Gateway Rugby | RUGBY

Planning Statement | July 2010

Phase R1 & R2

Prepared on behalf of Bloor Homes and CALA Homes
GATEWAY RUGBY: PHASES R1 & R2

PLANNING STATEMENT

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF
BLOOR HOMES, CALA HOMES & RENEW HOLDINGS

JULY 2010

Capita Lovejoy
4th Floor Caxton House
1 Fore Street
Birmingham
B2 5ER
0121 329 7676
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 The submitted Rugby Borough Council Core Strategy (RBCS) proposes to allocate land to the north of Rugby (site enclosed by M6 to the north, A426 to the east and the Canal to the west) as a strategic mixed-use urban extension to provide 1,300 dwellings and 36ha of B2 and B8 employment uses. The Gateway site is controlled by the Gateway consortium (Cala Homes, Bloor Homes, Renew Holdings & Wyggeston’s Hospital Estate). The consortium have submitted an outline planning application in response to the proposed allocation.

1.1.2 To expedite delivery of the initial phases of the development Cala Homes and Bloor Homes have also submitted three full applications for Phase R1 (237 dwellings), Phase R2 (219 dwellings) and the temporary storage of material generated by the ground modelling required to deliver those phases. This statement outlines how these proposals sit within the context of the overall development proposed, and outlines the technical work that has been undertaken to support the applications.
2 GATEWAY RUGBY PHASE R1 & R2 PROPOSALS

2.1 The Application Sites

2.1.1 The R1 and R2 application sites currently comprise farmland on the northern fringe of the Rugby Urban area (to the west of the A426 and north of Brownsover Hall). The extent of each application site is identified in the red line application boundary plans that accompany the applications.

2.2 Application Proposals

2.2.1 The full application for R1 seeks permission for the development 237 dwellings, accessed via a connection to the Brownsover roundabout on the A426 (with some alteration to Brownsover Lane), together with provision of the adjacent allotment area, the parkland in the southern part of the Gateway site and the required SUDs within it.

2.2.2 The full application for R2 seeks permission for the development of 219 dwellings, accessed via the internal road system proposed in R1, together with the provision of the open space adjacent to the canal and the required SUDs within it.

2.2.3 To facilitate these developments, a third full application has also been prepared to seek permission for the temporary stockpiling of material generated by the cut and fill exercise required to create the development platforms in the first two phases.

Outline Planning Application

2.2.4 Capita Lovejoy have also submitted an outline planning application for the development of the entire Gateway Rugby site. The planning application description is as follows:

Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except for access) for the demolition of an existing dwelling and all ancillary buildings, and the development of the Gateway Rugby site (125.32ha) to provide residential units (use class C3), employment premises (use classes B2 and B8), community facilities including a primary school (use class D1) and retail premises (use class A1, A3, A4 & A5), supporting infrastructure and ancillary works.

2.2.5 The outline planning application proposals respond to the requirements of the emerging RBCS, and are largely in accordance with its policies and provisions. Indeed the outline planning application has been prepared within a context of close liaison with RBC, and notably there is broad agreement on the form and nature of the Masterplan, which forms the basis of the planning application.

2.2.6 The outline planning application submission includes an overarching Design and Access Statement to which the proposals for phases R1 & R2 respond (as outlined in their specific Design and Access Statements), and a Transport Assessment and Environmental Statement that examine the implications of the entire development proposed.
2.2.7 Extensive public and stakeholder consultation was also undertaken by the applicants during preparation of the planning application submissions. Further detail is provided in the Consultation Statement that also accompanies the outline planning application.
3 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY & NEED

3.1.1 Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (The 2004 Act) requires that planning applications must accord with the provisions of the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan in this case constitutes the saved policies of the adopted Warwickshire Structure Plan (WSP) and adopted Rugby Borough Local Plan (RBLP). Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Statements, the emerging RBCS, and any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents.

3.1.2 A full analysis of application proposals in light of the relevant planning policy context is presented in the Planning Statement that accompanies the outline planning application. The key points are summarised below.

3.2 RBCS Development Strategy

3.2.1 RBCS Policy CS1: Development Strategy states that the location and scale of future development in the Borough must comply with the settlement hierarchy. The policy seeks to focus growth at Rugby town, the principal urban area in the Borough, and as such the most sustainable location for future development. Paragraph 2.5 states that the vast majority of growth homes and jobs will be provided through extensions to the urban area. Consequently, RBCS Policy CS3: Gateway Rugby Sustainable Urban Extension proposes to allocate the Gateway Rugby site for the development of 1300 new dwellings and 36 hectares of B2 and B8 employment land. Clearly then the application proposals accord with RBC’s emerging development strategy as set out in the RBCS.

