

**Redditch Borough Council Planning Policy comments on the Foxlydiate Hotel,
Birchfield Road, Redditch
Planning Application (19/00615/OUT) April 2020**

1. Background

1.1 Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) has received a Planning Application for the Foxlydiate Hotel site (Application number 19/00615/OUT). The Outline Application is to establish the principle for the partial demolition of the existing pub building and former walled garden on site and the conversion of the remaining pub building into 12 apartments alongside 36 dwellings, a children's play area, landscaping and circulation space. The site is on the edge of Redditch and lies in the administrative area of Bromsgrove.

1.2 This response has been prepared as Redditch Borough Council (RBC) is a consultee to the Planning Application received by BDC. The purpose of these comments is not to consider the merits of the application or provide a determination of that application. It is to provide BDC with a view from RBC on the Application being determined by them.

2. The Site

2.1 Whilst the application site is located within Bromsgrove District, the development is intended to serve the development needs of Redditch (which is discussed further below).

2.2 The site is located to the west of Redditch Town, adjacent to the Webheath area. It is located within the allocated Foxlydiate Development Site, with Birchfield Road running to the North East of the site and the residential area of Webheath to the South East. It is located in the Tardebigge Ward of Bromsgrove and within the Bentley Pouncefoot Parish Council area.

2.3 The Site lies within an allocated housing site in the Bromsgrove District Plan 2011- 2030 (Adopted 2017).

3. Planning Policy

3.1 The Foxlydiate site is designated within the Bromsgrove Local Plan (2011 – 2030) as a housing allocation to meet some of the development needs of Redditch Borough. The Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) was adopted in January 2017; at this point the Foxlydiate site was removed from the Green Belt and became an allocation for housing development. Policy RCBD1 'Redditch Cross Boundary Development' allocates the whole Foxlydiate site (of which this application site is part of) for up to 2,800 dwellings, a Local Centre, a First School and associated community infrastructure.

3.2 Policy RCBD1 is included in the BDP and as an appendix to the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 2011- 2030 (BORLP4) and states that Redditch needs to deliver 6,400 up to 2030. Around 3,000 dwellings are to be accommodated within Redditch Borough and therefore approximately 3,400 dwellings are to be accommodated at the Foxlydiate site and as an extension to the existing Brockhill site. Both sites are crucial to enable the delivery of the housing strategy for Redditch over the plan period.

3.3 It is essential that the proposed development is in accordance with all of the Policies contained within the BDP, in particular Policy RCBD1 which details the principles that the site must achieve to be sustainable. This policy was jointly prepared with RBC.

3.4 It is worth noting at this point that it has been determined that BORLP4 and the BDP are fully in accordance with the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

4. Foxlydiate Hotel Planning Application

4.1 As stated above it is not the intention of RBC to consider the merits of the application with a view to its determination, however as the site is adjacent to the administrative boundary of Redditch, and falls within an area that is designated to meet the housing needs of Redditch; there are some aspects of the application RBC considers the need to comment upon.

4.2 RBC considers the building a non-designated heritage asset, this importance has also been acknowledged by BDC (see previous comments submitted by Bromsgrove and Redditch Conservation Officer in relation to this application) that the building is of local importance, and thus would be considered as a candidate for the Bromsgrove Local Heritage List and is being treated as a non-designated heritage asset. The two heritage assets include the pub and hotel building, and the large walled garden which was part of Foxlydiate House. The building as a community and a heritage asset will be considered in turn below.

4.3 To deal with the community asset consideration first. RBC feels that the applicant has gone some way to justify the loss of the Public House due to viability reasons. It is considered that the future of a community asset such as this is likely to change with the allocation of a significant housing site in close proximity. RBC recognises that the Public House is a community facility and as such would be considered against Policy BDP12 'Sustainable Communities' of the Bromsgrove District Plan (Adopted January 2017). In particular point c) i) should be carefully considered, as the future prospects of the Public House are likely to be considered favourable in light of the allocation and therefore the viability issues may not be a concern long term. RBC acknowledges the revised planning application includes an updated Marketing Statement (2020) which sets out at page 8 the offers which have been received since the previous application was submitted. The statement sets out that these offers are unviable. It is not for the Redditch Strategic Planning Team to consider the viability of this evidence but would highlight it is for Bromsgrove to consider its robustness in their determination of the application.

4.4 RBC agree the need for housing and considers that if BDC accept the loss of the community asset this should not give automatic rise to the heritage asset being lost. It is acknowledged the revised planning application has explored the opportunity to convert part of Pub building to apartments, this is welcomed. This building is considered by RBC to be an example of a landmark, distinctive historical asset which provides an opportunity for high quality conversion; making the building a desirable place to live, rather than being considered a constraint. Its designation provides an opportunity to design a distinctive, unique place to live, which should be maximised. It will be for the determining authority guided by the Conservation Officer to consider whether this element of proposed partial conversion is adequate. As stated previously it is considered that the walled garden could also be

utilised as a feature of the design and layout of the development. It is not clear from the revised plans what the intention is for this aspect of the setting.

4.5 The Planning Application site is located on the North East edge of the Foxlydiate site and therefore is the interface between the wider Foxlydiate development site and the Redditch urban area. It is considered that the layout of the scheme still has potential to link these two areas. The site should not be considered in isolation from the wider area both in design or connectivity terms; in particular it is not clear from the plan whether the Home Zone located in the South West corner of the site will allow for connectivity (vehicular, pedestrian or cycle) to the wider Foxlydiate site. It is considered there are opportunities with this site to make walking and cycling an attractive option for future users.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The principle of housing on this site is in accordance with both the BDP and BORLP4. For clarity this site is not within the Green Belt and forms part of the Foxlydiate development site in accordance with Policy RCBD1 'Redditch Cross Boundary Development'.

5.2 It is fundamental that the Application is in accordance with all of the policies set out within the BDP, RBC is supportive of all of the policies contained within the BDP and would wish to see them implemented to a high standard. In conclusion, Redditch Borough Council welcome the element of conservation and conversion proposed through the revised scheme and it will be for the determining authority in consultation with the Conservation Officer to determine if this level of conversion is adequate.

5.3 With regard to connectivity, it is not clear from the proposed site plan whether the Home Zone located in the South West corner of the site will allow for connectivity (vehicular, pedestrian or cycle) to the wider Foxlydiate site. If it is not the intention to allow for connectivity from the Foxlydiate Hotel site to the wider allocation of the Foxlydiate Development Site RBC would not support this application.