

Redditch Borough Council Planning Policy comments for Brockhill East, Weights Lane, Redditch Planning Application (19/00976/HYB)

1. Background

1.1 Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) has received a Planning Application for the development Brockhill East site (Application number 19/00976/HYB). The Hybrid Application is for up to 960 dwellings consisting of a full application for 128 dwellings accessed off Weights Lane and an outline application for (with all matters reserved with the exception of access) for the construction of the remaining dwellings, with access points off Cookridge Close, Hawling Street and Weights Lane. The application also seeks outline approval for a new District Centre, new play facilities, new highway network and public open space. For information an identical application (19/00977/HYB) has been submitted to Redditch Borough Council as this application crosses Bromsgrove and Redditch administrative boundaries, the Redditch portion of the application will be going to Redditch Planning Committee for determination in due course.

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 for the portion of development in their administrative area.

2. The Site

2.1 The site is located to the north of Redditch Town, adjacent to the existing Brockhill area. It is part the allocated Brockhill Development Site, the constructed Phase 1 portion of the site lies to the south and Phase 2 (currently being constructed) which lies between Phase 1 and the railway line, again to the south of this application site (Phase 3). The Bromsgrove portion of the site lies within the Tardebigge and the Tutnall and Cobley Parish Council area.

3. Planning Policy

3.1 The Brockhill Cross Boundary site is designated within the Bromsgrove District Plan 2011 – 2030 (2017) 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 Brockhill site was removed from the Green Belt and became an allocation for housing development. Policy RCBD1 'Redditch Cross Boundary Development' allocates the Brockhill site (of which this application site is part of) for up to 600 dwellings (note this application covers this site and the Brockhill site within Redditch (19/00977/HYB), hence the higher number of dwellings for the application).

3.2 The BDP Policy RCBD1 is included 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 3,400 to be accommodated within Bromsgrove District. Of the 3,400, 2,800 are to be accommodated at the Foxlydiate Site and approximately 600 as an extension to the existing Brockhill East Strategic Site (the subject of this planning application). The extension to the Brockhill East Strategic Site is crucial to enable the delivery of the housing strategy for Redditch over the plan period.

3.3 The Brockhill East Strategic Site within Redditch was allocated as part of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4. Phase 1 has been constructed and Phase 2 is still currently under construction. Phase 1 and 2 of the Strategic Site are being delivered in accordance with the adopted Redditch Policy (Policy 46 of BoRLP.4) and will deliver residential development, employment land and a First School.

3.4 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.

3.5 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. Brockhill East Planning Application

4.1 As stated above it is not the intention of these comments 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 to inform the determination of the planning application.

Design

4.2 One of the key elements of this policy (Points 1.3 and XII) is to ensure the proposed development integrates well into the existing urban fabric of Redditch. It is considered that the location of the school and the proposed District Centre form a central, accessible location relative from the location of this application (Phase 3), Phase 1 and 2 of Brockhill.

4.3 The green swathes running through the proposals also assist to link the Strategic Site to its surroundings. The Planning Application site is located to the Northern edge of the Brockhill site that is currently under construction and therefore is the interface between the urban area and the Green Belt beyond. Being a pivotal location it is considered that the layout of the scheme still has potential to link these two areas for recreational purposes. The site should not be considered in isolation from the wider area both in design or

connectivity terms. The Design and Access Statement submitted by the applicants states that there is 32.1 ha of Green Infrastructure provided which is predominantly along the ridge and valley of the site, *“These areas will include formal and informal public open spaces, a network of footpaths, two play areas, three attenuation basins and the retained watercourse Red Ditch. The Green Infrastructure will link to existing open space surrounding the site to create a robust green network as part of the new development, assimilating within its landscape context.”* It is important these spaces are delivered in accordance with the strategy to ensure the site is connected and successful.

4.4 Point XII of RCBD1 seeks to ensure that high quality design is integral to the development area, including design that is locally distinctive to its surroundings. This is a large site, on the edge of Redditch and is one of the first things people see when entering the Borough, therefore it is essential that it demonstrates the quality of buildings that the Borough would wish to showcase for new housing in Redditch when entering the Borough.

Housing

4.5 Policy RCBD1 requires at Point I that 40% affordable housing is to be delivered. The Applicants letter to the Council dated 10th July 2019 states that 35% of affordable housing will be delivered (30% of affordable housing on dwellings in Redditch Borough and 40% of those in Bromsgrove District), this is also set out in the Affordable Housing Delivery Framework (Aug 2019). The Delivery Framework submitted by the applicants also sets out that of the 960 dwellings 365 will be affordable units (307 in Bromsgrove and 58 in Redditch, on the basis that 80% of total dwellings are to be delivered in Bromsgrove and 20% in Redditch). Officers wish to point out that all of the affordable housing (i.e. 365 units) must be to meet Redditch’s affordable housing needs.

4.6 Point I of RCBD1 also sets out that there should be a mix of house types and tenure, the type and tenure should be agreed with the Councils Housing Team. From the evidence presented there are two affordable bungalows to be provided, it is considered there should be higher proportion of affordable bungalows, it is also requested that a small amount of market bungalows are also provided, as this area of the market is consistently under catered for.

Transport

4.7 With regard to transport it has been noted that Worcestershire County Council have submitted a consultee response which requests further information and therefore have deferred their response until such information is provided. With regard to transport it will be for the Case Officer to determine that WCC Highways and any other transport consultees are satisfied with the proposals to ensure Points II and III of RCBD1 can be safely and satisfactorily discharged. In particular, in relation to Point II that mitigation is in place to ensure the safety and operation of the road network. Also, in relation to Point III, there is a requirement for an integrated and regular bus service. The Residential Travel Plan (June 2019) provided by the Applicants states at paragraph 4.2.3 *“Upon occupation of Phase 2, it*

is proposed to provide a bus service through Phases 2 and 3 of the wider Brockhill development, consisting either a new bus service or re-routing of an existing service. This would provide a high-quality bus link towards Redditch town centre from the development.” It is essential that this is delivered.

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 Brockhill 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. As mentioned in the response the site should be delivered as set out in the supporting documents submitted alongside the planning application, this includes the quantum of affordable housing, which should be delivered to meet the needs of Redditch.