

EXAMINATIONS OF THE BROMSGROVE DISTRICT PLAN (BDP) and  
BOROUGH OF REDDITCH LOCAL PLAN No. 4 (BORLP4)  
**DRAFT MATTERS, ISSUES & QUESTIONS PAPER**

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Please Note: This document is in draft form. It is issued for comment only (to be sent to the Programme Officer for receipt by 5pm on **Monday 12 May 2014**) and will be superseded by a final version following that date.

OVERARCHING MATTERS & ISSUES (BOTH PLANS)

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**Matter O1 – Objectively Assessed Housing Needs**

O1.1 Are both Local Plans' housing policies based on adequate and up-to-date evidence and a clear understanding of housing needs in the market area, as is required by para 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)? Specifically, does the updated evidence base (April 2014) satisfactorily address failings in the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2012 that were identified by the Inspector examining the South Worcestershire Development Plan?

**Matter O2 – Duty to Co-operate & Future Housing Needs from Major Urban Areas**

O2.1 Have both Councils satisfied the Duty to Co-operate set out in section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004?

O2.2 Is it clear how both Local Plans have addressed the matter of meeting anticipated future housing needs arising from the major urban areas? Are the timing and scope of the Green Belt Boundary Review proposed by Bromsgrove District Council clearly expressed and adequately justified?

BROMSGROVE AND REDDITCH CROSS-BOUNDARY ISSUES

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**Matter XB1 – Cross-boundary Allocations**

XB1.1 Is the apportionment of housing provision from Redditch Borough to Bromsgrove District adequately justified? Specifically, with reference to paragraph 179 of the Framework, has it been demonstrated that Redditch's full housing needs cannot be met within the Borough itself?

XB1.2 Do the Foxlydiate and Brockhill Urban Extensions represent the most appropriate locations for meeting Redditch's housing needs within Bromsgrove District, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure, affordable housing and other facilities, and taking account of environmental constraints? Is the methodology for selecting these sites robust and transparent? Have exceptional circumstances been demonstrated to justify the removal of land from the Green Belt?

XB1.3 Is it clear how development of the Brockhill Urban Extension (BDP policy RCBD1.1) would relate to the development of the adjoining Brockhill East Strategic Site (BORLP4 policy 46)? Is it intended that cross-boundary co-ordination would take place – for example in respect of infrastructure provision? If so, is this clearly provided for in the two Local Plans?

XB1.4 Is the scale and location of the Ravensbank Expansion Site (policy BDP5B) adequately justified?

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT PLAN (BDP) – OTHER MATTERS & ISSUES

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### **Matter B1 – Development Strategy**

- B1.1 Does the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework?
- B1.2 Is the BDP's settlement hierarchy and proposed distribution of development sufficiently clear and adequately justified? Should housing targets be set for specific towns and villages? Does the settlement hierarchy take sufficient account of the proximity of parts of the District to the main urban areas?
- B1.3 Are policy BDP4's provisions for development in the Green Belt consistent with national planning policy? Specifically:
- (a) Is policy BDP4.4(b) consistent with paragraph 89 (2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point) of the Framework?
  - (b) Are the size thresholds set out in policy BDP4.4(c) adequately justified?

