

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

17th July 2025

Planning Application 25/00442/PIP

Erection of up nine dwellings

Land South of Crumpfields Lane, Webheath, Redditch, Worcs. B97 5PW

Applicant: C/O Agent
Ward: Webheath And Callow Hill

(see additional papers for site plan)

The case officer of this application is Sharron Williams, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 534061 Ext 3372 Email: sharron.williams@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The site is a linear area of land that historically would have been agricultural land but has been used as a paddock for equine use/grazing in recent years. The site comprises of tree/hedge planting fronting the road. Several trees are growing within the paddock as well outside the application boundary line. Some of these trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The site is designated as Green Belt in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4.

Proposal Description

This is a Permission in Principle (PIP) application, it is an alternative route of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development, additional information is contained in the procedural section of the report. The proposed development is for up to 9 dwellings. Details submitted only show a red line around the site boundary, no indicative layout has been provided at this stage.

Relevant Policies :

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 2: Settlement Hierarchy

Policy 4: Housing Provision

Policy 8: Green Belt

Policy 16: Natural Environment

Policy 19: Sustainable travel and Accessibility

Policy 40: High Quality Design and Safer Communities

Policy 48: Webheath Strategic Site

Others

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Redditch High Quality Design SPD

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Relevant Planning History

No planning history.

Consultations

Worcestershire Highways - Redditch

No highway objections “in principle” to the proposed Permission in Principle for the erection of up nine dwellings – subject to details provided within the Technical Details stage be in accordance with WCC Streetscape Design Guide to cover the following:-

- Parking to be provided in accordance with Streetscape Design Guide.
- Sheltered and secure cycle parking to comply with the Council’s parking standards.
- Appropriate vehicular and pedestrian visibility splays in accordance with WCC standards to be provided.
- The vehicular access/s for the first 5 metres of the access into the development, measured from the edge of the carriageway to be surfaced in a bound material.
- A Road Safety Audit 1 and 2 is required for the proposed development.
- Applicant to provide a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
- Bin storage details/ collection point details to be provided.

North Worcestershire Water Management

The proposed development site is situated in the catchment of Alders Brook. The site falls within flood zone 1 and it is not considered that there is any significant fluvial flood risk to the site. The EA's flood mapping also indicates that there is no surface water flood risk to the site.

As there are no details provided in relation to any proposed drainage arrangements, the following is primarily a statement of our requirements at Technical Details stage. A drainage strategy will be required to avoid the need for conditions and include a drainage plan identifying where surface water will be discharged to. It should also detail the extent of any new buildings and any new hard standing and finish materials for these areas. Where possible driveway and parking bays should comprise of a porous material to limit the amount of hardstanding on site.

Based on Severn Trent Water records there is a foul sewer that runs across the site. However, there are no nearby surface water sewers to connect to. No surface water may be disposed into the foul sewer and no water may enter the highway drainage system. Infiltration drainage should be prioritised.

Severn Trent Water Ltd

Comments awaited.

WRS - Contaminated Land

Due to the historic agricultural nature of the site, and the proximity to a historic landfill site, WRS recommend that should any permission be granted to the development, that potential contaminated land issues on site are appropriately addressed at the Technical Details stage.

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Worcestershire Archive and Archaeological Service

No objection to the proposal. However, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Planning Advisory Service should be consulted at the Technical Details stage, as there may be a case for conditions to offset potential harm.

Tree Officer

The site outline might impact on 3 protected ash trees and possibly an additional tree and a group of trees covered under Tree Preservation Order No. 74 (1992) if services need to be added. An existing hedgerow adjacent to Crumpfields Lane is also likely to be affected.

Any application for the site should include a full Tree Survey and a comprehensive Arboricultural Impact and Method statement (in line with BS5837- 2012) to be approved by the LPA before any work commences.

If it can be demonstrated that the development would not cause harm to the trees during the construction phase and there would not be future pressures for pruning or removal after development, I would support the application.

Public Consultation Response

27 letters of objection following public consultation which included 42 letters sent out and a site notice erected. Comments are summarised as follows:-

Highway matters

Road infrastructure in the area is inadequate, narrow lanes with inadequate footpaths. Traffic passing up and down the lane already excessive and beyond speed limits. Lane used as a short cut route. Road goes into a single track lane close to where the site is located. Speed and use by HGVs already an issue with difficulty turning/reversing, so not appropriate to add additional housing/traffic off this lane. Nearest bus stop is 15 mins walk away. Road used for cyclists, walkers and horseriders – need to protect their safety. The area is already burdened by the construction of hundreds of new dwellings, which is having an impact on traffic and safety on these country lanes. Potential parking issues. Traffic congestion.

