



**BROCKHILL WEST, REDDITCH
PLANNING STATEMENT**

ON BEHALF OF

**MILLER STRATEGIC LAND, PERSIMMON HOMES
SOUTH MIDLANDS, AND SOUTHERN & REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENTS**

**OCTOBER 2010
(UPDATED JANUARY 2011)**

Date: 5 January 2011

Our Ref: JBB7661.B8219/A

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Date:	5 January 2011
Project Number/Document Reference:	JBB7661.B8219/A

Revision A: STW December 2010 report inserted into Document C

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ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

- A. PRELIMINARY TRANSPORT STUDY - MAY 2010; AND TECHNICAL NOTE - OCTOBER 2010 (RPS)
- B. PUBLIC TRANSPORT STRATEGY - MARCH 2010 (RPS)
- C. DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK STRATEGY - SEPTEMBER 2010 (RPS) AND, HYDRAULIC FOUL WATER SEWER CAPACITY ASSESSMENT FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON LAND AT BROCKHILL WEST, REDDITCH - DECEMBER 2010 (STW)
- D. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, VISUAL RESOURCES AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE- SEPTEMBER 2010 (FPCR)
- E. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT - SEPTEMBER 2010 (CGMS)
- F. BROCKHILL WEST ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL - SEPTEMBER 2010 (FPCR)
- G. CONSTRAINTS PLAN AND CONCEPT MASTERPLAN OPTIONS - SEPTEMBER 2010 (RPS)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 RPS Planning & Development (RPS) has been instructed by Miller Strategic Land (Miller), Persimmon Homes South Midlands (Persimmon), and Southern & Regional Developments (SRD) to prepare and submit to Redditch Borough Council a portfolio of evidence based documents comprising technical work undertaken for land at Brockhill West. A copy of this comprehensive submission has also been sent to Bromsgrove District Council within whose District the majority of the Brockhill West area is located. Plan RPS1 identifies the location of the site, highlighting the Borough boundary.
- 1.2 Brockhill West is a strategic development opportunity at Redditch which can contribute effectively towards meeting the town's development requirements in a sustainable location which is well integrated with the existing urban area and also close to the town centre and rail/bus interchange. The land includes an area in Redditch Borough which has been referred to as Foxlydiate Green Belt. This area has a capacity for residential use of some 230 dwellings. The balance of the site is in Bromsgrove District.
- 1.3 The Brockhill West area is proposed to be masterplan-led and there is significant flexibility in terms of land use disposition and scale of different uses which can respond to identified development needs in the wider area. Illustrative concept masterplans are provided in this document, which demonstrate how the site can be developed effectively.
- 1.4 This submission is intended to add to and consolidate the evidence base relating to the Brockhill West area. The discrete documents within the portfolio may be amended as additional information becomes available and changes to the planning policy context and requirements arise. It is intended in these circumstances to provide replacement documents to be inserted into the portfolio.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement and accompanying portfolio seek primarily to address issues in the questions raised by Redditch Borough Council in its email to RPS dated 16 June 2010. The issues covered are site and planning policy context, transport, drainage and flood risk, green belt, landscape, ecology, and the proposed Masterplan and these are addressed by the following sections in conjunction with the suite of technical documents which are attached.
- 1.6 The proposal is for a mixed use urban extension at land at Brockhill West which is considered to be a suitable and sustainable location for development and able to accommodate a significant part of the new homes required for Redditch town including land in Bromsgrove District. This will require a cross-boundary approach between the Local Authorities which has formed part of the process to date as evidenced most recently in the Core Strategy Special Consultation on Redditch Expansion between February and March 2010.

Site Description

- 1.7 The Brockhill West site is located to the north west of Redditch and is controlled by the consortium of Miller, Persimmon and SRD with the exception of one roughly rectangular parcel of land in the south east of the site (some 1.3ha) where the landowner has indicated support for the proposals and an intention to collaborate with the consortium.

- 1.8 The site is situated north of the A448 and is currently designated as Green Belt land in the adopted Local Plans which includes part of the Foxlydiate Green Belt area in Redditch Borough, and a larger area of Green Belt land in Bromsgrove District. The most southern part of the site is within Redditch Borough, with the remainder being within the district of Bromsgrove, whereby a cross-boundary approach to development at this location would be optimal. It is possible to phase the development of the area whereby development in Redditch Borough preceded the release of land in Bromsgrove District. It is the developers' intention that the land be masterplanned comprehensively, respecting the site's context. The technical work that has been undertaken to date demonstrates that the land in Redditch can be satisfactorily developed in isolation. Further work is being undertaken expressly in connection with foul water drainage to determine the appropriate strategy for draining the Redditch only land as a discrete development.
- 1.9 The land is in agricultural use and adjoins the existing residential area of Brockhill to the east. The area is topographically very well contained and this is reinforced by areas of woodland to the north (Brockhill Wood), west (Hewell Grange Park) and south (Foxlydiate Wood).

