

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY

16TH MARCH 2009

LONGBRIDGE AREA ACTION PLAN - ADOPTION

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

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Longbridge Area Action Plan (LAAP) has been prepared in conjunction with Birmingham City Council, Worcestershire County Council and key stakeholders, including the landowners St Modwen Properties PLC, and Advantage West Midlands. The Secretary of State has now assessed the LAAP and found it sound, and can now be adopted by both Local Planning authorities.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Longbridge Area Action Plan is formally adopted as the development plan for the former MG Rover Site.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As members are aware the former car maker MG rover collapsed on 8th April 2005. The immediate effects of the collapse was around 6500 jobs lost, on a site which resourced a supply chain of approximately 27,000 people and had an annual materials budget of £1.2 billion, a considerable amount of the supply chain was within the West Midlands region. The collapse also left a site of approximately 140 hectares / 350 acres of brownfield development land.
- 3.2 In October 2005 Bromsgrove District Council, and Birmingham City Council as the planning authorities formally agreed to work together, alongside key partners such as Worcester County Council, Advantage West Midlands and the principal landowners St Modwen Properties to prepare a Development Plan Document (The LAAP) to guide the regeneration of the former MG rover plant.
- 3.3 Since the agreement was made several reports have been submitted to members outlining the various stages in the production of the LAAP, this report is the final one which summarises the Examination in Public and subsequent inspectors report.

3.4 In March 2008 upon agreement from both councils the LAAP was submitted to the Secretary of State to undergo an Examination in Public (EIP). At the time the plan was proposing policies to create a sustainable community that showcased the highest standards of design. The aim was to deliver a mixed-use development with sustainable jobs in new technology based businesses, a high quality built environment, a leading edge approach to creating a mixed use local centre, well designed open spaces and river corridors and to break new ground in helping tackle climate change.

3.5 The plan specifically proposed within Birmingham

- A 25ha Regional Investment Site, for high technology businesses with some offices and supporting services,
- A new Local Centre including the following:
 - A retail quarter with up to 13,500 sq.m. Gross retail floorspace for convenience and comparison goods. Offices and residential uses on upper floors.
 - A learning quarter comprising a new college facility.
 - A mixed-use quarter with offices, service uses, an Austin Heritage centre, residential and other uses.
- An employment zone adjacent to the boundary with Nanjing comprising industrial and warehousing uses with some live/work units.
- Nanjing Automotive site to be retained for car manufacturing but with encouragement that should any of the site become surplus to requirements it be made available for other employment uses and uses which fit within the overall aims of the AAP and adjoining land uses
- Residential development with associated open space comprising around 350 dwellings adjacent to the Regional Investment site

3.6 And within Bromsgrove proposals were for

- Longbridge East Residential development
 - Residential - minimum 700 dwellings with a range of house types, styles, and tenures including 35% affordable. The River Arrow will be opened up through the site to provide green links to the open countryside and Public Open Space
 - Within the east works site small scale local facilities will be provided, including small scale retail with new community centre and library.
 - The main accesses to the site will be from Groveley Lane with a secondary route from the existing access point in Parsonage Drive. No access will be permitted from Cofton Church Lane.
- Cofton Centre Employment Development

- Employment (Use Class B1, B2 and B8 uses) suitable uses include light industry, general industry, warehousing, and Green Technology developments.

- As the Cofton Centre abuts the Green Belt, the opportunity to improve pedestrian and green links to the countryside will be investigated at the detailed design stage, the screening around the site will be protected, and enhanced where possible.

- 3.7 Upon submission the plan was then subjected to a further period of public consultation 113 separate representations were received from a range of people and organisations, these representations along with the AAP as a whole were to be considered by the EIP.
- 3.8 The Government appointed Jill Kingaby as the inspector for the plan and after a large amount of pre examination work the EIP formally opened on the 14th October, the EIP ran until the 4th December although this included 5 week adjournment in order to deal with issues that arose due the current financial situation, which had worsened considerably since the initial evidence was submitted in March 2009.
- 3.9 During the EIP relatively few people or organisations objected to the plan. Indeed there was an extremely positive and helpful discussion on all the key issues. These included housing, employment, transport, the local centre, delivery and implementation of the Plan and there was a high level of agreement between all the parties present on all the issues. This was largely due to the front loaded community involvement and extensive joint working between Bromsgrove District Council and Birmingham City Council that had underpinned the Plan. During the EIP officers recommended a number of minor changes to the Plan to the Inspector in response to some of the representations and to help clarify, update and interpret some of the policies.
- 3.10 The Inspector issued her report on 10th February 2009. In this report the Inspector is required by legislation to consider whether the LAAP meets the government's tests of soundness for Area Action Plans.
- 3.11 The Inspector concludes that the LAAP is sound. She states "In my view, the proposals for the future economy of Longbridge are founded on robust and credible evidence and will be effective, flexible and deliverable."
"Overall, I conclude that the LAAP should enable the economic transformation of Longbridge...developing a range of employment opportunities across the site and establishing a Regional Investment Site which is attractive to high profile investors."
- 3.12 She also supported the approach taken towards providing a new local centre at Longbridge stating, "... the Councils are taking a positive approach. They are planning for a new centre in an area which is expected

to grow significantly in terms of new housing and employment provision, and within an area where.. (there is)..a gap in local centre provision..... In addition, the community which has lost the MG Rover Works requires a new heart which a significant, well designed new shopping and service centre could provide.”

