

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP**

**28<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2007**

**JOINT WORKING WITH WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL AND STRATFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL, ON RSS PHASE TWO ALLOCATIONS HOUSING STUDY**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mrs J Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	David Hammond - Head of Planning and Environment Services

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The following report outlines the current position in relation to the proposed housing allocations identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2 Revision, and the proposed approach to commissioning a joint study to assess the validity of the figures being proposed for Redditch District.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Members approve that work can begin on the RSS housing options study dependant on the financial commitment Bromsgrove District Council is required to make.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the existing Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands had its status altered to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and formally became part of the development plan. As part of this process it was stipulated that the RSS undergo a phased revision of key topic areas.
- 3.2 Currently phase two of this revision is underway; this phase identifies specific targets for new levels of housing and employment development disaggregated down to district level. Appendix 1 of this report is the officer's response sent on behalf of the council on the implications of the levels of development being proposed in the region, below is a very brief summary.
- 3.3 The levels of new residential development being proposed are listed below.

	Bromsgrove	Redditch
Option 1	3800	4300
Option 2	4700	8200
Option 3	7200	13200

- 3.4 The implications for Bromsgrove in isolation are relatively straightforward. Under option 1 we would only be building to levels which would meet the locally generated need for new housing from within the district. Although it must be stressed we have already have nearly 3000 dwellings of this allocation in supply.
- 3.5 Under option two we would meet all of the locally generated need also some of the migration needs of the Major Urban Area. This option provides the opportunity to develop substantial numbers of new dwellings with a significant proportion of these being affordable housing.

Although as above nearly 3000 dwellings have already been completed or have planning permission and that figure needs to be taken out of the total proposed.

- 3.6 Option three whilst giving the opportunity to provide the highest number of affordable housing in the district, also caters more for the needs of the conurbation. Under this option the majority of these houses would provide accommodation for people from outside the district.
- 3.7 The implications of the proposed allocation for Redditch are of the greatest concern to Bromsgrove. Under the current proposals Redditch is being allocated housing over and above its locally generated needs, especially under option 3. The assumptions on which these needs are being assessed are also being challenged as to their validity. Under both options 2 and 3 an element of the housing provision for Redditch may need to be provided in neighbouring districts due to the lack of urban capacity. The detailed policy implications for resisting allocating land on Redditch's borders are further outlined in appendix 1.
- 3.8 The lack of evidence to support these figures has alarmed the districts concerned and it is felt that more evidence needs to be collected with which to potentially challenge these housing allocations. A two part urban capacity and Housing site study is therefore being proposed.

#### **4 The Urban Capacity and Housing Site Study**

- 4.1 The exact details of the study have yet to be finalised although the brief will be agreed between all relevant authorities. The speed and scale of this work means that the Local Authorities do not have the resources in-house to carry out this project; as such independent consultants will be commissioned to undertake the work. Appendix 2 of this report is a letter from the West Midlands Regional Assembly supporting this approach.
- 4.2 It is envisaged the study will be in two parts;

##### **Part 1 - Urban Capacity and Housing Need Assessment of Redditch**

The main part of this stage is an assessment of the actual housing capacity of the Redditch district, not including the green belt land to the south west. This assessment will clearly identify how much extra housing Redditch can develop without the need to build outside the currently defined urban area. Another element of part one may include an independent examination of the locally generated housing needs figures contained in the supporting evidence for the RSS review.

##### **Part 2 - Direction of Growth Study**

Should part one identify that the current urban capacity of Redditch is not sufficient to meet the growth needs then part two of the report will need to be carried out. If it is identified that either the growth figures for Redditch are incorrect or there is enough urban capacity to fulfil these growth requirements then part two will not be needed.

Should part two be carried out then it is envisaged it will be an assessment of sites surrounding Redditch in both, Bromsgrove and Stratford as well as to the south west of Redditch urban area. This assessment will identify the suitability of areas to take potential new residential development taking into account the wider implication of this growth such as requirement for new or effect on existing infrastructure.

#### **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1 Worcestershire County Council as the strategic authority on behalf of the district councils will appoint consultants to carry out part one of the Study and then if required part two.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 It is unclear at the moment the exact level of funding required for this project although contributions will be sought from all Local Authorities affected by this issue

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 None

## **8. Background Papers**

Appendix 1 - Bromsgrove District Council officers' response to Phase 2 Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy

Appendix 2 - Letter of Support from West Midlands Regional Assembly Re joint housing study

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