA procedure and Local Plan Review for Shropshire Council to consider removing certain areas of land adjacent to Stanmore Business Park, extending to 4.55ha, from Green Belt status in order that the existing Business Park (which covers 17.76ha) might be expanded in response to potential occupier needs.

1.2 In 2018 the concept of combining the need for more Employment land and the pressures for more housing for local workers with the Shropshire Local Plan Review 2016-2038, was discussed with Shropshire Council who were considering a growth strategy for the County which required further allocation of housing land for Bridgnorth, the third largest town in the County where housing completions had been running at a low (and decreasing) rate.

1.3 Stanmore cooperated with the Apley Estate and John Davies Farms (the major adjoining landowners) in devising a comprehensive masterplan based on Garden Village design principles. This was for additional employment land totalling 16ha net (much as a simple extension to the existing Business Park and using its infrastructure, some to permit development of high quality B1 office/research building) and a substantial residential extension to the east of Bridgnorth, providing some 850 dwellings in an agreed mix, including a significant element of affordable housing to accommodate existing and proposed workers from the Business Park and which could include 'key worker' housing on a basis to be formally agreed with the Council.

1.4 Employers at Stanmore had reported difficulties in recruiting locally and a high proportion (see later) of employees were commuting significant distances, evidently because local housing was out of their price range. A Socio-Economic Study was commissioned from Hatch Regeneris to investigate

(inter alia) the age range and commuting patterns of the local population and comparative house prices. That Study forms part of the evidence base for the Stanmore Village proposal. This note deals with the history and development of the Business Park under the ownership of the Hickman family; trends in requirements for built space; some background on typical occupiers and their opinions; the connection between employee availability and housing and Stanmore's plans for its future.

2.0 History

2.1 Formerly a non-flying, wartime RAF station (RAF Bridgnorth) the site of some 70+ ha was developed as a major training facility and in 1945 was retained as a permanent training base with engineering as part of its activities. Many of the buildings were temporary in nature but there were a number of permanent workshops and the MoD developed two areas of housing (Russell's Close and The Hobbins) to accommodate officers and NCO's. The base had a floating population of several thousand at its peak.

2.2 In the early 1960's the decision was made to close RAF Bridgnorth; the site was vacated in 1963 and subsequently sold in a number of lots. The major portion, with permanent training buildings, was acquired by the Hickman family (local builders and developers) who leased a variety of existing buildings to numerous businesses, demolishing some and erecting more modern industrial space in their place.

The Estate retains the original grid layout of the RAF base to this day. After a mixed history, the remainder of the old base was demolished and eventually bought by the (then County) Council who cleared the majority of the land and planted the Stanmore Country Park in the 1990's. This area remains heavily wooded with a network of paths, popular with dog walkers in particular and with good level access for the less able.

2.3 The Business Park now extends to 17.76ha and comprises 635,000 sq ft approx in total (59,000 m2) in 84 units with some 40 different businesses in occupation. Many units have been combined with the smallest occupier in 1,000sq ft and the largest in some 267,000 sq ft. The site is currently surrounded by (though excluded from) green belt and heavily screened by woodland so that it does not intrude into the landscape.

3.0 Rolling Redevelopment Program; Changing Building Needs

3.1 Following its 1960's purchase, Stanmore removed many wartime buildings and replaced them in a rolling program, from the early 1970's, with a variety of sizes of single span structures better suited to modern occupiers' requirements.

3.2 That process of improvement has continued to the present, with a program of new building, refurbishment of the last viable wartime buildings and (recently) of some of the 1970's-built stock, with provision of better infrastructure, new roads and car parks and an estate office with maintenance compound.

3.3 The trend in 'industrial-type buildings has been for better insulation; access and loading; natural light; aesthetics (better looking buildings); clear working space with better roof height and good security. Good communications and IT are essential. **Ultra-fast (1GB/sec) broadband** is now available to occupiers and **24 hour security** is provided with maintenance of the site and its landscape features being undertaken by on-site staff. As buildings have been refurbished overall standards have been raised and the appearance of the estate has been transformed.

4.0 A 'Family' Approach

4.1 Unlike many 'institutional' landlords who appoint managing agents in remote offices, the Hickman's 'Stanmore Model' has been to manage the Business Park from the on-site Estate Office which provides an immediately accessible, personal point of reference for occupiers and can respond to persons enquiring about space to rent.

