Stanmore Village, Bridgnorth - Shropshire Local Plan Review (SLPR) on the 'Regulation 18' Pre-Submission Draft
Site Comparison: Landscape and Visual Matters
edp5653_r010b

1. Introduction

1.1 The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Stanmore Consortium to prepare a technical note to undertake a preliminary site comparison of the landscape and visual considerations of development at land at Stanmore Village, Bridgnorth and Land at Tasley, Bridgnorth. The locations of both sites are illustrated on **Image EDP 1.1**.

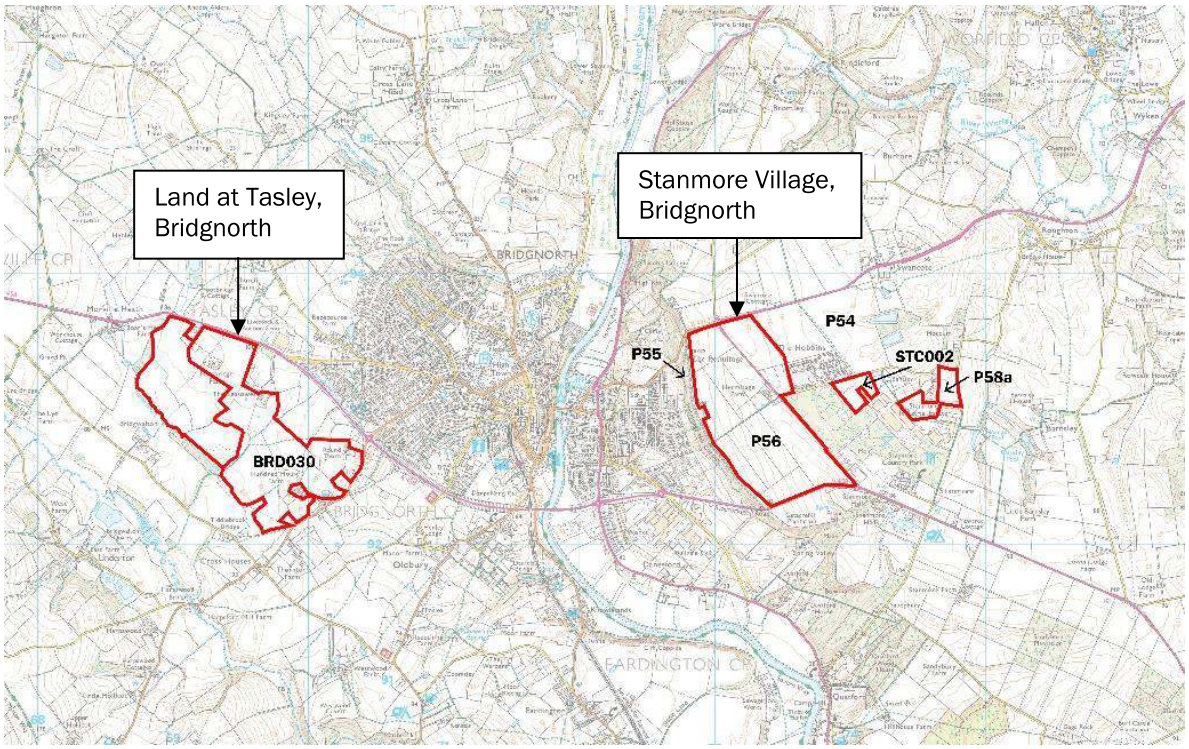


Image EDP 1.1: Location Plan of Stanmore and Tasley sites.

1.2 As part of the promotion process, EDP have prepared a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (**edp5653_r002d**), which has informed this note. The LVA includes Photoviewpoints EDP 1 to 11 (PVPs) of the Stanmore site. For comparison, contained at **Appendix EDP 1** of this report are nine PVPs of the Tasley site.

1.3 Taylor Wimpey are promoting the Tasley site through the Local Plan Process. The Tasley site and Stanmore site have both been the subject of a detailed site assessment process by Shropshire Council, which forms part of the wider Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan.

1.4 Both sites comprise several land parcels that have now been considered for their suitability for residential and employment development in the Shropshire Local Plan review process. The emerging Regulation 18: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan (August 2020) includes the Tasley site (Ref. BRD030) as a draft allocation (for 1,050 dwellings, 16 hectares (ha) employment land, a local centre and 20ha of green infrastructure and a 19ha linear park) but now excludes the wider Stanmore site (Ref. P54 and P56).

