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Planning and Regeneration
Strategic Planning
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Our Ref.: HD/BromsgroveLPPublication
Your Ref.: Bromsgrove District Plan
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Date: 11th November 2013

For the attention of the Strategic Planning Team

Dear Sir/Madam,

Bromsgrove and Redditch District Plan Proposed Submission Version 2011-2030

Thank you for consulting Centro on the document, "Bromsgrove/Redditch District Plan Proposed Submission". Whilst this plan area falls outside the West Midlands Metropolitan area, the plan is within the West Midlands 'Journey to Work' area and therefore Centro considers this important and should be consistent with the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (2011-2026) as well as national policy guidance.

Centro considers Bromsgrove and Redditch as key travel designations within the West Midlands region, offering a diverse range of services including employment opportunities and leisure attractions. The West Midlands Regional Rail Forum (WMRRF) (the regional body covering both the seven Metropolitan area districts and the West Midlands shire areas) have produced their Rail Vision Document which presents Bromsgrove and Redditch as key rail destinations and Centro is very supportive of the importance of any future rail improvements made to this area.

Improving rail services to Bromsgrove and Redditch is also a policy within the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Centro's long term vision document, "Towards a World Class Integrated Transport Network". The documents provide a "backbone" of rapid, high capacity public transport, which links the Metropolitan area with the journey to work area; main centres and enterprise zones; and key corridors which underpin regeneration. This network is at the core of facilitating future growth and development and will help enable labour markets to access jobs and skills right across the West Midlands. Rail improvements are vital to locations in connecting it to the Metropolitan area and Centro is very keen to work jointly with both Bromsgrove and Redditch District Council to seek investment for such improvements, to support any planned growth.

Rail comments

Centro, in partnership with Network Rail appreciates there is a requirement to invest in longer/more frequent trains and additional infrastructure capability in order to meet the increasing transport demand brought about by growth in this area. In the future, High Speed Rail can transfer the West Coast Main Line inter-city services to the High Speed Rail Network, therefore releasing considerable capacity from the existing line which can be used for new local, regional or national services. However, exploring additional infrastructure capability required, to meet the increasing



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transport demand with both Redditch and Bromsgrove District Council is important to Centro and Network Rail.

Centro has also had a major role to play in developing and financing Bromsgrove's new rail station and interchange facilities and therefore fully supports the proposals to relocate and improve the existing station. However, as a key partner in this project, Centro requests we are highlighted in the plan together with rail industry partners in paragraph 8.182 and in the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Co-Operate. The partnership created between Bromsgrove District Council and Centro should be seen as a benchmark and we hope that other 'journey to work areas' follow suit, in forming a working partnership with Centro.

Furthermore, under paragraph 8.183, Centro fully supports improved rail connectivity through increased frequency and service pattern changes to Bromsgrove. Electrification from Barnt Green to Bromsgrove is committed and frequency of train services between Birmingham, Barnt Green, Alvechurch and Redditch, which incorporates partial double tracking in the Alvechurch area and a second platform, will increase frequency of services at the new Bromsgrove station. All of which are committed under CP5.

Rail, bus, cycling and walking comments

Centro supports the overall spatial vision for the districts and especially the identification of public transport as an important issue. The close location of proposal sites in Bromsgrove and Redditch to railway stations supports Centro's policies in locating development close to the existing public transport network.

Centro would like to ensure that people travelling to all the proposed sites, do not establish unsustainable travel patterns. Centro would wish to ensure that anticipated growth in land uses can be supported by public transport and in supporting transport infrastructure to promote improved accessibility by modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. Therefore it is vital that any new development fully supports sustainable travel measures, good cycling and walking links in the area (particularly connecting to public transport stops and stations and the centre), provision of cycle parking, and the development of employer and residential travel plans with particular onus on personal travel planning for residential developments.

Park and Ride implications

Centro supports improved park and ride facilities at Wythall Railway Station, particularly as development at Wythall takes place. Also, growing towns close to stations such as Alvechurch, Barnt Green and Hagley may also require improved park and ride facilities. Reference to possible station improvements, to support such growth should therefore be made in the local plan.

Furthermore, as Centro offers free park and ride facilities within the Centro area, the implications on our bordering park and ride sites such as Longbridge and Stourbridge could be significant and should be considered in the local plan.

Duty to Co-operate

Any development will shape future travel demand and vice versa. Therefore Centro would like to ensure that the Local Plan reflects Centro's vision, shapes broad development patterns in the wider journey to work area and that we understand how the growth areas will impact on the existing public transport network. The role of Birmingham in particular, as a regional economic driver leads to a significant amount of inward commuting from adjoining areas such as Kidderminster and Worcester, thus leading to pressures along main transport corridors into the Metropolitan area. It is therefore vital that high capacity public transport, which can effectively link with the journey to work area, is considered and highlighted within the Local Plan.

As Centro has had a significant role into the design and operation of the new Bromsgrove station and in supporting the case for improved frequency of services to Bromsgrove and Redditch, it is vital we are included in the prescribed bodies in the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Co-Operate.

Finally, as such anticipated growth of Bromsgrove and Redditch will bring challenges for public transport, Centro recommends that a wider transportation strategy is required, to achieve the wider growth aspirations in a sustainable manner. Centro Planning Officers would therefore like to arrange a meeting with you to discuss these impacts further.

Summary

- Reference should be made to the West Midlands Local Transport Plan and the links Bromsgrove and Redditch has (as a journey to work area) with the Metropolitan West Midlands area.
- As Birmingham is a regional driver, significant amounts of commuting from Bromsgrove and Redditch into the Metropolitan area takes place. For Centro to understand how the anticipated growth of Bromsgrove and Redditch will impact on the demand for public transport, Centro recommends that a wider transportation strategy be developed.
- As Centro has had a significant role into the design and operation of new Bromsgrove station and in supporting the case for improved frequency of services to Bromsgrove, it is vital we are referenced in the Local Plan under paragraph **8.182** and included in the prescribed bodies in the Statement of Compliance within the Duty to Co-Operate.
- The impact of growing towns close to existing rail stations, such as Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Hagley and Wythall, and how these could impact on existing park and ride facilities at stations should be considered in the plan.
- To ensure that all the proposed sites support sustainable travel measures, good cycling and walking links in the area (particularly connecting to public transport stops and stations), provision of cycle parking, and development of employer and residential travel plans with particular onus on personal travel planning for residential developments should be fully developed to ensure each site is well connected to the public transport network.

In the meantime, I would appreciate you keeping me informed on the progress of this development plan and if you have any further queries, would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

