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Ruth Bamford - Head of Planning and Regeneration
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Our Ref: ALP/HD/Web/GO/PS1

11 December 2012

Dear Ruth,

REDDITCH HOUSING GROWTH OPTIONS: HEYFORD DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED
LAND WEST OF THE BROMSGROVE HIGHWAY, WEBHEATH, REDDITCH.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Redditch Borough Council is committed to preparing its Local Plan No.4 and Bromsgrove District Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan: both Local Plans have now been aligned so as to extend to 2030.

1.2 Furthermore, in the light of the explicit 'Duty to Cooperate' that is now enshrined in the Localism Act 2011 and reaffirmed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), both Councils have acknowledged that Redditch Borough Council will not be able to meet its long-term development needs sustainably on land within its administrative boundary and so Bromsgrove District Council officers have been instructed to work with Redditch Borough Council officers, in an attempt to find a mutually acceptable solution of accommodating the element of Redditch's growth needs which cannot be met within the Borough's boundaries.

- 1.3 As part of this process, it is intended to produce a joint Cross Boundary Growth Consultation in February/March 2013 to consider the options for creating sustainable urban extension(s) to accommodate at least 3000 dwellings within Bromsgrove District, immediately adjacent to the north/north-west of Redditch.
- 1.4 Heyford Developments Limited has a controlling interest in a significant tract of land adjacent to the Bromsgrove Highway (A448) and the northern edge of Webheath, which it is keen to promote as a sustainable urban extension to the north-west of Redditch.
- 1.5 Representations have previously been submitted to both Local Planning Authorities in relation to their respective emerging Core Strategies and Heyford Developments has long held the view that cross boundary cooperation is the only way to provide for the future development needs of Redditch in a sustainable manner.
- 1.6 Heyford Developments Limited is therefore delighted to be given the opportunity to reaffirm its ongoing commitment, and more particularly, to demonstrate that the land to the north of Webheath and north-west edge of Redditch is suitable, available and capable of being delivered to create a sustainable extension to the existing urban area.
- 1.7 To assist the Councils in their joint deliberations, Heyford Developments has appointed a team of core consultants to assist in the promotion of the site and at relatively short notice, preliminary investigations, appraisals and reports have been prepared to supplement this brief Planning Submission, as follows:
- **Deliverability Statement** (Jonathan Tomlinson, Managing Director, Heyford Developments Limited December 2012)
 - **Site Location Plan** (Neil Boddison Associates – Architects November 2012)
 - **Report of the Availability of Services and Technical Site Constraints (including a Site Analysis Plan)** (Discovery November 2012)

- **Concept Block Plan** (Neil Boddison Associates – Architects November 2012)
- **Development Coverage Plan** (Neil Boddison Associates – Architects November 2012)
- **Traffic and Highway Report and Access Strategy Drawing** (Dermot McCaffery-Highways and Transportation Consultant November 2012) to update a previously submitted Report prepared by Halcrow (October 2010)
- **Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal** (Aspect Landscape Planning November 2012)
- **Ecology Appraisal Constraints and Opportunities** (Aspect Ecology October 2012)

1.8 Heyford Developments Limited acknowledges that further and more detailed information will subsequently be required to support any proposals for an urban extension, but it is hoped that the initial work that has been undertaken is sufficient at this stage to demonstrate that the land is suitable to accommodate development and that this can be delivered within the Plan period.

2.0 The Site(s)

2.1 The site(s) are located on the north-west fringe of Redditch, immediately adjoining the northern edge of Webheath. It abuts a junction of the Bromsgrove Highway (A448) which provides excellent access to Redditch in the south-east, and Bromsgrove 5km-7km to the north-west and the wider road network.

2.2 Webheath offers a range of services and facilities including a post office; two primary schools, village hall, sports centre and public house. The nearest doctor's surgery is Millstream Surgery, which is approximately 2.5 kilometres away. There are also good vehicular and pedestrian linkages to the Redditch town centre and its wide range of facilities including employment opportunities. The bus service through Webheath has suffered through the cut-backs, but there is scope for its re-introduction and enhancement in association with new development.