5.0 Trends in Occupation

5.1 With units from only 1,000 sq ft, the Estate has always followed a policy of encouraging small firms and business start-ups who can move into premises, at short notice, on informal tenancy agreements and progress to full leases in due course. MacMullen Associates has examined the letting history of buildings on the site which shows that many current occupiers started their businesses at Stanmore and grew - over periods of 15 to 20 (or more) years - into adjoining units as they became available, or were able to surrender a lease and move to larger premises on the Estate.

5.2 The Estate has historically had a stock of units available for immediate occupation, however recently, both nationally and locally, demand has outstripped supply and currently (March 2020) the Estate has effectively no vacant space on offer.

5.3 As an illustration of 'pent-up demand', in 2019 the Estate arranged to fully modernise a block of 4 units (totalling 17,650 sq ft) with new roofs, doors, cladding, lighting and interiors. Before work commenced 3 were reserved by adjoining occupiers and, by completion of the work, the 4th was let to a business new to the Estate. On occasions, the first that the Estate knows about a building becoming vacant is when a 'neighbour' asks for details at the Estate Office.

5.4 This demonstrates the desirability of having space available since small/medium size requirements are usually needed within a month or two – i.e. businesses cannot wait for something new to be built. Consequently, if space not available in Bridgnorth, firms will go to the nearest place where it is. The result being that incoming investment is diverted elsewhere; and Bridgnorth-based firms needing to expand may well move their entire business elsewhere, to the economic detriment of the town.

6.0 Examples of expansion on the Business Park

- **Clive Cowern Transport** now occupies almost **three times** its original holding from 20 years ago and runs a successful logistics business from Stanmore.
- **Classic Motor Cars** moved to Stanmore and took **37,200 sq ft** in 2014 (specially converted and refurbished for them) and in 2018 leased another **24,000 sq ft** (a **65% increase**).
- **Jenvey Dynamics**, a precision fuel injections systems engineer, started in a **single unit** in 1994 and now has **four** adjoining/interconnecting units.
- **Grainger & Worrall** progressed from **123,400 sq ft** in 2010 to **267,000 sq ft** in 2019 - **an increase of 116% over 10 years.** It is the largest employer at Stanmore with nearly 700 employees and occupies 42% of the estate.

34,000 sq ft purpose-built precision machining facility for G & W Machining, completed in 2016.

Part of 61,000 sq ft now occupied by Classic Motor Cars. The building was extensively re-modelled and refurbished to suit CMC's requirements.

7.0 Employee Availability, Training and Education

7.1 Stanmore has a long tradition of engineering and many of its businesses have mutual supply connections and some have relocated to be close to businesses they trade with. Some of the smallest firms on site possess great design expertise, world-class engineering skills and specialise in making 'one-off' prototypes for later mass-production.

7.2 Shropshire Council and the Marches LEP have recognised Stanmore as a centre of engineering excellence and identified it as a 'key growth sector'.

7.3 Several manufacturing employers at Stanmore had (increasingly) found difficulty in recruiting skilled employees (*see survey result later*) and found that very few potential apprentices lived locally because of the cost of housing. Four companies (*Grainger & Worrall, Classic Motor Cars, Salop Design & Engineering and In-Comm Training*) established the **Marches Centre for Manufacturing and Technology CIC** (MCMT)as a **training centre for apprentices** . Stanmore agreed in 2016 to make available a large **(32,600 sq ft**) building to house **MCMT**, making a significant financial contribution to supplement grant aid from the EU and the Marches LEP and other bodies, including the four sponsors.

