

## **THE GORGE PARISH COUNCIL – RESPONSE TO FIRST CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF THE IRONBRIDGE POWER STATION SITE**

The Gorge Parish Council understands that the proposal to develop the power station site is potentially the most significant issue to affect the parish in a generation. In order to properly represent the views of residents, the parish council issued a survey document to every household as part of the Gorge Gazette, and made the survey available online. 156 surveys were completed and the results summarised below.

Some questions allowed responders to tick the options they supported and these are represented as graphs. Other questions were open or asked for additional comments. As responders included several suggestions or concerns in one answer the numbers listed below will exceed the total responses. Some responses included comments that related to a different question and these have been reflected in the relevant question summary.

### **Q1. In an ideal world, if there were no financial constraints, what would you like to see happen to the power station site?**

Many responses contained several ideas and so figures quoted below will exceed the total.

The majority of responses wanted the area to be as green as possible. 43 responses would like to see either all or most of the site becoming a wildlife area or nature reserve, and 42 responses specifically suggested recreational open space including a country park, walks and bridleways and cycle trails. 19 responses suggested the creation of outdoor leisure facilities including golf, pitches and outdoor adventure centre. 10 responses identified use of the river and riverbank as being important to them. 4 responses suggested an environmental education centre linked to the wildlife areas. 3 responses suggested retention and creation of agricultural land.

Where people were prepared to see some development sitting alongside green areas, they suggested things like some low density eco housing (3), or low density social and affordable housing (13); green tourism development (3), motorhome or camp site (4) or a holiday village (4).

30 responses wanted to see the retention of some or all of the power station infrastructure, in particular one or more towers. This linked into people's desire to see part of the site used for heritage interpretation, with the power station being part of the Gorge's industrial history.

26 responses suggested bringing the Telford Steam Railway to the site as part of a heritage attraction and key tourism gateway to the Gorge. 19 responses wanted to see the rail link also used for passenger transport linking to the mainline at Telford and Shrewsbury. 1 person suggested creating a narrow-gauge rail link to Jackfield. 4 responses want to see Park and Ride and relief parking for the Gorge.

24 responses supported a mixed development that was sustainable and self-contained in terms of services to support the new housing and business use. 14 responses specifically wanted to be sure that housing development was low density and lower in number than has been proposed. 2 responses suggested only building on the brownfield areas of the site and not the existing agricultural land. 6 responses clearly stated that there should be no housing. 1 response wanted there to be controls to prevent any housing being used as second homes.

Only a few responders wanted to see some commercial development. 11 responses suggested commercial and retail development, 7 responses suggested a hotel or commercial leisure complex, and 3 responses suggested a science and technology park with business use that puts the Gorge at

the forefront of the next industrial revolution. 2 responses suggested a college campus or university linked to new technologies. In terms of retail, more responders seemed to prefer more artisan and independent retailers rather than national chains.

Some specific suggestions included creating a community events area, creating a museum about climate change in one of the cooling towers, and building a new general hospital to replace the Royal Shrewsbury and Princess Royal hospitals.

One response stated that the railway should be used to remove materials from the site during demolition.

## **Q2. What are your greatest concerns about developing this site?**

The issue of most concern was the impact of the development on local roads and services ( 89). Too high a density of housing (30) and poor design of housing (20) were also significant concerns. The impact on wildlife and the environment (18), the apparent encroachment of the development on greenfield sites (9), pollution of the river (8), flood risk (9) and lack of public transport were all mentioned regularly.

Other concerns raised were that there would be too many executive homes (5), not enough social housing(2), potential for loss of World Heritage Site status (4), the negative impact on business in Ironbridge (2), an increase in pressure on an already overwhelmed nighttime economy (1), lack of facilities if it's all housing (2), potential for social unrest (1) and the fact that the rates will go to Shropshire Council but the pressure on services and roads will be on Telford and Wrekin Council.

## **Q3. What comments do you have on the proposed layouts put forward by Harworth. For each option please state what you consider to be positive about the plans and what you are concerned about or do not like. Please consider the amenities being proposed, their locations, impact on the Gorge community, traffic flows and views from outside the site**

When asked about which option they would prefer from the two presented by Harworth, 15 respondents preferred Option 2, 8 preferred Option 1, 6 had no preference and 14 did not prefer either option. In addition, 10 replied that they were unhappy with both the style, procedure and limited options of the consultation on this development by Harworth.

