Technical Note

Project: Stanmore Garden Village, Bridgnorth

Subject: Response to Shropshire Council's Key Consideration (Highways)

Client:	Stanmore Properties Ltd and Apley Estates	**Version:**	G
Project No:	04151	**Author:**	JO
Date:	24 September 2020	**Approved:**	CS

1 Introduction

1.1.1 PJA have been commissioned by Stanmore Properties and Apley Estates to provide transport services in relation to Stanmore Garden Village in Bridgnorth, and also to review the proposals for Tasley Garden Village (Taylor Wimpey) from a highways' perspective.

1.1.2 It is understood that these two sites have been the subject of a detailed site assessment process by Shropshire County Council (SCC), which forms part of the wider Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan. In August 2020, the key considerations from these assessments were summarised by Shropshire Council. This Technical Note sets out a response to these key considerations, of relevance to highways.

2 Highways – Vehicles

SCC Key Consideration		PJA Response
26	The land at the 'Garden Village' at Stanmore benefits from direct access onto an A road. Similarly, the Garden Village' at Tasley benefits from direct access onto an A road (with an additional access proposed off Ludlow Road).	From a review of the Tasley Garden Village proposals, it is understood that the priority junction onto the A458 will form the secondary vehicular access to the residential element of the site. This means that throughout the early stages of the residential development (until the western part of the spine road through the site is complete), access will only be provided from Ludlow Road, which is not an A Road. It is considered that emphasising that the site '*benefits from direct access from an A road*' is therefore misleading. It is likely that the access from Ludlow Road will form the primary access for the majority of trips generated by the residential element of the site, and therefore should not be described as '*additional*'. Vehicular access to Stanmore Garden Village will solely be provided from A454, with new accesses provided to facilitate access to different elements of the site. The overall transport function of the A454 would remain as existing, but would be re-designed with an appropriate, lower speed limit. The proposed local centre would be

LOCATION Seven House
High Street
Longbridge
Birmingham
B31 2UQ

SCC Key Consideration		PJA Response
		located directly adjacent to the A454 with a new Park and Choose facility.
27	Due to the scale of both developments, it is likely that both would have a significant impact on the surrounding highway network and mitigation measures would be required to manage this growth. Specifically, both sites would need to introduce traffic calming measures within the vicinity of the site and make all necessary improvements to the wider highway infrastructure. However, given the scale of the development proposed it is considered that these improvements are viable and achievable.	Whilst it is agreed that both proposals are of a considerable scale (although Tasley proposes 250 more houses than Stanmore) and may need to make improvements to highway infrastructure, a comprehensive High Level Highways Appraisal, including traffic counts, has been undertaken by PJA for Stanmore. For Tasley, the Traffic Impact Report presents many assumptions. It is noted that the Tasley proposal gives no consideration to trips from the site to Bridgnorth town centre, where the ability to mitigate many of the junctions is constrained, not only by highway boundary extent, but also the road layout and proximity of buildings to the edge of the carriageway.

3 Highways – Pedestrians and Cyclists

SC Key Consideration		PJA Response
28	Both sites are a similar distance from Bridgnorth centre.	Agreed.
29	Direct access onto an A road is a benefit for vehicles but can be a disadvantage when considering pedestrian and cycle access to the site. Promoting sustainable modes of travel is a key consideration. Furthermore, if a site cannot demonstrate that some trips will be via sustainable modes, this will increase the dependency on vehicles and increase the impact on the surrounding network.	The Stanmore Garden Village would be designed such that the focus is not placed on the private car, rather on providing public realm space that optimises access to and between sustainable transport modes. This demonstrates the aspiration for the site to promote sustainable modes of travel and reduce dependence on private vehicles. Primary access to the Stanmore Garden Village site would be provided from the A454. The A454 would pass through the local centre, with a reduce speed limit, new footpaths, cycleways, pedestrian crossings, and appropriately designed junctions to reduce speed and severance, and maximise opportunities for sustainable travel. Initial discussions with the Highway Officer at SCC have been undertaken and they were comfortable with these proposals at a high level.
30	The land at the 'Garden Village' at Stanmore is separated from the built form of Bridgnorth by Hermitage Ridge. Necessary improvements to pedestrian and cycle facilities to create safe links between the site and the built form of Bridgnorth are essential in order to reduce the potential segregation between the existing settlement and the site. This would require careful consideration given the gradient and nature of roads and footpaths between Bridgnorth and the site.	Paragraph 108 in NPPF states that "*In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in places, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location".* Opportunities to provide safe links between Stanmore Garden Village and Bridgnorth Low Town have been identified within the promotional documentation and supporting technical work. To link Stanmore Garden Village to Bridgnorth Low Town, it is proposed to provide pedestrian and cycle links across Hermitage Ridge along new and existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW). Following a site visit, it is considered feasible to provide a new DDA compliant route across Hermitage Ridge, under existing overhead

