

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT PLAN & THE BOROUGH OF REDDITCH LOCAL PLAN (NO. 4)

EXAMINATION UNDER SECTION 20 OF THE PLANNING ACT 2004

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL JOINT NOTE

Introduction

1. The examination hearings in respect of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan (No.4) and Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 are due to re-commence on Tuesday 23 and Wednesday 24 June 2015. The hearings will specifically address the Bromsgrove and Redditch cross boundary allocations and sustainability appraisal.
2. The Inspector has requested that the Councils produce an additional note in advance of commencement of the hearings, addressing the following specific matters:
 - The chronology of events since 6 October 2014
 - Explanation of the outcomes of these events in respect of the plans
 - The sustainability appraisal evidence
 - Earlier correspondence in relation to sustainability appraisal
3. This statement addresses these points below.

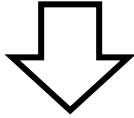
Chronology of Events

4. The Inspector has requested that the Councils set out the sequence of actions taken by the Councils since his Post Hearing Note of 6 October 2014.

6 October 2014

Following the hearing sessions in September 2014, the Inspector issued [a Post Hearing Note](#)

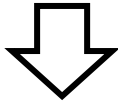
- I. The Inspector's Note made a series of requests in respect of the Housing Growth Development Study and its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. This included, firstly explicit reference to the Webheath and A435 Sites in the HGDS, secondly the revisiting of the SA accompanying



7 October 2014
Redditch Borough Council submitted [a response to the Inspector's Post Hearings Note](#)

the submitted Local Plan with regard to the Webheath and Brockhill West sites.

- II. Redditch Borough Council (RBC) replied to the Note, by agreeing to submit further work before the hearings were due to reconvene in December 2014.

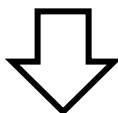


6 November 2014
Redditch Borough Council submitted the additional work requested.
[Letter dated 5 November](#)
[CDR18.23](#) - Redditch Sustainability Appraisal Refresh
[CDX 1.47](#) - Addendum to the Housing Growth Development Study and the Housing Growth Sustainability Appraisal

- III. RBC quickly responded to the request by submitting the Borough of Redditch Sustainability Appraisal refresh [CDR18.23] and with Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), an Addendum to the Housing Growth Development Study and the Housing Growth Sustainability Appraisal [CDX1.47].

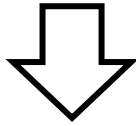
The Redditch Sustainability Appraisal refresh was undertaken including two sites (Webheath as part of Area 3 and A435 Corridor also known as Area 18).

The HGDS SA Addendum [CDX1.47] was undertaken to cover all previously excluded areas within Redditch as part of this comparable assessment.



5 December 2014
Statement for Cross Boundary Allocations Submitted

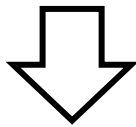
- IV. Statements for the December hearing sessions were submitted on 5 December 2014 in preparation for the Cross Boundary allocations hearing sessions.



The Borough Council then asked for a short delay to the Hearings to enable them time to understand the significance of the statements given, in the absence of a key staff member.

17 December 2014
Following Statements being submitted for December hearings RBC asked for additional time to undertake further work

V. On 17 December 2014 the Council requested a second, longer period of time to undertake further SA work and ensure that the Inspector was provided with a further updated Sustainability Appraisal Report.



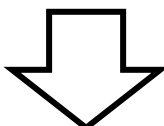
13 -19 January 2015
There has been [an email exchange](#)
To propose a timetable for undertaking additional work

VI. At the start of 2015, Bromsgrove District Council also considered carrying out further work to its SA and decided to publish and consult upon an updated SA alongside the updated Redditch SA. The Inspector subsequently agreed to both Councils' suggested new timetable for consultation, response and recommencement of Examination Hearings.



January - March 2015
Additional work being undertaken

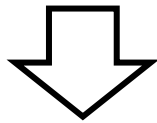
VII. The Councils, alongside specialist consultants AMEC UK Ltd, carried out additional work on the updated BORLP No.4 Sustainability Appraisal Report. This included the formulation of (a) an audit of the evolution of the appraisal of the BORLP4 in respect of the reasonable alternatives considered, proposed spatial strategy and strategic allocations; (b) the re-appraisal and additional appraisal where required, of the proposed spatial strategy, proposed strategic allocations and policies; (c) remedies of certain technical errors; and (d) revision of the overall structure and presentation of the SA Report.



The scope of work specific to the BDP SA was limited to additions to aid in the clarity and

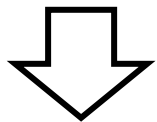
completeness of the report and with AMEC verifying its compliance with the SEA/SA regulations.

24 March – 5 May 2015
Consultation on new SA



VIII. Consultation on the revised Redditch Local Plan and Bromsgrove District Plan Sustainability Appraisals was undertaken between 24 March and 5 May 2015. 48 individual representations were received, including from statutory consultees, parish councils, members of the public and development industry representatives.

January – March 2015
Additional work being undertaken



IX. The Councils responded to this consultation jointly by making amendments to the Sustainability Appraisal documentation in response to the representations received [OED/35].

18 May 2015
Submission of SA to the examination

X. The Councils have now submitted the up to date Sustainability Appraisals to accompany the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 (OED33a) and the Bromsgrove District Plan (OED34). The RBC Sustainability Appraisal now includes a narrative and assessment which makes it clear why the sites originally omitted from the Assessment were either promoted as development sites or rejected, which is what was requested by the Inspector.