1.5 Stanmore Land north of Stanmore Industrial Estate (Ref. P58a) has been included as a draft allocation for 6.8ha employment land and Land adjacent Hickman Road, Stanmore Industrial Estate (Ref. STC002) for 4.6ha employment land. This is illustrated on the Regulation 18 Policies Map Inset S3 Bridgnorth Place Plan Area contained at **Image EDP 1.2** below.

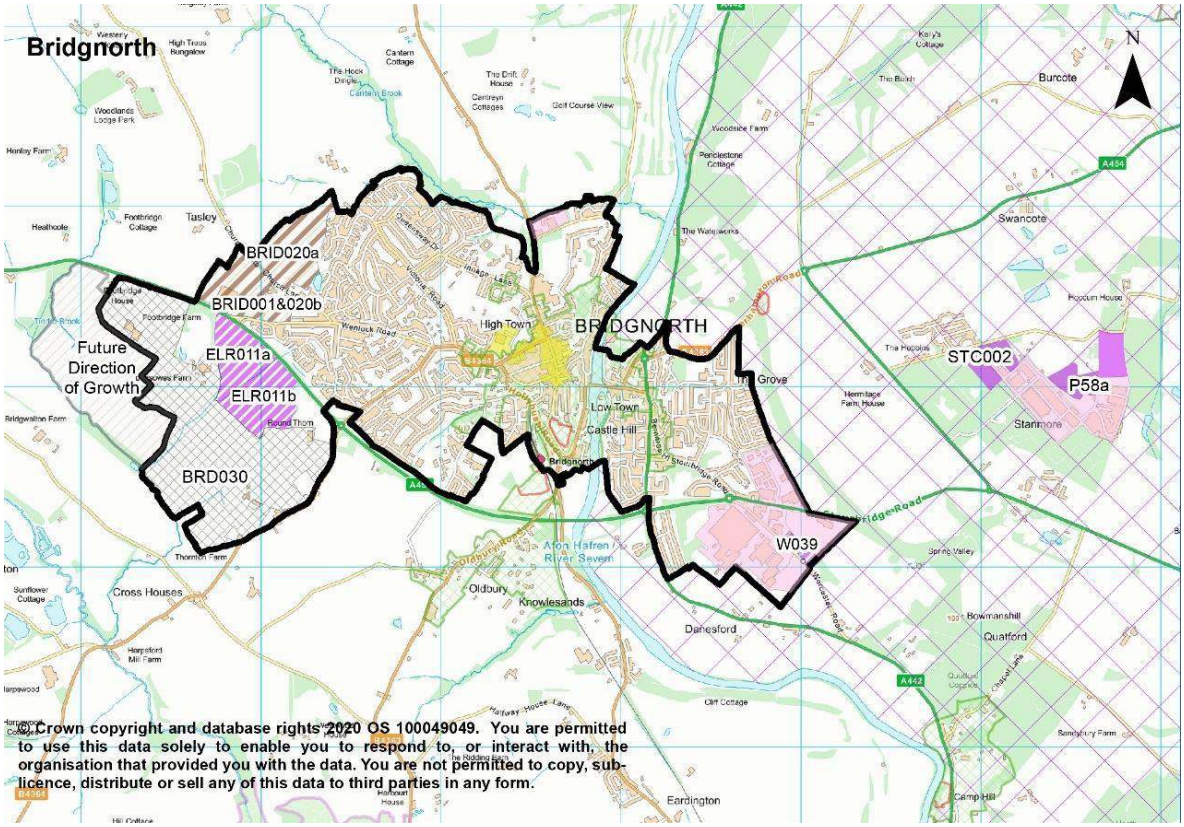


Image EDP 1.2: Extract from the Regulation 18 Policies Map Inset S3 Bridgnorth Place Plan Area (August 2020).

1.6 This note undertakes a preliminary desk review, informed by observations in the field, to consider the landscape and visual opportunities and constraints of both sites in order to determine their relative merits with regard to these matters.

1.7 The primary documents considered in the preparation of this paper include:

- The Regulation 18: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan;

- Regulation 18 Policies Map Inset S3 Bridgnorth Place Plan Area[1];
- The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Regulation 18: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan: Main Report July 2020[2];
- Appendix D. Bridgnorth Place Plan Site Assessments[3] (August 2020);
- Shropshire Council's Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) (November 2018);
- Summary of the Assessment of Garden Village Proposals in Bridgnorth prepared by Shropshire County Council[4];
- Tasley Garden Village Landscape and Visual Appraisal prepared by Pegasus Group (March 2020); and
- Landscape and Visual Baseline Assessment (**edp5653_r002d**).

