

24<sup>th</sup> July 2013

Development Policy Manager  
Development Services  
Warwick District Council  
Riverside House  
Milverton Hill  
Leamington Spa  
CV32 5HQ

Dear Sir,

**Warwick District Council  
Local Plan - Revised Development Strategy – June 2013**

As Chairman of Leek Wootton and Guy's Cliffe Parish Council, I am writing to record our observations and comments relating to the above document, which we wish to bring to the District Council's attention.

We recognize the pressures on the District Council to accommodate future population growth and, in that context, we are seeking to establish a collaborative approach to future planning, but the comments that follow will in some cases necessarily be recorded as 'objections' to the content of the RDS document.

In addition to this letter we will be submitting the salient points via the District Council's on-line consultation process.

- **Para. 4.2. Meeting the Housing Requirement**

We have noted the basis of calculation for the *Interim Housing Requirement* of 12,300 additional homes and the subsequent comments made in response to the Bishop's Tachbrook Parish Council representations concerning this number.

This debate notwithstanding, we believe that a more detailed assessment of the phasing of new developments over the fifteen-year period is necessary in order to better understand the true impact on local communities.

The Local Plan focuses upon the development of 6,622 new dwellings on sites to be identified over the period to 2029. We are concerned that much of this new development could be concentrated in the first five-year period, with negative consequences for the character and communities of the areas affected.

- **Para. 4.4 Housing Allocations**

Designation of Leek Wootton as a 'Secondary Service Village' and the consequent allocation of 70 – 90 new dwellings represents a considerable increase over the earlier figures of 30 – 80 and would seem to indicate an expectation that place can be found for around 80 new dwellings over the next 15 years.

This represents an increase of 21% in the current housing stock of the village. Whilst this may not seem excessive when spread over 15 years, such new development could not be accommodated within the existing village envelope and an incursion into the Green Belt would be inevitable. As such, it also runs counter to the District Council's 'Preferred Option' (para. 4.3): that *limited*

*growth in smaller villages and hamlets should be of a scale appropriate to the existing settlement.*

- **Paras. 4.4.3 and 4.4.6 Phasing and Mix**

The phasing of such a large addition also presents further issues in terms of the effects upon the character of the village, access and related infrastructure.

The Parish Council therefore supports the proposition of a detailed dialogue with the District Council regarding the absolute scale of any proposed new development, potential locations within the Parish (including the hamlet of Hill Wootton) and, above all, the phasing of any likely consents, as proposed in paragraph 4.4.6, with the objective of incorporating this into a Neighbourhood Plan.

The recently completed Housing Needs Survey for the Parish indicated demand for some smaller accommodation, including 5 x 1 bedroom flats and 1 x 2 bedroom house. This would also be an argument in favour of different sites for different styles of new development, rather than a single location.

The age profile and property mix in the HNS also identified some measure of under-occupation of the existing housing stock. This, in part, supports the case for "retirement bungalows", as envisaged by the outline consent for the Police HQ, to enable some people to downsize but nevertheless remain within the village. This process would also free up larger properties within the District to accommodate growing families.

- **Para. 5.1.18 and 5.4.13 Infrastructure Requirements – Education**

Relating to our comments on paragraph 4.4 above, a significant new development of 3/4 bedroom houses over a short timeframe could place severe demands upon Leek Wootton School.

The school is currently at capacity (138 out of maximum 140 places occupied) and could not accommodate significant expansion within the existing facilities.

Using the WDC criteria, 80 new dwellings, if built over a short period, implies 28 additional pupils at the school. However an influx of new, young families could cause a peak in demand for places amongst certain age groups and it would not be possible to continue the current mixed age-group class system for the early-year pupils.

Catering for such expansion would create the need for three additional classrooms but also significant extension to all related facilities, such as the school hall, plus ancillary facilities, such as storage, toilets, kitchens, playing field space and car parking.

The proposed, new development at Thickthorn, Kenilworth also raises important questions regarding the provision of Secondary Education.

Leek Wootton currently falls within the catchment of Kenilworth School for secondary provision. The implication of paragraph 5.4.13 is that the capacity would be dedicated to the primary catchment area (i.e. Kenilworth) and that children from Leek Wootton would need to be accommodated elsewhere.

Since the proposed developments to the south of Warwick and Leamington would inevitably increase demand for places at Myton and Aylesford Schools, Leek Wootton could find itself in a "no man's land" in terms of future secondary provision. This is not adequately addressed in the RDS document.

- **Para. 5.4.16 Amenity Green Space**

The Parish Council has proposed to acquire the Woodcote woodland, to the north-west of the village, providing proper management and public access as a local amenity. This fits with the general vision to preserve the Green Belt whilst creating more open space as part of the longer-term development plan.

- **Paras 5.6 and 5.6.4 Transport Infrastructure**

Traffic mitigation measures require much more detailed consideration.

Increased through traffic will be a major concern, especially in view of the proposed Thickthorn development. Warwick Road is already used as a "rat run" by motorists leaving the A46 by-pass early in order to avoid the Thickthorn roundabout and, although it is proposed to install traffic lights both there and at the Kenilworth gyratory, traffic volumes are bound to increase. This has implications for anyone trying to access Warwick Road (e.g. from Woodcote Lane, Hill Wootton Road, Home Farm and The Elms) at peak times.

There are also implications for minor roads such as Woodcote Lane. This route is used by many as a "back way" around Kenilworth, using Rounds Hill and Rouncil Lane, creating problems at the Anchor junction at peak times.

Proposed improvements to the footpath and construction of a cycle-way between the village and Kenilworth are welcome, but the plan begs the question where and how this would be located, given the narrowness of the existing verge in places.

**Gypsy and Traveller Site Options**

Finally, although part of a separate consultation, having given due consideration to the availability of suitable sites within the Parish, there are no possible locations which fulfill the criteria set down for such sites.

Please accept the above comments in the spirit of our on-going dialogue with the District Council towards achieving a balanced and appropriate development plan for our Parish.

Yours faithfully,

Anthony Rollins  
Chairman  
Leek Wootton and Guy's Cliffe  
Parish Council