3.3 Development Plan Policy

3.3.1 Within the RBLP housing allocations are identified in Policy H3, reserve sites in case the allocations do not come forward are identified in Policy H4, and safeguarded sites to meet long term needs beyond 2016 are identified in Policy H5. None of these policies include the Gateway site. Indeed, the site is not subject to any specific designation and lies outside of the defined “urban edge” to Rugby. Policy E1 generally seeks to resist development in the countryside, which is defined as land outside of the urban edge. The development proposals would not, therefore, comply with this policy.

3.3.2 However, Policies S1: Urban Development Priorities and S2: The Release of Development Land for Housing and Employment in the Areas Identified in Policy S1 set out a sequential approach to the identification and release of sites for development if there is an identified need to do so. Urban extensions to Rugby, such as that proposed, are identified at Priority 5. The RBLP acknowledges that it may be necessary to release sites for development outside of the Rugby Urban Area beyond 2011, and Policy S2 states that large scale development will be permitted in accordance with the priority sequence when sites of higher priority have been implemented, or shown to be undeliverable, or where the need for further development is identified in the Council’s Annual Monitoring Report.
3.3.3 The development proposals would therefore, comply with these RBLP policies if there is a demonstrable need to release development sites to meet identified development requirements.

3.4 Development Need & Delivery

3.4.1 The most relevant statement of future development requirements in the Borough is set out in the RBCS. They are based on up-to-date and thorough assessments of need and demand for residential development that were undertaken in the recent review of the West Midlands RSS (now revoked), which was also subject to a very recent independent examination. The requirements set out in the RBCS also reflect the conclusions of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

3.4.2 The RBCS housing trajectory that outlines the scale of development required annually to meet the overall housing requirements, anticipates the delivery of 540 dwellings in the period 2011-2016 on the Gateway site. Whilst the Gateway site is not particularly constrained, there are still enabling works required before actual houses can be built. Notably the provision of the access route and the utilities/drainage infrastructure, and the ground modelling required to create the development platforms. The submission of the outline planning application and the full applications for the first two phases of residential development, and their prompt determination by the end of the year, will help to ensure that the required scale of development is delivered in the timescale anticipated by the RBCS.

3.4.3 The case for the early release of the initial phases of the Gateway site is also supported by PPS3 (para 60), which requires local planning authorities to identify and maintain a 5 year supply of housing land. RBC’s Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) suggests (page 7) that the Borough has a deliverable 5 year housing land supply to meet the adopted RSS targets. However, the recent Coton Park East appeal decision (April 2010), which related to a proposal for 165 dwellings to the east of the A426, highlighted that there is an undersupply of housing land (approximately only 4 years) based on the RBCS requirements. In the absence of a 5 year land supply, the Gateway proposals have been brought forward to meet these immediate development needs.

3.4.4 There is, therefore, a demonstrable and pressing need to release land to meet both short and long term housing development needs in the Borough. The Gateway site is an appropriate site for the development of a strategic urban extension that can make a significant contribution to meeting those needs. What sets it apart from entirely speculative applications, however, is that the site also entirely accords with the development strategy for the Borough as set out in the emerging RBCS.
4 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

4.1.1 The Planning Statement submitted with the outline planning application considers in detail the compliance of the application proposals with the specific provisions of the RBCS allocation as set out in Policy CS3, and other development management policies relating to design, sustainability, transport, environmental matters.

4.1.2 It highlights that the development proposals will provide a balanced mix of high quality housing to meet a broad range of housing needs, deliver employment land to provide employment opportunities and help support the local economy, and secure the provision of community facilities and recreation space. As such it meets all of the policy objectives of the sites proposed allocation as set out in RBCS Policy CS3.

4.1.3 Further explanation and analysis in respect of Phases R1 and R2 specifically is set out below.

4.2 Design

4.2.1 The overarching Design and Access Statement that accompanies the outline planning application highlights how the proposals have been developed through a clear knowledge and understanding of the specific characteristics of the site, seeking to maximise the use of existing natural features and respect the local context within which the development will sit, to create a community that is clearly integrated with its surroundings. The core aim is to create an attractive and sustainable environment that responds to and respects its existing setting, retaining natural features where possible and using existing landscape structure and topography to create distinct development areas.

4.2.2 The residential community is envisaged as one ‘place’ which will be composed from a series of interrelated streets and open spaces. The objective is for residents to identify with where they live through the variety of existing natural features being retained in the layout and surrounding the site. Therefore, to allow these features to remain dominant, a sympathetic arrangement of traditional built form will be developed alongside them, constructed from a simple, robust palette of building materials.