- 2.3 Webheath, therefore, represents a sustainable community within Redditch, however, there is always scope for enhancement of local services and facilities, which the development could deliver.
- 2.4 The potential urban extension can be considered as two adjoining areas of land, which for the purposes of this submission, can be referred to as **Area 1** and **Area 2**. It is suggested that Area 1 could be developed on its own, or as the first of a two phased urban extension. Area 2 would not be developed in isolation, but only as a second phase of a larger urban extension.
- 2.5 A detailed description and assessment of the two Areas is provided in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and so it is not repeated other than to note that both Areas comprise agricultural land with elements of woodland present in Area 1.
- 2.6 Area 1 measures approximately 42 hectares (104 acres) and forms a roughly square shaped area that extends from the junction of Birchfield Road with the Bromsgrove Highway in the north, to Cur Lane in the south; and from Foxlydiate Lane in the East to bridleway/public footpath and hedge in the west. The land abuts the north-west edge of Webheath and to the north, there is also built development in the form of the Foxlydiate Arms, the Redditch Premier, a garage and residential development.
- 2.7 Area 2 measures approximately 47 hectares (116 acres) and also forms a roughly square shaped area that extends from the north-west field boundary of Area 1; Cur Lane and Gypsy Lane in the south and west; and the Bromsgrove Highway to the north. It should be noted that the north-west is shown in this submission to broadly reflect the extent of the Growth Option Area that the Councils have previously indicated however, due to contiguous land ownerships, its precise extent is flexible and so it can be formally defined in liaison with the Councils in due course.
- 2.8 In combination, the two areas measure almost 90 hectares (over 220 acres) on the edge of Webheath and with excellent access to the Bromsgrove Highway (A448).

3.0 Availability/Deliverability

- 3.1 The supporting statement submitted by Heyford Developments Limited should provide the Authorities with the necessary comfort that the two areas of land that represent this potential growth option are readily available and capable of being developed as soon as required.
- 3.2 The statement confirms that Legal Agreements are in place with the relevant landowners of Area 1. One of the owners of part of Area 1 also owns the land forming Area 2 and whilst a formal contract is not yet signed with Heyford Developments in respect of Area 2, the landowner is entirely agreeable to its promotion and is committed to its future development as a second phase of the suggested Growth Option. The statement also confirms that there are no onerous restrictions or covenants in the legal Title that might otherwise prevent or frustrate the early development of the land.
- 3.3 Heyford Developments Limited is a well-resourced company that has considerable experience and an excellent track record in delivering development sites, via a variety of house-builders to whom it holds no particular allegiance. As a developer, Heyford is also capable of facilitating mixed-use opportunities, which can assist the sustainability of any scheme.

4.0 The Technical Services and Constraints

- 4.1 Discovery, has undertaken a preliminary investigation into the general availability of services and also the presence of any on-site physical constraints caused by existing services.. A Site Analysis Plan has been prepared and this indicates the presence of existing constraints; all of which can either be accommodated in-situ, or realigned within any future development scheme(s).

4.2 In summary:

- **Electricity Services** are not an impediment to the development of the site(s). Where necessary, the 66kv and 11kv cables can be diverted into an underground route through the development. There may be a need for future reinforcement works to the Redditch primary substation, but Western Power Distribution does not consider that this would be an impediment to development.
- **Water Services:** water abstraction boreholes intrude into parts of the south-east corner of the site, but these do not represent a significant constraint to development. There is a water main that crosses the site and this will have to be accommodated in-situ within any development layout. It may be necessary to reinforce the local water supply network, but this is perfectly feasible and viable.
- **Gas Services:** a high pressure gas main crosses the eastern edge of Area 2 and will have to be accommodated within any layout. It is assumed that reinforcement of the local gas network will be needed, but this is achievable.
- **Communications:** A fibre-optic cable follows the line of the gas main across the eastern part of Area 2 but as with the gas main, this could be accommodated within a central area of open space.
- An **Oil Pipeline** crosses the north-western part of Area 2 and will have to be accommodated with any layout.
- **Foul Water Drainage:** the site is clear of any existing adopted or private sewers. There is understood to be adequate capacity available at both Redditch Priest Bridge and Redditch Spenal sewage treatment works. There may be a need for improvements to the sewerage infrastructure system which the water authorities will have a statutory duty to resolve. The contours of the site suggest that foul water will be discharged via on-site gravity sewers to a new pumping station and pumping main to a suitable outfall sewer.
- **Surface Water Disposal:** Within the time available, a full Flood Risk Assessment has not yet been undertaken; however, the site is not within a flood plain and is classified as Flood Zone 1. There may be some localised susceptibility for ground water flooding, but there is no documentary evidence to support this assertion.

