

1080



28 July 2013

Dear Sir

REVISED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (JUNE 2013)

On Mon 22 July 2013, on the hottest day of the year, some 350 concerned local citizens attended a public meeting, arranged by Warwick Town Council, Bishops Tachbrook Parish Council, Whitnash Town Council & the Warwick Society. The overall opinion was negative, words like "bonkers", "selfish", "not all in one place" were heard frequently.

As the last Mayor of Warwick & Heritage Champion, I am irate that the majority houses to be built in Warwick District are to be within Warwick's curtilage. 98% of the responses, to the last consultation, were against building in an Area of Restraint and these citizens feel their opinions are being ignored. It is my desire to preserve what is left of Warwick, its unique heritage with its poor infrastructure, already overwhelmed with too many people. This is repeated by Mr N Hamilton and Mr H Hussain, Mrs Franklin, Mr Fletcher, Prof A Brickwood and others who have responded to you and from whom I have received their emails as copies.

NUMBERS

Page 11 of Revised Dev Strategy Para 4.1.6

These figures, produced by G L Hearn, are disputed. There are nearly 2000 empty houses, offices can be converted into dwellings without planning permission, HMOs and the student population is up from 5000 to 10,000 (Warwickshire Observatory) and WDC households grew 50% faster than anywhere else in England/Wales, hence our recent moratorium of planning permission for new houses, only extensions were allowed. ONS (Office for National Statistics) expect population to increase by 11,300; therefore, local needs are for 5400 new houses rather than 12,300 the Dev Strategy demands. This is due to be discussed by Cllr R Bullen and Mr Barber at the end of August.

WHA is building at Albert St fire station, Ash Mill is converting WCC's empty residential side of Northgate St, Park View nursing home is going to be re-built. Are these including in the numbers to be built or included

in the Planning Permissions already passed? I know Ash Mill's plans are not yet in the P/P pipeline.

HERITAGE/CONSERVATION AREAS

This subject has been completely ignored in the RDS, yet is the most important aspect of our 4 towns and why we have so many visitors. Now that L/Spa is to be the HQ of both Men's & Women's Bowls, there is already resistance, viz: local opposition to Victoria Park being used as a 3 week car park. Brakes football land is to be sold and they want another stadium. The indoor bowls at Gaydon is to be used as car parking for JLR and they are looking for a new site. This is evidence that there is insufficient land around and in our 4 towns to contain all this development.

When the Local Plan was discussed at CAF we concluded the total development (SE of Warwick) would affect the scale of the Conservation Areas of all 4 towns. A 40% increase in population, with its attendant traffic will have a dramatic effect on existing settlements. Site 6: will be L/Spa/Warwick suburban sprawl. The Transport Strategy is wholly geared towards cars, and not enough consideration has been given to pedestrians, cyclists and babies in pushchairs.

CAF feels the strategy should be to release land slowly over 25 years and let the towns grow organically.

Warwick is unique as a "new town" built in William & Mary's time, with a 6d in the collection plate from England's population. You would be glad to do this in case your town might burn down. On 8th Sept 1694, with a strong S-W wind, fire broke out at the current Quakers' Church and burnt down a large portion of the county town. Francis Smith was the 18th century architect (hence Smith St a busy shopping street) and Warwick is an almost complete town of 17th to 18th century town houses. Every "new" house is up 4 or so steps from the walk-way, Parliament decreed this as the new houses could not have manure walked on to the new floors. Of course, the cellars remained, and became the foundations of the new houses. Some High St/Jury St houses even have 2 storey cellars.

In the late 1960s/70s many unburnt Tudor houses were destroyed by the then Borough Council and their timber and wattle walls were pushed into the cellars. Hence, the new houses along West Rock and North Rock. Indeed, my house, 8 North Rock, was built by Crosbee & Atkins in 1981 on a concrete raft, with the Tudor house pushed into the cellar. This was where the northern by-pass was to be built across Priory Park, to Broad St (hence that curious traffic island opposite Emscote entrance to St Nicholas Park), a new bridge across the R. Avon and on to Myton Road. This never happened because the people of Warwick rose up and revolted.

This is just a little background of the heritage, Warwick people are trying to save from future destruction by vibration from too much traffic, from fumes from diesel and petrol exhausts.

TRANSPORT

In 2004 I formed The Townsfolk of Warwick and we managed to stop Mike Waters' scheme for central Warwick traffic. The Transport Development Assessment (dated Feb and May 2013) seems to want to bring back some of those elements. WDC commissioned WCC who put out the contract to Arup. Others are trying to discover what remit WDC asked WCC to consider.

Warwick/L/Spa is controlled by narrow crossings over rivers, canals and under 19th century railway bridges. I have already submitted a 6 page paper on these bridges and what will happen when one of them fails. With 6000 houses built to the S-E of Warwick over the next 25 years, traffic will increase by about 12,000 more vehicles queuing at Banbury Rd, Myton Rd, Castle Hill, Cape Rd, Birmingham Rd in Warwick, along with Princes Drive, High St in L/Spa not to mention the bottom of High St/L/Spa (where STW roadwork's at the moment) and around the iconic L/Spa railway station.