1.8 A desk-based review of the SA and SLAA was undertaken to identify the main landscape and visual considerations contributing to the identification of suitable sites for residential and employment development.

1.9 Direct comparison of the two sites with regard to these considerations was then undertaken, to determine which of the two sites scores more positively for landscape and visual considerations. The site with the more positive score is the site that it is likely to have a lesser impact on the landscape and visual resource and is most appropriate to be brought forward as an allocated site for residential and employment development.

2. Findings

2.1 A review of the landscape and visual matters assessed within the SA and the SLAA has been undertaken, with reference to the findings of the individual LVA's prepared for the Stanmore site and the Tasley site. This appraisal found that there are primary differences between the sites landscape and visual effects assessed by the SA and SLAA are, summarised below.

2.2 An assessment of the promoted land parcels around Bridgnorth was undertaken in the Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report Regulation 18 Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan July 2020 – Appendix D Bridgnorth Place Plan Site Assessments. An extract of the assessment summary table relating to parcels comprising the Stanmore site and Tasley site are contained below at **Table EDP 2.1**.

[1] https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/15513/regulation-18-policies-map-inset-s3-bridgnorth-place-plan-area.pdf accessed 01.09.20
[2] https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/15538/sustainability-appraisal-environmental-report-regulation-18-pre-submission-draft-of-the-shropshire-local-plan.pdf accessed 01.09.20
[3] https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/15617/appendix-d-bridgnorth-place-plan-site-assessments.pdf accessed 01.09.20
[4] https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/15615/bridgnorth-development-options-assessment.pdf accessed 01.09.20

Table EDP 2.1: Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report Regulation 18 Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan July 2020 Appendix D Bridgnorth Place Plan Site Assessments Summary Table

Principal Centre: Bridgnorth Stage 2a Housing					
Site Name	**Tasley**	**Stanmore**			
Site Reference	**BRD030**	**P54**	**P56**	**P58a**	**STC002**
Overall Score	-10	-10	-8	-7	-5
Overall Sustainability Conclusion	Poor	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair
Principal Centre: Bridgnorth Stage 2b Employment					
Site Name	**Tasley**	**Stanmore**			
Site Reference	**BRD030**	**P54**	**P56**	**P58a**	**STC002**
Overall Score	-8	-11	-7	-7	-5
Overall Sustainability Conclusion	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair

2.3 Each land parcel (site) is tested against 15 different SA Criteria. Of particular interest, is the SA Criteria which deals with Landscape Sensitivity matters. This is underpinned by SA Objective SO16, which is to conserve and enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness. The key considerations of SO16 are (with emphasis added):

- *"Avoid harm to the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB?*
- *Maintain or improve landscape character, particularly ecological and cultural integrity?*
- *Prevent adverse visual impacts?*
- *Respect, maintain and strengthen local character and distinctiveness?*
- *Promote high quality design?*
- *Improve the satisfaction of people with their neighbourhoods as places to live?"*

2.4 The methodology relating to the Scoring options for site SA is presented below for SO16. The criteria and scoring system were then translated into an assessment matrix which could be used to assess the sites.

Table EDP 2.2: Extract from table showing Scoring options for site SA contained within the Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report Regulation 18 Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan July 2020

SO	**Sustainability questions**	**Score if Yes**	**Score if No**
SO16: Conserve and enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness	Is the site in an area with high landscape sensitivity?	Negative	Neutral
	Is the site in an area with low landscape sensitivity?	Positive	Neutral

Table EDP 2.3: Extract from the Assessment matrix for the SA of sites contained within the Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report Regulation 18 Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan July 2020

Relevant Sustainability Objective(s)	Criteria no.	Criteria	SA score
SO16: Conserve and enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness	15	Landscape sensitivity low	+
		Landscape sensitivity moderate or site within urban area	0
		Landscape sensitivity high	-
		Where a site falls into more than one category, record the most sensitive category	

2.5 The scoring of Objective SO16 and landscape features (Ancient Woodland and Tree Preservation Orders) for parcels of land with the Stanmore site and the Tasley site are detailed below:

Table EDP 2.4: Extract from the Appendix D Bridgnorth Place Plan Site Assessments