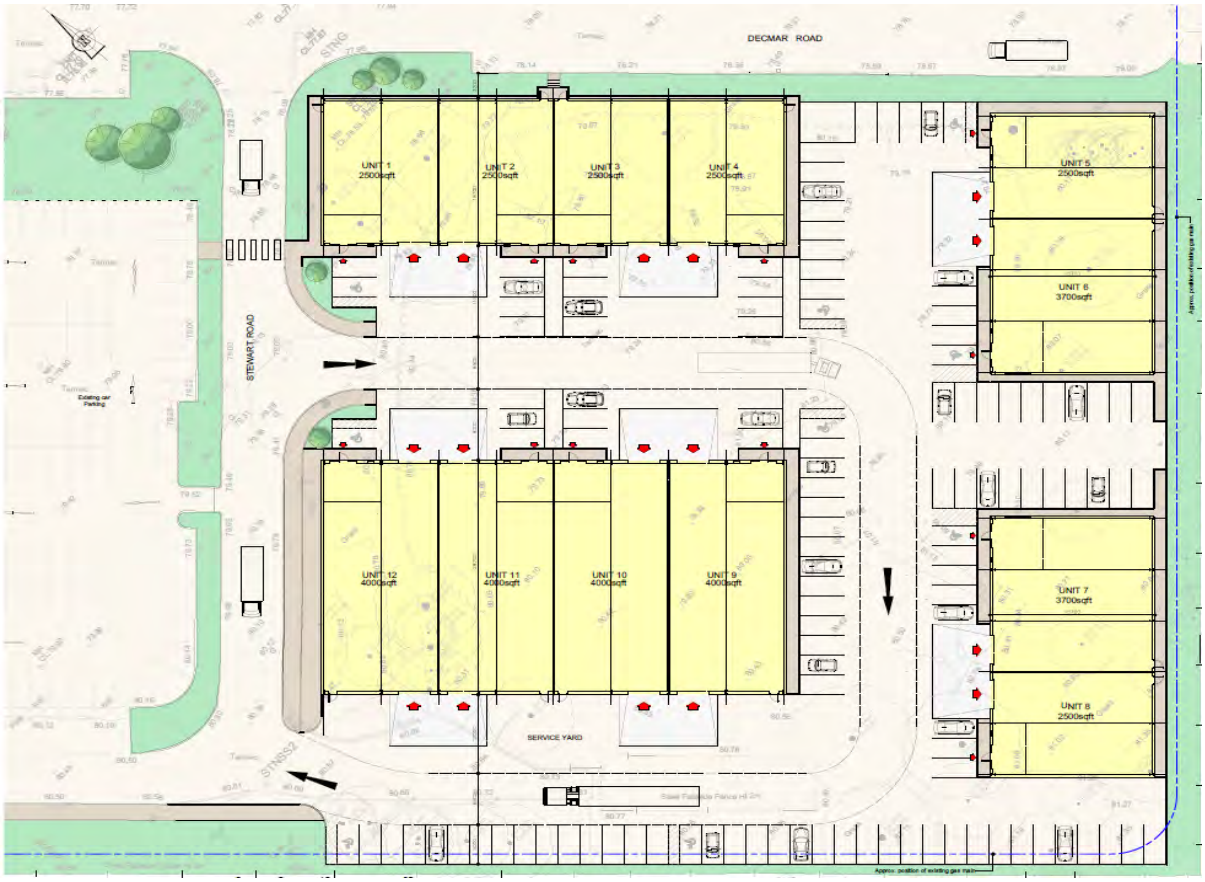
Apprentices Training Space

MCMT Offices

7.4 With a working population of around 1,700 employees (2019), Stanmore is established as a major, successful Employment Area having achieved the critical mass to permit improvement, investment and self-sustaining growth. The limitation of the green belt 'collar' is now being felt with further expansion of existing businesses or accommodation for inward investment constrained.

8.0 Planning for the Future

8.1 It is apparent that the Park now draws in connected/supply chain firms, provides apprentice training through MCMT and can build on the 'engineering excellence' for which it has become known. With strong finances, Stanmore is planning to invest in further facilities and new buildings, with a number of projects currently planned, viz:-



