



Wyre Forest District

Site Allocations and Policies Plan

Examination

Matter 9: Rural Allocations

WFDC Response

14th January 2013

Matter 9 - Rural Allocations

Blakedown Nurseries

1. **Does Policy SAL.RS1 adequately address local needs? Is it consistent with the Core Strategy?**
 - 1.1 The District Council considers that the terms of Policy SAL.RS1 address local housing needs and contain specific reference to the Parish Housing Needs Survey and the local waiting list that is required under the Council's Adopted Local Connections Policy. The most recent Parish Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in 2010. A new Parish Survey has yet to be ratified and completed.
 - 1.2 Core Strategy (SD003) Policy DS01: Development Locations specifies that new development within the District up until 2026 will be concentrated on brownfield sites within the urban areas of Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn. Limited opportunities for development to meet local needs will be identified on brownfield sites within Bewdley and within rural settlements. The settlement hierarchy contained within this policy identifies Blakedown as a village where housing to meet local needs would be appropriate.
 - 1.3 Core Strategy Policy DS04: Rural Regeneration clearly specifies that new residential development in the District's villages will be to meet local housing needs only as established through parish surveys.
 - 1.4 Core Strategy Policy CP04: Providing Affordable Housing clearly states that "a proactive approach to the provision of affordable housing within the District's rural areas will be encouraged through working in conjunction with Parish Councils to identify appropriate sites for the sole provision of affordable housing through the site allocations process, within or immediately adjacent to the District's villages, rural settlements and other rural hamlets where a local need exists." It also specifies that small scale affordable housing schemes will be permitted as exception schemes on unallocated sites to meet identified local housing need.
 - 1.5 It is considered that Policy SAL.RS1 is clearly consistent with and guided by the overarching development strategy as set out in the Core Strategy (SD003). The policy

sets out a proactive and deliverable approach to ensuring that much needed affordable housing is delivered on the site within the plan period.

- 1.6 It should be noted that the former Blakedown Nurseries site is now subject to a Planning Approval (12/0114/Full). In accordance with the emerging Site Allocations policy, this will provide 19 affordable units on a site that has been derelict for a number of years. The application had regard to the 2010 Churchill and Blakedown Housing Needs Survey and the Local Housing Waiting list.

Clows Top

2. **The Coal Authority suggests that the development of this site would sterilise mineral reserves. Has consideration been given to how this would impact on the deliverability of the site within the Plan period?**

- 2.1 Worcestershire County Council is currently preparing a Minerals Local Plan which will set out the broad locations for mineral extraction up until 2030. Whilst Clows Top is identified as having coal reserves, Worcestershire County Council has not raised any objections to the allocation of the site.

- 2.2 However, in response to representations made by The Coal Authority a modification has been proposed to include reference in the policy to the prior extraction of surface coal resources should this be practical and environmentally feasible (SALMOD61).

3. **Has sufficient regard been made to the necessary infrastructure upgrades referred to by the Environment Agency in the allocation of this site and the implications that may arise in terms of its deliverability within the Plan period?**

- 3.1 The issues raised in relation to water related infrastructure have been considered in a number of ways. The longer phasing period for 2011-21 identified in the plan recognises that, on drafting of the plan, the site has a number of challenges that need to be overcome in order for development to be acceptable and therefore its potential implementation is difficult to understand with great certainty. Notwithstanding this, the site owners are looking to bring forward an application in the near future. Furthermore, the Rock Waste Water Treatment Works, (the facility that will need to

accommodate this development), has recently received planning permission (as of 2nd August 2012) for improvements to the facility, further details are set out below.

- 3.2 In terms of deliverability, previous discussions with the land owners have identified that the drainage works required to ensure the site is adequately serviced are estimated at approximately could be in the region of £600,000. To enable the redevelopment of the site and being mindful of viability issues, the Council has included flexibility within the policy framework to allow for some market housing within this area to come forward, in order to help fund the drainage improvements that are required.
- 3.3 It should also be noted that the site included within the Plan was granted outline planning consent for residential redevelopment on 14th March 2003 (WF/0265/01). This was followed by a Reserved Matters approval for 21 dwellings (issued on 12th June 2006). The permission was subject to a Section 106 obligation to commit to the construction of off-site foul and surface sewers to Rock prior to commencement. This evidence suggests that development is acceptable and deliverable within this location, subject to the satisfactory conclusion in regard to sewerage infrastructure. Correspondence between the land owners and Severn Trent identifies a proposed solution to ensure that mains sewers are provided and connected to the Rock Waste Water Treatment Works at Rectory Lane, Rock. The site owners have subsequently identified that they are confident that the same technical solution still exists and it is their intention to bring forward this solution as part of a planning application in the near future.
- 3.4 The other element of concern at this location was the capacity of the Waste Water Treatment Works at Rock to be able to deal with the proposed development, even if the main sewers were implemented. In respect of this, the following information is provided which highlights the proposed improvements to this Waste Water Treatment Works.

Planning Permission at Rock (Rectory Lane) Waste Water Treatment Works

- 3.5 Planning permission has recently been granted at Rock Sewage Treatment Works (12/0030/COUN), off Rectory Lane. The planning permission is for a proposed

extension and asset renewal. The proposal is to replace the existing infrastructure with a single Rotating Biological Contactor (RBC) and a reed bed for balancing storm flows.

- 3.6 The Planning Statement that accompanied the submission of the application identified the following information in relation to the need for the proposed development:

“The principle driver for the proposed redevelopment of Rectory Lane is the need to replace aging assets that are no longer capable of fully treating sewage to the standards now required by the EA.

The sewage catchments connected to each plant have both been substantially enlarged since the plants were originally constructed and thus both plants are now hydraulically inadequate, and do not always treat sewage to the minimum standards required by the EA.

The solution identified for the Rectory Lane STW involves the abandonment of the existing undersized treatment streams and the development of an enlarged treatment works sized to take the flows from both existing sewerage catchments and the proposed residential housing development in Clows Top.”

- 3.7 Therefore, it can be seen that the proposed improvements to the infrastructure at Rock Sewage Treatment Works have taken into account the site allocated at Clows Top and this will help to provide additional capacity within this location to accommodate the new development.

- 3.8 Further correspondence from Severn Trent Water has also provided the following response in relation to the works at Rock:

“With respect to our plans for the Treatment Works at Rock, it is in the process of being completely rebuilt with completion in yr 4 of this AMP period (April 2013-Mar 2014). The existing works shares a site with a separate sewage works that is owned and operated by Wyre Forest Community Housing. These two works are being combined into a single new Severn Trent facility that will also include some capacity

for growth. This is a relatively small works serving a small community and should there be doubt as to whether the additional capacity is sufficient we will make sure capacity is provided under the obligations of the Water Industry Act.”

- 3.9 Severn Trent Water has been consulted at all stages of the development plan preparation and the Council has not received an objection to any proposals to date. It is therefore considered that the site allocation has fully taken into account the infrastructure requirements within this location. The wording included in the policy will allow for a viable scheme to come forward that will meet the challenges posed by the water related infrastructure requirements. The District Council considers that the site is deliverable within the plan period, based on sound evidence and should remain as an allocation in the plan.