WCC Highways call the projected increase in traffic "**mitigatable**". This, in lay terms, means adding very expensive traffic lights to junctions which seem to be incapable of dealing with 21st century traffic. Warwick's roads, which take 2 lanes of traffic, & have a little parking on the side are actually "fire breaks", because Warwick was rebuilt after the Fire of London and Samuel Pepys' new legislation. Castle Hill was

brought down to that level by a make work scheme after the Avon Bridge was built, which is why the Castle Hill Almshouses, seem to be on a cliff. They were built after the fire.

Para 4.3.10 P16 of RDS. The conclusion of this para is that Green Belt land (to the north of L/Spa should neither be built on nor released whereas Warwick argues that the Northern Relief Road (NRR) should be built to join the A452 Kenilworth Rd, L/Spa to the A46 (in the pipeline since the 1980s) would greatly relieve traffic and congestion along Emscote Rd and Myton Rd.

It is just too many houses in one place destroying the road infrastructure.

AIR QUALITY

Warwick District's AQMA districts are already at dangerous levels, and break EU regulations, the nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide produced by diesel particulates are slowly poisoning us. WDC's collection point is at Pageant House, Jury St and at other points in L/Spa and Kenilworth. I have already asked Environment Health what are the figures along High St/Jury St, W'k now traffic has reduced by about 17% (my figures) due to WCC re-modelling the through road with 3 raised platforms of shared space.

Diesel cars/vans have doubled since 2000 (Daily Telegraph 20/07/13) because it is perceived that a litre of diesel goes further. Buses and trucks no longer put out a stream of black steam/exhaust fumes because their engines are better serviced. About 29,000 UK citizens are killed by air pollution, far more than die in traffic accidents. WHO have stated that diesel fumes are as great a cause of cancer alongside asbestos and plutonium. Petrol exhausts have fallen 96% over the last decade.

Your plan is not sound. Traffic and Air Pollution will make it fail. We should have an action group: "CLEAN AIR FOR WARWICK DISTRICT" alongside Clean Air in London.

Ideally, Dr John Linnane should demand a Health Impact Study of just this, traffic and air pollution.

VIBRATION

When the High St/Jury St, Warwick road works were done in April 2012, vibration was felt in the shops, flats, houses along High St/Jury St, W'k. Shelves fell down, glasses rattled in cupboards, especially at Fascinos and Trios cafe. This is evidence that, not only road works, but the vibration from traffic is slowly rattling this new town (after the 1694 fire) to pieces. It really can take no more traffic. It is full already.

Even Cllr A Boad, at WDC Plans on Tues 23/07/13, as L/Spa Cllr acknowledged that Warwick needs a congestion charge/road user charge or narrow the roads even more so it can not used as a through route. 76% of the peak hour traffic in school terms is through traffic and has no business to be in Warwick, those cars, trucks, vans should use the by-pass. (My figures confirmed by WCC counting).

If you stand on the 19th century railway bridge on Cape Rd when a truck/HGV trundles by, the bridge trembles – well vibrates. Stand on the Grade II * listed bridge over the R. Avon, when a double decker bus crosses the river that bridge and feel it vibrating. This is the bridge which WCC rebuilt in 1998, to put modern sewers, electricity, gas and telephone in the foundations and it was discovered that funded by the Earl of Warwick in 1795, some of the piers were filled with rubble. It looks splendid with the even stone work (beautifully conserved over the centuries) but shoddily built inside. English Heritage will concur with me on this.

AREA OF RESTRAINT

P15 Para: 4.3.8

The land where these houses are projected is an Area of Restraint, not Green Belt. Therefore, this land is controlled by the current Local Plan 1996-2011. These fields are in the hands of a consortium of local charities and have formed themselves into a company (PLC) for the purposes of selling the land to a developer. The views from Caesar's Town of the Castle, from the Tower of St Mary's Church and from the scaffolding (now down) on St Nicholas' Church spire is a wonderful view of pasture land/cereal crops and hedges, crisscrossed by roads and

pylons. To lose this view both from the high points and from people in coaches and cars visiting this heritage site is unacceptable.

Coming along Banbury Rd, past the Castle Park (Grade II listed) and Brooks Willow caravan park (unused) up a rise then down into Warwick has been seen for centuries as the perfect setting for Warwick Castle, on its south side. Royalty has visited and President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher held a summit there during the Cold War. To ruin this pastoral setting with rows of houses is totally unacceptable.

Those charities should take better care of their assets; they are not poor now, having sold the north facing field where the Shires Retail Park is now.

Rural Area Policies refer to this land and note should be taken of RAP1, Para 8.10 "*New housing development in rural areas has an impact upon the character of the area, upon existing rural communities and upon wider objectives in terms of encouraging sustainable development*". Para 8.11 means use brownfield not green field (i.e.: AofR) sites using UAP1.

RAP4 becomes irrelevant, as the land is valuable as building land, there will be little, if any so-called "affordable housing" to be built – which is a misnomer anyway.

