

**CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT
OPTIONS JOINT CONSULTATION WITH BROMSGROVE DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

(Report of the Acting Head of Planning and Building Control)

1. **Summary of Proposals**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for consultation to be carried out between 1st February and 15th March 2010 on 'Core Strategy Development Options'. The consultation would be held jointly between Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council. The consultation document will present options for development within Redditch Borough's boundaries and the options for development in Bromsgrove District, adjacent to Redditch Borough to meet Redditch's growth needs up to 2026.

It is envisaged that there would be three development options presented for development within Redditch Borough's boundaries. These include one suggested preferred option which is using existing commitments, the three identified Areas of Development Restraint, the Land to the Rear of the Alexandra Hospital and two parcels of Green Belt land to the North West of the Borough (Foxlydiate and Brockhill).

The two alternative options which work carried out to date suggests are less sustainable are:

- 1 Extending the Webheath ADR into the South West Redditch Green Belt;
2. A new settlement located in the South West Redditch Green Belt.

Options for development in Bromsgrove District to meet Redditch's needs are likely to cover the arc between the A448 and the A435, adjacent to the Redditch boundary.

2. **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

1. **A six week consultation period from 1st February to 15th March 2010 to be held jointly with Bromsgrove District Council be approved for the purposes of consulting on the Development Options to meet Redditch's growth needs up to 2026.**

2. Authority be delegated to the Acting Development Plans Manager in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and the leaders of all political parties to agree the nature and contents of the consultation publicity material.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

3.1 The costs of the proposed joint consultation period can be met within the Council's existing approved budgets. However, there will be costs associated with preparing a jointly agreed evidence base associated with determining the location of cross-boundary growth. Recent advice from the Government Office for the West Midlands states that there should be evidence that the proposed development in Bromsgrove to meet the needs of Redditch can be delivered and also how it will relate to Redditch. At the time of writing this report, the agenda for this committee meeting also includes a report concerning Capital and Revenue Bids in which revenue bids are made for both 2009/10 and 2010/11 for the purposes of completing this joint evidence base.

Legal

3.2 Redditch Borough Council is required, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), to produce a Core Strategy. Sustainability Appraisal is also necessary as part of this document preparation in line with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

Policy

3.3 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) will eventually replace many policies within the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3. It will be the first Development Plan Document to be produced as part of Redditch Borough's Local Development Framework (LDF) and forms part of the development plan for the area. The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy sets the regional planning framework and also forms part of the development plan for Redditch Borough.

Risk

3.4 The Council is at risk of not being able to progress its Core Strategy DPD without having this consultation period. Section 5 'Key Issues' outlines further the risk associated with not progressing the Core Strategy.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.5 The three Development Options within Redditch Borough will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal process. The suggested preferred option would be deemed the most sustainable option for Redditch Borough's future development needs.

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) provides the framework for the Redditch Borough Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document. The WMRSS Phase Two Revision Preferred Option Document (December 2007) allocated a provisional 3,300 dwellings to be delivered in Redditch Borough up to 2026 and 3,300 dwellings to be delivered adjacent to Redditch town in Bromsgrove and/or Stratford-on-Avon Districts. The WMRSS Preferred Option Document also allocated 51 Ha of employment land to be delivered up to 2026.
- 4.2 The Redditch Preferred Draft Core Strategy Development Plan Document used these provisional figures to determine its development strategy. However only capacity for 2,243 dwellings could be identified within Redditch and this formed the basis of the Redditch Borough Council submission to the Examination in Public for the WMRSS.
- 4.3 The Panel Report for the Examination in Public of the WMRSS Preferred Option Document was released on 28 September 2009 and recommends that 7,000 dwellings are delivered to meet Redditch's growth needs up to 2026. Around 4,000 of these dwellings are to be delivered within Redditch Borough and around 3,000 in Bromsgrove District, adjacent to the Redditch boundary. The employment targets remain broadly similar to those published in the Preferred Option, with the indicative long-term requirements being 68 hectares. The Panel Report specifies that 37hecatres will be provided cross-boundary, of which at least 8 hectares will be provided within Stratford-on-Avon District west of the A435.
- 4.4 This increase in residential targets requires the Council to consult on development options that have not previously been consulted on. Therefore a period of consultation is needed on where this 7,000 dwellings and other development would be best located.
- 4.5 The figure of 4,000 dwellings that need to be provided within the Redditch Boundary is higher than that originally presented in the

RSS Preferred Option document. It has always been the case that the development capacity within the Borough is significantly limited as the urban area abuts the administrative boundary.

