

## **Major planning application for proposed development to the west of Worcester is withdrawn**

In December 2009 developers JS Bloor Ltd (Tewkesbury) submitted an outline planning application to Malvern Hills District Council for up to 3,950 dwellings and 14 hectares of employment land to the west of Worcester. The proposed development along with associated community infrastructure was proposed over land extending from the Crown East island, off Bromyard Road, to north of Martley Road.

At the time the application was submitted the South Worcestershire authorities had published options for the future expansion of Worcester which included the possibility of 3,500 dwellings and 14 hectares of employment land in this general location. In addition the now abandoned West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) was proposing that 10,500 dwellings should be provided to meet Worcester's needs and the resulting WMRSS Panel's report was recommending at least 3,500 dwellings should be located to the west of the City.

In response to the submission of the planning application the District Council stated that it acknowledged the pressures exerted by the emerging WMRSS but the Council was insistent that any decisions regarding future development at Worcester should be plan led and no positive decisions would be made regarding the Bloor Homes proposal until the Development Plan for South Worcestershire was adequately progressed.

Since the application was submitted the District Council has undertaken public and technical consultations regarding the application and liaised with Bloor Homes over the exchange of technical evidence. However, it has not been possible to progress the application substantially in the absence of development plan decisions regarding growth at Worcester.

The Government however, has subsequently signalled its intention to remove Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) from the national planning system and allow local councils to establish their own long term housing aspirations. Consequently, the District Council has informally indicated to Bloor Homes that development to the west of the City at the scale proposed by the emerging RSS may not feature in the new South Worcestershire Development Plan.

In the light of these changes Bloor Homes have indicated that they remain committed to promoting comprehensive development to the west of Worcester but have accepted it will be more appropriate to try to work with the District Council by promoting their interests through the South Worcestershire Development Plan process. They have therefore withdrawn their planning application which was driven in part by the requirements of the emerging WMRSS. This means the District Council will not now be issuing a formal decision on the planning application.

Councillor David Hughes (Deputy Leader and planning portfolio holder for MHDC) stated "The current MHDC administration has rigorously maintained its stance that the scale of growth proposed by the WMRSS was unacceptable and now that the WMRSS is being revoked we have advised Bloor Homes that the scale and extent of development proposed is unlikely to feature in our new plan for South Worcestershire. In response it is encouraging that Bloor Homes have acted professionally and positively by withdrawing their application and committing to promoting their proposals through the plan process. "

He continued "We have committed ourselves to producing a new South Worcestershire Development Plan as quickly as possible, but it's essential that a new plan reflects local housing aspirations and capacity. Our willingness to engage with developers and landowners, such as Bloor Homes, should not however, be interpreted by anyone as implying acceptance of any specific development proposals or levels of growth at Worcester. "

David Joseph (Strategic Planning Director) on behalf of Bloor Homes stated "Bloor Homes are convinced that development to the west of Worcester can and should play a major role in meeting the future development needs of the area and offers the potential for a sustainable balance of housing, employment, community uses together with physical and green infrastructure. We hoped that submission of our planning application would enable technical issues surrounding possible development in this location to be resolved as the Development Plan is progressed. This would allow the early release of land for development if a strategic allocation to the west of the City is ultimately confirmed in the emerging Plan. However, we understand that the Council does not intend to take major strategic decisions about future development until a new plan is progressed and we intend to now focus on influencing the content of the emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan. "

In December 2010 the South Worcestershire Authorities approved a new timetable for the production of the new South Worcestershire Development Plan which now proposes that decisions regarding the content of the Plan would be made in the summer this year with an additional public consultation stage commencing in September.

Message ends

Notes to editors:

1. Background information regarding the above planning application can be found on the Malvern Hills District Council Website (West of Worcester Notice Board) using the following link <http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/cms/planning-and-the-environment/development-plans/west-of-worcester-notice-board.aspx>
2. The formal planning reference for the above application is 10/00228/OUT. This reference can be used to search the application details on line at

<http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/cms/environment-and-planning/planning-services/development-control/search-planning-applications.aspx>

3. Details of the project plan (timetable) for the South Worcestershire Development Plan can be found at [http://www.swjcs.org/swdp\\_oct2010/ldstimetable\\_rev5\\_sept10\\_oct10.pdf](http://www.swjcs.org/swdp_oct2010/ldstimetable_rev5_sept10_oct10.pdf)
4. Whilst the application has been withdrawn it will remain on the District Council's website for a further 6 months before the material is removed in accordance with our policies. After that application material will remain available for public inspection at our offices.
5. For further information regarding this matter please contact:
  - Vicky Bilton (Area Planning Officer) Malvern Hills District Council – Case officer Tel 01684 862225 or email [Vicky.bilton@malvern hills.gov.uk](mailto:Vicky.bilton@malvern hills.gov.uk)
  - Gary Williams (Head of Planning) Malvern Hills District Council - Tel 01684 862293 or email [gary.williams@malvern hills.gov.uk](mailto:gary.williams@malvern hills.gov.uk)
  - JS Bloor Ltd can be contacted at Tel 01530 270100 (JS Bloor Services) Limited, Ashby Road, Measham, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE12 7JP.

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