

At last, two and a half years behind schedule, the Local Plan has now been submitted.

We now await the appointment of an inspector to carry out the Examination and Officers believe that the Plan should be ready for adoption by the end of 2024. At that stage, the District should regain a greater degree of control over planning decisions.

That is the better news although we are still awaiting details of a transport policy to establish how the road network will be able to accommodate cars from the additional 1100 houses currently in the pipeline for the area of north east Malvern Hills District to the River Severn at Stourport. Many of these will wish to cross the river daily using the congested bridges at Stourport and Holt. In addition to these there are a further 2,500 houses already approved at Broadheath which will add to the problem.

The issue of local school places is also being raised at planning meetings and the need for educational contributions from developers is now being taken more seriously.

On a positive note, the government is proposing changes to streamline the process for future Local Plans as well as other measures which should give more assistance to councils.

Interviews for a new Head of Planning are due to take place this month and there will be representation from Baldwin Ward on the selection panel.