SC Key Consideration		PJA Response
		power lines, at a gradient of 1 in 20 and with limited or no loss of adjacent trees, into existing adjacent residential areas in Bridgnorth. This route, and the enhancements of other PRoW, will provide a traffic-free, direct, and safe link between Stanmore Garden Village and Bridgnorth Low Town. All of the land required to facilitate these improvements is owned by The Apley Estate and therefore is deliverable entirely without 3rd party land. In addition, The Apley Estate owns the land adjacent to the A458 and B4363 (Wolverhampton Road) and could upgrade and widen existing footways along both of these routes.
31	The land at the 'Garden Village' at Tasley is separated from the built form of Bridgnorth by the A458. Necessary improvements to pedestrian and cycle facilities to create safe links between the site and the built form of Bridgnorth are essential in order to reduce the potential segregation between the existing settlement and the proposed development. This would require careful consideration to ensure that the infrastructure provided is safe and attractive to pedestrians and cyclists.	For Tasley Garden Village, it is understood that a footbridge was stated by the promoter's consultants to be unnecessary and an 'at grade' crossing has been included within the proposals and consultation documentation to connect the site to Bridgnorth town centre. Within the Transport Issues Report (paragraph 3.4.3), it states that "*…the details of a potential footbridge crossing of the A458 adjacent to the site frontage could be considered in more detail if were considered necessary following discussions with the highways team*". SCC has advised that if this site was allocated, the development guidelines would state a pedestrian footbridge <u>would</u> be a necessary element of the proposal. Given the traffic volumes on the A458, an at grade crossing would likely provide a lower level of service than a well designed pedestrian/cycle bridge and would therefore be a compromised solution. The feasibility and safety of such an at grade solution would need to be carefully considered through the design process and engagement with the highway authority. There are concerns relating to the feasibility of providing a footbridge along the desire lines, and the linkages to it, as set out within the PJA review of the Tasley Garden Village proposals, and summarised below: • It is likely that a footbridge could not be delivered without use of third party land for construction (required land is within ownership of The Apley Estate who have declined to make it available). The ability to deliver a footbridge, which has been deemed as a necessary element of the proposal, is therefore in doubt. • The development proposals must facilitate both pedestrian <u>and</u> cyclist trips into Bridgnorth. A bridge to accommodate cyclists as well as pedestrians (3m width ramps and bridge deck) would not fit within highway boundary and therefore, cyclists would be required to cross at grade at the Ludlow Road/A458 roundabout. LTN 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design states that '*normal roundabouts with flared geometries and no additional cycle facilities are unsuitable for most people wishing to cycle and can pose a high risk even for experienced cyclists.*'