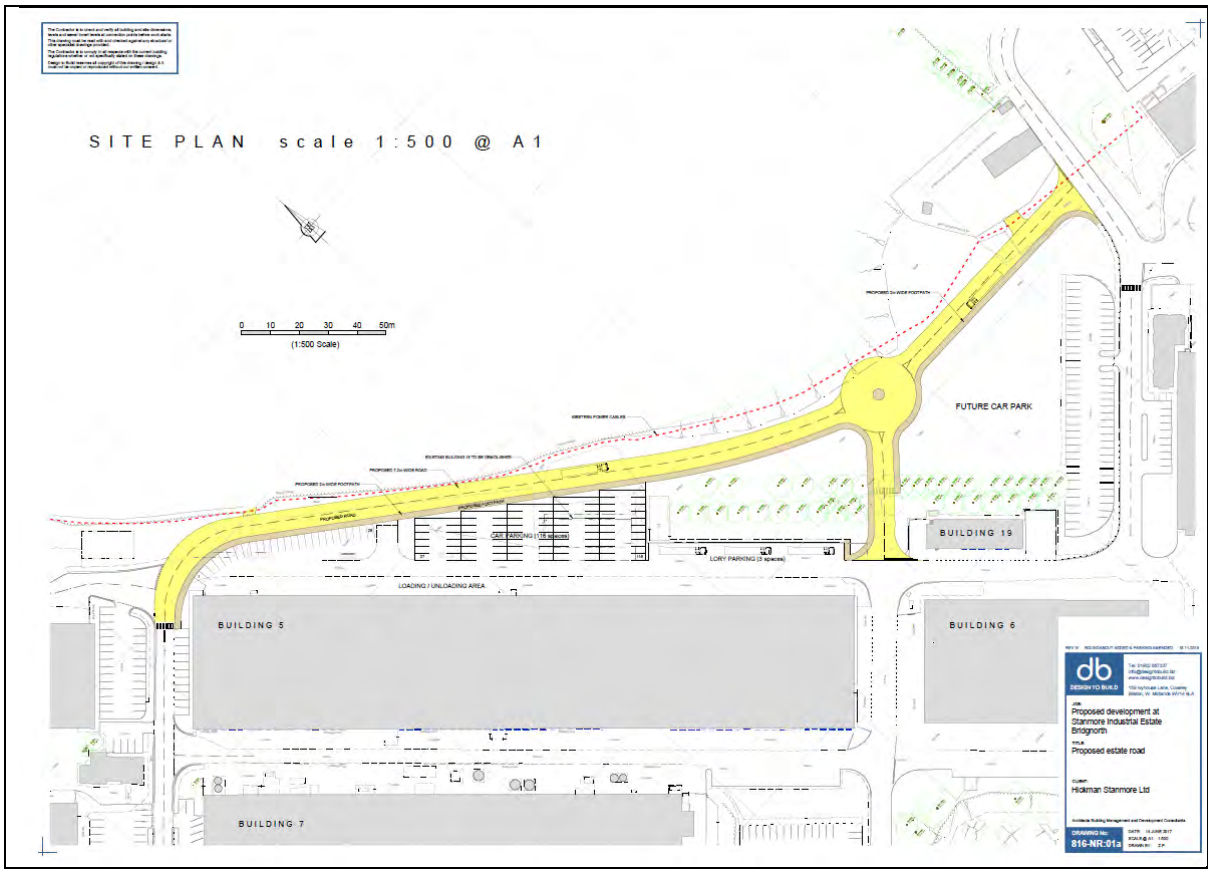
Layout for 12 Industrial units on the Square.

8.2 New Buildings: A plot (1.3ha approx.) known as 'the Square' for a multi-unit development of 38,500 sq ft (3580 m2) – the only undeveloped plot not designated Green Belt for which a planning application will be made in April 2020. *(Note: Due to a lack of electrical power capacity in the local grid, these units will not be commenced until Western Power confirms the date they will provide a reinforced supply to the site. An application has been made for reinforcement of the 33,000 volt network and planning for this is in hand with a view to delivery of power in 2022).*

8.3 Stanmore proposed that 4.9ha gross of **additional land** for development should be included in the **SLAA** process in 2017. This, if approved under the Local Plan Review, would provide land for additional employment space which could be ready for development <u>before the end of the current Plan period.</u>

This further land will probably be required if 'the Square' can be developed in 2022/23 as, at average take-up rates of 25-30,000 sq ft pa, all that space is likely to be occupied by 2024. The receptionist at the Business Park Estate Office reports that currently the office receives 7 or 8 enquiries a week for units of 2,000 – 5,000 sq ft but cannot offer any space.

8.4 A capital project to **re-route nearly 500m of the internal estate road** is in design. This will provide better access, loading and parking to 12 existing units and to the development at 'the Square'. It will also provide greater capacity to access additional land to the east which is part of the proposed greater Stanmore Village employment area.



Plan showing possible diversion of existing Estate Road

9.0 Available Built Space (March 2020)

9.1 Stanmore has a single vacant building of 48,600 sq ft (4,500m2) which was vacated by Coram Showers in December 2019. A major refurbishment, at a projected cost of £1m, will shortly commence but will not be completed, to make the building available, until early 2021. Marketing will commence in spring 2020.

9.2 Other space: One unit of 4,800 sq ft is currently being refurbished and will be available to let in late spring 2020. One workshop of 1,050 sq ft has just been vacated and has enquiries currently. No other space is available.

9.3 Currently the Park is having to turn away potential new occupiers unless a unit becomes available at the end of a lease.

10.0 Link between Employment and Housing

Extract from Shropshire Local Plan Review……..

*"Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy identifies the need for a 'step change' in Shropshire's economy to: reduce levels of out commuting; retain employment and skills locally; increase productivity; and address housing affordability issues"***.**

10.1 Hatch Regeneris consultancy was commissioned to undertake a Socio-Economic Study of Bridgnorth.

The paragraphs below are directly extracted from that Study, a full copy of which has been provided to Shropshire Council.

