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19th December 2013

Dear Sirs,

Village Housing Options and Settlement Boundaries Consultation

Development at Leek Wootton - land at The Warwickshire Golf and Country Club, Leek Wootton, CV35 7QT

Hancock Town Planning Ltd acts for The Club Company Ltd which owns The Warwickshire Golf and Country Club at Leek Wootton.

Leek Wootton Preferred Option 5, The Warwickshire Golf and Country Club

The Club Company wishes to express its strong **SUPPORT** for the principle of Preferred Option 5, "*informal car park*" at The Warwickshire Golf and Country Club.

If the allocation is confirmed, The Club Company anticipates the development of approximately five high quality detached homes on the site. Care would be taken to ensure the design of the properties reflects the local vernacular and palette of materials.

We note that the detailed appraisal of the land set out in Appendix 6 to the Consultation Document states that TPOs are "*near the rear of the site*". However, this relates to the area of land known as the 1926 Arboretum to the south which, at its nearest point, is almost 20 m from the car park site. Therefore, given this distance and the fact that the southern part of any development of the car park site would be likely to be laid out as garden, there is no reason why the Arboretum area should pose any significant constraint to development.

We also note that the site appraisal notes that this site is a "*well used car park*". For clarity, the Club Company confirms that it has no operational need for this car park. Whilst the car park is used on a casual basis by dog walkers, this is on a permissive basis by the company with no established use rights.

The Company is currently commissioning a draft indicative layout showing how the car park site could be developed and hopes to submit this to the Council for discussion shortly.

Non-allocation of part of Discounted Option 7 - land north of site entrance at The Warwickshire

The Club Company wishes to **OBJECT** to the non-allocation of part of Discounted Option 7 for modest residential development.

Having reviewed the supporting information to the Consultation, we note that concern has been expressed regarding the potential landscape impact of development of this site, particularly on the elevated section to the north. However, consideration needs to be given to smaller-scale development which would maintain a sense of openness along the frontage. We note the summary of the landscape character assessment which states:

“Due to the use of this area as a golf course and the distance away from the main settlement the majority of this zone is not considered suitable for development. A small amount of linear development could be accommodated along the Warwick Road adjacent to the golf club entrance but this should not extend further west than the current building line of properties along the Warwick Road.”

The Council's own landscape assessment has there indicated that small-scale development within the vicinity of the entrance could be acceptable in terms of landscape impact. Such a scheme might be for between only 5-15 dwellings. In urging the Council to support such an approach, we highlight that the development of a small area of Discounted Option Site 7 would have the following advantages:

- Access to the site would be easy and safe, provided via a junction off Deansway (the internal drive into the Club).
- A development of 5-15 dwellings could be set back into the site to ensure that The Warwickshire's undeveloped frontage is maintained.
- Any small-scale development within the site would be on the lowest lying part of the site, so ensuring limited visual intrusion.
- Selective tree planting could be implemented to enhance the landscape character of the surrounding land.
- The land is very well located in relation to the A46 which would be likely to be the focus of the majority of work-related traffic movements to and from any new housing at Leek Wootton.
- This part of the Warwick Road frontage already benefits from street lighting and a footpath.
- Bus services pass directly outside the site.
- The land has no agricultural or other purpose and so its development would not result in the loss of productive farm land.
- Development would be very well related to the key element of village community infrastructure, the All Saints' Church of England Primary School which lies opposite the site.

We also highlight our concern that the advantages of the site are not adequately reflected in the Sustainability Appraisal as set out in Appendix 6 of the Consultation Documents. In particular, we note that the Preferred Option Sites 1-4 are more distant from the core of the village, bus services and the village school. The sites are also served by a constrained access and no footways. These sites, however, have the same sustainability score on “*Sustainable Transport / Reduce the Need to Travel / Local Services and Community Facilities*” as the Club Company’s land which has excellent access and is adjacent to a bus stop and the village school. We therefore respectfully ask that this scoring be reviewed.

Leek Wootton Preferred Options 1-4, Woodcote Drive

The Club Company wishes to **OBJECT** to Preferred Options 1-4 for the reasons set out below.

The individual site appraisal for Preferred Option 1 as set out in Appendix 6 of the Consultation confirms that an access onto Woodcote Lane cannot be achieved due to inadequate visibility splays. This means that a combined total of 80 dwellings would have to be accessed via Woodcote Drive. As acknowledged in the report, Woodcote Drive would have to be widened in places and has no footway. Given the distance of the sites from the village core, the lack of a footway means that any new development would be poorly integrated with the village. However, if it were possible to provide a footway, this would have a significantly urbanising impact on the rural character and the approach to an important listed building (Woodcote House).

Assuming an average trip generation of 7 movements per dwelling, the provision of 80 dwellings in these locations would result in around 560 movements using the Woodcote Lane / Warwick Road junction. Visibility at this junction is poor and we note the conclusions of the recently published Parish Plan which specifically highlights the need for improved safety at this junction. Loading a large number of vehicle movements, including large construction vehicles, onto this junction is not appropriate when there is alternative suitable land available at The Warwickshire which offers excellent vehicular access.

Whilst re-use of the main Woodcote House building seems sensible, Preferred Option 4 proposes 12 new-build units within the grounds of the House. This new-build element is inappropriate given the site’s distance from the main village envelope. We highlight that Woodcote House is more distant than the village than Discounted Option 6 which was not pursued due to its remoteness from the village. Preferred Option 4 should therefore be amended to exclude any new-build development.

Preferred Option 1, land south of Hill Wootton Road, Hill Wootton

The Club Company wishes to **OBJECT** to this Preferred Option as it is a greenfield site in a highly unsustainable location. Hill Wootton has no facilities whatsoever, no public transport and is one mile distant from Leek Wootton with the roads having no footways. Therefore, any future occupants of the site would be totally car dependant, contrary to the core objective of the NPPF.

The housing need at Leek Wootton should be met by sites within or on the edge of the village where future occupants can access its facilities by foot and where there is access to regular bus services.

We therefore request that our views be taken into account when preparing the Submission version of the Village Options Document.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or would like to discuss our proposals in greater detail.

Yours faithfully,

J. Hancock

Joel Hancock BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI