



Date: 10th November 2017

Neighbourhood Plan Representation

Land to the east of Callow Hill Road, Alvechurch

Introduction

This representation has been prepared by RPS Planning and Development on behalf of landowners in relation to the Draft Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2030 which is currently undergoing a 6 week public consultation during October and November 2017.

The area of land in question is located east of Callow Hill Road and is currently outside the development boundary identified within the Neighbourhood Plan. It is seen as a suitable and sustainable residential site for future allocation at Alvechurch to accommodate the housing target set out by Bromsgrove District Council.

A Site Delivery Document has been prepared by RPS Planning and Development, which provides further detail of the site and which demonstrates its suitability for residential development.

Bromsgrove District Plan 2011 – 2030

The Bromsgrove District Plan was adopted January 2017, and has identified a required target of 7,000 new homes by 2030. The District Council have identified that approximately 4,700 homes can be delivered without having to develop in the Green Belt. This means a further 2,300 homes need to be identified to meet the target, leading to the need to potentially release Green Belt land for future development. Policy BDP3 of the District Plan identifies the need for a Green Belt Review to be undertaken to identify land for housing before 2023.

Draft Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan, September 2017

The designated Neighbourhood Plan area was formally agreed in January 2013. Since then the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has set out their vision for Alvechurch Parish. A draft Neighbourhood Plan has now been produced for the period up to 2030. The plan and all associated documents are currently undergoing a 6 week period of consultation prior to the submission to Bromsgrove District.



The Neighbourhood Plan currently does not look at any sites outside the settlement boundary, within the Green Belt. The Plan indicates that once Bromsgrove Council have undertaken their Local Plan review, including a Green Belt review, they may have to identify development sites.

During the consultation period when producing the Neighbourhood Plan a survey was undertaken with the residents of Alvechurch to establish the preferred areas for future development. There is an understanding that Alvechurch is constrained by surrounding Green Belt land which is the only option for future development in the area. The majority of local residents voted that it would be preferred if sites released from the Green Belt for development were situated immediately adjacent to existing settlements. The land to the east of Callow Hill Road is located adjacent to Alvechurch, therefore conforming to the preferred option.

POLICY 2: Locations for New Housing Development

The Neighbourhood Plan Policy 2: Locations for New Housing Development sets out the following criteria for new development within Alvechurch. As described above the subject site is outside the settlement boundary and as such these policies will not apply. In the event that additional sites are needed to be identified this policy will set criteria for such sites, in addition to being located adjacent to the settlement boundary. The criteria are

- a. It is located within the designated Alvechurch Village settlement boundary

Land East of Callow Hill Road, is located adjacent to the settlement boundary, however Alvechurch currently has no potential development sites within the boundary. There were two sites within the settlement boundary with planning permission for residential use, these have now been completed providing 52 new dwellings.

Any future review of the Green Belt would necessitate a similar settlement boundary review.

- b. The redevelopment of brownfield land will be prioritised

The site is unmanaged and of poor quality which is considered to have low or no value to the Green Belt. It is accepted all previously developed land options would need to be considered ahead of Green Belt releases.

- c. It would not lead to the loss of open space, community asset or employment uses, which are desirable to maintain

The site does not consist of open space, community asset or employment use. The development would in fact improve what is currently a disused area, and will also provide improved open space.

- d. Development should not extend existing ribbon development and should contain the spread of the village, by promoting infilling up to its natural physical boundaries

Ribbon development is a line of buildings served by individual accesses extending along a road therefore the development would not result in ribbon development. The site has strong defining boundaries with the placement of development within the area that is naturally and physically bound.

- e. Criteria for defining development boundaries: boundaries should follow clearly defined physical features such as: walls, fences, hedgerows, roads, streams, and water courses in general. However, some development boundaries may follow along the rear of built development rather than physical features to prevent inappropriate back land development, for instances where dwellings have large back gardens

The site has very strong physical boundaries, the M42 runs adjacent to the north, the Worcester and Birmingham canal also runs adjacent to the east and south, with Callow Hill Road located to the west. Trees and hedgerows are due to be kept and enhanced along the boundary of the main site.

- f. It would not have an adverse impact on the local landscape, natural environment or heritage assets

Trees surrounding the site are due to be kept on the masterplan, as well as improvements to the canal area by providing a landscape buffer zone. With regards to Listed Buildings within the area, (Two Grade II*, and nineteen Grade II listed) due to the distance of the site and intervening built development, the Listed Buildings and their settings are not expected to be affected. Existing and additional trees will mitigate any potential negative impacts.

- g. The scale, height and form of the proposed development will fit unobtrusively with existing buildings and spacing between buildings would respect the character of the street scene

Existing cottages along Callow Hill Road give a strong sense of enclosure to the road frontage and will be continued within the development to reflect the character of the road. Future applications on the site for residential dwellings will take into consideration further policies and guidance from the Bromsgrove District Plan, including the Alvechurch Village Design Statement.

- h. It would not adversely impact on the existing residential amenity of adjoining occupiers

Neighbouring residents have been taken into consideration with regards to the placement of units. A large area of open space will separate the existing cottages and the single dwelling to the West of the site. Mature tree planting will be retained which surrounds the properties as well as additional trees so the development will not negatively impact the neighbouring properties.

- i. To meet sustainable criteria new development where possible should be located within 15 minutes and no more than a 20 minutes' comfortable walk of the Village centre at a comfortable pace

The site is approximately a 12 minute walk to the village square, via the public footpath which includes shops, restaurants, doctors, and public houses. A short walk along the footpath also leads you to bus stops for both routes 182 and 146. The first and middle school is also located close to the bus stops.

- j. The NP should be used as a whole

As a development, the design has taken into account the surrounding area as well as improving open space for current residents and new residents to enjoy. The scheme will also support biodiversity in the area which will support an attractive and sustainable environment. Additional Policies relevant to the development are addressed through the proposed design:

- Policy 4 – Affordable housing on rural exception sites in the Green Belt
- Policy 5 – Housing design principles
- Policy 6 – Sustainable development through design
- Policy 7 – Providing a mix of housing types and sizes
- Policy 12 – Protecting landscape and open views
- Policy 13 – Access to the countryside
- Policy 14 – Protection and enhancement of the natural environment
- Policy 17 – Improvement to and protection of open spaces



Summary

As detailed above, the site itself would conform to the Neighbourhood Plan and Policy 2 for defining development sites. We believe that in any future review of Green Belt, settlement boundaries, and site identification, the site would meet these criteria.

The provision of a potential suitable site within the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan will aid the Local Plan Review that is due to be undertaken before 2023.

For further, detailed information regarding the masterplan proposal for the site, see Appendix 1: Site Promotion Document.