There are a number of water courses in the southern part of the site which could accommodate the attenuated discharge of surface water from the development.

- 4.3 In conclusion, whilst the site is crossed by a number of underground and above ground services, it would be perfectly feasible to either accommodate or where appropriate, realign these within any development layout for the site(s). Furthermore, early indications are that all principle services and drainage provisions can be made available to serve any new development and that there are no overriding technical constraints.

5.0 Transportation

- 5.1 Heyford Developments Limited instructed Halcrow to prepare a Traffic and Highway Report that was submitted to Worcestershire County Council Highways Department in October 2010. That report concluded that:

- The development is located on the south western side of Redditch which means that the site is fully accessible by sustainable modes to health, employment, retail and education facilities.
- The site benefits from being well positioned in relation to existing high quality strategic roads which are not subject to significant delays or congestion, therefore significant off-site highway improvements will not be required.
- The development provides an opportunity to improve bus services in the area. These improvements will benefit both existing residents of the area and future residents associated with this site and other development sites.
- The site presents an excellent opportunity to deliver significant growth without the need for major infrastructure schemes, thus the site will not be subject to the negative environmental impacts which can be associated with the implementation of such schemes.

- The site will provide a new vehicular link between the A448 and Cur Lane/Foxlydiate Lane. This presents a significant opportunity to relieve existing local traffic issues in Webheath.

5.2 At the suggestion of the Highway Authority, the Report has been reviewed and updated by Dermot McCaffery (Highways and Transportation Consultant). The Update Report concludes as follows:

- The Halcrow report established the principles of accessibility and access for the development of the site for up to 1400 dwellings. The design of the proposed junctions and the capacity in a future year of 2020 were assessed and no significant problems were encountered.
- Accessibility by non-car modes is very good. Key facilities that require day to day access are all within walking and cycling distance. Bus services in Webheath have changed since the Halcrow report was published with service 68 being withdrawn.
- Discussions between the Highway Authority and the applicants for the ADR site at Church Lane, Webheath have resulted in a potential diversion of service 143 which has been revised to try and replace service 68. The diversion would run this service along Church Lane and Foxlydiate Lane which would benefit the eastern portion of the site. The additional passengers emanating from the new development would help to ensure that this service remained viable.
- The Planning Authorities have asked for consideration to be given to whether the site could accommodate further development if the total landholding was included. This potential Phase 2 could increase the overall development to of some 2500 dwellings. This will require improvements to the Foxlydiate junction in order to accommodate the additional traffic that will be generated and to ensure a suitable internal road network can be provided.

- The Phase 2 development would extend the site to the west and away from the diverted bus services in Foxlydiate Lane. As such, it would be necessary to make a further alteration to service 143 to bring it into the site. With careful design the internal road network can accommodate the diverted bus service within an acceptable walk distance of Foxlydiate Lane and the existing dwellings in that area.

5.3 It is perhaps also worth noting that the urban extension would provide for a new primary school, with a capability for further expansion as necessary in connection with a second phase of development on Area 2; plus a Local Centre that would include some shops and possibly a health centre facility capable of accommodating a doctors surgery, a dentist and a pharmacy etc. These new facilities would not only serve the new development, but would provide the opportunity to enhance facilities for existing residents of Webheath. In the circumstances, the development would be very sustainable.