- 4.6 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment forms part of the evidence base of the Core Strategy. The SHLAA provides information on the opportunities that exist to meet the need and demand for housing and indicates whether sufficient land is potentially available to meet the levels and growth proposed for Redditch Borough in the WMRSS. The SHLAA published in March 2009 only considered the urban area of Redditch and identified a capacity of 2,243 dwellings in the urban area. The SHLAA is reviewed annually and the next version is due to be published in April 2010. The review is likely to result in a reduced capacity in the urban area due to a recalculated windfall allowance and some sites being considered no longer suitable. However, as the RSS Panel Report has concluded that 4,000 dwellings need to be provided within the Redditch Boundary, it is necessary to reconsider potential development areas that were previously ruled out by various Evidence Base studies including the WYG Study into the Future Growth Implications of Redditch (January 2009). The WYG study recommended that Redditch's ADRs were not as preferable to development in Bromsgrove District, however the implications of the WMRSS Panel Report are that these ADR need to be re-evaluated as well as some parcels of Green Belt within the Borough. The SHLAA review will therefore also assess the capacity of the three Areas of Development Restraint, two areas of Green Belt and land to the rear of the Alexandra Hospital. The land to the rear of the Alex has previously been consulted on for employment uses as detailed in the Preferred Draft Core Strategy but it is now considered that it would be more suitable for a mix of uses including residential. Therefore, although the capacity in the urban area is likely to reduce, the overall capacity for residential development across the Borough that will be presented in the next version of the SHLAA is likely to be significantly higher than the 2,243 currently identified.
- 4.7 The WMRSS Panel Report states that the remaining 3,000 dwellings needed to meet Redditch's growth needs up to 2026 should be located in Bromsgrove District adjacent to the Redditch boundary. Previously, the WMRSS Preferred Option stated that dwellings to be provided cross-boundary could be located in Bromsgrove and/or Stratford-on-Avon Districts. The Council's have now received direction from the WMRSS Panel Report that the 3,000 dwellings should be located in Bromsgrove District adjacent to the Redditch boundary; therefore consultation on the possible locations for this development is required.

- 4.8 . Although this development is required to meet the needs of Redditch up to 2026, as it is to be located in Bromsgrove District, the potential locations have to be determined through Bromsgrove District's Core Strategy process. However, both authorities have received advice from the Government Office for the West Midlands that when the Core Strategies are examined, the Inspectors will look for evidence of co-operation between the authorities. Officers from both authorities have been working collaboratively and, to provide the required evidence of this, are recommending that consultation on the options for meeting Redditch's growth needs up to 2026 be carried out jointly.
- 4.9 The development options put forward within Redditch will concentrate on meeting the 4,000 dwellings required as the location of employment land within the Borough has been consulted upon through previous stages of the Core Strategy process. The locations for Redditch related development in Bromsgrove will, however, consider both housing and employment.
- 4.10 The material for this joint consultation is not yet available due to the short time period since the WMRSS Panel Report was published. However, Officers are requesting that the joint consultation period is held as soon as possible so as not to cause an inappropriate level of slippage from the timetable of production for the Core Strategy as set out in Local Development Scheme No.3.

5. **Key Issues**

- 5.1 There are likely to be three options for locating development within Redditch Borough's boundaries which are:
- a) Extend the Webheath Area of Development Restraint into the southwest Redditch Green Belt.
 - b) New settlement in the southwest Redditch Green Belt
 - c) Urban Extensions - ADR development and 2 Green Belt areas at North Redditch and Land to the Rear of the Alexandra Hospital
- 5.2 Each of the three options for development will be tested against a Sustainability Appraisal framework. The results from work carried out by Redditch Officers to date indicate that options 1 and 2 would not be as preferable as option 3 for the following reasons:
- i) The South West Redditch Green Belt is considered to have landscape of a high value and sensitive nature and extending the development here would result in the loss of this.