Concern regarding general safety. Street lighting is located on the opposite side of the road to the site, to cross this busy lane could be dangerous.

Drainage matters

Concern regarding drainage and flooding issues close to the site. Field beyond the application site has long periods of standing water on it. Heavy rain runs down Crumpfields Lane. Pumping station issues located down a track between No.s 80A and 82 Crumpfields Lane. Main sewer runs under the site.

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Environmental matters

Loss of green space. Impact on the environment. Additional noise and air pollution. Loss of trees.

Loss of wildlife. Potential badger set, great crested newts on the land along with deer, bats, hedgehogs, and owls. Wild orchids exist on the site. The grassy area provides benefits to butterflies/insects.

Character of the lane is individual style houses within large plots, scheme could be out of character with the area. Do not agree that the land is considered to be grey belt. Webheath area already been overly developed. Lack of local services such as doctors/dentists etc.

Procedural Matters

Permission in Principle (PIP) is an alternative route of obtaining planning permission for **housing-led development**. This process separates the issues concerning the principle of the proposed development, from the technical details of the proposal.

The process has two stages - Permission in Principle, which establishes whether a site is suitable in principle; and the second stage - Technical Details Consent, where the detailed development proposals are assessed. This process was introduced in June 2018 and was intended to speed up and simplify the planning process for small housing developments.

When assessing applications for Permission in Principle, the scope for assessment is strictly limited to the following issues:

- **location;**
- **land use; and**
- **amount of development.**

Any decision has to be made having regard to the Policies in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 (Local Plan). Matters of detail, such as how a development might look and the impact on residential amenity, will not be available and will not be a relevant consideration at this stage of the process. Following a grant of Permission in Principle, the site must receive a grant of Technical Details Consent before development can proceed. The granting of Technical Details Consent has the effect of granting planning permission for the development.

Technical Details Consent can be obtained following submission of a valid application to the Borough Council. An application for Technical Details Consent must be in accordance with the Permission in Principle application. Members should also note that conditions cannot be placed on the permission at this stage.

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Assessment of Proposal

Location

The application site is located within Green Belt; therefore, Policy 8 of Local Plan No. 4 would apply. The site also abuts strategic housing site No. 213 on its northeastern and northwestern boundaries. Policy 4 and 48 of Local Plan No. 4 would apply in respect to allocating approximately 600 dwellings for this strategic and sustainable site.

Given the Green Belt designation of the application site Paragraph 154 of the National Planning Framework (NPPF) states that '*development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:-*

- a) *buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b) *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c) *the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) *the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) *limited infilling in villages;*
- f) *limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) *limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.*
- h) *Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*
 - i. *mineral extraction;*
 - ii. *engineering operations;*
 - iii. *local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
 - iv. *the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*
 - v. *material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
 - vi. *development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.'*

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The application does not fall within the above exceptions. However, Paragraph 155 of the NPPF would apply and outlines that:-

The development of homes, commercial and other development should also not be regarded as inappropriate development where all of the following apply;

- a. A development would utilise grey belt and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location;
- d. where applicable the proposed development meets the 'Golden Rules'" (Major developments only).

Annex 2 (Glossary) defines grey belt as *'For the purposes of plan-making and decision making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.'*

Does the site strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes a), b) or d)?

To establish whether the application site can be considered 'grey belt' it must first be determined whether the site strongly contributes to Green Belt purposes a), b) or d) of the Green Belt which are set out in Paragraph 143 of the NPPF.

These are;

a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (LBUA);

Given the location of the site within the Borough, adjacent to established ribbon housing development and abutting a strategic housing site. The development is not considered to amount to sprawl of a LBUA. As such, the site makes no contribution to purpose a).

b) To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;

The existing site is located at the edge of Webheath. As such, the site makes no contribution to purpose b).

d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;

Webheath is not considered to be a 'Historic Town' for the purpose of criteria d). As such, the site makes no contribution to purpose d).

To summarise the site does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes a), b) or d).