Planning Policy Context

- 1.10 The West Midlands RSS Phase 2 Revision at submission stage proposed that 6,600 net additional homes are required for Redditch between 2006 and 2026 on the basis of meeting locally generated household needs based on 2004 Household Projections. The dwellings were proposed to be split evenly between Redditch Borough (3,300) and neighbouring districts on no specific shares in Bromsgrove and Stratford-on-Avon Districts (3,000 combined). There were significant objections to this proposal on the lack of conformity with PPS3/PPS11 on providing clear District requirements and also concerning the evidence base for the housing split between all districts concerned.
- 1.11 The RSS Examination gave particular and close attention to the issue of Redditch related growth when it convened in June 2009. The Panel's report in September 2009 records that careful site visits were undertaken with more scrutiny than anywhere else in the region. The RSS Panel's Report recommended that the overall requirement be increased to 7,000 dwellings between 2006 and 2026 and that the Redditch Borough requirement should be increased to 4,000 dwellings to make use of both the three safeguarded ADRs and also areas of Green Belt within the Borough where development can logically be accommodated.
- 1.12 The Panel Report also recommended that the Bromsgrove District requirement for Redditch related housing needs should be 3,000 dwellings (a reduction of 300 dwellings as a cross-boundary element), accepting that no peripheral housing should be accommodated in Stratford-on-Avon District in the period to 2026.
- 1.13 This requirement is also supported in the report of the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (CCHPR) April 2009 'Housing demand and need in the West Midlands' which was commissioned by the West Midlands Regional Assembly to inform the RSS Examination based on the more recent 2006 Household Projections. The CCHPR concluded that the 2006 based Household Projections supported a requirement for 6,900 net additional dwellings at Redditch to ensure locally generated households were satisfactorily accommodated without any allowance for overspill from the conurbation.

- 1.14 The submitted RSS, the related evidence base, and the independent Panel's Report based on the evidence remain material to the consideration of Redditch-related growth over the appropriate future plan period. The delays to formulation of the Core Strategies now requires the plans to look forward further than 2026 to ensure at least 15 years of operational life post adoption under PPS3 policy. If 2031 were chosen as the plan period end date, at 350 dwellings per year, there will be a need to plan for 8,250 net additional dwellings between 2006 and 2031. Given understood capacity constraints in Redditch Borough the housing split would be expected to remain as 4,000 dwellings in Redditch Borough and 4,250 dwellings in Bromsgrove District.
- 1.15 To ensure delivery of the 4,000 dwellings required within Redditch Borough, it is accepted by the Borough Council that additional sites outside of the urban area are needed including the ADR sites and areas of Green Belt at Foxlydiate (within Brockhill West) and also north of the Brockhill East ADR west of the railway line and south of Weights Lane. This is described on page 3 of the joint Special Consultation on Redditch Expansion paper in early 2010 which also recognised a need to consider where 3,000 further net additional homes should be located within Bromsgrove District on the edge of the town for the period to 2026.
- 1.16 In May 2010 a new national Government was formed and this has led to some initial changes in the planning system, and to the prospect of new primary legislation which will place the onus on local planning authorities to determine policy matters which have previously been managed at regional level. On 27 May 2010 the new Secretary of State issued a letter stating the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and to introduce primary legislation that would be enacted in the second half of 2011.
- 1.17 The current RSS was revoked on 6 July 2010. This document in respect of its provisions for Redditch related growth as part of growth in Worcestershire was formulated in the late 1990s and examined as an RPG in 2000. It was only finalised by the Secretary of State following consultation on changes in June 2004. The RPG was operative only to 2021 and did not contain district housing requirements. The household projections on which the RPG had been based are seriously out of date and do not form a sound basis on which to establish housing requirements.
- 1.18 RPG11 became the RSS for the West Midlands in September 2004 on the enactment of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. There has been a policy vacuum for several years which the RSS Phase 2 Revision was prepared to fill. Clearly, the RSS Revision will not now be completed and the revocation of the previous regional plan has completely removed all bases for considering housing requirements in Redditch and Worcestershire beyond 2011 until Core Strategies are adopted.
- 1.19 The RSS, the RSS Panel Report and the Cambridge Centre report indicate an overall requirement of between 6,600 and 7,000 new dwellings for Redditch Borough with a significant proportion of this allocation situated within Bromsgrove at cross-boundary locations. Therefore it is contended that there remains a need for this number of new homes to be completed by 2026.
- 1.20 RPS understands that Redditch Borough Council is continuing to work towards delivering 4,000 new homes within the Borough up to 2026. It is recommended that the Borough Council confirms what the extension of the plan period will be to ensure conformity with PPS3 and to confirm if there is any additional capacity in the Borough that could become available after 2026 in that period.

- 1.21 Redditch Borough Council must continue to work with Bromsgrove District Council on a joint cross-boundary basis to ensure the balance of Redditch's housing requirements is being planned for positively. This must include at least the 3,000 additional dwellings requirement. There is also a need for clarity over where required homes over the extended plan period will be accommodated.
- 1.22 In conclusion, there is compelling evidence of need for some 7,000 net additional dwellings at Redditch between 2006 and 2026 and for development continuing at a similar annual rate beyond 2026.
- 1.23 The area of search for new homes in Bromsgrove District has been identified jointly by the District Councils in their consultation Core Strategy document relating to Redditch Expansion (January – March 2010) as an arc between Curr Lane (south of A448 west of Redditch) in the west to west of Icknield Street, near Beoley village in the east.
- 1.24 RPS in conjunction with FPCR consultants has undertaken a Green Belt Review study (December 2009) which has included this area of search within a wider arc that also included land east of Redditch in Stratford-on-Avon District. The review identified limited potential for Green Belt releases south of A448 and east of A441 within the Bromsgrove District defined options. These areas have capacity estimates of some 780 and 670 dwellings if developed for residential use. The principal areas with capacity for potential development, having regard to Green Belt purposes and landscape considerations, are between A448 in the west and the railway line in the east where overall capacity of some 4,110 dwellings. Brockhill West would provide some 1,300 dwellings, with further capacity at Brockhill East and North.