Outcomes for the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 (BORLP4) and the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP)

5. The Inspector has further requested that the Councils state the outcome of the process in terms of any changes to the Plans.

6. The above process thoroughly investigated the content of both Plans (BORLP No.4 and the BDP) and their evidence case, including the Cross Boundary Allocations and the Redditch Sustainability Appraisal. The Councils have also very carefully considered the many representations submitted by representors/consultees. No statutory consultee has objected to the Plans or any component of the Sustainability Appraisal. No changes have been made to policies or supporting text of either plan. It remains the Councils view that the SA's are legally compliant and are appropriate Sustainability Appraisals to support both Plans.

SA and evidence to support the Plans

7. The Inspector has further requested that the Councils should state which document (or documents) the Councils are relying upon to justify the present position in respect of the Cross Boundary Allocations.

Documentation Generally

8. It is important to distinguish the three categories of document before the Inspector, by brief reference to the legal framework.
9. First, the Examination involves determination of the soundness and legal compliance of the submitted BORLP4 and BDP Local Plans (as development plan documents/local development documents) (s. 19(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
10. Second, the Plans have each been accompanied by a Report on the Sustainability Appraisal (as a statutory requirement under s. 19(5)(a) and (b) PCPA 2004). These documents are a legal requirement and occupy a specific role within the evidence base. It is further important to recognise that the term "sustainability appraisal" refers to a process, not a single document – although the term "SA" is often used as shorthand for "the SA Report".
11. Third, the Plans were produced with the support of a much larger number of documents comprising the rest of the Plans' evidence base.

Housing Growth Development Study

12. The Housing Growth Development Study (HGDS) and its Addendum (submitted in November 2014) are two evidence base documents (as distinguishable from the Local Plans and the Sustainability Appraisals).
13. Redditch Borough Council confirmed in its Letter dated 5 November 2014 that the HGDS *"has been updated to ensure the previously discounted*

areas have been assessed to the same level as the existing areas within the study."

14. The Housing Growth Development Study should be read alongside the Addendum and is also relied upon as part of the evidence base.

HGDS Sustainability Appraisal

15. The November 2014 Addendum's accompanying Sustainability Appraisal is also a material component of the evidence base, but it is not the most recent SA Report (for the purposes of statutory compliance under s.19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Sustainability Appraisal Report Update

16. The SAs are the most up-to-date Reports on Sustainability Appraisal and the qualifying document for the purposes of s. 19(5) PCPA 2004 in respect of the BORLP4 and the BDP.
17. The SA Updates have taken into account and do not supersede the HGDS and its Addendum as a component of their evidence base.
18. The HGDS SA was also taken into account, but it represents an earlier stage of the overall process of sustainability appraisal.
19. Additional sites were appraised during the process of updating the HGDS to produce the Addendum and its accompanying SA. That process has also been taken into account within the SA Updates.
20. The SA Update Reports therefore support the Plan, by recording, considering and evaluating the site selection process. It has also contributed to the consideration of whether the Plan needed to be altered or amended, including by the selection of alternative allocations.
21. The SA Update Report records the Council's conclusion that the Cross Boundary growth is therefore consistent with the broad evidence in the HGDS.
22. Paragraph 167 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that:

"Assessments should be proportionate, and should not repeat policy assessment that has already been undertaken. Wherever possible the

local planning authority should consider how the preparation of any assessment will contribute to the plan's evidence base."

Summary

23. In summary, the Councils rely upon both the Sustainability Appraisal Updates and the full evidence base, including the HGDS and its Addendum.
24. Notably, the Redditch Sustainability Appraisal explains in the Non-Technical Summary (paragraph 13 to 26) how all the reasonable alternatives to growth in and around Redditch have been assessed. The BDP SA update mirrors the cross boundary section in its Non-technical Summary on pages 19-23.
25. The evidence to support the preferred location of Foxlydiate and Brockhill East remains valid, and the Redditch Sustainability Appraisal concludes that the preferred sites are sustainable; therefore the Plans can be considered to be sound and can be adopted in due course.

Earlier Correspondence

26. The Inspector has requested clarity in respect of earlier correspondence identifying that there would be a "two-stage re-write" of the Sustainability Appraisal and where this can be found.
27. As a preliminary matter, the term "update" more accurately describes the process that was undertaken than "re-write". Substantial components of the SA remained valid and up-to-date and therefore did not require any further amendment. Where amendments and additions occurred, these were clearly sign-posted.
28. Redditch Borough Council's intention expressed in the email of 17 December 2014 referred to the production of a redrafted SA for consultation as the first component of this process.
29. Once responses to that consultation were received, the second, finalised Sustainability Appraisal was to be amended and then submitted to the Examination representing the second component of that process [OED/33a].
30. The Council completed the first re-write of the Sustainability Appraisal which commenced consultation on 24th March 2015. As this was the Council's consultation, this version of the Sustainability Appraisal Report was not submitted to the examination at that stage.

31. On 5 May 2015 the consultation ended and the Council commenced its preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal with the necessary amendments based upon the responses received. This was submitted to the examination on 18 May as OED/33a.
32. As the March 2015 consultation version was not submitted at the time of the consultation, the Councils have requested that it now be added to the Examination Documents List.

Summary

33. At the examination hearing next week, the Councils will explain the above statements by reference to the relevant documentation and respond to Inspector's questions and other participants' submissions made in the round-table discussion led by the Inspector.