Principal Centre: Bridgnorth Stage 2a Housing						
Criteria	**Site Name**	**Tasley**	**Stanmore**			
	Site Reference	**BRD030**	**P54**	**P56**	**P58a**	**STC002**
1	Site wholly or partly within one or more of the following (record all that apply): Ancient Woodland	0	0	- -	0	0
3	Tree Preservation Order (single or group) within or on site boundary	-	0	-	0	0
15	Site is wholly/partly classified as very high landscape sensitivity for residential					
	Site is wholly/partly classified as high landscape sensitivity for residential			-		
	Site is wholly/partly classified as medium low, medium, or medium high landscape sensitivity for residential	0	0		0	0
	Site is wholly classified as low landscape sensitivity for residential or site is inside the development boundary					
Principal Centre: Bridgnorth Stage 2b Employment						
Criteria	**Site Name**	**Tasley**	**Stanmore**			
	Site Reference	**BRD030**	**P54**	**P56**	**P58a**	**STC002**
1	Site wholly or partly within one or more of the following (record all that apply): Ancient Woodland	0		- -	0	0

Principal Centre: Bridgnorth Stage 2a Housing						
Criteria	**Site Name**	**Tasley**	**Stanmore**			
	Site Reference	**BRD030**	**P54**	**P56**	**P58a**	**STC002**
3	Tree Preservation Order (single or group) within or on site boundary	-			0	0
15	Site is wholly/partly classified as very high landscape sensitivity for employment		-			
	Site is wholly/partly classified as high landscape sensitivity for employment					
	Site is wholly/partly classified as medium low, medium, or medium high landscape sensitivity for employment	0			0	0
	Site is wholly classified as low landscape sensitivity for employment or site is inside the development boundary					

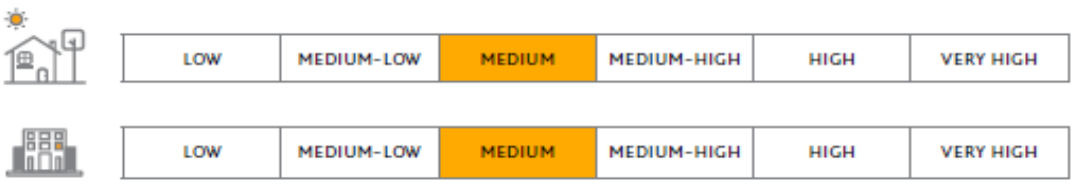
2.6 A comparison between the sites, rather than the individual parcels, in relation to Objective SO16, is undertaken below.

Landscape Character

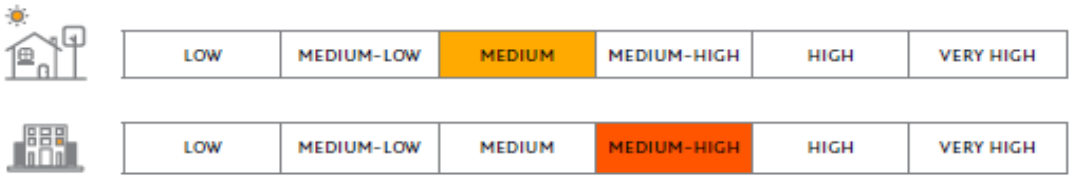
2.7 Parcel 56 of the Stanmore site scores negatively for *"Site is wholly/partly classified as high landscape sensitivity for residential"* whereas the Tasley site scores zero for *"Site is wholly/partly classified as medium low, medium, or medium high landscape sensitivity for residential".* This finding is challenged by EDP, on the basis of the published findings of the Shropshire Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study (LVSS) for Bridgnorth and a closer look at each of the constituent parts of Objective SO16 contained at paragraph 2.3.

2.8 The published LVSS for Bridgnorth concludes that:

- Stanmore site – identified within Parcel 02BDG-E is judged to have a **medium** landscape and visual sensitivity to residential development and employment development; and



- Tasley site – within identified Parcel 02BDG-A judged to have a **medium** landscape and visual sensitivity to residential development and a **medium-high sensitivity** to employment development.



2.9 Both sites are assessed in the LVSS to have a medium sensitivity to residential development. Parcel 56 should have been scored zero too, therefore the Stanmore site has been scored more negatively than the Tasley site.

2.10 There is no reference to land within Parcel 02BDG-E being of 'high sensitivity' despite the 'Summary of the Assessment of Garden Village Proposals in Bridgnorth paragraph 18' stating that *"A very small portion of the eastern extent of the site has medium-high landscape and visual sensitivity to housing and high landscape and visual sensitivity to employment".* Furthermore, both areas are described as being *"predominantly agricultural"* in character, which would therefore suggest they should have been scored the same for landscape sensitivity.