Site Suitability for Development

- 1.25 The land has been appraised in the Redditch Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment in respect of the area within Redditch Borough. The area has been assessed as suitable and available, albeit currently identified by the Borough Council for potential delivery in Years 11-15. The reason given for delayed release is that it is a Green Belt site that may not be required to meet the Redditch Borough housing requirement. The Council has indicated that this is a matter for the Core Strategy to determine.
- 1.26 RPS has made the case that the land in Redditch Borough is developable within 5 years and therefore should be recorded as deliverable and identified as achievable in years 1 - 5 of the assessment.
- 1.27 As demonstrated in the succeeding sections and the various attached reports, the land has been assessed in respect of the constraints which exist in the Brockhill West area and the land's ability to accommodate development satisfactorily, without unacceptable harm.
- 1.28 The area is exceptionally well contained by the topography and existing vegetation which can be further enhanced. Access can readily be provided which can integrate the land effectively with the Redditch urban area. New social and green infrastructure would be delivered which will benefit both new residents and the existing community in the Brockhill area which is predominantly residential properties.
- 1.29 As stated above, the area's value as Green Belt has been thoroughly assessed. It has been demonstrated that to accommodate the required scale of development at Redditch (to meet

locally generated household growth) there is a need to release land from the Green Belt for the period to 2026 and beyond.

- 1.30 The Brockhill West area has previously been assessed by the Bromsgrove District Local Plan Modifications Inquiry Inspector (in respect of land at Birchensale and Oxstalls Farms) where the conclusion was drawn that the location was both sustainable and one where Green Belt purposes were less strong. At that time there was no requirement to consider safeguarding land cross-boundary residential growth of Redditch (in the then Structure Plan period to 2011). However, the need for new homes at Redditch has been addressed through the evidence base for the West Midlands RSS Phase 2 Revision and there is a compelling case and requirement for Green Belt release.
- 1.31 The capacity of the Redditch Borough part of the Brockhill West land, if fully developed for housing, is assessed as 230 dwellings (on some 7.1 ha at 32.5 dwellings per hectare). The masterplanning of the area is particularly flexible in terms of the disposition of uses, subject to the constraints analysis that has been undertaken. An alternative option would be for example to introduce Class B employment land on the Brockhill Drive frontage within the Redditch Borough land. This would allow, for example some 2.5 ha of employment and 150 dwellings. A density of 32.5dw/ha is considered feasible on this land having regard to the strategic road infrastructure for which land would be required to be safeguarded to ensure comprehensive development with adjoining land in Bromsgrove District.
- 1.32 RPS and the developers of the site are willing to engage closely with Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council in the context of the 'localism' agenda to develop proposals for the land which provide an optimum development for the locality.
- 1.33 Sections 2 to 6 summarise the various technical reports that have been prepared for the site.
- 1.34 Section 7 of this statement addresses the constraints and masterplanning options for the site.

2 TRANSPORT

- 2.1 A Preliminary Transport Study was undertaken by RPS Planning & Development in May 2010 and is included in the portfolio at Document A. The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of an urban extension at Brockhill West on the existing highway, pedestrian, cycle and public transport networks; at that time a scheme of some 2,000 dwellings and 8 hectares of Class B employment land was considered. This was undertaken in the context of a clear requirement in Bromsgrove District at Redditch of some 3,000 dwellings and a concern to maximise the scale of potential development at Brockhill West on a larger masterplanned area than that now proposed for a sustainable urban extension in the current masterplan options as set out in Section 7.
- 2.2 Following the publication of the Study, more detailed analysis of the constraints in the area has been undertaken, including identifying the extent of easements required which are associated with pipelines crossing the area. This has allowed masterplanning to progress to demonstrate development options reflecting the deliverable capacity of the area much more accurately.
- 2.3 The effect of these changes has been to reduce the overall scale of the development from some 2,000 dwellings to some 1,210 to 1,340 dwellings at an overall average of 35 dwellings per hectare across land in both Redditch and Bromsgrove Districts, subject to the scale of employment uses on the reduced masterplan area. Based on the scale of the development assessed, the Preliminary Transport Study is addressing a substantially larger scale of development than is now currently proposed. The work highlights current areas of network stress where particular attention is likely to be needed. An updated assessment will be prepared in due course and will be submitted to replace the current attachment A.
- 2.4 The study identified that some links and junctions would be sensitive to additional traffic demand generated by the development, but that appropriate measures could be introduced to minimise the impact of the development. The study considers a range of engineering solutions and 'soft' travel demand measures that could be introduced in conjunction with the proposed development and recommends that a more detailed Transport Assessment should be undertaken at a later stage in the process. It is anticipated with the reduced scale of development that there will be greater scope for managing impacts through local improvements and the 'soft' travel demand measures.
- 2.5 Further assessment has been undertaken by RPS with respect to the existing and potential public transport network in the North West of Redditch. A '*Public Transport Strategy – Route Options Development*' document (Document B) was produced in March 2010 to promote discussion with Public Transport Officers at WCC in respect of potential improvements to the existing bus network and/or the introduction of new services providing access to the proposed development. The Strategy seeks to maximise accessibility for future and existing residents of Brockhill to a wide range of educational, health, employment and retail opportunities, whilst reducing car dependency in the area. The Strategy demonstrates the commitment to promoting a public transport-led development, thereby minimising the impact on the local highway network.
- 2.6 Document B was also based on earlier masterplanning work which pre-dated recent constraints analysis and the suspension of work on the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. The detail of the bus routes shown no longer relate to the current masterplan options (Section 7 refers).