6.0 Landscape and Visual Impact

6.1 Aspect Landscape has prepared a landscape and visual assessment (LVIA) of both Area 1 (referred to in the appraisal as 'The Subject Site') and Area 2, to the northwest of Redditch (together referred to as Area A in the report). It also considers two of the three strategic sites identified in the Councils Growth Options Paper at Foxlydiate (Brockhill West) and East of the A441. The Appraisal considers opportunities and constraints that should be weighed in the balance with other planning considerations to determine the suitability of strategic Growth Options.

6.2 The report seeks to analyse the landscape character and visual environment of the local area; define the sensitivity of the receiving landscape and assess the ability of the growth options, especially the land at Webheath, to accommodate an urban extension to Redditch.

- 6.3 Table 1 of the LVIA provides a useful summary of the Consultants' findings which confirms that the land at Webheath referred to as Area A (Areas 1 and 2) represents the least sensitive Growth Option in terms of landscape character and visual environment and also offers the greatest capacity to accommodate development.
- 6.4 More particularly, the report concludes that Area 1 (the subject site) lies in a localised valley which affords it a degree of containment and enclosure by roads and strong boundary vegetation, including a strong belt of trees along the existing urban edge of Webheath currently defined by Foxlydiate Lane.
- 6.5 It confirms that the land has limited visual receptors which add to the moderate level of sensitivity, in contrast to other Growth Option areas to the north of the Bromsgrove Highway and beyond.
- 6.6 In summary, the Report finds that from a landscape perspective, the land south of the Bromsgrove Highway (Areas 1 and 2) offers the strongest potential to accommodate development that is carefully designed to respect the setting of the existing urban area, and the sensitivity of the adjacent landscape.

7.0 Ecology

- 7.1 Aspect Ecology was instructed by Heyford Developments to identify any potential ecological constraints in relation to Area 1 (referred to as 'The Study Area'). The report provides a summary of the key ecological issues identified, with recommendations for any further ecological work required in due course. Whilst the appraisal focuses on Area 1, it also considers Area 2 (referred to as part of Area A at Webheath), as well as the other Growth Options around the northern fringe of Redditch extending from immediately north of the A448 (Area B), Brockhill Wood (Area C) and to the land west of the A441 (Area D).

7.2 This report includes a useful Table that summarises Ecological Designations; Habitats; and Protected Species with regard to the various growth option areas. In summary, based upon current information, this comparative analysis indicates that Areas 1 and 2 (referred to as Area A) has the fewest potential ecological constraints to development, whilst Areas B (Brockhill West) and C (Brockhill Wood) potentially have the most.

7.3 From initial survey work and evidence reviewed to date, the appraisal concludes that the Webheath Growth Option exhibits no overriding ecological constraints to development. It does, however, afford significant opportunities for improving biodiversity; both through change of land use and the incorporation of ecological enhancements.

8.0 The Concept Plan

8.1 Neil Boddison Associates (NBA) has taken account of the site characteristics, constraints and opportunities highlighted in the various reports and appraisals that have been undertaken, in order to prepare a preliminary Concept Plan that demonstrates how the land (Areas 1 and 2) might be developed. NBA has also prepared a plan to quantify the approximate size of the depicted development cells and provide a notional average density.

8.2 In essence, the Concept Plan indicates the following:

- **Area 1** measures approximately 42 hectares
- The notional residential developable area for Area 1 measures just over 24 hectares, plus an area measuring approximately 2.6 hectares to accommodate a Local Centre comprising a Primary School 1.8 ha (NB. A first phase would only require 1ha but a second phase might require an enlarged school on 1.8ha); plus 0.8 hectare for a small group of shops and possibly a

health centre (doctors and dental surgeries and possibly a chemist). The remaining 15 hectares would comprise retained woodland and open space.

