



CHRONOLOGY OF THE CURBOROUGH NEW
SETTLEMENT FROM 1990 TO FEBRUARY 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Chronology of the Fradley new settlement has been prepared at the request of the Inspector, to the Independent Examination of the Lichfield District Development Plan Documents, at the Core Strategy Pre-Examination meeting held on 14 February 2006.
- 1.2 A copy of the Chronology has been submitted to Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire County Council for their agreement.
- 1.3 The Chronology was included as a Core Document to the Examination.
- 1.4 Following the close of the Examination, the Chronology has been up-dated to incorporate the Inspector's Report and preparation on the revised Local Development Framework for Lichfield District.

2. CHRONOLOGY SUMMARY

- 1990 The issue of housing at South Fradley, linked to the airfield was first raised in the Chesteron Report of 1990 that covered employment proposals for the airfield.
- December 1993 Subsequent representations made to the Consultation Draft of the District-wide Local Plan (December 1993) included various proposals for increased housing based at Fradley or in a new settlement. In response to this Lichfield District Council commissioned David Lock Associates¹ and Land Use Planning to examine the option of a new village based on various alternative locations around the District.
- 1994 The conclusion of both studies was that the Fradley Airfield area represented the best potential location for a new settlement in the District. The David Lock report concludes that the only desirable location for a new settlement in Lichfield District, in planning terms, is to the west of the A38 focussed on Fradley airfield.
- October 1997 **Consultation Draft Structure Plan** allocates a minimum of 3,000 dwellings for a new settlement at Fradley.
- June 1998 **Adopted Lichfield District Local Plan** resolved to, 'Promote the development of a new settlement at the general location (if any) identified in the Structure Plan Review'.
- October 1998 Structure Plan allocation amended in Deposit Draft to provide for 1,400 dwellings north of Lichfield around Fradley, with capacity allowed for a further 1,600 dwellings beyond the Plan period.
- October 1999 **Structure Plan Panel Report** endorses the new settlement at Fradley.
- May 2001 **Adopted Structure Plan** requires that 1,400 dwellings should be built at Fradley before 2011 on land centred around the former airfield.

¹ Study of the Potential for a New Settlement in Lichfield District, David Lock Associates

After 2011 the Structure Plan envisages the new settlement should have capacity to expand to a minimum of 3,000 dwellings.

- July 2001 **Fradley Vision Statement** published by LDC in accordance with the requirements of the Structure Plan. The District Council embarked upon a public consultation process to seek views on the various issues, which needed to be addressed in order to promote a new settlement for the Fradley area.
- Autumn 2001 A series of public meetings and feedback sessions, hosted by Alison Millward Associates on behalf of Lichfield District Council, took place in relation to the Fradley proposals.
- October 2001 LDC published the **first draft Lichfield Urban Capacity Study**. This identified considerably more potential housing land in the settlements within the District than had hitherto been expected, most of it within Lichfield City itself. At the same time, the District Council increased the density assumptions on the outstanding housing allocations, particularly at Walsall Road, Lichfield, and concluded that fewer new additional housing sites would be needed from any future review of their Local Plan.
- November 2001 **Deposit Draft Regional Guidance** published.
- December 2001 Representations to the Fradley Vision Statement on behalf of the Curborough Consortium were submitted in December 2001. The representations argued that the form of a new settlement should evolve from the establishment of a community focused as a new village or town centre and it should develop organically in a series of neighbourhoods with their own identity and linkages to the centre form and countryside beyond. In support of the location of the new settlement the Curborough Consortium also submitted Context Study 3 – Appraisal of Potential Development Areas in support of their representations.
- February 2002 LDC produced a draft Housing Strategy that effectively reduced the requirement from new sites. It proposed that the strategic requirement

for Fradley new settlement be relegated to a reserve site to be considered in the final phase of the Local Plan. This was rejected by the Planning Committee following strong pressure from Lichfield City Council who was concerned about the impact of the strategy on the historic city of Lichfield.

