

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY**

**3<sup>rd</sup> July 2008**

**REDDITCH JOINT STUDY PART 2 BRIEF**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jill Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	Dave Hammond
Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report details the brief for the second stage of the Redditch Joint Study to be carried out to inform the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Phase 2 revision.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Members agree the brief of the Second Stage of the Redditch growth study, and consultants are commissioned to carry out the work.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 As members will be aware the phase 2 revision of the RSS is proposing an additional 3300 dwellings to meet the needs of Redditch which will need to be accommodated in Bromsgrove and or Stratford. Currently the revision does not specify how this requirement should be split between the districts, which present a challenge for the authorities in progressing their Core Strategies. In order to move to the latter stages of Core Strategy production the District Council needs to have more clarity on the levels of development potentially required in Bromsgrove for Redditch's growth needs.
- 3.2 Government Office and the Regional Assembly have indicated that they expect robust arrangements to be put in place to determine the split in the housing and employment land targets between the authorities' areas to provide greater certainty in the preparation of Core Strategies.
- 3.3 To support the preparation of the RSS Worcestershire County Council, Redditch Borough, and Bromsgrove and Stratford District Councils commissioned consultants White Young Green to undertake a 'Joint Study into the Future Growth of Redditch Town to 2026'. This study was completed in December 2007 and forms a key part of the evidence base for the RSS.
- 3.4 The existing joint study is strategic in nature and provides an independent view on (i) the potential capacity of Redditch Town to accommodate additional growth; and (ii) taking account of that capacity, to give a view on the scale of and likely implications of growth in the surrounding districts of

Bromsgrove and Stratford that will be required to meet Redditch Borough-related growth needs. Having considered areas of search the study provides sufficient evidence for a view to be formed on the broad balance of development required between Redditch Borough and the surrounding two districts of Bromsgrove and Stratford-on-Avon; the key infrastructure issues such levels of growth are likely to give rise to and which will need to be addressed; and the key policy implications that will need to be addressed such as the impact the levels of growth will potentially have on the Green Belt and its purposes. A further report has been prepared outlining in more detail the findings of the joint study.

- 3.5 However, there is a general agreement between the authorities concerned that the Joint Study is insufficiently detailed to allow district level splits of Redditch Borough-related growth to be identified. At a meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March attended by the Leaders and senior officers of all the Local Authorities four options of how to progress were outlined, it was agreed option 2 additional work would need to be done augment the broad study findings.
- 3.6 A brief has been prepared by officers at the commissioning authorities (see appendix A) and it is proposed upon members approval White Young Green are commissioned to undertake the further work, the role of Warwickshire County council has yet to be finalised.
- 3.7 This additional work will investigate the following elements
  - a) Whether Redditch Borough can accommodate more than its 3300 dwelling designation within its boundary and the optimum split of the remaining designation between Stratford and Bromsgrove districts, together with a phasing programme based on two scenarios firstly the Preferred Option figures for housing and employment land together with a second scenario of a 30% increase on these figures;
  - b) Provide detailed information on the likely impacts of development (including different scales of development) on the priority of sites to be developed. This will relate to the areas of search considered within the existing Joint Study (or parts of them), in terms of the natural environment, including sensitive sites and opportunities for protection and enhancement (i.e. a more robust and detailed SWOT type analysis). This should include reference to the Worcestershire/Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessments and the application of a sensitivity analysis.
  - c) The suitability or otherwise of the areas of search (or parts of them) in relation to the existing Redditch Town form, in particular accessibility to essential Town Centre facilities and transport nodes. An accessibility profile for areas of search (or parts of them) would need to be established to allow comparisons;

- d) The key infrastructure issues to be faced, particularly with regard to the two concerns identified within the Joint Study regarding new transportation and foul water infrastructure. This would need to address the issue of which areas of search (or parts of them) are most likely to be deliverable, or are preferable for development given the scale of infrastructure needs and likely costs. This should examine the scale of development and associated infrastructure required in various areas to justify unlocking them. In terms of transportation this would involve more detailed analysis throughout the sub-region of trip rates, the implications of growth on the proposals for the Studley by-pass, the Bordesley by-pass and future rail plans particularly along the cross city line between Redditch and the conurbation.
- e) The implications of development in the areas of search (or parts of them) in respect of one another in terms of specific impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt and in helping to deliver the aims of the RSS (e.g. urban renaissance of the MUAs and local regeneration), including for example an appraisal of the proposed development on the strategic function of the Green Belt;
- f) Thorough/rigorous consideration of the capacity of the Areas of Development Constraint and White Land (Winyates Green Triangle) within and adjacent to Redditch;
- g) Detailed scrutiny of the capacity of the urban area, both the Town Centre and more widely in terms of the adopted open space standards in Redditch;
- h) Sustainability Appraisal to consider likely sustainability impacts of the scale of development required and the implications, for example in terms of infrastructure needed.