Would the application of non-Green Belt NPPF footnote 7 policies to the scheme proposed on the site provide a strong reason for refusing development?

Footnote 7 states *"The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads*

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Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change."

Although the development's potential impact on drainage, trees, potential contamination, and archaeological remains are key considerations, all consultees have indicated that subject to satisfactory design at the Technical Details stage, there would be no objection. Therefore, these matters, as currently assessed, do not present a strong justification for refusing planning permission.

The application site can therefore fall within the definition of grey belt and would not be inappropriate development subject to satisfying the criteria as set out in Paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

Would the proposed development on grey belt fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan?

Purposes a, b and d have already been assessed above. Regard however must be made to c and e.

c) Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

It is accepted that the spatial occupation of the site would clearly encroach into the countryside as it is currently undeveloped and on the edge of a settlement. However, in relation to the wider function of the Green Belt as a whole, the comparatively small nature of the site itself, within an existing run of ribbon development is such that it does not fundamentally undermine purpose c) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.

e) Assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land;

The proposed development would not fundamentally undermine the purpose of this Green Belt criterion.

Is there a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed.

The NPPF at footnote 56 explains that demonstrable unmet need would apply where there is a lack of a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. At present, the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply.

Would the development in the grey belt be in a sustainable location?

County Highways considers the site is situated in a semi-rural residential location, off an 30 mph unclassified road that does not benefit from an existing vehicular access.

Crumppfields Lane benefits from footpaths and street lighting and no parking restrictions are in force in the vicinity. It is also noted that this site is not located within walking distance of amenities / facilities, in addition, whilst there is a bus service S85 located at Hill Top, this is a school bus and not a regular bus service. Whilst it is County Highways view that the site is not a sustainable location potentially resulting in future occupants heavily reliant on the use of the private car to access amenities and services; highway

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safety & pedestrian safety is not being compromised by this proposed development since a footway and street lighting is located along Crumpfields Lane.

County Highways also refer to a recent appeal decision for a site at 38 Crumpfields Lane. The scheme (Ref: 22/00520/FUL) was a full application for the development of 6 dwellings. County Highways considered the site to be unsustainable. The applicant appealed to the Planning Inspectorate for non-determination reasons. The Inspector in their appeal decision dated 18th April 2024, stated that the LPA's main issues related to:-

- The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
- Whether the proposal would make suitable provision for pedestrian and cycle links.

The Inspector noted the pavement which would provide a pedestrian route for future occupiers to the facilities and services of Webheath. The Inspector stated in the appeal decision that *'It was noted that whilst there is no dedicated cycle path in the vicinity of the site, Crumpfields Lane is lit by streetlamps and vehicle speeds are not excessive. Therefore, cycling into Webheath and connecting to existing routes leading towards Redditch Town Centre would be a realistic prospect for future occupiers.....The proposal would be a discreet and relatively modest development. As such, ...would provide adequate connections to existing pedestrian and cycle links which would provide future occupiers with a choice of modes of transport.'*

The above appeal was dismissed for other reasons; however, whilst the two schemes are not like for like; they both would have access off Crumpfields Lane. Therefore, the view the Planning Inspector had in respect to the sustainable location of the appeal site (38 Crumpfields Lane) is a material consideration for this application. The Inspector considered that there would have been a choice of modes of transport for the scheme concerned.

For the above reasons it is considered that the site is a sustainable location for residential development.

Does the proposal include major development involving housing?

The application proposes 9 dwellings which would not usually be considered a 'Major Application' under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA). However, the updated NPPF glossary defines a site over 0.5 hectares as a Major. To clarify the application site for this PIP application is 0.48 hectares and as such would not be caught by the requirement to also satisfy the 'Golden Rules' when considering grey belt policy.

In conclusion, it is considered that the site is Grey Belt and would meet the Paragraph 155 requirements and thus the proposal should not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the NPPF.

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Land use

The site has been used in recent years as an equine paddock. Given its location in respect to the existing ribbon development it is considered that the proposal for 9 dwellings would be compatible with existing residential development.

Amount of development

Having regards to the layout and density of the nearby established ribbon development, it is considered that the site is of a reasonable size to facilitate 9 dwellings as proposed. Given the linear nature of the site, it assumed that the 9 dwellings would directly front Crumpfields Lane. However, the design and layout is not for consideration at this stage but would be considered at the Technical Stage.