> *2.17 The concentration of specialised metals casting activity (600) jobs is underlined when it is set in the context of employment in this sub-sector in the wider area. It accounts for all of Shropshire's employment in this sector, is more than sevenfold higher than jobs in these sectors in Wolverhampton and Telford & Wrekin, and accounts for 13% of the England total in the sub-sector.*
>
> *2.18 The sector's description perhaps understates the nature of the activity carried out on Stanmore Industrial Estate. Grainger and Worrall, with 700 employees, is the major employer on the site in this sector, and is globally recognised for the development and machining of high specification metals for the motorsport industry, and also the defence and aerospace sector. It is understood to supply Formula 1 teams.*
>
> *2.20 The ONS data suggests that the period from 2013-17 saw employment increase by 750 jobs in Bridgnorth and 1,100 across the area including Stanmore Industrial Estate. This represents growth of 17% and 20% respectively, compared with 7% across Shropshire, 9% in Telford and Wrekin, a fall of 9% in Wolverhampton, and 9% in England. Much of this uplift in growth occurred between 2015 and 2017.*

This demonstrates the strength of the employment sector of Bridgnorth's economy.

> *2.27 Business level GVA data are not available for individual businesses in Bridgnorth. However, analysis of GVA per job data for the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area in which Shropshire is located (The Marches LEP) suggests that a high proportion of the type of business activity located on Stanmore Industrial Estate is likely to be at the higher end of the spectrum.*

Illustrating the 'quality' of the business activity existing at Stanmore.

The key messages from a review of employment and related sectors data shows that:

- *Bridgnorth has a relatively diverse economy, a key marker of local economic resilience.*

- *Stanmore Industrial Estate, and the higher value business activity it generates, make an important contribution to this diversity and to the availability of good quality employment in the area.*
- *Gross Value Added data suggests that sectors prominent on Stanmore Industrial Estate are amongst the higher productivity, higher value adding business base in Shropshire. Increasing productivity is a priority in local and national industrial strategies.*
- *Bridgnorth has seen recent employment growth at a faster rate than the county, neighbouring areas and the national average.*
- *Salaries data suggests that Stanmore Industrial Estate contributes significantly to better paid employment in Bridgnorth and Shropshire. This is important in addressing the challenge for Shropshire which sees higher earning residents tend to commute to other locations to work.*

2.43 Commuting data (Census 2011) point to Bridgnorth having a lower rate of self-containment (ie people living and working in the town) than other locations. The data suggest around 39% of the town's residents also worked in Bridgnorth, with 61% working elsewhere, the majority of which (51%) were commuting to locations elsewhere in Shropshire, with Telford and Wrekin and Wolverhampton also key out-commuting destinations.

The report highlights the thriving local economy with the highest quality employment largely located at Stanmore and the high level of in-commuting of lower paid workers due to lack of housing affordability – and conversely out-commuting by the higher paid.

10.2 The Business Park currently (2019) has about 1,700 workers in total.

10.3 The 2018 email below, in response to a request (shown in italics) shows the substantial commuting distances for employees of Grainger & Worrall (then totalling 642) and, although we do not have specific data for other employers at Stanmore, it is reasonable to assume that similar proportions of their lower paid workers would exhibit the same type of commuting pattern.

10.4 This shows that in 2018 **over 72%** of Grainger & Worrall's workforce was commuting **more than 10 miles each way to and from work.**

Email from HR dept at Grainger & Worrall to David MacMullen

Hi

Please find below a summary of the information requested as it relates to those employees employed at our Stanmore sites:

Distance from home location to work	No. Employees
5 miles or less	108
More than 5 up to 10 miles	68
More than 10	466

I trust the above is satisfactory, but if you have any queries, please feel free to give me a call.

Kind regards

Sent: 28 June 2018 15:46

Subject: Commute Mileage.

Hello

Ref Your Question on Employee Commute below.

The Council asked if Stanmore was able to give any information on the typical travel distances and times for employees on the Estate as part of their argument to justify releasing land is to provide more local housing for people who might wish to live closer to their workplace but cannot find suitable accommodation. The Council's plans would include an element of affordable housing as well as 'market' housing.

I don't know if your HR people could assist with anything? What we are looking for is how many people live 5/10/more than 10 miles from work from which we can deduce typical travel times.

is pulling the data together and should have something out to you soon and will forward directly.