3.8 It is anticipated that work would commence on the stage 2 study by the end of July with a report being available for public consultation by 7 October. This timing means that the Stage 2 study would be available at the same time that the Government Office Study of Housing Options for the RSS, being undertaken by Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners (NLP), is published for public comment. The findings of the stage 2 study would also be available for public consultation as part of the Preferred Options consultation in respect of each of the three District Authorities Core Strategies, which are due to commence by the end of October 2008.

3.9 The final study, together with the feedback from public consultation would be available to inform the Local Authorities response to the WMRSS Preferred Option and the NLP study by 8 December.

#### 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 It was estimated that the costs for carrying out such a study was likely to be in the region of £50,000 and contributors would be Worcestershire County Council, Stratford District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council and the West Midlands Regional Assembly. At the meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> May both the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive agreed to part fund this work to the sum of £10,000.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The RSS is the responsibility of the West Midlands Regional Assembly and is being prepared under the regulations of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; the district council also has an obligation under the act to prepare a Local Development Documents in line with the Local Development Scheme. The ability to prepare these documents is influence by progress on the RSS.

## 6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 The ability of the Council to deliver its objectives is affected by the status of the Local Development Framework (LDF). All documents produced as part of the LDF have to be in general conformity with the RSS, therefore the RSS will ultimately impact on these objectives and priorities. The table below indicates potential impacts.

6.2 The ability to implement the Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy is also highly dependant of the Local Development Framework. Many of the areas covered by the Sustainable Community Strategy cannot be delivered without formal planning polices.

<b>Council Objective (CO)</b>	Regeneration (CO1)	<b>Council Priority (CP)</b>	A thriving market town (CP1)
<b>Impacts</b>			
Policies in the RSS support the development of centres across the region, including those not specifically named as major urban areas or, settlements of significant development, the ability to regenerate the town are not adversely effected by policies in the RSS			
<b>Council Objective (CO)</b>	Improvement (CO2)	<b>Council Priority (CP)</b>	Customer service (CP2)
<b>Impacts</b>			
No impact			
<b>Council Objective (CO)</b>	Sense of Community and Well Being (CO3)	<b>Council Priority (CP)</b>	Sense of community (CP3)
<b>Impacts</b>			

The RSS gives a strategic framework for planning across the region. Plans at a more local level can then create planning policies that provide developments which can enhance the sense of community and well being.

<b>Council Objective (CO)</b>	Environment (CO4)	<b>Council Priority (CP)</b>	Housing (CP4)  Clean streets and recycling (CP5)
<b>Impacts</b>			
<p>The RSS guides the levels and distribution of housing development across the region. The ability of Bromsgrove to satisfy all of its affordable housing needs are significantly reduced by this emerging policy of housing restraint in districts which are not Major Urban Areas or, Settlements of Significant Development.</p> <p>In the Long term the RSS could help provide more waste management facilities in the district.</p>			

## 7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- Inability to produce development plan documents which are judged to be sound by the planning inspectorate.

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

Risk Register: Planning and Environment  
 Key Objective Ref No: 6  
 Key Objective: Effective, efficient, and legally compliant Strategic planning Service

7.3 Progress on the LDF is monitored by the government through the Local Development Schemes and Annual Monitoring Reports produced by the Strategic Planning section. The progress on the Local Development Scheme is a key factor used to allocate Housing and Planning Delivery Grant. Failure to progress the LDF inline with the Local Development Scheme could have short term financial implications. Consistent failure to produce LDF documents specifically the Core Strategy could result in the GOWM taking the strategic planning function away from control of the council. In this case they would employ other planning professionals to prepare the core strategy on behalf of the GOWM and then impose it on the District Council, whilst also requesting that the district council pay the consultancy fees accrued in the process.

## 8. **CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Endorsing the agreement to carry out a further technical study will have no direct implications on the council's customers; however the implications of the work are likely to have a wide sub regional impact on customers as does the RSS.

## **9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 This study will form part of the evidence base to inform the Core Strategy. Consultation will be carried out with all sections of the community as the plan progresses.

## **10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The proposed study is to be jointly funded by a number of different bodies thereby distributing the costs, it is also hoped that White Young Green who carried out the original work will also be able to complete the part 2 study thereby reducing the time and cost implications of a further procurement exercise.

## **11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	The policy decisions taken at a regional level directly effect the ability to generate local policies especially in relation to planning
Environmental	As stated above their will be implications to the environment over a long period of time, the exact effects are currently unknown.

## **12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director - Partnerships & Projects	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No

Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

**13. WARDS AFFECTED**

All wards

**14. APPENDICES**

Appendix A - Redditch Joint Study Part 2 Brief

**15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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