- March 2002 **Local Plan Review: Housing Strategy Issues Paper** placed on deposit. The Issue Paper raised questions concerning the housing strategy in the District in light of capacity identified in the Urban Capacity Study. It raised the question as to where the new settlement at Fradley fitted into the housing strategy in light of the urban capacity study and the emerging RPG.
- March 2002 The Leader of LDC sought advice from the (then) Environment Minister, Steven Byers, on the most appropriate course of action where tensions existed between accommodating housing in urban areas and potential new settlements.
- April 2002 Response from the Under Secretary, Sally Keeble MP, in April 2002, (although not specific in its lack of reference to the specific circumstances in Lichfield), appeared to suggest that the re-use of previously used land should normally come before the development of new settlements. LDC stated that this supported their position.
- June 2002 **RSS Public Examination** at which representations were made concerning the New Settlement.
- July 2002 LDC issued a report, which recommended undertaking further technical work on the implications of focusing more housing within Lichfield City, as opposed to creating a new village at Fradley. The District Council subsequently sought technical advice from consultants, WS Atkins, (via the County Council), on the potential traffic flows and also explored the physical, environmental, social, educational and recreational implications of such a strategy.
- August 2002 **Local Plan Review: Employment Strategy Issue Paper.** This discussed the employment land provision and stated that the former

Fradley Airfield has been a developing employment location for many years and is the largest employment allocation in the current Local Plan. It is stated that the Council has proposed in its Draft Local Plan housing strategy that Fradley should be retained as a long-term strategic direction for growth and could therefore be identified as the location for meeting the residual housing requirement in the last phase of the plan period. Decisions were yet to be taken on the scale and location of the new housing at Fradley.

- October 2002 RSS Public Examination Panel issued report broadly supporting the strategy but recognising the drawbacks. No reference was made to matter 7D, which covered the South Staffordshire Sub-Area at which the Fradley new settlement was discussed.
- February 2003 A **Housing Strategy** report was presented to Planning Committee (subsequently deferred to March 2003), which proposed the withdrawal of the Fradley new settlement from the Council's Housing Strategy (subject to formal comments from the County Council).
- May 2003 LDC resolved to defer the preparation of their Local Plan Review to Spring 2004 in order to focus on producing a Local Development Framework.
- June 2003 Staffordshire County Council's Executive approved a report on 30 June 2003, which provided a response to the request from Lichfield District Council to consider the District Council's housing and employment strategies. The response stated that the omission of Fradley could not be said to be in conformity with the adopted Structure Plan. LDC adopted the view that the LDF would be introduced under the new Act and would therefore not have to conform to the Structure Plan.
- September 2003 The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) were published on 11 September 2003.

- February 2004 Residential planning applications at Walsall Road and Chesterfield Road in Lichfield were approved.
- June 2004 The final version of **RPG 11 the Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands** was published on 15 June 2004.
- September 2004 The **Planning & Compulsory Purchase Bill** was enacted requiring the preparation of Local Development Frameworks.
- October 2004 LDC undertook **targeted consultations on the LDF option papers**. They wrote to statutory organisations, community groups, landowners and their agents, including the Curborough Consortium, to comment on the three papers namely the Core Strategy, Development Control Policies & Allocation of Land and Site Development Policies which outlined initial considerations and options for shaping future development within the District.
- December 2004 The responses received by LDC were presented to the Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee at their meeting held 02 December 2004, this reported all of the responses received. It confirmed that having considered the sites put forward by landowners and developers, Members agreed that no Green Belt releases were required to meet identified needs. It was reported that if additional land is required to meet housing needs beyond 2011 then Fradley should be identified as the direction of growth but there is no requirement for a new settlement.
- February 2005 Partial Review of RSS begun.
- February 2005 **LDF Preferred Options Papers** issued for consultation on Core Strategy, Development Control and Allocation of Land.
- October 2005 **LDF DPD Submission Documents to ODPM**. LDC approved the documents at the meeting of the Full Council held on 17 October 2005. The Core Strategy, Development Control and Allocation of Land DPDs were then submitted to the ODPM for consideration by the First Secretary of State on 28 October 2005 and went on public consultation for a period of six weeks.

- April/May 2006 Examination of the Core Strategy
- July 2006 **Core Strategy Inspector's Report** published. This declared the DPD unsound, for failure to provide a 10 year supply of housing and deficiencies in its evidence base.
- January 2007 West Midlands RSS Phase 2 Revision was published (Spatial Options) for public consultation. RPS made representations on behalf of the Curborough Consortium.
- April 2007 The revised **Local Development Scheme** became effective in July which introduced the timetable for the production of the revised Core Strategy and related documents.
- June 2007 Lichfield District Council's **Housing Land Availability Assessment** was published. Curborough was submitted as a potential housing site by RPS in October 2007.
- August 2007 The Consortium sought an EIA **screening opinion** from Lichfield District Council. The response was received the same month, confirming that an ES would be required for Curborough.
- September 2007 **Issues Consultation** on the revised Core Strategy was published. RPS made representations to the document.
- September 2007 Structure Plan Policies H1, IM1 and IM2 were not saved by the Secretary of State.
- October 2007 The Consortium also issued a **scoping report** to Lichfield District Council on 19 October 2007 relating to the provision of 5,000 dwellings. The Council's response to this Scoping Report was issued on 7 December 2007.
- October 2007 The Consortium submitted Curborough as an **Expression of Interest to the Government's Eco-towns consultation** process. 50 Expressions of Interest in the West Midlands were published. Additional information was requested by CLG in November and December, which RPS responded to.