4.2.3 The Design and Access Statement that accompanies the Phase R1 and Phase R2 planning applications illustrates how the detailed proposals respond to above concept. It highlights how the scheme layouts, density and appearance of various groups of houses are carefully related to their position, whether it be the character of adjoining parkland, woodland, allotments or field boundaries.

4.2.4 Large open spaces are to be retained to the west and the south to reduce possible impacts on the Swift Valley Country Park and Old Brownsover. To the south, this will be in the form of the retained relic parkland. To the west, a linear corridor following the alignment of the Swift Valley will be created and incorporate new wetland habitats as part of the drainage strategy. An area of allotments will be provided to the east of Phase R1 adjacent to the A426.
4.2.5 The development proposals as set out in the Design and Access Statements that accompany the planning applications clearly meet the policy tests in the RBLP and RBCS, and in the national planning policy statements.

4.3 Environment

4.3.1 The development of the proposals for the site have, from the outset, taken into account the findings of the technical and environmental studies that have been undertaken, notably the Environmental Impact Assessment and its various component elements. There has been an iterative process of continual design and assessment and the scheme has, therefore, evolved to respond to identified environmental issues and incorporate primary mitigation measures wherever appropriate and practicable. The application proposals are, therefore, considered to be the optimal response to the planning policy context and site-specific opportunities and constraints. That is reflected in the conclusions of the Environmental Statement that accompanies the outline planning application and highlights that the limited number of adverse residual environmental impacts that would result from the development are either negligible or minor in nature, and that there are some notable benefits.

4.3.2 Further detailed ecology and archaeology survey work recommended in the Environmental Statement has been undertaken in respect of the full applications for Phases R1 & R2 and the stockpiling application. Reports setting out the conclusions of that work accompanies those application submissions.

4.3.3 The outline planning application is also accompanied by a full Flood Risk Assessment, but a specific Drainage Strategy report has also been prepared for the Phase R1 and Phase R2 planning applications.

4.3.4 It can, therefore, be concluded that the proposed development meets the key environmental policy tests in the RBLP and RBCS, and in national planning policy statements.

4.4 Transport

4.4.1 A detailed Transport Assessment has been undertaken and accompanies the outline planning application. It examines the surrounding highway network, pedestrian and cycles routes, and bus services to identify opportunities for accessing the site for all modes of transport. It highlights that the site is well located in terms of accessibility to the services and facilities within Rugby and will be well served by the public transport services.

4.4.2 Specific Transport Statements have also been prepared by WSP to accompany the R1 and R2 planning applications. They highlight that access to the sites will be provided via the Brownsover Lane Roundabout on the A426. The access arrangements have been designed in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's design standard.
4.4.3 A shared foot/cycleway will connect from the site to tie into existing provision along the A426. Pedestrian access will be significantly enhanced across the A426 through the installation of pedestrian crossings at the site entrances. Bus shelters will also be provided on the A426 to allow access to existing services. During construction of Phase R2, the internal spine road linking to the northern access from Central Park roundabout on the A426 will be provided. That will facilitate bus penetration in the site.

4.4.4 The Transport Statements also outline Travel Plan initiatives that will be implemented in these early phases of development. That will ensure that there is a general ethos of sustainable travel within the community from the outset.

4.4.5 The proposed development clearly meets the key transport and accessibility policy tests in the RBLP, RBCS, and national planning policy statements.

4.5 Section 106 Heads of Terms

4.5.1 The Planning Statement that accompanies the outline planning application sets out the proposed Section 106 Heads of Terms as discussed with RBC Officers.

4.5.2 In respect of affordable housing, the RBLP, RBCS and Affordable Housing SPD all set a 40% provision target, which subject to viability, the applicants propose to meet. The precise quantum and mix will, however, be subject to viability testing and agreed with RBC on a phase by phase basis as the development comes forward. Therefore, further information specific to Phases R1 and R2 will be provided to RBC in this respect.
5 CONCLUSION

5.1.1 The Gateway site is an appropriate site for the development of a strategic urban extension. The development proposals will deliver 1,300 homes together with 36ha of employment land, in a high quality scheme that optimises the use of an unconstrained site in a sustainable location. The proposals, therefore, accord with national planning policy, and policies contained in the RBLP and the RBCS.

5.1.2 These full applications for Phases R1 and R2, and the enabling earthworks application, seek to expedite the delivery of 456 new homes on the site to ensure that the required scale of development is delivered in the timescale anticipated by the RBCS in order to meet the demonstrable and pressing housing need in the Borough. Planning permission should, therefore, be granted.