2.11 The Tasley site has a higher sensitivity to employment development (medium-high) than the Stanmore site. The Stanmore site clearly scores more positively on landscape sensitivity than the Tasley site in its suitability for residential development.

Views from the PRoW Network

2.12 The SA states that due to the presence of public rights of way (PRoW) in close proximity to all of the assessment parcels, views experienced by users could be altered as a result, so a minor negative impact on the local landscape would be expected.

2.13 However, further investigation finds that while PRoW cross both sites, the following notable differences occur:

- Stanmore site – crossed by two local PRoW (0151/70/1 and 0151/68/1) which, as local routes, are assessed as having a high sensitivity although one passes through the Stanmore Industrial Estate; and

- Tasley site – crossed by six local PRoW routes (0113/11/1, 0148/1/3, 0148/UN1/2, 0148/2/2, 0148/2/1 and 0113/30/1) which link through the site and across Tiddle Brook. In the wider landscape, these local PRoW routes link to the promoted route, the Jack Wytton Way, to the west of the site.

2.14 The Tasley site is therefore crossed by more routes and longer lengths of PRoW, which are all of high sensitivity. In contrast, the Stanmore site is crossed by one length of high sensitivity route with the second short route passing through the urban area of the Stanmore Industrial Estate.

For these reasons, it is considered that there is potential for greater levels of effect on users of PRoW crossing the Tasley site than the Stanmore site, so the Tasley site should have a negative score.

Views for Local Residents

2.15 Proposed development across all land parcels of both sites could potentially alter the views experienced by local residents.

2.16 However, this paper finds that the following notable differences occur:

- Stanmore site – views across the site from properties at the Hobbins are limited to some eight properties; these properties are within a small residential development area so reducing resident's sensitivity to change across the site; and

- Tasley site – views across the site from 15 or so dispersed dwellings and farmsteads (i.e. the Hundred House Farm and Cottage, Ye Olde Punchbowl Country Inn, Thornton Lodge and Farm, Thornton Cottage, Grendon, Tiddlebrook House and Farm, Old Meadows and Bridgwarton Farm, The Lye Farm, Harpsford Mill Farm to name a few) into the site from elevated land in open countryside. These receptors will, therefore, be more sensitive to change.

2.17 As there are more properties overlooking the Tasley site, and because some of these are of higher sensitivity (listed buildings) than those at the Stanmore site, it is considered that Tasley site should have a more negative score than the Stanmore site with regard to *"adverse visual impacts"* for local residents.

Findings from Baseline LVAs

2.18 On reviewing the baseline LVA prepared by Taylor Wimpey, the primary constraints reported with regard to the Tasley site are its prominent location, open character and visibility from PRoW, the Jack Mytton Way, minor rural roads and local residential dwellings to the south and south-west. A selection of representative viewpoints are contained in **Appendix EDP 1**, to further illustrate the below findings:

- The Tasley site will be highly visible, being located on elevated, facing slopes over a substantial area to the west of Bridgnorth (as shown in **Images EDP 2.1** and **2.2**);
- Development will be large scale and comprise a notable extension to the built development of Bridgnorth;

Image EDP 2.1: View from a gateway on the Ludlow Road (B4364) looking north towards the Tasley site.

- The Tasley site is assessed within the SA as having a detrimental impact in regard to (single or group) Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within the site. TPOs are acknowledged to limit the site's capacity for development and mean that development on the site would be subject to an assessment of impact on these protected tree(s) in order to demonstrate how they can be safeguarded. However, potential impacts can be mitigated with appropriate buffers;

- The open nature of the site, in comparison to the Stanmore, in views from the local PRoW means that the site will form an intrusive element in the landscape to the south-west of the settlement leading to a greater visual impact;

- Views from PRoW include those from six PRoW located within the site. Visual receptors on the Jack Mytton Way are of very high sensitivity and it would be difficult to mitigate these views due to the sloping nature and aspect of the site combined with the more elevated location of the visual receptors;

- The broad visibility to the site, which will be difficult to mitigate due to its elevated sloping nature, will make it difficult to limit the effect of the proposals on landscape character; the character of the settlement; and the perception of urban sprawl that will inevitably occur as a result of development of such a large site; and
- Views to the site from local residents are include some 15 or so dispersed dwellings and farmstead off Ludlow Road and connecting minor rural roads on higher ground that

overlook the site. There are two listed buildings present on the site; 'The Leasowes' and the 'Former Farm House at The Leasowes'.