### **Matter B2 – Housing**

- B2.1 Notwithstanding the Overarching Matters & Issues above, can an adequate and flexible supply of housing land be demonstrated in respect of the Local Plan's housing target and the five year housing land supply as required by the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)? Specifically:
- (a) Has the Council shown a record of persistent under-delivery of housing, in the terms of paragraph 47 of the Framework?
  - (b) Has previous undersupply been considered in the light of the PPG's advice that that local planning authorities should aim to deal with any undersupply within the first five years of the plan period where possible?
  - (c) Has appropriate account been taken of the possibility that sites may not come forward, or may not be delivered at the rates envisaged, during the five year period? What flexibility exists to address any shortfalls?
  - (d) Is it clear how the 'Remaining Developments Sites' and 'Other SHLAA sites' components of housing supply (BDP para 8.22) have been calculated? Has double-counting been avoided?
  - (e) Are the Local Plan's assumptions in respect of the potential delivery from windfall sites robustly justified in line with the Framework?
  - (f) Is a clear mechanism set out to identify how and when the additional housing requirement not presently allocated within the Local Plan will be brought forward?
- B2.2 Is the Local Plan's approach to housing mix and density, including provisions for housing for the elderly and people with special needs, adequately justified?  
*Inspector's Note: See also question B4.6.*
- B2.3 Is the Local Plan's approach to affordable housing effective, justified (with particular regard to effects on viability), and consistent with national policy? Is the approach to affordable housing requirements in the

proposed cross-boundary allocations consistent with that set out in the BORLP4? If not, why not?

- B2.4 Does the Local Plan's approach to traveller sites accord with national policy in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS)? Specifically:
- (a) Has the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches been robustly assessed in line with the PPTS?
  - (b) Has an adequate supply of sites been identified in accordance with the PPTS? Specifically, has a supply of deliverable sites (years 1-5) and developable sites/broad locations (year 6+) been identified?
  - (c) Do policy BDP11's criteria for traveller sites accord with the PPTS?
- Inspector's Note: Please also refer to the query set out in my note to the Councils dated 10.4.14.*

### **Matter B3 – Employment, Retail, Transport and Infrastructure**

- B3.1 Are the Local Plan's policies for employment development based on robust and up-to-date evidence? Does policy BDP14's protection of existing employment sites accord with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (notably paragraph 22)? Is there scope to consider the reallocation of any employment sites to assist in meeting housing targets?  
*Inspector's Note: It is noted that employment land at Stoke Prior is included as a deliverable housing site in the Council's 5 year land supply.*
- B3.2 Are the Local Plan's policies for retail development, including the designation of Primary and Secondary Shopping Zones in Bromsgrove Town Centre, based on robust and up-to-date evidence?
- B3.3 With regard to comments by the Highways Agency, can the Council demonstrate that the scale of development proposed in the later part of the Plan period (post-2022) can be accommodated in transport terms?
- B3.4 Are the Local Plan's infrastructure requirements clear, justified and consistent with national policy and the proposed preparation of a CIL Charging Schedule? Has appropriate account been taken of potential effects on viability in line with paragraph 173 of the Framework?

### **Matter B4 – Environment**

- B4.1 Can the Council demonstrate that the Local Plan's allocations, including those proposed in policies RCBD1.1 and BDP17, are supported by adequate Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), as required by the Framework and national Planning Practice Guidance?  
*Inspector's Note: The Council's comments on representations by the Environment Agency regarding the absence of a Level 2 SFRA for a number of allocated sites are requested.*
- B4.2 Can the Council demonstrate that the Local Plan's allocations, including those proposed in policy RCBD1.1, have taken adequate account of potential effects on groundwater resources?  
*Inspector's Note: The Council's comments on representations by the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water in respect of this matter, particularly in respect of proposed allocation at Foxlydiate [policy RCBD1.1], are requested.*

- B4.3 Can the Council demonstrate that the Local Plan's allocations, including those proposed in policy RCBD1.1, have taken adequate account of agricultural land quality, in line with paragraph 112 of the Framework?
- B4.4 Does policy BDP21 accurately reflect relevant national policies and legislative requirements in respect of nature conservation and geological sites and designations?
- B4.5 Can the Council demonstrate that the Local Plan's allocations, including those proposed in policy RCBD1.1, have taken adequate account of potential effects on heritage assets?  
*Inspector's Note: The Council's comments on representations by English Heritage in respect of proposed allocations at Hagley and Ravensbank [policy BDP5B] are requested.*
- B4.6 Are the Local Plan's design requirements (such as Lifetime Homes standards [policy BDP8/10], sustainable building requirements [policy BDP19/22 and water management [policy BDP23] in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and national Planning Practice Guidance and adequately justified – for example in terms of viability?

