

Bishop's Castle Community Partnership 2018 Local Plan Review Response Summary

The summary of the BC Community Partnership response to the Local Plan Review's 'Preferred Site' allocation in Bishop's Castle is as follows:

1. BIS028 is unacceptable

- Site BIS028 is contrary to BC Town Plan Development Policy 1 which defines three zones on the west and south of the town which are currently unsuitable for development and clearly states the reasons why. This site lies in the zone defined as unsuitable for development **unless vehicular access via the town centre is prevented**. The Local Plan proposal does not prevent access to the town centre.
- The Local Plan states that the entire site is accessed from the Wintles estate road yet the site is split by Welsh Street so that the southern half of the site is not accessed by the Wintles estate road. In fact a current application on half of the southern part of the site takes vehicular access via Oak Meadow and its site plans facilitate the remainder of the site being accessed by Oak Meadow. This will exacerbate problems along Kerry Lane and the southern part of the Conservation Area, problems that are already recognised in the Local Plan and Conservation Area Statement.
- The use of the Wintles estate road for access does not recognise the character of the road or the problems at its junction with Castle Street, Bull Lane and Montgomery Road.
- In addition, development on the site would be visually intrusive; would detrimentally affect existing use by walkers and impact on the tourism industry.

2. Alternative sites are available

- The current (24 Jan. '19) proposal for site BIS028 if the current application for 24 affordable houses on part of the site is approved, is for **68 dwellings** in total, **44** of which will be **affordable** and **24** will be **open market** properties. The Partnership believes that currently 3 other sites (BIS012; BIS013 and BIS008) are preferable to this one, one of which, according to Shropshire Council's (SC) assessment can accommodate a slightly larger quantity of houses. The other two would provide slightly less dwellings but the outstanding quantity could be accommodated elsewhere (e.g. on either BIS016 or BIS020) both of which have been defined as accepted SLAA (Strategic Land Availability Assessment) sites.
- All three sites (see map Fig 1 Page 4) are contiguous with the development boundary and the existing residential land allocation on Schoolhouse Lane and therefore are a natural extension of the built-up area.
- Two of the sites present no issues regarding vehicular access through the Conservation Area and the sensitive, historic town centre streets. The third would have minimal impact on Bull Lane, only for traffic travelling to the south/southeast. If, however access could be negotiated through the adjoining, as yet undeveloped

site which is allocated for residential use, this site also would be free of any access issues.

- In all other respects the three sites appear to have optimum potential. According to the SLAA they are all classified as 'Currently Available', 'Viable' and 'Achievable' and score higher in the SC Sustainability Appraisal than the 'Preferred Site' BIS028.
- An additional area not included in the SLAA, but which is worthy of consideration is an area abutting the A488 which is zoned in Development Policy 1 as Unsuitable for development unless vehicular access via Church Lane is prevented. This area includes sites BIS027 and BIS030 (see map Fig 1 Page 4).

3. The Local Plan indicates an extension to the Development Boundary

The Local Plan shows an extension of the Development Boundary beyond the new housing development that is currently being constructed at Lavender Bank. The extended boundary would facilitate further housing being built in an area defined in the Town Plan Development Policy as totally unsuitable for development. It would put even more pressure on Kerry Lane and the southern part of the Conservation area and its streets.

4. An appraisal of the three alternative sites : BIS008; BIS012; BIS013

The SLAA Sustainability Appraisal classifies sites as Good, Fair or Poor, based on a scoring system. Scores between 4 and – 1 are classified as Good, between – 2 and – 5 as Fair and between – 6 and – 9 as Poor.

BIS008 see map Fig 1 Page 4

SLAA Sustainability Appraisal score -2 FAIR (bordering Good) **cf BIS028 -5 FAIR** (bordering Poor)

Site Capacity: 58 dwellings

- The site abuts Schoolhouse Lane and is contiguous with both the Development Boundary and with land zoned for housing following the 2013/14 SAMDev site allocation. It is also within the visual boundary of the townscape. As such it would constitute a natural extension of the built-up area.
- The land slopes down towards the A488 and this, together with its proximity to the existing built-up area ensures that it is not visually intrusive from the surrounding landscape.
- There is no footpath access across this land that would need to be diverted.
- There is safe pedestrian access to the town centre using existing pavements.
- The site would take vehicular access from Schoolhouse Lane which gives direct access onto the A488 and all hinterland destinations. This ensures there are no issues regarding access through the Conservation Area and the sensitive, historic town centre streets.

BIS012 see map Fig 1 Page 4

SLAA Sustainability Appraisal score -3 FAIR cf BIS028 -5 FAIR (bordering Poor)

Site Capacity: 62 dwellings

- The site abuts Montgomery Road and is contiguous with both the Development Boundary and with land zoned for housing following the 2013/14 SAMDev site allocation. It is also within the visual boundary of the townscape. As such it would constitute a natural extension of the built-up area.
- It is a relatively flat site with a partial slope down towards the land allocated for housing in 13/14 and beyond it, to Schoolhouse Lane. There is also a line of existing dwellings along the opposite side of the Montgomery Road. As such, it is not visually intrusive from the surrounding landscape. Neither is it visible from the Montgomery Road as a mature hedge along the road boundary protects it.
- The public footpath from Bull Lane to the Foxholes campsite runs through this field. This could ensure safe pedestrian access not only for visitors but also for residents of the development to both the town centre in the south and the open countryside to the north and north west.
- Access from the site onto Montgomery Road is beyond the current built-up area and provides direct vehicular access to all destinations in the hinterland in the North, North-West and North-East, including Newtown, Welshpool, Shrewsbury and Telford and all destinations beyond.
- It is only travel to the A488 for southerly and south easterly destinations that would potentially use Bull Lane and the Conservation Area streets for access. This compares with site BIS028 from which all traffic to the hinterland (other than to remote destinations in the west) would need to traverse the Conservation area and its sensitive streets.
- It might be possible to create an alternative access to avoid using Bull Lane if plans for the development of this site and the adjoining allocated land off Schoolhouse Lane were coordinated.

BIS013 see map Fig 1 Page 4

SLAA Sustainability Appraisal score -3 FAIR cf BIS028 -5 FAIR (bordering Poor)

Site Capacity: 74 dwellings

- The site abuts Schoolhouse Lane and is contiguous with both the Development Boundary and with land zoned for housing following the 2013/14 SAMDev site allocation. Whilst it is not at present within the visual boundary of the townscape, the Local Plan covers the period until 2036 and once the adjacent, allocated housing land is developed, it will constitute a natural extension of the built-up area.
- The land slopes down to Schoolhouse Lane and this, together with its proximity to the allocated housing site, ensures that it would not be visually intrusive from the surrounding landscape.
- There is no footpath across this land that would need to be diverted, nor is it currently used by walkers.

- There are opportunities to ensure safe pedestrian access to the town centre by connecting to existing footpaths along Schoolhouse Lane.
- The site would take vehicular access from Schoolhouse Lane which gives direct access onto the A488 and all hinterland destinations. This ensures there are no issues regarding access through the Conservation Area and the sensitive, historic town centre streets.

Fig 1 - Map of Proposed and Possible Alternative Sites