INFRASTRUCTURE, ELECTRICITY, WATER, SEWAGE

Para 8.37: now that 2 plots have been presented for OPP prematurely, i.e.: before the new Local Plan has been adopted, S106 money will be sought for infrastructure. £39M has been quoted for the infrastructure revised up to £75M, and S106 money will be insufficient for the capital needed for it.

W/13/0607 Land North of Harbury Lane, Heathcote, Warwick quotes about £17,000 p/house.

Some of the figures are from CIL (not yet adopted) and some from S106.

WCC footpaths = £300 (CIL)

NHS Public Health = £1572 P/house for hospital and outpatient infrastructure

NHS Property Services = £700 p/house (CIL for new GP's surgery)

Cultural Services = £24.95 p/person = S106

WCC Education = £8005 p/house (CIL for primary/secondary schools)

WCC Highways = £16,000 p/house = S106

£50 p/house for sustainability welcome packs to promote public transport

This is just one example shown already in the difference between CIL (not yet adopted) and S106.

Pumping stations for water (as Warwick Gates now), sewage – which is pumped daily into tankers and taken to Finham from Longbridge Sewage works, therefore, both water and sewage are already at breaking point.

How much consultation has been done with STW, when Warwick Gates was in the planning stage, STW assured us there was sufficient water supply for all those houses. This has turned out not be so as there had to be a hastily built pumping station. Bishops Tachbrook's water supply is very weak on occasions.

Electricity is almost at breaking point. Mr A Cowlard, (Warwick Racing Football Club) confirms a new sub-station is required, he is a supply electrical engineer with National Grid.

WARWICK HOSPITAL

Mr Glen Burley is an excellent CEO and has brought S W Hospital out of debt with good fiscal management. Both in patient and out patient services are heavily used and long waits are to be expected and are the "norm" nowadays. All staff are overworked and stressed. It is not true that Warwick Hospital has been offered another site and £4M to build a new NHS hospital. It is on a very congested site.

A & E face a winter crisis, prophesied by the Commons Health inquiry, because of lack of senior (ie experienced) staff. A retired ENT surgeon told me surgical beds are occupied by medical patients, which is why

infection is so rampant. Juggling around sick or orthopaedic patients in and out of differently designated beds is not acceptable.

GAYDON NEW TOWN

There is a new town envisaged by our neighbours, SDC, at Lighthorne Heath of 4,800 houses, 1,900 to be built in the first phase. This plan has been given an overwhelming backing by SDCllrs. Of course, it makes sense for them to agree to a new town nowhere near Stratford. Currently Gaydon and Lighthorne residents come into Warwick/L/Spa for their services, especially the hospital and GP services. Cllr Seccombe (SDC & currently leader of WCC): "This proposed new settlement clearly fits with local jobs because we have an international company (JLR) in need of expansion and it fits with local need."

I plead, on behalf of Warwick, for WDC to agree to negotiations with SDC. Therefore, the numbers (as stated at the beginning of this letter) are wrong again. With several of the feeder villages (Harbury, Bishops Itchington etc) also feeding into Warwick/L/Spa then job done. SDC has done some of the numbers for us.

I feel this is good news for infrastructure, JLR are funding the rebuilding of J12 M40 and the landlord of the Lighthorne Arms informs me that JLR will hire another 7000 employees, engineers and designers, over the next 25 years.

Land to the north of J15 M40 is owned by SDC and if they decide to build houses there, then they, too would lead straight into WD for schools, post offices, GPs, surgeries.

Warwick Town Centre Plan Preferred Options (pub summer 2012)

The vision is:

"To achieve economic and social success by building on Warwick's distinct architecture and cultural strengths".

This is WDC policy.

I have itemised above how the projected development SE of Warwick will complete ruin Warwick with its six lane highway coming into Warwick along Banbury Rd, a huge new roundabout at Bridge End, a

traffic light controlled gyratory at Castle Hill, possible two way along St Nicholas Church St.

The Town Centre has 300 Listed buildings and most of the town is in the Conservation Area, yet no consideration, has been given to the preservation of this unique town with keeping through traffic out.

P9 Transport, Air Quality and Climate Change

"Inexplicably linked with this traffic issue is that of climate change. Climate change affects everyone. The final plan will comply with the Local Plan."

P 10 and P11 itemise many ways of reducing the through traffic.

BETTER LOCAL PLAN

1. Ask every Cllr, both town and District, how many brownfield sites in their ward.
2. Ditto congestion pinch points/car park problems in their ward.
3. Use Warwick Town Centre Plan Preferred Options where we found several unused car parks which could be more brownfield sites.
4. Get the Highways Agency and WCC to build NRR to relieve east/west congestion in Warwick/L/Spa.
5. Re-think allotment building in north L/Spa and around Old Milverton.
6. Remember Barratts (developers) have first option on Blackdown land (even though it's Green Belt).
7. HS2 is being built through Green Belt so it is not sacrosanct.

In conclusion, I ask that this Revised Development Strategy is withdrawn and rethought.

Yours faithfully


Cllr Mrs Elizabeth Higgins

Warwick West Town & District Councillor

Former Mayor of Warwick 2012/13