3.13 The Inspector also noted the commitment of all parties to implement the development at Longbridge “It is clear from the hearing sessions and written evidence that there has been continuing collaboration between the landowner/developers and Councils, and infrastructure providers, directed at delivering the plan.... Evidence on the ground, in the form of clearance of the old MG Rover sites and construction of new business premises at the Innovation Centre and Cofton Centre, demonstrate that an “action” plan is intended and not just a paper document”.

3.14 In her report the Inspector has accepted the plan largely unchanged, apart from supporting the minor changes put forward by the authorities and some other minor changes which were discussed at the EIP. She has not recommended adopting any of the major changes put forward by those objecting to the Plan. As such she has fully endorsed all of our work. The Inspector’s decision is attached as appendix 2 to this report.

3.15 The findings in the Inspector’s report are binding upon the Councils, and the LAAP must therefore be amended to incorporate all the changes required by the Inspector. The final LAAP (incorporating the Inspector’s changes) is attached as Appendix 1.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no immediate financial implications of adopting the AAP. In the longer term the regeneration of the sites in Bromsgrove will generate funds from planning applications / planning obligations associated with the development, along with Council Tax and business rates once complete. Work is ongoing with Birmingham City Council and Worcestershire County council to ensure developer contributions secured using section 106 of the 1990 planning act and sections 38 and 278 of the highways act are managed and distribution to the relevant projects in each authority area.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Plan is a statutory development plan document and has been prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and subsequent updates. The Plan has been prepared jointly with Birmingham City Council.

5.2 Section 23 (5) of the act states that ‘A document is adopted for the purposes of this section if it is adopted by resolution of the authority.’ It is envisaged

The AAP will formally be adopted by the Council at its meeting on the 22nd April 2009

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 Objective 1 Regeneration - Priorities Town Centre and Housing

It is clear the regeneration of the Former MG Rover site will help the council to meet its objective of providing more and better housing choice within the district. Although the approximately 1450 new residential units to be provided at Longbridge will largely be meeting the needs of south Birmingham it is envisaged that it will also help to meet the needs of north Bromsgrove. The effects on the Town centre are hard to quantify but the influx of new people and business to Longbridge could have positive effects on the vitality and of the town centre. Many of the 10,000 new jobs would be provided in different employment sectors to those historically provided for at Longbridge, this change in the employment structure alongside improved road and rail links and regeneration in the Town centre itself could effect the economic performance of Bromsgrove Town Centre.

6.2 Objective 4 Environment - Priorities Clean Streets and Climate Change

It is intended that all new development at Longbridge should embrace the challenges presented by climate change and as such the long term aim is for the site to become an urban eco centre. Proposals must include details of how they minimise carbon emissions, minimise energy consumption, maximise the use of low carbon and renewable energy sources, meet an on site target of 15% renewable energy production and maximise energy efficiency. Development must also consider the impacts of flooding, water efficiency measure must be included alongside Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) within an overall flood prevention and compensation strategy. Further policies also include the protection, management and enhancement of all existing biodiversity, flora, and fauna across the site and comprehensive waste strategy to manage the collection and recycling of waste from homes and businesses.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

The Longbridge Area Action Plan is challenged in the future

7.2 The risks will be managed as follows:

Risk Register: Planning and Environment

Key Objective Ref No: 6

Key Objective: Effective, efficient, and legally compliant Strategic planning Service

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Upon adoption there is a legal requirement to advertise the adoption of the plan in all the places previously used wherever possible. The plan will be placed in all libraries across the district as well as the CSC and planning reception it will also be available to view online. Formal press notices will also be placed. The primary customer affected by the plan are the developers St Modwen properties who have submitted planning applications for the redevelopment, ongoing discussions are taking place with regards to the planning applications.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An Equalities Impact Needs Assessment has been carried out on the Longbridge AAP, in order to assess the potential Equalities and Diversity impacts of the development proposals.

10. 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 AAP creates the policy framework for the redevelopment of the Former MG Rover site.
Environmental	The AAP indicates the measures we will expect the developers of the site to include to lessen the impact of development on the environment.

11. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	Yes
Executive Director - Services	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No

Corporate Procurement Team	No
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12. WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 Primarily Hillside Beacon and Waseley although the wider effects of the development could impact across the district

13. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Longbridge Area Action Plan
Appendix 2 Longbridge Area Action Plan Inspectors Report

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 Around 200 documents have been published in relation to the preparation of the Longbridge AAP all can be viewed at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/longbridge or obtained from the strategic planning manager

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