However, the masterplan options have been designed to accommodate equivalent routes and services to optimise potential for modal shift away from the private car.

- 2.7 RPS understands that Worcestershire County Council has been commissioned by the Borough Council to provide advice on the potential transport implications of providing development growth at different locations on the periphery of the town. This was originally intended to be on a cross-boundary basis but is currently focused on land in Redditch Borough and includes the Foxlydiate Green Belt land. The work is being undertaken in two phases including an assessment of accessibility (largely complete) and then traffic modelling. The latter should be completed before the end of 2010. The current programme is that this information will be presented formally to councillors in March 2011. It is understood the first phase work has identified that the Foxlydiate Green Belt land performs well in accessibility terms. RPS has requested information from the Borough Council on the accessibility study's conclusions.
- 2.8 Documents A and B have been provided to the County Council to demonstrate the availability of transport solutions in respect of planned growth at Brockhill West. RPS is aware of the County Council's previous proposals for a Bordesley Bypass improvement to the A441 north of Redditch. RPS is also mindful of the RSS Phase 2 Revision Panel's recommendation that development at the town should be located as far as possible to minimise the likelihood of migration from and car-borne commuting in relation to the conurbation (Recommendation R8.20 (Policy SS11) refers). This conclusion would broadly support transport measures to achieve modal shift within the expanded Redditch Urban Area rather than encourage the construction of the Bordesley Bypass.
- 2.9 The impact of the proposals has been considered in the context of parallel development at Brockhill East which is promoted by Persimmon Homes. The Redditch Borough SHLAA for 2010 identifies both the Brockhill ADR west of the railway and adjoining land in the Green Belt as deliverable within 5 years. That proposal would deliver complementary transport improvements including improved public transport and a new road link between Brockhill Drive and Weights Lane, which in turn links to A441 north of Redditch.
- 2.10 The mix of proposed land uses at Brockhill West can be selected to seek to maximise the internalisation of trips and investment in public transport and well-designed, safe and convenient cycle routes and footpaths (including routes to schools) will ensure traffic impact is limited. The proposals include a new First School which will serve both the new community and existing Brockhill estate. This has the potential to operate as a Primary School in the future where there to be a change to the 'age of transfer' in this part of North Worcestershire. This has the potential to reduce peak hour trips generated by the existing development. Similarly, a new local centre will provide local services and shopping facilities which can assist in reducing car dependence. The location is considered sufficiently far from the existing Batchley Local Centre to avoid undue impact.
- 2.11 Vehicular access to the site is proposed from three points. The formation of a new junction on B4164 Brockhill Drive is proposed to provide direct access from the south; it is considered that the access arrangements would enable the independent development of the site within Redditch Borough (Foxlydiate Green Belt land). Two additional access points are proposed to serve the northern portion of the site and comprise the extension of existing cul-de sacs at Lily Green Lane and Appletree Lane. The newly formed routes would provide links back on to Brockhill Drive through the existing Brockhill residential area. Vehicular, pedestrian and cycle routes within the

development will ensure integration and permeability between all the parts of the site and will connect with existing external networks. The proposals are further discussed and illustrated in the Technical Note contained at Document A.

- 2.12 The land in Redditch Borough can access bus services on Brockhill Drive and Hewell Lane, as well as the 51 Service which operates in the Batchley area to the east of the site and the opportunity will exist to extend or divert existing services into the site. Clearly, in the context of the wider development site, buses will be able to serve the site effectively as described in Document B and paragraphs 2.5 to 2.6 above.