Kind Regards,

GRAINGER & WORRALL

Future Shape Technology ™

Registered Office: Building 7, Stanmore Industrial Estate, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV15 5HP
Registered in England No. 980487 Directors P.V. Grainger, M.P. Grainger, J.B. Grainger, E.T. Grainger

10.5 Based on the principle of connecting housing provision with employment, the location of a substantial number of affordable houses in close proximity to the Business Park (and town) should assist in increasing the availability of employees to Bridgnorth companies and would reduce the number of in-commuters. The possibility of linking certain types of 'key worker' to qualification for affordable housing has also been offered by the promoters of Stanmore Village.

10.6 The availability of a Local Centre (with convenience store) in the Stanmore Village development and potential diversion (and greater frequency of) bus services through the Business Park will help reduce travel by private motor car. New housing at Stanmore Village would be within easy walking or cycling distance of the Business Park.

11.0 Business Survey

11.1 Shropshire Council requested information about known occupier requirements at Stanmore; any available data on companies wishing to expand; general levels of satisfaction with Stanmore as a location for business; typical backgrounds and history for existing tenants and where they had originated, if not from the immediate area.

11.2 Such information is largely 'anecdotal' in nature, although the landlord has data upon commencement dates for occupations and records of when (if) tenants moved or expanded. Periodically Stanmore arranges informal meetings of business owners and managers on the Business Park for exchanges of views. It had been planned to incorporate the completion of a survey questionnaire with a meeting in early March 2020 updating tenants on plans for the Park, however the Coronavirus pandemic and government advice on social contact frustrated the planned meeting. Instead an email circulation was made to share information on the Estate's plans, viz.

- its 10-20 year plans, irrespective of whether the Garden Village proposal goes ahead.
- How SPL intends to continue improvement and expansion of the Business Park.
- Plans of intended new Estate Road/ The Square Development/other land to be released.
- Intended program of refurbishment of Buildings.
- Investment in bringing enhanced electricity supply to site

11.2 As part of the communication occupiers were asked to provide some basic information:

1. Confirm company name (*but all responses to be anonymised)*
2. Previous location if moved to Stanmore from elsewhere.
3. How long have you been at Stanmore?
4. How many persons work (or are based at) your premises?
5. Have you expanded while at Stanmore (if so, by what %age approx.)
6. Have you experienced any difficulty in recruiting suitable employees locally?
7. If yes, any reason if you are aware from potential candidates.
8. Do you find Stanmore a suitable location for your business?
9. If you wanted to expand, would you do so at Stanmore if suitable space were available at acceptable cost?
10. If a unit became available next door, would it be of interest?
11. Any other comments

11.3 Responses were received by just under half the businesses approached – in some cases by return. All the 'early' responders were interested in expansion space. Further replies were received by telephone canvassing. *An appendix shows the analysis of the responses*.

11.0 Summary of Facts

11.1 Stanmore Business Park is an important existing focus for manufacturing and employment in Bridgnorth with around 1,700 employees and is identified as a Centre of Engineering Excellence.

11.2 It is the only existing employment area of any scale in Bridgnorth where expansion can take place utilising existing infrastructure.

11.3 The Business Park has undeveloped land for less than 40,000 sq ft of new buildings and this land appears likely to be fully developed before 2025, leaving nothing for the period up to 2038.

11.4 Existing businesses at the Business Park will have little or no opportunity for expansion after 2025 if no further land is released for development. There must be a risk that some businesses will leave Bridgnorth completely (as in the case of Moneta Packaging in 2015).

11.5 Bridgnorth has (20th March 2020) effectively no availability of employment buildings ready for immediate occupation. Searches of Zoopla and Rightmove offered a single unit of 1,070 sq ft at Stanmore (referred to earlier).

11.6 Stanmore is the logical location for inward investment to Bridgnorth as businesses prefer to come to a proven successful location.

11.7 Currently there is no opportunity for any prospective inward investor of any scale to locate in Bridgnorth.

11.8 The survey of existing businesses at Stanmore reveals satisfaction with the location and that the Business Park is suitable for their needs. Several express interest in larger premises, were any to become available and a number express concern at the difficulty of recruiting employees locally (*see appendix C*).

11.9 Data (in the Hatch Regeneris study) shows that:

- Bridgnorth has an ageing population;
- its working age population has declined;
- Houses are comparatively less affordable in Bridgnorth than in most of Shropshire:
- There is a high level of in- and out- commuting as many less well-paid workers evidently cannot afford to live in Bridgnorth.
- Evidence from the largest employer at Stanmore confirms that over 70% of its workforce live more than 10 miles from their workplace.
- There is an imbalance between the amount of employment in Bridgnorth and housing provision.
- Without substantial growth in housing provision, further affordable housing will not become available.