**Matter B5 – Site Allocations (excluding cross-boundary allocations)**

*Inspector's Note: Cross-boundary allocations are considered in matter XB1*

- B5.1 Are the allocated sites appropriate and deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure, affordable housing and other facilities, and taking account of environmental constraints? Are relevant development requirements clearly set out and appropriately justified? Is the overall site selection methodology robust and transparent?
- B5.2 If there is a need to identify additional land for housing, are the alternative proposals that have been put forward in representations appropriate and deliverable? Have they been subject to sustainability appraisal compatible with that for the Local Plan and to public consultation?  
*Inspector's Note: Representors seeking to promote additional sites should have regard to any Interim Conclusions arising from the hearings held in respect of the Overarching Matters & Issues. Comments are requested from the Council on the merits of the alternative sites being promoted by representors.*

## BOROUGH OF REDDITCH LOCAL PLAN No. 4 – OTHER MATTERS & ISSUES

### **Matter R1 – Development Strategy**

- R1.1 Does the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 (BORLP4) plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)?
- R1.2 Is the BORLP4's settlement hierarchy and proposed distribution of development sufficiently clear and adequately justified?
- R1.3 Are the development densities required by policy 5 sufficiently flexible and adequately justified?
- R1.4 Are policy 8's provisions for development in the Green Belt consistent with the requirements of the Framework?
- R1.5 Are policy 10's provisions for rural worker's dwellings consistent with the requirements of the Framework? Specifically, is an adequate distinction made between the policy that applies to the Green Belt and that applying to the Open Countryside?

### **Matter R2 – Housing**

- R2.1 Notwithstanding the Overarching Matters & Issues above, can an adequate and flexible supply of housing land be demonstrated in respect of the Local Plan's housing target and the five year housing land supply as required by the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)? Specifically:
- (a) Has the Council shown a record of persistent under-delivery of housing, in the terms of paragraph 47 of the Framework?
  - (b) Has previous undersupply been considered in the light of the PPG's advice that that local planning authorities should aim to deal with any undersupply within the first five years of the plan period where possible?
  - (c) Has appropriate account been taken of the possibility that sites may not come forward, or may not be delivered at the rates envisaged, during the five year period? In particular, is it realistic to anticipate the delivery of 450 houses from the Foxlydiate site by 2018? What flexibility exists to address any shortfalls?
  - (e) Are the Local Plan's assumptions in respect of the potential delivery from windfall sites robustly justified in line with the Framework?
  - (f) Are the changes now proposed to policy 4.3 and Appendix 2 in respect of the former A435 ADR appropriately justified and necessary for soundness reasons? Is the amended stance with respect to lack of capacity for new housing to be located within Stratford-on-Avon District sufficiently justified?
- R2.2 Is the planning status of land at Curr Lane, Webheath clearly explained in BORLP4? The notation on the submission proposals map regarding this land refers to BDP policy RCBD1.1. However, this policy does not (and cannot) set out provisions for the development of land outside Bromsgrove District.
- R2.3 Is the Local Plan's approach to affordable housing effective, notably at policy 6, justified (with particular regard to effects on viability), and

consistent with national policy? Would a higher percentage requirement be justified in rural parts of the Borough?

- R2.4 Does the Local Plan make adequate provision for housing for the elderly?
- R2.5 Does the Local Plan's approach to traveller sites accord with national policy in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS)? Specifically:
- (a) Has the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches been robustly assessed in line with the PPTS?
  - (b) Has an adequate supply of sites been identified in accordance with the PPTS? Specifically, has a supply of deliverable sites (years 1-5) and developable sites/broad locations (year 6+) been identified?
  - (c) Do policy 7's criteria for traveller sites accord with the PPTS?
- Inspector's Note: Please also refer to the query set out in my note to the Councils dated 10.4.14.*