- ii) There are prominent ridges in this area which would make development visible from a considerable distance. The topography would also limit the type of development that could be accommodated in this area.
 - iii) Development in the South West Redditch Green Belt is considered unsustainable as a significant amount foul drainage improvement would be needed.
 - iv) There is a general lack of community facilities within the area and it is remote from the Town centre, railway station and other amenities.
 - v) The existing roads in the area are inadequate to serve large scale development. A significant amount of new transport infrastructure would be necessary and would be a further intrusion in the area.
- 5.3 The work carried out by Officers to date suggests that option 3 is the most preferable because some of the sites included in this option assist in achieving the vision of the Core Strategy. For example, by helping to facilitate the Abbey Stadium redevelopment, by helping to improve the vitality and viability of the Town Centre, by achieving a balance between housing and employment, and because the sites are adjacent to the existing urban area.
- 5.4 Options for the location of Redditch related development within Bromsgrove are likely to be to the north and west of the Redditch Boundary between the A448 and A441.
- 5.5 This consultation provides an essential step in progressing the Core Strategy. If this consultation period is not approved to commence on the 1st February this could result in an inappropriate level of slippage from the timetable for the production for the Core Strategy set out in Local Development Scheme No.3. There may be a possibility that the Council will not receive Housing and Planning Delivery Grant if production of the Core Strategy is delayed.
- 5.6 It is also essential to continue with the development of the Core Strategy as this provides the overarching framework for other necessary planning policy documents including Site Allocations and Policies DPD and Supplementary Planning Documents. This document also provides a necessary framework for development control decisions on planning applications.
- 5.7 Community Infrastructure Levy is a tool that collects monies for various community infrastructure projects relating to planning

applications. The CIL needs to hook on to a policy within the Core Strategy and should the Core Strategy be delayed the Council's ability to collect contributions towards community infrastructure projects could also be hindered.

- 5.8 The Core Strategy provides the opportunity to resolve issues such as Town Centre improvements, District Centre enhancements and the Abbey Stadium redevelopment. The Core Strategy policies could trigger the receipt of Section 106 monies and any delay in the Core Strategy preparation could also impact upon the resolution of the aforementioned issues.
- 5.9 The Core Strategy is the key planning policy document that the council is working on; many other councils have progressed and adopted their core strategies with the help and support of Government Agencies. It would not be advisable to stall production of the Core Strategy as this is against Government advice and contradictory to particular guidance from GOWM to both Redditch and Bromsgrove.
- 5.10 If the period of consultation on Development Options is not approved, there may be significant sustainability issues. This risks the soundness of the Core Strategy and is in conflict with the SEA Directive and the implementation of Directive 2001/42/EC on The Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programs on the Environment. It is essential that all options to be presented within the Publication version of the Core Strategy are tested through the Sustainability Appraisal process prior to Publication. If options are not tested prior to Publication this may risk the soundness of the Core Strategy.
- 5.11 Both Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils have approved a Joint Planning Board to progress a joint approach to deal with cross boundary issues. It is intended that the consultation material will be considered by the Joint Planning Board and the final versions will be agreed in consultation with the Leaders of both Councils.

6. Other Implications

Asset Management	-	None
Community Safety	-	None
Human Resources	-	None
Social Exclusion	-	None

7. Lessons Learnt

- 7.1 The Council will be required to produce other DPDs in the future. The production of this DPD has been influenced by significant changes such as the publication of the WMRSS Panel Report. In order that significant changes, such as this, do not adversely impact upon the production of future DPDs Officers consider that presenting a broader range of options at earlier stages of DPD production which encompass the possibility of significant changes could reduce the need for additional periods of consultation.

8. **Background Papers**

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision Draft Preferred Option (December 2007).

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision Report of the Panel (September 2009).

Redditch Borough Council Preferred Draft Core Strategy Document 31st Oct 08 – 8th May 09.

9. **Consultation**

- 9.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers.
- 9.2 Other consultees have included landowners of some of the sites that are to be consulted on.

10. **Author of Report**

The author of this report is Alexa Williams, who can be contacted on extension 3376 (e-mail: alexa.williams@redditchbc.go.uk) for more information.

11. **Appendices**

There are none

12. **Key**

ADR (Area of Development Restraint) – an area of land safeguarded for consideration for possible long-term development needs. Areas are excluded from the Green Belt.

Core Strategy – this is the principal Development Plan Document (DPD) within the Local Development Framework (LDF). Among

other things, it sets the Key Vision, objectives and policies for the future development of the area.

DPD (Development Plan Document) - planning policy documents that a local planning authority must prepare, and which have to be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and examination. They are the documents contained within a Local Development Framework. All planning applications should be determined in accordance with the DPDs unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.

LDS (Local Development Scheme) – sets out the programme for developing the Local Development Documents.

WMRSS (West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy) - sets the regional context for planning and shows how a region should look in 15-20 years time and possibly longer. It identifies the scale and distribution of new housing in the region, indicates areas for regeneration, expansion or sub-regional planning and specifies priorities for the environment, transport, housing, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals and waste treatment and disposal. The RSS forms part of the Development Plan for the area.