Additionally:

- Development of both employment and housing land at Stanmore would enable inward investment and provide substantial affordable housing, some of which could be allocated to Stanmore workers through an agreed 'key worker' test.
- Provision of a Local Centre would provide facilities to the Business Park workforce, including convenience shopping (saving car-borne journeys further afield).
- Local housing would promote more walking and cycling by residents working at Stanmore; Improved bus services would give employees a choice of modes of transport and reduce reliance on the private motor car.

12.0. Conclusion

Employment land currently available in Bridgnorth (and allocated under the current Local Plan) includes some land at Chartwell Park which is under development and is intended for use in the period to 2026. Delivery of further Employment land at Tasley is associated with a sizable allocation of residential land north of the A458 and has been considerably delayed by a number of factors. Delivery of this land must be anticipated but being on the west side of the River Severn it is more remote from the West Midlands conurbation and is likely to appeal to a different class of user than the Stanmore location where development is effectively able to proceed on the back of existing infrastructure.

We conclude that Stanmore Business Park urgently needs a release of land from Green Belt in order to continue its pattern of organic growth. The provision of new employment and new housing together fully meets the policy statement in para 1.2 of the Shropshire Council Local Plan Review (Strategic Sites Consultation) and the provision of new housing goes hand in hand with the demonstrable need for further employment land to be released - and that the requirement for the release of land from Green Belt is thus Employment - led.

March 2020

This paper has been prepared by , MacMullen Associates Ltd, property and development consultants. He is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered surveyors of over fifty years standing and widely experienced in Commercial and Industrial Property Development and Strategic Planning of major sites, both nationally and with particular emphasis on the West Midlands. *MacMullen Associates has advised Stanmore Properties Ltd, owners of Stanmore Business Park Bridgnorth on this and numerous other properties for many years.*	MacMullen Associates

Appendices

A. Existing extent of Stanmore Business Park – Area excluded from green belt

The Square
Proposed site for additional units
38,500 sq ft approx

B. Proposed Masterplan: Stanmore Garden Village

As submitted to Shropshire Council for its Local Plan Review.

C. Analysis of Occupier Survey carried out at Stanmore Business Park. March 17 -25 2020

Stanmore Business Park: Survey of Businesses March 2020.

1 Introduction

In discussions with Shropshire Council's Local Plan Review team the Stanmore Consortium was asked whether it had any data about the history and current occupants of Stanmore Business Park. Specifically comments had been received by the Council (including some made by Bridgnorth Town Plan Steering Group) to the effect, inter alia, that 'no demand existed for more employment space in Bridgnorth'; that 'there is adequate provision of land and buildings already'; 'businesses questioned stated they would not be interested in locating in Bridgnorth'.

The Consortium had already prepared a draft report on the background and intended future of Stanmore Business Park and offered to engage with Stanmore occupiers and conduct a survey. This is attached as an appendix to MacMullen Associates study ***"Stanmore Business Park and Proposed Stanmore Garden Village. Employment-Led Development of a Garden Village Community."***

A simple survey of businesses at the Business Park was undertaken between 18th and 25th March 2020 by means of an email containing 10 questions which potential respondents could answer by filling in a form contained in the email and returning it; where no response was received within 48 hours, telephone calls were made to the named addressee and they were invited to respond over the telephone. In the main the survey was conducted by Joanne Hall of Kingsbridge Property Management Services with additional input from David MacMullen of MacMullen Associates.

The survey commenced just as the Government was issuing details of financial assistance for companies in retail, leisure and tourism (not generally of much help to businesses at Stanmore); two days later a further announcement was made about support for employees to give a base subsidy of 80% of employees' income, up to a level of £2,500 per month. Understandably some businesses were preoccupied with the significant effects of Coronavirus on their trade and, when asked, said it was not appropriate to spend any time on a survey in light of problems with business shutdowns. However, a considerable number did respond and their responses are analysed below.

2 The questions.

In the main respondents were asked to select simple answer questions to aid analysis of responses and were then given the opportunity to expand their answers if they wished.

1. Where did you operate from before Stanmore Business Park?

2. How long have you operated on the Park?

3. How many people work (or are based) at the premises?

4. Have you expanded while you have been at Stanmore?

5. If 'yes' how many times? By what percentage (roughly)?

6. Any problems in recruiting locally?

7. If yes, any particular reason?
(e.g.no evident availability of suitable applicants locally/ long commute/prefer to live closer but houses too expensive)

8. Generally, is Stanmore a suitable place to be located

9. If you wanted to expand, would you do so at Stanmore (assuming suitably sized/priced accommodation available)

10. If an adjacent unit became available, would it be of interest?

11. Any other comments?

3 The Responses

Respondents approached	34
Responses received	14
Size range occupied by responders	1,050 – 50,000 (sq ft)

Question 1. ***"Where did you operate from before locating at Stanmore?".***

5 respondents had started from 'home' and taken a small unit at Stanmore as their first formal premises. 3 of those had subsequently moved within the Estate or taken adjacent space.