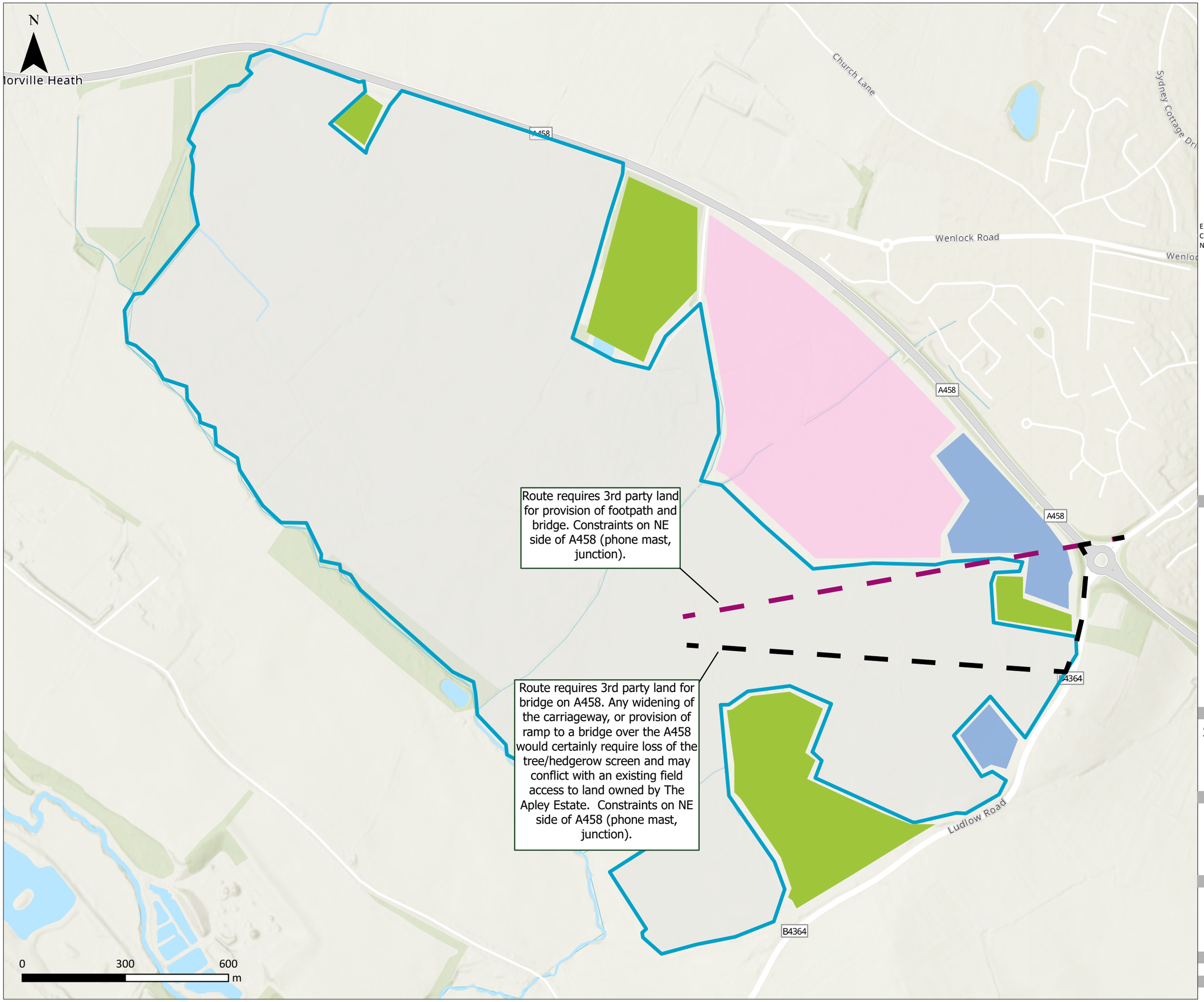
SC Key Consideration		PJA Response
		On this basis, it is concluded that without significant improvements to cycling facilities at this roundabout, in line with guidance set out in LTN 1/20, there is no safe route for cyclists to access Bridgnorth town centre from the site. • The ability to construct a bridge with ramps and footway on A458, is constrained by the existing earth bank and tree screen on the northern side of the carriageway. It is likely that retaining structures would be required following excavation, which may require third party land; it is likely the trees providing screening to housing on Harley Way and Campbell Close would be lost (see photo in **Appendix B**). In addition, within the promotional documents, the desire lines for both pedestrians and cyclists follow various PRoW. The ability to improve a PRoW depends on the agreement of any third party landowner. The Apley Estate control the PRoW that links to the A458 and will not be in agreement to any upgrade proposals. This will lead to a diversion of 300m to Ludlow Road before crossing the A458 (either via a bridge or at-grade crossing) to avoid further diversion. It is not considered that a diversion away from the desire lines would form an attractive route for pedestrians or cycles, and would also undermine any bridge proposals. A plan showing the ideal, and alternative routes is shown in **Appendix A.** The highway boundary data shows that along the site frontage between the Apley Land and retained part of Round Thorn Farm, and along the eastern boundary of the Apley Land there is between approximately 6m to 12m of highway boundary – the majority of this is trees/hedgerows, providing screening from A458. This narrows in width further south down Ludlow Road. Therefore, any widening of the carriageway, or provision of ramp to a bridge over the A458 would certainly require loss of the tree/hedgerow screen and may conflict with an existing field access (to land owned by The Apley Estates). If SCC regards a footbridge as a necessary part of the development proposals, but doubt exists as to its feasibility, it is considered that the promoter should be required to demonstrate how it intends to accommodate such provision at this early stage.
32	It should be noted that both sites offer the potential for enhanced public transport links into the town. It should also be noted that both site promotions are of a scale that a level of self-containment would be expected, through provision of a mixed-use development including a local centre, primary school, housing, and employment. Whilst this self-containment can reduce the number of trips from the site into Bridgnorth, ultimately the reason for the development is to meet the needs of Bridgnorth and a site adjacent to its built form will benefit strongly	There are four existing bus route that operate along part, or all of A454 through the Stanmore Garden Village site. It is understood that The Apley Estate have engaged with two bus operators who have indicated they would be willing to enhance existing services or introduce new services as part of provision of a Park and Choose facility at Stanmore Garden Village. These public transport services would provide a sustainable link into Bridgnorth for both residents, employees, and visitors to Bridgnorth Town Centre. At Tasley Garden Village, any enhanced public transport link would require a significant diversion of an existing bus service. Currently,