Image EDP 2.2: View from PRoW (0117/9/1), looking north towards the Tasley site.

2.19 In contrast, the primary considerations with regard to the Stanmore site can be mitigated by site design and development type. The Landscape and Visual Baseline Assessment (report ref: **edp5653_r002d**) for Stanmore shows that:

- The Stanmore site will have a negligible effect on views from the wider landscape, being barely visible beyond Bridgnorth and, where it is apparent, being seen as a small-scale change beyond, and in the context of, Stanmore Industrial Estate and the residential development at the Hobbins. Refer to **Images EDP 2.3** and **2.4** below;

- Visibility is largely confined to within 2km to the west of the site;

- Hermitage Hill Coppice and existing mature vegetation around the Stanmore site will substantially limit intervisibility between the site and the wider landscape to the west of Bridgnorth, mitigating any negative impact in the longer term, before any further mitigatory planting has matured;

- The Stanmore site is assessed in the SA table as having a detrimental impact in regard to its location adjacent to Ancient Woodland and containing (single or group) Tree Preservation Order. As noted above in the commentary for the Tasley site, the potential impacts on TPOs and proximity to Ancient Woodland can be mitigated with appropriate buffer(s) between

development and the woodland/TPO. This is acknowledged with the SLAA and the 'Summary of the Assessment of Garden Village Proposals in Bridgnorth paragraph 18' states that *"…this would need to be appropriately buffered and protected to avoid loss or deterioration, as required by national policy."* However, Parcel 56 which does not contain Ancient Woodland is still scored a double negative in the SA;

- Views to the site from PRoW are limited to two local routes which are generally considered to have a high sensitivity, there are no promoted route with views to the site; and

- Views to the site from local residents are limited to some four or five properties on the western edge of the Hobbins residential development and single dwelling (Peewit Cottage) on the A454. There are unlikely to be views from Swancote Farmhouse owing to the orientation of the property and surrounding vegetation.

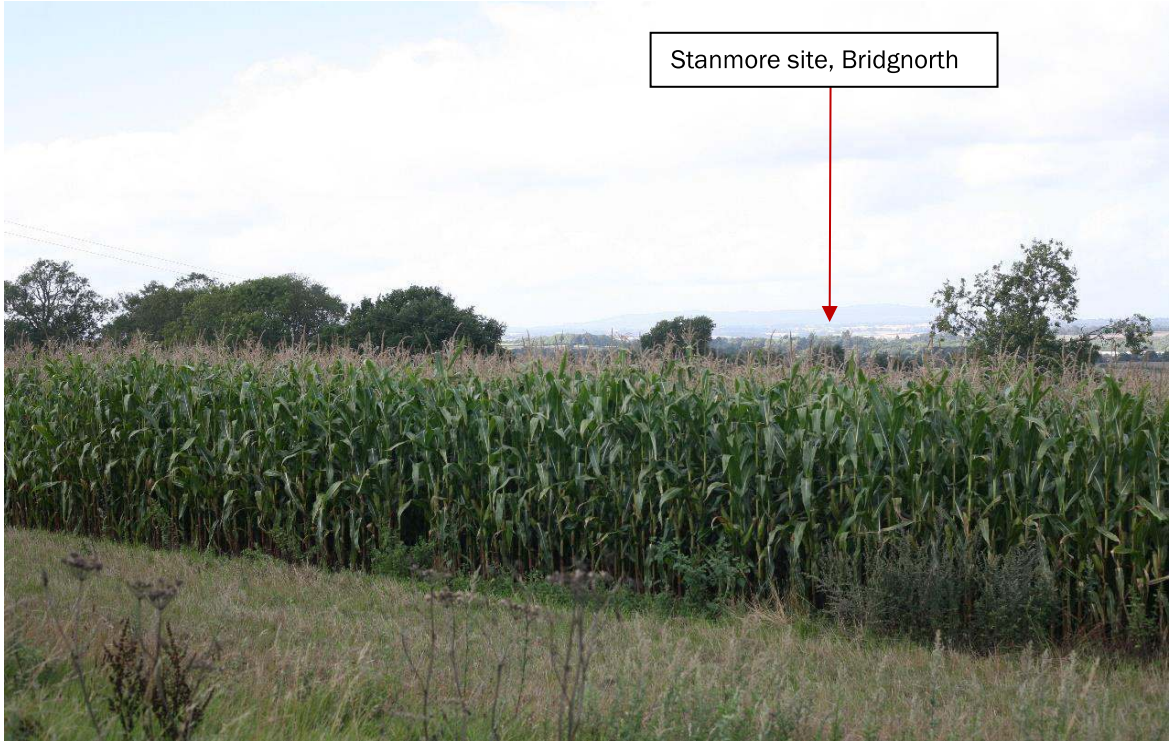


Image EDP 2.3: View from PRoW (0118/UN1/2), looking towards the Stanmore site.

