

B024



Your Ref:

Our Ref:

November 2013

Strategic Planning
Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

DTZ
1 Colmore Square
Birmingham
B4 6AJ

Dear Sir/Madam

ROYAL MAIL GROUP REPRESENTATIONS:

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT PLAN DOCUMENT – SUBMISSION VERSION CONSULTATION (2013)

We are instructed by Royal Mail Group Ltd (Royal Mail) to submit representations to the Bromsgrove District Plan Submission Version Consultation (2013)

Background

Royal Mail, formerly Consignia plc, is the successor to the former statutory corporation, The Post Office. Although its management operates independently, Royal Mail is wholly owned by the Government through the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. Its services are regulated by Ofcom. Its letters business, Royal Mail, is the operator of universal postal functions through the Royal Mail letterpost delivery and collections services, handling letters, postal packets and high value (registered) packets. Royal Mail Group also operates Parcelforce Worldwide, which is a parcels carrier. Post Office Limited (a “sister” company to Royal Mail) operates the national network of post offices and sub post offices.

The United Kingdom letter post business has been fully liberalised since the Postal Services Act 2000 and Royal Mail now operates in a highly competitive market place. As such, it effectively operates like any other business and is continually seeking to find ways to improve the efficiency of its business (e.g. increased automation) and respond to the changes in communications technology (e.g. email and internet). Put simply, the nature of the mail industry has, and continues to change and Royal Mail’s real estate needs to respond accordingly.

Royal Mail Properties

Royal Mail has a statutory duty to provide efficient mail sorting and delivery for Bromsgrove District Council’s administrative area. Royal Mail’s collection and delivery service for Bromsgrove is provided from Bromsgrove Delivery Office, Sherwood Road, Bromsgrove B60 3GB which is owned by Royal Mail freehold.

Royal Mail wish to emphasise the need to protect this site from development that may adversely affect mail services provided from them and that should any land surrounding Royal Mail’s sites be redeveloped, it would be vital that any new uses be designed and managed so that they are both cognisant of and sensitive to Royal Mail’s operations.

This approach accords with adopted Government guidance set out in the *National Planning Policy Statement* (NPPF) (March 2012) which advises that local planning authorities should help achieve economic growth by planning proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. The *NPPF* also advises that local planning authorities should support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting. It also states that policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances (Paragraphs 20-21).

Representations

The District Plan provides employment and housing site allocations to meet the target provisions identified in the Core Strategy.

The Bromsgrove Delivery Office (201) is located within an identified employment area where employment uses will be protected. RMG support this policy.

The Plan makes a number of strategic housing allocations, including on expansion sites north of Bromsgrove for over 2,000 new homes. The document also provides employment land to meet the identified target which equates to a total of 28 ha for local employment need over the Plan period.

The Bromsgrove Delivery Office is operational, and it is important that any proposals that come forward ensure that Royal Mail's operations will not be prejudiced and they can continue to comply with their statutory duty to maintain a 'universal service' for the UK pursuant to the Postal Services Act 2000.

Royal Mail has a statutory duty to provide efficient mail sorting and delivery for North Warwickshire Borough Council's administrative area. As such, they are keen to be informed about plans for strategic levels of growth, and in particular the proposed delivery of 2,000 new homes north of Bromsgrove.

The scale of proposed growth may place a significant burden on the existing Delivery Offices and as a consequence, it is possible that Royal Mail may require a new Delivery Office to handle the additional deliveries that will result from the planned growth.

As a statutory provider, Royal Mail may require the allocation of a new site for a new Delivery Office or developer contributions through S106 of the Town & Country Planning Act or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as a valid recipient of infrastructure funds.

Royal Mail will continue to closely monitor plans for growth around Bromsgrove and would welcome further discussion with the Council on the delivery of new infrastructure as the plans for the town evolve.

We request that Royal Mail is consulted on the forthcoming submission of the Development Plan. All correspondence for Royal Mail should be sent to DTZ.

Yours Sincerely