4 respondents had moved from Telford. **3** from the Black Country (Willenhall and Wolverhampton) and **1** from Cannock.

3 had started their business at Stanmore Business Park.

Question 2. ***How long have you operated on Stanmore Business Park?***

Responses varied from **1 month to 29 years**. Most occupiers of units in the range 1,000 – 2,000 sq ft had been in occupation for less than 3 years (some only months). **6** respondents had been at Stanmore for between **7 and 30 years**. All of these occupied more than 7,000 sq ft of space.

Question 3. ***How many employees work (or are based) at the premises?***

Several occupiers of units in the range 1,000 sq ft – 2,000 sq ft had **between 1 and 5 workers.**

The largest occupier had **150** employees. The total persons employed for all respondents was **313.**

Question 4. ***Have you expanded while you have been at Stanmore?***

4 respondents who had been on the Park **7 years or more** had all expanded either by taking adjacent units, or by moving within the site, **increases of 35%, 55%, 85% and 100%** are recorded.

The largest occupier on the Park (who did not participate in this survey) has expanded regularly and **since 2010 has more than doubled** its occupied space. That has included pre-letting a new 34,000 sq ft machining factory which the landlord built to order.

Of the **7** smallest respondents, **6** said they were planning to expand either by moving within the Park or, if an adjacent unit became available, by taking the available space.

Question 5. ***If you have expanded, by what percentage roughly?***

The reported responses are covered in Q 4 above.

Question 6. ***Any problems in recruiting locally?***

Comments in conversation confirmed that problems with recruitment have been reported over a long period by larger employers and those seeking advanced skill sets. The smaller respondents did not report difficulties but the Marches Centre for Manufacturing and Technology was established by local companies who could not recruit skilled workers and sought to create their own supply through the establishment of an apprentice training school. A high proportion of apprentices are reported to be travelling from Telford and the Black Country which suggests a continuation of high levels of 'in-commuting' to Bridgnorth in the absence of provision of affordable housing in the vicinity.

Question 7. ***Any particular reason?***

High house prices in Bridgnorth were believed by several larger occupiers to be an obstacle to semi-skilled and apprenticed workers being able to move to the area. The smaller respondents did not report issues.

Question 8. ***Generally is Stanmore a suitable place to be located?***

100% of respondents agreed that Stanmore suited them as a location.

The recent availability of **Fibre broadband** on the Business Park was quoted as being a major benefit. **24 hour on-site security** was mentioned by several respondents.

Question 9. ***If you wanted to expand would you do so at Stanmore (assuming suitable sized/priced accommodation available)?*** And **Question 10.** ***If an adjacent unit became available, would it be of interest?***

No occupier indicated any wish to expand in a location <u>other than Stanmore.</u>

All but one of the smaller occupiers (those in up to 5,000 sq ft) indicated an interest in being able to expand, preferably by taking an adjacent unit, or by moving, provided they could surrender an existing lease. **4** respondents indicated that a brand new unit would be of interest as their business would wish to portray a progressive, successful image.

Question 11. ***Any other comments?***

'Location and security was what attracted us to Stanmore'.

'We outgrew our (first premises) very quickly and we are happy to know we can move to a bigger unit if we need to before our lease ends.'

One respondent identified a specific (larger) unit which they would like to move to if it were to become available.

Supply chain comment*: 'We support (*named occupier*) and our future is related to their success.'*

'We operate and distribute around the West Midlands, Black Country and Shropshire. Stanmore remains an ideal location.'

'The landlord has been very good in refurbishing a bigger unit especially for us and allowing us to surrender the old one.'

'Happy with everything at Stanmore.'

'Stanmore has been an ideal location.'

'I hope the landlord will allow me to stay on site and grow the business.'

'We are very happy on Stanmore. You can't find good sites that offer good security and CCTC. Bridgnorth needs more like this.'

The above is a selection of comments which indicated considerable enthusiasm for the location and facilities on offer. Most of the smaller and more recent occupiers had clear ambitions to grow their businesses in this location (that has been a pattern over the last 50+ years) and appreciated an element of partnership, with the Landlord being able and willing to assist in their progression up the size ladder.

MacMullen Associates

25 March 2020