Image EDP 2.4: View from PRoW (0151/59/1), looking towards the Stanmore site.

2.20 For all of these reasons, it is concluded that the Stanmore site is more appropriate to be carried forward for allocation in the Shropshire Local Plan than the Tasley site.

3. Summary and Conclusion

3.1 There are a number of inaccurate scores relating to landscape and visual matters assessed within the SA. Based upon this appraisal, EDP has reviewed and re-scored the sites SA in **Table EDP 3.1** below based on the following findings:

- Parcel 56 does not 'wholly or partially' contain Ancient Woodland nor TPOs, the Ancient Woodland falls within Parcel 55 and is assessed correctly for this Parcel;
- Parcel 56 is not classed as 'high' landscape sensitivity for residential development but medium within the LVSS; and
- Parcel 54 is not classed as 'very high' landscape sensitivity for employment but medium within the LVSS.

Table EDP 3.1: EDP's Reassessment of Landscape and Visual Matters.

Principal Centre: Bridgnorth Stage 2a Housing					
Site Name	**Tasley**	**Stanmore**			
Site Reference	**BRD030**	**P54**	**P56**	**P58a**	**STC002**
EDP's rescored SA			-4 points removed from overall score		
New Score	-10	-10	-4	-7	-5
New Sustainability Conclusion	Poor	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair
Principal Centre: Bridgnorth Stage 2b Employment					
Site Name	**Tasley**	**Stanmore**			
Site Reference	**BRD030**	**P54**	**P56**	**P58a**	**STC002**
EDP's rescored SA		-1 point removed from overall score	-2 points removed from overall score		
New Score	-8	-10	-5	-7	-5
New Sustainability Conclusion	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair

3.2 The SLAA determines whether parcels should be carried forward for potential allocation in the Shropshire Local Plan and summarises the main reasons for the determination. The Tasley site (BRD030) was not included within the 2018 SLAA but has been carried forward into the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan despite a 'Poor' SA Rating for residential development. The Stanmore Site, with particular reference to Parcel 56, was concluded to be considered within the next stage of the site assessment process but has not been carried through the to the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan, despite a SA Rating of 'Fair' for key parcels within the site. As demonstrated above the Parcel 56 with a SA score of -4 is more suitable for residential development than the BRD030 and the wider Tasley site. The review of the SA OS16 has highlighted a number of incorrect scores for landscape sensitivity which undermines the consideration of the Stanmore site.

3.3 With regard to the Stanmore site, this comparison finds that the site should be carried forward for allocation in the Shropshire Local Plan. It has been demonstrated within this report that the Stanmore site presents fewer landscape and visual constraints than the wider Tasley site. Those constraints which have been identified, such as proximity to the Ancient Woodland, could be overcome with an appropriate buffer that would minimise potential intrusion and harm to this protected area. The Landscape and Visual Baseline Assessment for the Tasley site shows that the site is visible from a wide area encompassing a greater number of high sensitivity visual receptors across the landscape to the south and west of the site. Whilst the baseline assessment acknowledges that development of the site should be treated sensitively to minimise any potential harm to long distance views of/to Bridgnorth, it does not note that it would be difficult to mitigate these views due to the elevated, sloping nature of the site combined with the more elevated location of the visual receptor.