3 DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK

- 3.1 A Drainage and Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken for the Brockhill West site in September 2010 by RPS Planning and Development, which updates the assessment from October 2008. Document C contains the latest Flood Risk Assessment information and Drainage Strategy for the area.
- 3.2 The report concludes that surface water drainage can be effectively managed for development of the site by attenuating run-off rates to match the existing greenfield conditions, with surface water running into Batchley Brook from Brockhill West. The extent of the floodplain has been mapped as part of the constraints analysis and the extent and locations of areas required for detaining storm water outside the floodplain have been calculated and mapped. The intention is to integrate these areas into a co-ordinated green infrastructure strategy which provides recreational areas and naturally managed areas as part of the overall green space for the development. Much of the land for detaining water will not be permanently wet and will be suitable for amenity space and children's kick-about areas.
- 3.3 It was identified that flooding by foul effluent occurs to both Batchley Brook and River Arrow during bad weather due to the operation of combined sewers in this area of the town. Foul water from the development would be diverted through a new trunk sewer through the Arrow Valley helping to alleviate existing flooding problems and eliminate flooding of untreated sewage into the River Arrow and the Red Ditch. This is a significant benefit which can accrue from the Brockhill West proposals.
- 3.4 The River Arrow is identified as 'At Risk' by the European Water Framework Directive strategy for protecting and enhancing the quality of groundwaters, rivers, lakes, estuaries and coasts. Development of the site will reduce the pressures on the River Arrow and help to reach objectives of the River Basin Management Plan.
- 3.5 In terms of surface water drainage, RPS Planning & Development has advised that the area of the site within Redditch Borough can readily be developed as a discrete phase or free-standing development draining through appropriate attenuation areas in land controlled by the developers into the Batchley Brook. The most appropriate foul water drainage strategy for the Redditch Borough land within the site is currently being investigated as previous work has focused on the wider cross-boundary potential of this area.
- 3.6 RPS understands that Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council are continuing to collaborate on the evidence base relating to more detailed work on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Water Cycle Study, where NWH has been commissioned. They are expected to provide a draft report in January 2011 with a final report to be presented to the Local Planning Authorities in March 2011. The work is understood to be examining the issues relating to the potential development sites in Redditch Borough which will include the 'Foxlydiate Green Belt' site in isolation as well as part of a more strategic location and this address both surface water and flood risk aspects as well as foul water drainage.

4 GREEN BELT

- 4.1.1 A Green Belt Review was undertaken by RPS and FPCR in December 2009, to assess the various sites around the northern edge of Redditch to assess the suitability of these locations to accommodate an urban extension having regard to PPG2 national Green Belt policy, in particular the stated purposes of including land in the Green Belt, and also having regard to issues of openness and landscape character. The report has previously been submitted to Redditch Borough, Bromsgrove District, Stratford-on-Avon District and Worcestershire County Councils. The land being promoted as Brockhill West is within the assessed Area 5 of the report. RPS has invited comments on the document and has received none at the time of preparing this statement in September 2010.
- 4.2 This study identified a capacity of between 1,600 to 2000 dwellings on land at Brockhill West (including additional land to the north of the current masterplan area), 300 of which would be located within Redditch Borough and the remainder in the district of Bromsgrove. This is considered to be a sustainable location for an urban extension.
- 4.3 More recent detailed constraints analysis has reduced the assessed capacity within Redditch Borough to some 230 dwellings if fully developed for residential use.
- 4.4 As detailed in the Green Belt Review report, development at Brockhill West could also extend to the north into Areas 6 and 11 at 'Brockhill North', subject to development requirements and the length of the planning period. This would allow further development, integrated with the town and, significantly, further green infrastructure including the ability to link the existing woodlands through retained and enhanced managed wildlife corridors (which have been discussed with Worcestershire Wildlife Trust).
- 4.5 Under PPG2 policy guidance, it is a requirement to consider safeguarding land for potential longer term development when Green Belt boundaries are reviewed. The Green Belt Review identified a suitable Green Belt boundary around the north west side of Redditch, comprising Cladshill Wood and field boundary/watercourse north to Brockhill Lane, then Brockhill Lane eastwards to Brockhill Farm, northwards through Brockhill Farm to Butler's Hill Wood, eastwards along the southern boundary of the wood to east of the landfill site and then south to Weights Lane and eastwards to A441 (Weights Lane is already the Green Belt boundary east of the railway line).
- 4.6 As stated in Section 1 to this statement, the Green Belt purposes of land at Brockhill West were considered in respect of land at Birchensale Farm and Oxstalls Farm in Bromsgrove District by the Bromsgrove District Local Plan Modifications Inquiry Inspector who concluded that the location was sustainable and had limited Green Belt value given the topographical containment and reduced coalescence risk.

5 LANDSCAPE & CULTURAL HERITAGE

5.1 FPCR and CgMs have been retained respectively to advise on landscape and historic environment issues relating to development at Brockhill West. The work demonstrates that development can be undertaken comprehensively on a cross-boundary basis and that there are no constraints to a separate discrete development phase on the Redditch Borough land within the masterplan area.

5.2 Documents D and E respectively reproduce the landscape and historic environmental assessments of the area.

Landscape Assessment

5.3 An assessment of Landscape Character, Visual Resources and Green Infrastructure has been undertaken by FPCR which has been updated to September 2010, and is included as Document D. The assessment conforms with recognised national standards and has involved extensive desk-based and on-site surveys and appraisals.

5.4 The findings confirm that the Brockhill West site as defined on Plan RPS1 lies within the Batchley Brook valley, particularly on the north-east facing slopes north of Hewell Lane. The area enjoys exceptional containment from wooded hills to the north west (Cladshill Wood), north (Butler's Hill Wood), north east (Brockhill Wood) and south (Foxlydiate Wood). The registered Historic Park and Garden at Hewell Grange is a mature landscape to the west occupying the upper part of the valley and this provides further natural containment to the west. The Brockhill development in Redditch, built over the last 15 years lies to the east.