SC Key Consideration		PJA Response
	from the ability to sustainably access the services and facilities available within the town.	the nearest existing services route along A458 to the north of the site, and Wenlock Road.

4 Summary

SC Key Consideration		PJA Response
39	Having given careful considered to these issues and all other available information, it is considered that the 'Garden Village' at Tasley represents the most appropriate location to include within the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan as a proposed mixed-use allocation to meet the needs of Bridgnorth and its wider hinterland during the Plan Period. However, given that the total site size has capacity for considerable development, it is proposed that some of the site would be identified for development beyond the current Plan Period.	See below response.
40	Highways - It is considered that the land at the 'Garden Village' proposal at Tasley provides more opportunities to make localised improvements to the surrounding network to ensure the new development is not segregated from the existing settlement of Bridgnorth, in particular there appears to be more opportunities for improvements to pedestrian and cycle facilities.	From a highways' perspective, it is not considered that the 'Garden Village' at Tasley represents the most appropriate location to include as a mixed use allocation in the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan. A review of the documentation for Tasley Garden Village has demonstrated that there are significant concerns regarding the feasibility of providing safe pedestrian and cycle links along key desire lines into Bridgnorth, using land within the applicants' control. It is not clear how the claim that '*Tasley provides more opportunities to make localised improvements to the surrounding network to ensure the new development is not segregated from the existing settlement of Bridgnorth, in particular there appears to be more opportunities for improvements to pedestrian and cycle facilities*' can be justified, when based on the issues raised throughout this note, the opportunities appear to be limited. The promotional documentation and supporting technical work for Stanmore Garden Village has identified that there are multiple opportunities to provide direct, traffic-free, and safe pedestrian and cycle routes to Bridgnorth Low Town, without use of third party land.

Appendix A Pedestrian/Cycle Route Options Plan



Land For Development

Under Separate Ownership - unavailable for development

Apley Estates Ownership - unavailable for development

Livestock Market and Industrial Use

Indicative Route

Ideal Route

Alternative Route

Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, METI/NASA, USGS COPYRIGHT STATEMENTS

PJA

Seven House,
High Street,
Longbridge, Birmingham,
B31 2UQ
T: 0121 475 0234

CLIENT

Stanmore Properties Ltd and Apley Estates

PROJECT

Stanmore Garden Village, Bridgnorth

TITLE

Tasley Garden Village Route Constraints

SCALE	DRAWN	REVIEWED	DATE
A3 @ 1:10,000	MW	HG	22/09/2020

FIGURE NUMBER	REVISION
01	A

Appendix B Mobile Phone Mast and Equipment (adjacent to A458/Ludlow Road Roundabout)

Vodafone Mast and equipment adjacent A458/Ludlow Rd roundabout will require relocation if bridge to be constructed.

Red line indicates top of bank behind (c 3.5m high).

Mobile Phone Mast on A458 Roundabout, Tasley, Bridgnorth