Appendix EDP 1
Photoviewpoints of Tasley Site

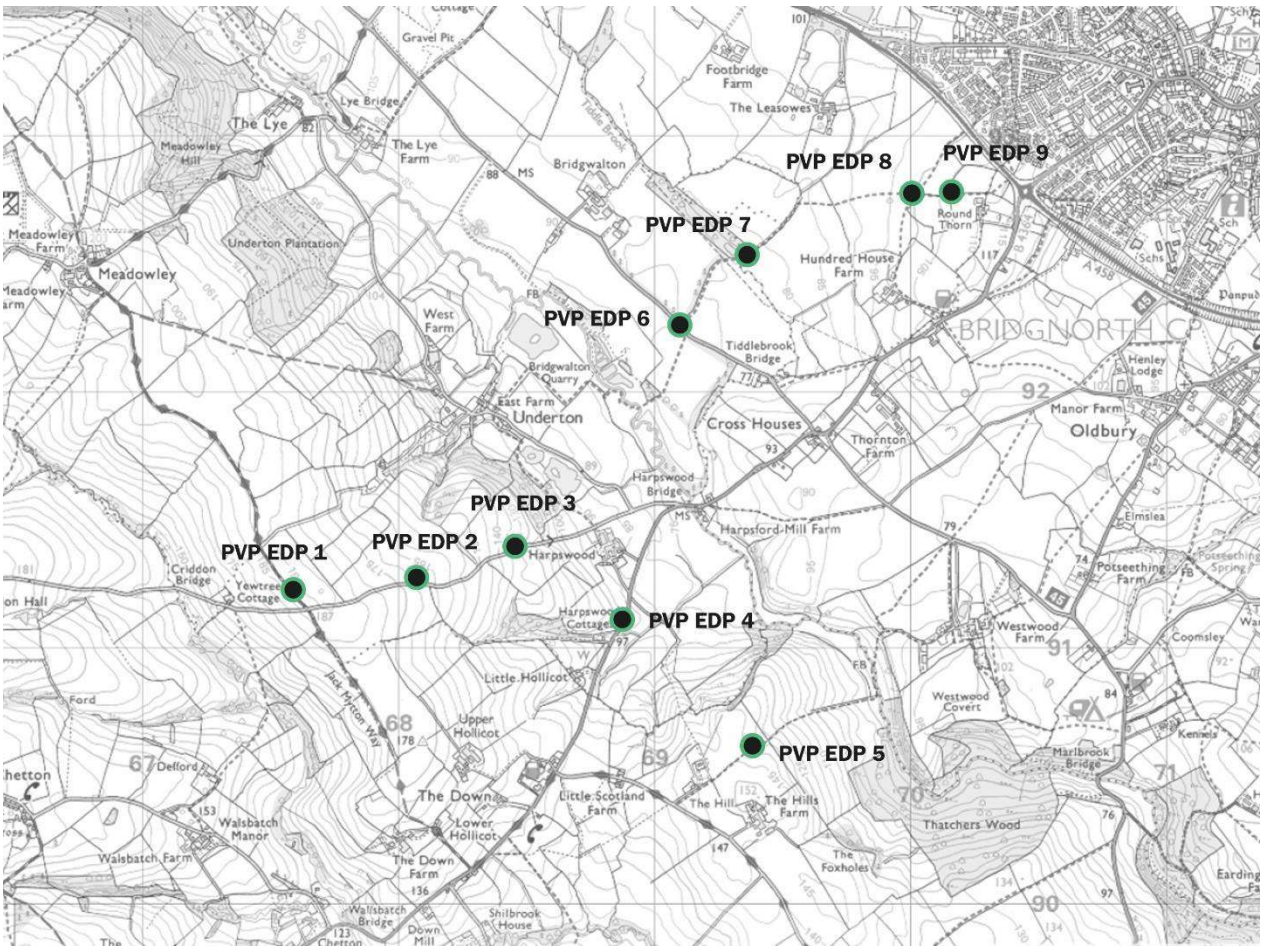


Image EDP A1.1: Location plan for Photoviewpoints of Tasley site

Photoviewpoint EDP 1: View from the Jack Mytton Way promoted route looking north-east towards the Tasley site.

Photoviewpoint EDP 2: View from gate opening on the minor rural road leading to Harpswood Bridge looking north-east towards the Tasley site.

Photoviewpoint EDP 3: View from minor rural road leading to Harpswood Bridge looking north-east towards the Tasley site.

Photoviewpoint EDP 4: View from B4364 leading to Harpswood Bridge looking north towards the Tasley site.

Photoviewpoint EDP 5: View from PRoW (0117/9/1) looking north towards the Tasley site.

Photoviewpoint EDP 6: View from PRoW (0132/9/2) looking north-east towards the Tasley site.

Photoviewpoint EDP 7: View from PRoW (0148/UN1/2) looking north-east within the Tasley site.

Photoviewpoint EDP 8: View from PRoW (0148/2/2) looking west within the Tasley site.

Photoviewpoint EDP 9: View from PRoW (0148/2/1) looking west within the Tasley site.