5.5 The Brockhill development provides a strong urban context for the land and the area can be seamlessly integrated with Brockhill through road, footpath and green infrastructure linkages all of which have been anticipated through the design of the Brockhill masterplan.

5.6 Consideration has been given to impact of potential development at Brockhill West on visual receptors. There are a small number of properties and three rights of way. The impact of development in views can be suitably mitigated through strategic landscaping and masterplanning of the green infrastructure. Importantly, Hewell Grange and its landscape setting have not been identified to have any views that will be affected by development as both are well-contained by peripheral woodland. A representative visual assessment has been undertaken illustrated through several site photographs.

5.7 Plans have been prepared showing existing landscape features and illustrating the principles that should govern green infrastructure associated with the development. These principles have informed the masterplan along with other constraints.

5.8 FPCR has given consideration to the relevant saved policies of the development plans for the area and also preparatory versions of the emerging Core Strategies for Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District. It is concluded that Brockhill West can conform with the thrust of landscape and environmental policies for the area. Although there are several landscape and biodiversity designations applicable to the site context, there are no specific designations applicable to the site.

Historic Environment

- 5.9 Document E reproduces the CgMs report completed in September 2010 relating to the historic environment and recording evidence of heritage assets in the area. This archaeological desk-based assessment considers land approximately 68.1 hectares in extent at Brockhill West, to the west of Redditch.
- 5.10 In brief, there are no known significant constraints relating to the site itself. There are no designated heritage assets (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Battlefields or Registered Parks and Gardens) on the site.
- 5.11 The only significant designation in the area is the Hewell Grange Registered Historic Park and Garden adjacent to the northern boundary of the site located to the west. The park is buffered from the proposed development by areas of mature woodland.
- 5.12 In the context of PPS 5, the assessment concentrates on archaeological heritage assets and concludes that the potential of the site for undesignated assets is low for all periods. The archaeological significance of the site is considered to be low. In terms of the Registered Park and Garden and its setting, the undulating topography of the site is such that it limits views to and from the Park and any proposed development would not, therefore, impact on the Park or its setting.
- 5.13 It is also helpful that the site is downstream from the Hewell Grange lake on Batchley Brook which is of historic and nature conservation interest (a SSSI). Historic mapping and aerial photography of the area has been examined which shows urbanisation of the Batchley Brook valley continuing from the 1940's through to the completion of the Brockhill housing allocation made in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.2 in 1996. The mapping shows connections have been made in the Brockhill development to serve future development at Brockhill West.

6 ECOLOGY

- 6.1 An Ecological Appraisal was undertaken by FPCR in December 2009 which assessed the wider area of land at Brockhill West as well as Brockhill East. Further assessment work was completed specifically within the Brockhill West development area in September 2010.
- 6.2 The report concluded that the North West Redditch area has capacity to accommodate strategic development, subject to mitigating localised impact through a nature conservation management plan and appropriate masterplanning. There is an existing pattern of containing woodlands and linking hedgerows and watercourses which can readily be consolidated to deliver a strong Green Infrastructure within and adjoining proposed development.
- 6.3 RPS has sought to involve the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust in strategic discussions to ensure that nature conservation interests are appropriately considered in formulating development plans for the area.
- 6.4 As may be expected from the name Brockhill, the report identified badger activity within the area. Other key features are the adjoining woodlands which are recognised as having high conservation value. However, the majority of the proposed development land is improved grassland with smaller areas of arable land which are of low conservation value. The opportunity is presented to seek to enhance wildlife value within the area through appropriate management of the green infrastructure for the development.
- 6.5 The overall conclusion was that development on the land would cause minimal impact on the overall conservation value of the local area through sympathetic design and appropriate landscaping.
- 6.6 During the summer of 2010, FPCR has undertaken further work on the express ecological issues relating to the Brockhill West area. Their report from September 2010 is attached as Document F.
- 6.7 This report advises in summary that:
- The grassland and arable habitats are considered to be of low conservation value, and any loss can be adequately mitigated on the extensive tracts of green infrastructure (species rich grassland, water bodies and new woodland planting).
 - The small areas of semi-improved grassland identified are only of local level value and adequate mitigation can be provided in the GI shown on the current masterplan.
 - Green links can be provided throughout the development, achieving bio-diversity plan objectives.
 - Hedgerows in this area of the site were also determined to be of moderate conservation value. These can be retained in the great majority of cases and be enhanced through new planting.
 - The stream and water course in the proposed development areas of the survey area are of high conservation value. Consequently, development proposals should retain the water course on the existing lines in areas of GI and the watercourses enhanced through appropriate management.