### **Matter R3 – Employment, Transport, Retail, Community & Infrastructure**

- R3.1 Are the Local Plan's policies for employment development clearly expressed and based on robust and up-to-date evidence? Specifically:
- (a) Does policy 24's protection of Primarily Employment Areas accord with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (notably paragraph 22)? Is there scope to consider the reallocation of any employment sites to assist in meeting housing targets?
  - (b) Is the scope of policy 25 clear? Is this restricted to non-designated employment sites or does it apply to any land outside the Primarily Employment Areas (in which case is it consistent with other policies – for example Green Belt and countryside protection)? Could this be made clearer?
  - (c) Is it clear from policy 28 what requirements are being placed on the developers of major applications in respect of education and training for local residents? Has appropriate account been taken of effects on viability in line with paragraph 173 of the Framework? Is this matter appropriate for consideration within a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), given the Framework's requirements in respect of SPDs (para 153) and the legal scope of SPDs?
- R3.2 Is the scale and distribution of employment development proposed by policy 23 clearly expressed and adequately justified? Specifically:
- (a) Is the scale of development at Ravensbank clearly expressed? (Para 23.2 refers to around 5.5 ha, while para 23.3 refers to around 10ha.)
  - (b) What is the status of the employment sites within Stratford-on-Avon District that are referred to in this policy? What certainty is there that these will be allocated and delivered? Is there a fallback position in the event that these do not come forward?
- R3.3 With regard to comments by the Highways Agency, can the Council demonstrate that the scale of development proposed in the later part of the Plan period (post-2022) can be accommodated in transport terms?
- R3.4 Are the Local Plan's policies for retail development, including the growth targets and hierarchy set out in policy 30, based on robust and up-to-date evidence?
- R3.5 Are the Local Plan's infrastructure requirements clear, justified and consistent with national policy and the proposed preparation of a CIL

Charging Schedule? Has appropriate account been taken of potential effects on viability in line with paragraph 173 of the Framework?

- R3.6 With reference to comments from Sport England, does the Local Plan make adequate provision for sporting facilities, including playing pitch improvements?

#### **Matter R4 – Environment**

- R4.1 Is the Plan's approach to Local Green Spaces clear and consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework? Specifically, given the Framework's requirement (para 76) that Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, why are Local Green Spaces not being proposed for designation in the submitted plan? Is it clear when and by what mechanism Local Green Spaces will be designated?
- R4.2 Are the references to Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) in policies 12 and 40 consistent with the Framework's requirements in respect of SPDs (para 153) and the legal scope of SPDs?
- R4.3 Are the detailed requirements of policy 15 (regarding climate change) consistent with national policy (in, for example the Planning Practice Guidance) and adequately justified in viability terms?
- R4.4 Does policy 16 distinguish adequately between the criteria applying to national, regional and local nature conservation sites?
- R4.5 Bearing in mind the comments of the Environment Agency, is the approach to flood risk set out in policy 17 (and supporting text) consistent with national policy?
- R4.6 Does the Local Plan provide adequately for the protection of heritage assets, consistent with the requirements of the Framework?

#### **Matter R5 – Site Allocations (excluding cross-boundary allocations)**

*Inspector's Note: Cross-boundary allocations are considered in matter XB1*

- R5.1 Are the allocated sites appropriate and deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure, affordable housing and other facilities, and taking account of environmental constraints? Are relevant development requirements clearly set out and appropriately justified? Is the overall site selection methodology robust and transparent?
- R5.2 If there is a need to identify additional land for housing, are the alternative proposals that have been put forward in representations appropriate and deliverable? Have they been subject to sustainability appraisal compatible with that for the Local Plan and to public consultation?  
*Inspector's Note: Representors seeking to promote additional sites should have regard to any Interim Conclusions arising from hearings held in respect of the Overarching Matters & Issues. Comments are requested from the Council on the merits of the alternative sites being promoted by representors.*

Michael J Hetherington  
Inspector for the Examinations of the BDP and BORLP4  
2 May 2014