- Based upon an average density of 40 dph, Area 1 could deliver around 1000 dwellings, although it should be noted that if necessary, the balance of the land use mix could be adjusted to increase the developable area and reduce the open space accordingly, in order to deliver a greater number of dwellings.
 - The school is located towards the eastern edge of the site, so as to be well positioned in a very accessible location with good vehicular and pedestrian linkages and as close as possible to the existing urban area of Webheath, which it could also serve.
 - The development blocks take into consideration the technical constraints, existing trees, ponds, vegetation, etc, as well as the suggested vehicular access points and potential bus route to be diverted through the site.
 - The Concept Plan also retains and links existing pedestrian routes and shows the potential connectivity & movement within the sites.
 - The Plan also maintains and enhances green links/corridor and incorporates a planting buffer to the southern boundary and northern boundary where, if necessary, a noise bund could be provided close to the Bromsgrove Highway.
 - Drainage attenuation is to be located to the south and south-west in the lowest areas of the site.
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- **Area 2** measures approximately 47 hectares.
 - Assuming that the social and community infrastructure is accommodated within Phase 1 (Area 1), then the notional residential developable area for Area 2 measures around 37 hectares which, at an average density of 40 dph, could deliver around 1500 dwellings.
 - The Concept Plan indicates around 10 hectares of open space, including pedestrian linkages and strong perimeter planting belts.

- **Areas 1 and 2 combined** measure nearly 90 hectares and could reasonably be expected to provide at least 61 hectares of land for housing development, which at a notional average density across the site, would deliver in excess of 2500 dwellings, plus a local centre including a Primary School (expanded as necessary) and some 25 hectares of open space. As mentioned above, if necessary, the balance of the land use mix could be adjusted to increase the developable area and reduce the open space accordingly, in order to deliver a greater number of dwellings.

It is worth mentioning that we would expect different parts of the site to accommodate development at differing densities to acknowledge the pattern and grain of the existing settlement, site characteristics and the need for a mix of dwellings. We have therefore assumed an overall average density of 40 dph on the development cells.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 In summary:

- The Webheath Growth Option comprises land (Areas 1 and 2) and it is capable of delivering a sustainable urban extension to Redditch.
- The site is located to the north-west of Redditch and immediately abuts the built-up area of Webheath.
- The land comprises unremarkable countryside that has no special landscape or ecological value and it is of no known historical or archaeological value.
- The land is generally flat and is regular in shape with strong, well-defined and recognisable boundaries formed by roads and mature vegetation.
- A new urban extension can be served off an improved Foxlydiate junction of the Bromsgrove Highway to provide excellent and convenient access to Redditch town centre and employment areas; Bromsgrove; and wider areas, beyond.

- The urban extension is capable of delivering 1000 dwellings as a first phase on Area 1 and at least 2500 dwellings (possibly more depending upon the mix of land uses and densities applied) with the inclusion of a second phase on Area 2. In addition, the development will deliver a Local Centre to provide for a Primary School that is capable of future expansion; a small group of shops and possibly a health centre to include a doctors' surgery, a dental surgery and a chemist.
- The development would therefore deliver a balanced and mixed community that would integrate well with the existing settlement and provide for enhanced facilities and communication links for existing residents in Webheath.
- The Concept Plan demonstrates one potential means of accommodating natural, physical and technical constraints to provide for a coherent urban extension.
- The land is suitable, it is readily available, with no overriding land ownership; physical; technical; or environmental constraints and it can therefore be delivered without undue delay through a number of competing major house-builders.
- Heyford Developments Limited considers that the land to the north-west of Webheath offers the most suitable and appropriate site(s) for accommodating the future development needs of Redditch and for the record, if necessary, would be willing to cooperate and work constructively with other parties (landowners and developers) to help deliver a coherent Growth Strategy for Redditch.

9.2 It should be recognised that this submission has been prepared at relatively short notice to assist the two Authorities prior to publication of a Growth Option Strategy. The information is preliminary and not necessarily definitive and will inevitably be subject to change and refinement if and hopefully, when the land at Webheath is identified as 'Preferred Site'.

9.3 The Authorities can, however, be reassured that Heyford Developments Limited has the necessary resources, skills, expertise and stamina to successfully deliver an urban extension proposals that might ultimately be allocated in this location.

9.4 In the circumstances, we look forward to a continuing working relationship, but in the meantime, if you have any queries about the submissions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

Andy Williams

A J Williams Dip TP, MRTPI

Director