- The mature trees within the overall Project area are of high conservation value. Therefore, the design should aim to retain the mature trees within the overall development proposals.
- Potential impacts on Hewell Park SSSI can be minimised through the provision of significant buffer zones in this area, recognising that the Hewell Park Lake is upstream of the Brockhill West Project area where minimal impact to the nature conservation value of the site will occur.
- Brockhill Wood adjoins the development area and is listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Appropriate buffers should be considered. Landscape proposals for the site should provide alternative local areas in which residents can walk to minimise potential impact from increased recreational pressure.
- Foxlydiate Wood is also listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Whilst not directly affected by the proposed development, the site is near to the site and as such recreational pressure could reduce the conservation value of the site. To minimise such impacts alternative local routes should be provided in the GI.
- Two badger setts have been confirmed within the Brockhill West area, with a main sett being identified. Consequently, development proposals should aim to retain the setts and corridor routes between the setts. Extensive areas of grassland foraging habitats should also be retained and created throughout the development to maintain the population at the current level.
- A small population of great crested newts could be present in the area. If present in habitats affected by or with suitable connectivity to the site mitigation would be required. Given the quantity of GI within the site the provision of any such mitigation could easily be accommodated.
- Reptiles may be present on site and through appropriate landscaping and management of landscaping any population could be maintained at a favourable conservation status.
- No water voles or otters have been confirmed in the area.

6.8 These principles are addressed in the concept masterplans (Section 7 refers). In particular, the presence of badger setts on the site has fully informed the concept masterplan options in terms of protection zones around the setts and access to retained areas for foraging. Fundamentally, the proposed development allows the delivery of extensive habitat creation which will ensure an overall ecological improvement is achieved.

6.9 Accordingly, it is considered that providing development was undertaken in a sympathetic manner and appropriate landscaping used to achieve biodiversity targets, development of the Brockhill West area should have minimal impact on the overall conservation value of the local area. Specific recommendations have been made for more detailed surveys to inform any planning application for development of the land.

6.10 As with the wider Brockhill West area, the ecological assessment has concluded that the Redditch Borough part of the area can be satisfactorily developed ahead of the wider area in Bromsgrove District. A mitigation strategy can be established for this area in isolation were the development of the adjoining land in Bromsgrove District to be delayed and not proceed within the same plan period.

7 MASTERPLAN

- 7.1 Miller Homes, Persimmon and Southern & Regional Developments have commissioned RPS Planning & Development's Urban Designers to prepare a constraints plan and masterplan options to identify the capacity of the Brockhill West site and that part of the site within Redditch Borough.
- 7.2 Document G presents the Constraints Plan and Concept Masterplan Options 1 and 2 which are effectively with and without employment areas as part of the mix of uses.
- 7.3 The Constraints Plan identifies features and areas within and adjacent to the site which will influence the form of the proposals. These include the location of the woodlands and Registered Historic Park & Garden outside but close to the site, the Batchley Brook flood plain, main topographical features, easements associated with gas and oil pipelines which cross the site and the line of definitive footpaths. Account is made of the amenities of existing neighbouring properties, potential access points, existing hedgerows and other natural features.
- 7.4 Further, the concept masterplan options have had full regard to the ecological assessments that have been undertaken. In particular, the presence of badger setts on the site has been recognised in terms of protection zones around the setts and access to retained areas for foraging. The proposed development allows the delivery of extensive habitat creation which will ensure an overall ecological improvement is achieved.
- 7.5 The Concept Masterplans have been prepared to demonstrate the level of flexibility there is at the Brockhill West site in terms of disposition of land uses and their mix which can be suited to respond to the Local Authorities' preferred strategy for development at Redditch. The overarching 'vision' for the development is to create a high quality scheme that works with the landscape and existing site features to create a place where people will want to live, work and visit as part of a new community. Moving forward the Consortium and its team would wish to promote good 'place making' design principles to achieve this vision, working with the Local Authority, wider community and other key stakeholders.
- 7.6 It is proposed that Brockhill West be a residentially led urban extension of Redditch creating a new and well defined settlement edge to the town which is integrated with the existing Brockhill development area, on a cross-boundary basis. The site can be appropriately extended to the north in the longer term on land which can appropriately be excluded from the Green Belt through the Bromsgrove District Core Strategy. The part of the area in Redditch Borough can be brought forward as a discrete development phase if required, in the context of less aligned Core Strategies for example in the event that proposals in Bromsgrove District do not include cross-boundary provision at Redditch in step with development in Redditch Borough. The land has vehicular access and can be served by public transport off Brockhill Drive, and linked for pedestrian and cycle access to the wider urban area via the adjoining community woodland area and Brockhill Drive corridor. The Redditch Borough area has been appraised in respect of landscape and ecology and can be suitably developed without unacceptable impact. The Redditch Borough land can also be effectively drained as a discrete phase in terms of surface water. The foul water drainage requirements of the development are being investigated.
- 7.7 All options for comprehensive development at Brockhill West should in RPS's recommendation include a site for a new First/Primary School (2.28 ha proposed) and a Local Centre (0.4 ha

proposed). The proposals should include an extensive green infrastructure network focused on natural containment on the upper slopes on the site's boundary and through the Batchley Brook valley. Appropriate managed use of the land required to be safeguarded to hold flood water to attenuate flows to natural greenfield run-off is also a key common consideration for all development options. The local centre has been proposed in a central location to maximise accessibility by foot and cycle from within the development. It would also sit on the proposed bus route(s) and provides a high degree of pedestrian and cycle permeability with links from the proposed routes to the existing network. The open spaces forming the green infrastructure network incorporate retained hedgerows and trees, existing and new habitats to enhance biodiversity, and a range of play spaces from more formal children's equipped play areas to informal recreational spaces and linear parks.