The greatest concern by 30 respondents was about the impact of the development on traffic in the Gorge.

The next biggest concerns (13) were over environmental issues, overdevelopment and the loss of green space.

Concerns over the number of houses were raised by 9 respondents and 9 also noted that new medical facilities would be required for this site.

Leisure use of the site was asked for by 2 people and a cultural centre by one respondent, whereas 4 approved the idea of mixed use of the site. If the site were to be developed, increased anti social behaviour was a concern from 4 respondents. Mixed housing was requested by 2 respondents

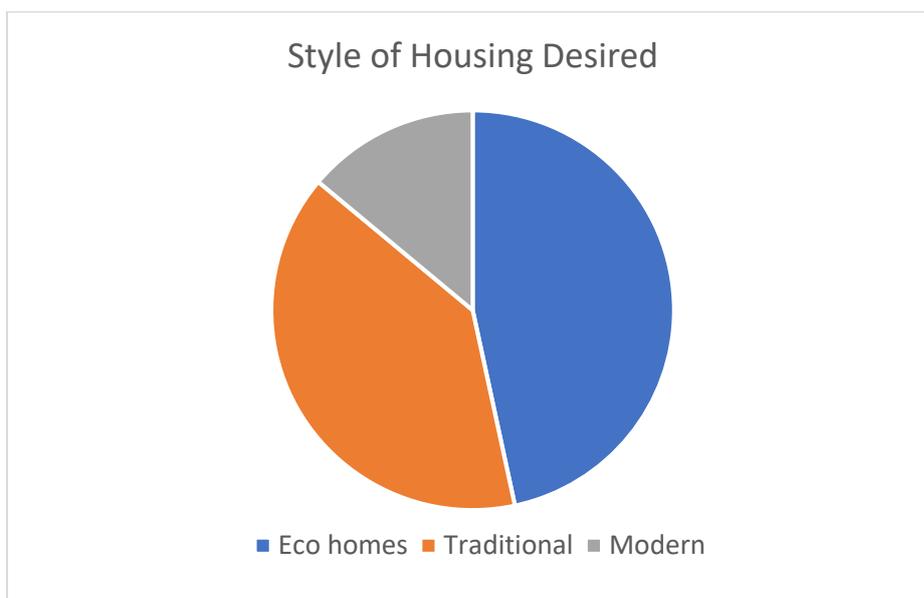
With regard to the location of the development, 3 respondents wanted the development to be kept to the "Brown area" of the site, and one respondent was concerned about building under the power lines and around the National Grid buildings. The preservation of the vista was a concern for 4 respondents and also the location of the village centre within the housing (1). Two people had

concerns over infrastructure pressure. A request was made for footpaths and bridges for pedestrians (2).

There were mixed views on the commercial development on the site. Some (2) queried what type of commercial was proposed; 2 wanted no commercial; 3 wanted more commercial/industrial and 3 wanted less commercial and more craft businesses.

General concerns raised by single respondents included: impact on Ironbridge retail provision, flood risk, need for a buffer zone, competition with sport facilities elsewhere, need for increase use of bypass and railway, secondary school provision, requirement for sewage treatment and full amenities, need for open access for all, do not want P&R, use of the bypass and railway.