- December 2007 The **Issues and Options consultation** was published on the Core Strategy, which featured Curborough as one of the four potential spatial options for growth. RPS made formal representations to the document.
- December 2007 Public consultation/exhibition events were held at Fradley village and Lichfield seeking views and input into the development proposals for Curborough.
- December 2007 RSS Phase 2 Revision was submitted to the Secretary of State indicating provision of 8,000 dwellings for Lichfield District. No specific mention was made for a new settlement in Lichfield (or any other part of the Region).
- January 2008 RSS Phase 2 Revision (submission) was consulted on for a 12 week period. On the same day Central Government extended the consultation for a further 2 months, indicating it was to carry out its own study to find ways of delivering a further 35,000 dwellings in the Region between 2006 and 2026.
- March 2008 The High Court Challenge into the non-saving of Structure Plan policies is due in March 2008.

3. STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT STRUCTURE PLAN 1996-2011

Consultation Draft, October 1997

- 3.1 The Consultation Draft of the Structure Plan proposed the provision of 7,600 dwellings to Lichfield District, to include a new allocation,

“north of Lichfield around Fradley for some 2,000 dwellings with capacity allowed for a further 1,000 dwellings beyond the Plan period.”

- 3.2 The explanatory text stated,

“Development at Fradley, for 2,000 dwellings in the Plan period and thereafter to a minimum of 3,000, could form a settlement which achieves a significant degree of self-sufficiency, even allowing that many services and facilities would still have to be provided in Lichfield. Special circumstances also apply to this area inasmuch as there is a major employment site already located at Fradley on the former airfield site and that the historic City of Lichfield and its setting warrant special protection. Improvements to public transport links to Lichfield would be an essential element of the development package. These improved links would not only feed into Lichfield City but via existing public transport connections to the West Midlands conurbation. Improvements to the A38 will need to be assessed as part of the development package for the Fradley area.”

Deposit Draft Written Statement, October 1998

- 3.3 The Deposit Plan, Policy H1, allocated 51,800 dwellings to cover housing provision between 1996-2011. The Lichfield portion of 6,800 dwellings included a new allocation,

“for 1,400 dwellings north of Lichfield around Fradley, with capacity allowed for a further 1,600 dwellings beyond the Plan period.”

- 3.4 The Curborough Consortium made representations to the Deposit Draft Plan advocating that despite the importance of the Fradley proposals to the Structure Plan a greater degree of information should be contained on the Fradley proposals.

Examination in Public, September 1999

- 3.5 **Curborough Consortium:** Statements submitted to the EIP on behalf of the Curborough Consortium referred to the series of Context Studies prepared to support the Structure Plan Proposals. Context Study 1 examined the scope generally for development in Lichfield District having regard to the physical constraints and policy designations. Having examined possible alternative approaches, including growth of existing settlements (including Lichfield, Rugeley, Burntwood, North Tamworth and the rural areas), the study supported the conclusions of the David Lock report, that there are limited opportunities for substantial new housing in the District without compromising key objectives, particularly the maintenance of the Green Belt, unless a new settlement is considered. Fradley is considered to be the most appropriate and sustainable location for a major new development, in the form of a new settlement, in Lichfield District.
- 3.6 Context Study 2 explores localised relationship between the existing historic City of Lichfield, its environs and the location of Fradley Airfield. The study concludes that in order to continue protecting the setting of the historic City of Lichfield the Green Belt should be retained.
- 3.7 Context Study 3 (now Context Study 4) set out the approach to urban design and masterplanning of the proposed new settlement at Curborough.
- 3.8 The submissions on behalf of the Curborough Consortium advocated that the Fradley area, and particularly Curborough, is therefore an appropriate and sustainable location for a new settlement in Lichfield District. A minimum provision of 3,000 dwellings was generally considered to be sufficient but it was stated that the scale should be established to allow for post 2011 planning and infrastructure, which subject to improvement and upgrading could be provided.
- 3.9 **Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City Council:** a summary of the statement indicates that they considered there to be sufficient land within Fradley, free from major constraints, which is capable of accommodating a new settlement. Elsewhere, large areas of Lichfield were considered to be subject to policy and physical constraints such as Green Belt, Grade 2 agricultural land and