- 7.8 The school site requires level playing space and is proposed as part of the broad green infrastructure area through the Batchley Brook valley. This is a reasonably central location, given the requirement for level play space and also offers a central site in the context of potential longer term development to the north of Brockhill West between Brockhill Wood and Cladshill Wood and south of Brockhill Lane. The school site has been sized to allow for a 2 Form of Entry facility in the longer term.
- 7.9 Access is proposed for motor vehicles at three points, ie from Brockhill Drive from the south through the land in Redditch Borough (potentially at a new roundabout) and from the two current cul-de-sacs leading off Brockhill Drive roundabouts to the east of the land adjoining the Bromsgrove District boundary. This allows a high level of permeability and, significantly, the scope for bus routes to service the development. Non-car/motor connections can also be made readily including the extension of the existing Batchley Brook strategic open corridor through Batchley and Brockhill developments out into Brockhill West. Existing rights of way can be improved and complemented by new links to achieve a comprehensive safe and convenient network of routes integrated with the wider Redditch urban network of footpaths, cycleways and bridle paths.
- 7.10 In this context of constraints and opportunities, there remains flexibility over the scale of residential and other potential uses of the development areas that have been identified by the masterplanning process. Two Concept Masterplan Options have been prepared to demonstrate and illustrate the scope for accommodating predominantly residential use and for introducing areas of employment taking advantage of the site's high level of accessibility to the A448 and principal road network, as well as delivering finer grain mixed use development such that the local centre can accommodate a wider range of commercial uses including Class B1 business space.
- 7.11 Concept Option 1 in Document G includes a more strategic employment area on the Brockhill Drive frontage of some 2.5 ha and a further local employment area linked to the local centre of some 0.8 ha. The residential area is 34.5 ha in this option across a range of densities which increase closest to the local centre core. Lower density housing is generally proposed on the outer edges of the development, particularly around the new settlement edge where the development fronts onto the open space network. At an average density of some 35 dw/ha overall, Option 1 would deliver a development of some 1,210 dwellings. These would include an appropriate level of affordable housing in accordance with local policy requirements, having regard to viability considerations in the context of all infrastructure requirements.
- 7.12 Concept Option 2 is essentially residential and excludes Class B employment land, although retaining the school, local centre and green space proposals. This demonstrates the scale of housing that could be achieved on the extended residential area of 38.41 ha which at 35 dw/ha would yield some 1,345 dwellings. This is a comparable size to the existing Brockhill development.

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- 7.13 As stated above, Brockhill West is considered complementary to development proposed by Persimmon Homes at Brockhill East, particularly in respect of co-ordinated new transport infrastructure.
- 7.14 Further, the Redditch Borough part of Brockhill West can make a useful early contribution towards meeting development requirements at Redditch without prejudicing the ability to deliver the wider Brockhill West and North West Redditch development options. The Redditch Borough part of the site has a residential capacity of some 230 dwellings allowing for strategic access and limited open space provision under Concept Option 2. The mixed use Concept Option 1 would involve some 2.5ha of employment and an area of some 4.6ha of housing with an approximate capacity of some 160 dwellings.
- 7.15 The Masterplan is particularly flexible and RPS/developer consortium is very willing to engage with the Local Planning Authorities to discuss land use requirements in detail and to refine the proposals to achieve appropriate spatial objectives in the area.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Miller Homes, Persimmon and Southern & Regional Developments have commissioned RPS and the wider consultant team to prepare and submit to Redditch Borough Council a portfolio of evidence based documents comprising technical work undertaken for a sustainable urban extension to Redditch on land at Brockhill West. A copy has also been sent to Bromsgrove District Council.
- 8.2 There remains a compelling evidence base to support growth at Redditch to accommodate locally generated households of some 7,000 new dwellings between 2006 and 2026. To meet the requirements of PPS3 it will be necessary to plan ahead over a longer period which will extend this requirement by some 350 dwellings per year.
- 8.3 Extensive scrutiny of growth options for Redditch has occurred through the now abandoned Regional Spatial Strategy revision process for 2006 to 2026. The evidence base for the RSS remains material and relevant. That work, including the independent panel's conclusions, supported cross-boundary growth into Bromsgrove District.
- 8.4 Brockhill West is identified in this submission as a suitable, available and achievable development option to accommodate some 1,210 to 1,345 dwellings on a cross-boundary basis. The site is flexible in terms of its ability to provide a mix of uses including employment land as well as housing and associated social and green infrastructure. It is highly accessible and readily capable of effective integration with the existing urban area.
- 8.5 Technical assessments have been undertaken which demonstrate the development's deliverability and respect for identified constraints. Concept Masterplan options have been provided which demonstrate the extent of green infrastructure that can be delivered appropriately in conjunction with new development.
- 8.6 In the event that the Redditch Borough Core Strategy proceeds to adoption and implementation before the Bromsgrove District Core Strategy, it is considered feasible to deliver development on the area of Brockhill West within Redditch Borough as a discrete project, which does not prejudice future options on adjoining land in Bromsgrove District, or as a first phase of a cross-boundary urban extension proposal. The form of foul water drainage solution is currently being investigated.
- 8.7 RPS and the developers of the site are willing to engage closely with Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council in the context of the 'localism' agenda to develop proposals for the land which provide an optimum development for the locality.