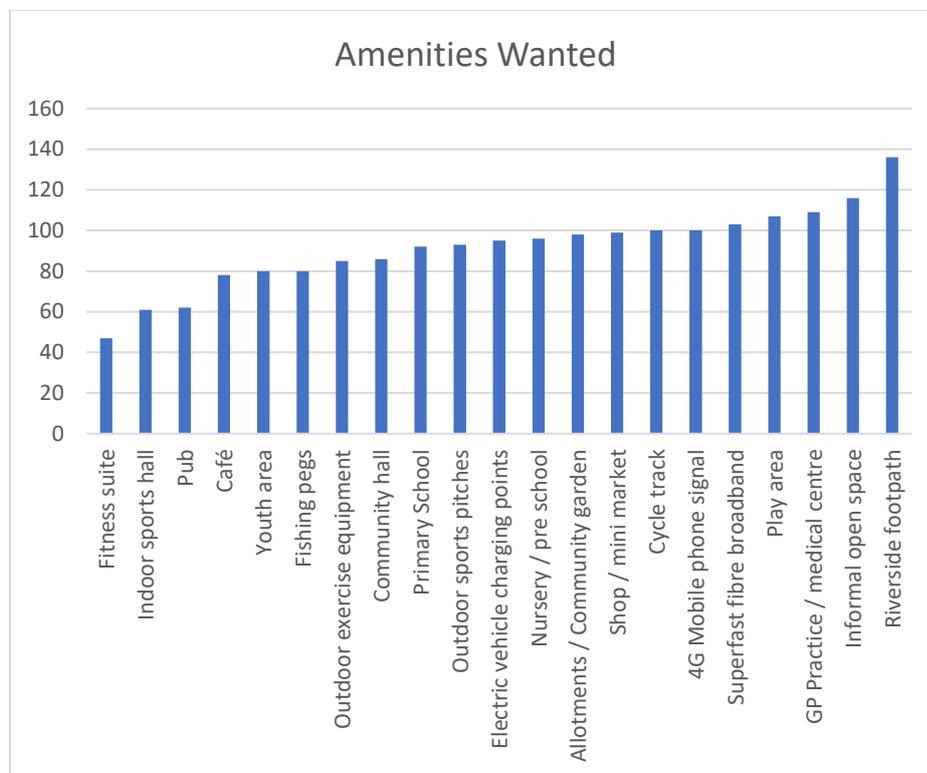
**Q4 and 5.** merged as answers were rather blurred across the issue of style and type of housing.  
**Any further comments on what type of housing you think should be included. Any further comments on what style of housing you think should be included.**



Other comments –

Many (30) want the housing to be specially and sensitively designed for the area. (18) wanted traditional, not modern, housing, (15) wanted innovative and imaginative design. (16) wanted eco homes. (10) were concerned about high rise flats. (5) Want an integrated community with a mixture of styles. Renewable energy supply/carbon neutral was preferred by (8) and (4) wanted no solar panels. (4) were concerned there would be too many executive homes, (1) saw an opportunity to bring wealth to the area, (4) wanted no social housing, (10) wanted good social and affordable housing. Parking and density were raised with (4) wanting low density housing with gardens and (3) suggesting that there should be 2 car parking spaces per house. Self build opportunities (1) and work/live units (1) were also mentioned. Others commented that there was an opportunity to set an example for good development as long as strict planning rules were adhered to.

**Q6. What amenities do you think should be included in the site?**



Other comments -

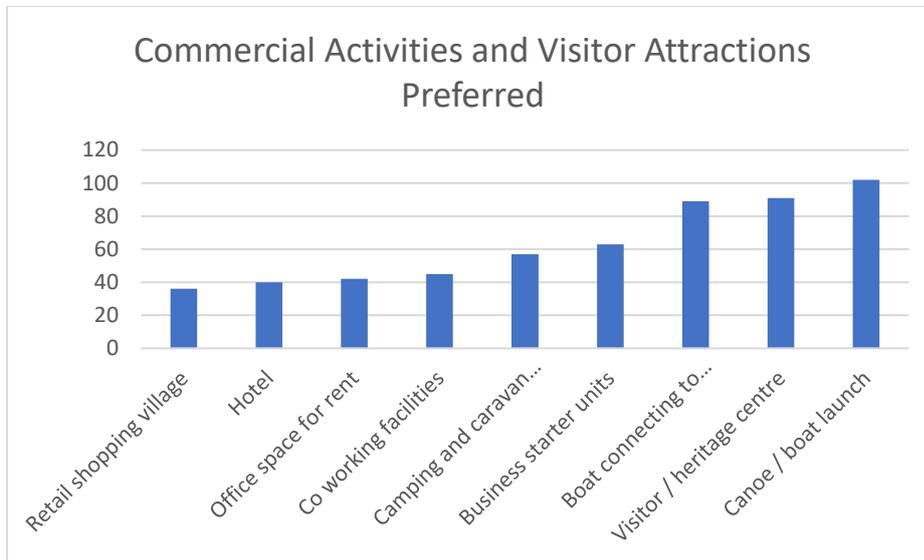
4 respondents considered that the amenities should depend on the scale of the development and 3 wanted them to be integrated with existing amenities in the area and complimentary to those in Ironbridge. Access for all was requested by 3 people and 3 wanted free open green spaces. Two respondents wanted the whole area to be a park.