Other matters

Drainage

The site is not considered to be at risk to flooding, however, a public sewer runs across the site (parallel with the Crumpfields Lane). Comments are awaited from Severn Trent regarding this matter. Comments have been expressed by residents regarding drainage and flooding issues close to the site. North Worcestershire Water Management raise no objection to the application; however, they have expressed that a drainage strategy will need to be submitted at the Technical Stage.

Highways

County Highways have no objection "in principle" to the proposed erection of up to nine dwellings – subject to the details provided at Technical Details stage are in accordance with WCC Streetscape Design Guide. Objections have been raised from residents on Highways safety concerns and the speed of vehicles. Further consideration will be made at the Technical Details stage depending on the layout and access proposed.

Land Contamination

Due to the historic agricultural nature of the site, and the proximity to a historic landfill site, there is the possibility that the site may potentially have contamination issues. Worcestershire Regulatory Services have confirmed that the principle of developing this site would be acceptable subject to a preliminary risk assessment which could be considered under the Technical Details stage.

Archaeology

In respect to Archaeology, there would be no objection to the proposal. However, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service should be consulted on Technical Details, as there may be a case for conditions to offset any potential harm.

Trees

Tree Preservation Order No. 74 exists on the site. The Tree Officer has stated that it is likely that the development might impact on 3 protected ash trees; and also to a lesser extent, another ash tree and group of trees if services need to be added. The existing hedgerow adjacent to Crumpfields Lane is also likely to be affected.

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Therefore, a full Tree Survey and a comprehensive Arboricultural Impact and Method statement (in line with BS5837- 2012) will be required at the Technical Details stage. So long as it can be demonstrated that the development would not cause harm to the trees, during construction and after development has taken place in terms of future pressures for pruning or removal; the Tree Officer does not object to the application.

Public consultation

The objections raised by residents, particularly concerning flood risk, traffic safety, and the impact on the Green Belt, have been carefully considered.

Regarding flood risk, while there are existing concerns in respect to flooding and a nearby pumping station, it is important to note that the Permission in Principle (PIP) stage focuses on the principle of development, and not detailed design. Technical solutions, such as appropriately designed drainage and attenuation, will be thoroughly assessed at the Technical Details Consent stage.

County Highways has no objections in principle, and further detailed traffic impact assessments will need to be conducted as part of the Technical Details Consent phase.

Concerning the Green Belt designation, the application has been assessed against Paragraph 155 of the NPPF, specifically regarding 'grey belt' land. The report concludes that the site meets the criteria for 'grey belt' and does not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the Green Belt, as defined in Paragraph 143. The Council's current lack of a five-year housing land supply, as outlined in the NPPF, also weighs significantly in favour of granting Permission in Principle.

Matters related to biodiversity, archaeology, trees, and land contamination will also be rigorously examined during the Technical Details Consent phase, ensuring that any potential impacts are appropriately mitigated. It is crucial to remember that at this PIP stage, the assessment is limited to location, land use, and the amount of development, and that the detail of the development, including the design and impact on residential amenity, will be fully explored in the subsequent Technical Details Consent application.

Housing Supply

The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (5YHLS) and therefore, regard should be had to paragraph 11(d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF which together state that for applications providing housing, where the Council cannot demonstrate a 5YHLS, the policies which are most important for determining the application are considered out-of-date and planning permission should be granted unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations,

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making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

Limb i. The proposals have been found to comply with paragraph 155 of the NPPF and are not considered to comprise of inappropriate development.

Limb ii. The proposal would contribute nine dwellings to local housing land supply. The site is located within a sustainable location and is of a suitable land use and amount. Other matters can be reviewed at the Technical Design Consent stage. Permission in Principle should therefore be granted.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, permission in principle be GRANTED.

Informative

1. This decision notice only relates to the grant of planning permission in principle. It does not give any approval or consent which may be needed under any legislation, enactment, byelaws, order or regulation other than the Housing and Planning Act 2016. You may need other approvals, consents or licenses for the development e.g. Technical Details Consent or building regulations approval.

Permission in Principle is not a planning permission; it is a precursor to it. A planning permission only exists when the Permission in Principle and Technical Detailed Consent have been granted.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because five (or more) objections have been received and therefore the proposal falls outside of the scheme of Delegation.