A youth area/teaching resources were requested by 3 people and 3 wanted cricket and golf facilities.

Two wanted a restaurant and a community hall and one person wanted a café in an existing building. Concerns (2) were raised about the possible impact/closure on Buildwas School and Community Centre.

Additional amenities identified by single respondents included: additional woodland, police, GP surgery, Public toilets, children’s farm/wildlife, Dentist, place of worship, secondary school, river based sports activities, more leisure /wildlife emphasis, dog park, no fast food outlets, centre parcs style leisure centre.

**Q7. What commercial activities and visitor attractions do you think should be included in the site?**



**Other comments -**

12 responses supported small production facilities or business start up units. One response specifically suggested space for social enterprises. If hotel accommodation is to be included, 3 responses preferred independent providers rather than multinational chains.

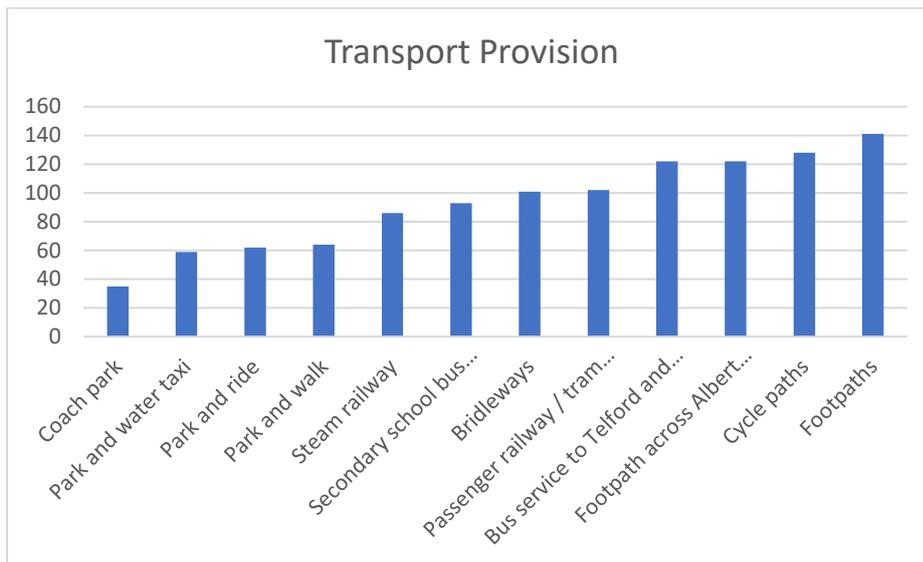
7 responses stated that any commercial development should not compete with existing businesses.

13 responses preferred commercial uses that were leisure or tourism linked, such as cycling venues, heritage and arts centre, climbing wall. 2 responders felt there were enough heritage and visitor centres in the area already.

17 responses specifically stated there should be very limited or no commercial development, with a further 8 responses not wanting to see a retail shopping village. One response suggested better facilities for home working.

One response made the suggestion that the future use of the site must be considered alongside the future use of the former Aga foundry site in Coalbrookdale, with one site including commercial activities but not both.

**Q8. What transport provision do you think should be included as part of the development?**



**Other comments –**

There were only a few other comments to the question as respondents had made reference to transport provision in other parts of the survey

**Q9. How would you like to see the landscape and wildlife provided for as part of the development?**

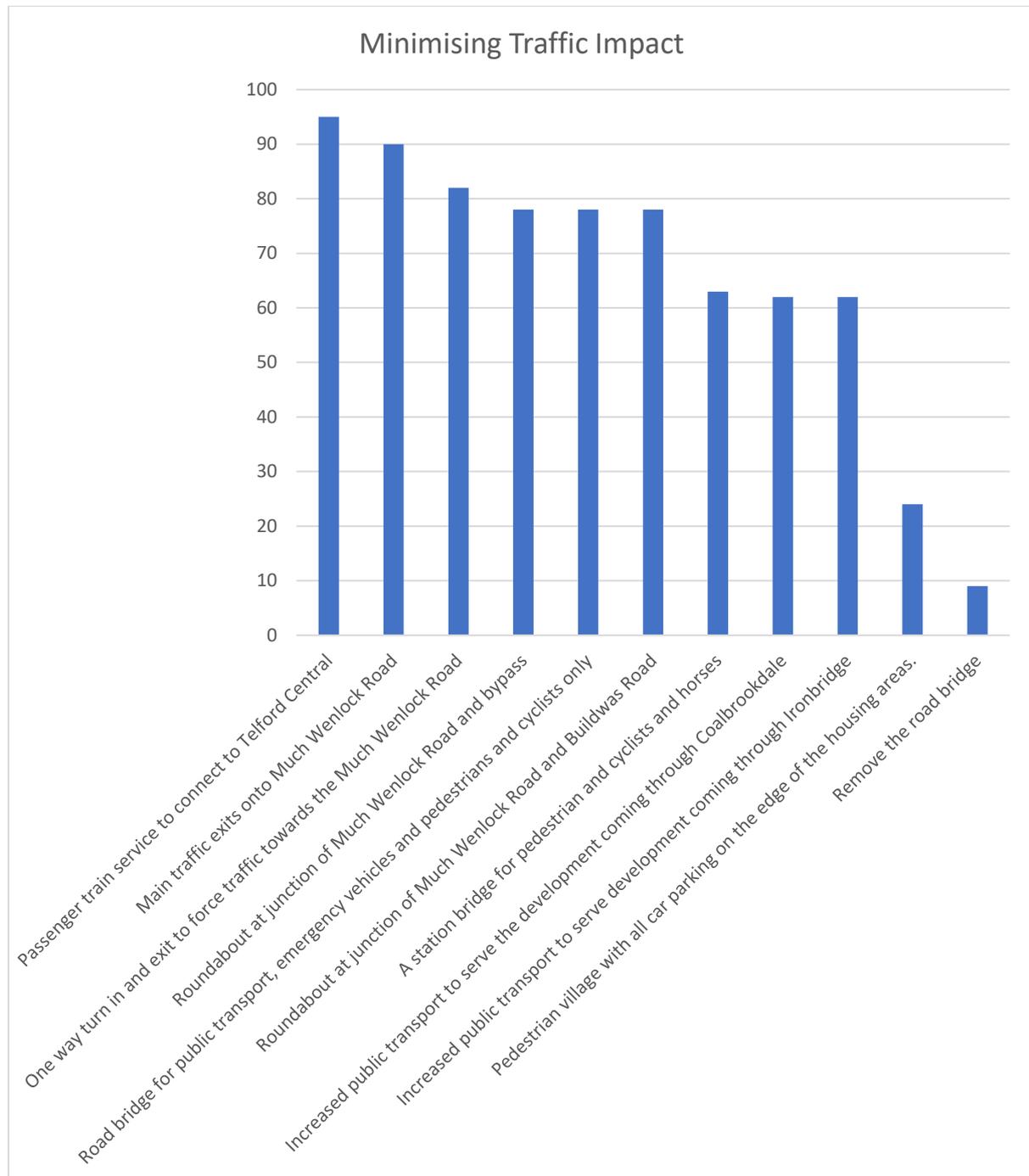


**Other comments –**

12 respondents want to keep the existing woods and wildlife areas, and no impact on the SSSI. (4) suggest more woodland to reduce impact of flooding, (3) think there is already enough woodland and wildlife in the area, (3) want the deer protected and road signage to help with this, (4) favour a nature centre/children’s farm and wildlife centre, (4) favour footpaths including by the river and to Benthall Edge, (2) believe the river bank needs improving, not protecting, (1) believes that the

development can become a lead for environmental development. (1) wanted swift boxes on houses. There was a request for more consultation with other groups in The Gorge. (1) was concerned that an artificial environment would result.

**10. The biggest potential impact on the Gorge is traffic. What would you consider to be good options and ideas for minimising this?**



The main response (9) was that all traffic from the development must use the bypass to avoid Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge. There were similar concerns (5) over the impact of increased traffic on the rat-runs in Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale and general concerns over traffic volume (3).

Suggestions (4) to minimise this were to either pedestrianise or make the Wharfage one-way, more local transport (2) and the entrance to the site should be from Buildwas Road (1)

The development should have sufficient parking for 2/3 car families (2) and should include electric charging stations (1).

Further options and ideas suggested by single respondents included: more bridges, extend the Eastern Primary / Queensway to Buildwas, ensure a rail link to Wolverhampton, a petrol station, more bridges and a detailed traffic study should be undertaken before the commencement of the development.