

Warwickshire Direct

12 DEC 2014

Leamington

LPFC\_LETGEN 2056

WARWICK DISTRICT PLANNING

Dear Sirs,

12 December 2014

**WARWICK DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2029 (Focused Consultation)**

This response is further to our response to the Local Plan proposals dated 26 June 2014 (LPPD\_LETGEN 3193).

We are particularly concerned that despite this local plan still being at the consultation stage permission has been granted to the application to build some 735 homes on land in the Europa Way, Myton Road area. That this permission has been granted before the relevant local plan has been finalized brings the planning system seriously into disrepute.

Of particular concern is the proposal to allocate land to the south of Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa for development. This countryside south of the two towns which enhances their attractive setting in rural South Warwickshire is amongst the 10% best agricultural land in the county. In return for granting planning permission to develop Warwick Technology Park a restraint order was made against further development in this area. The draft local plan ignores this restraint order. Does this mean such orders set by the planning department are worthless?

There is already severe traffic congestion on the road network of the two towns extending well beyond the travel to work peak hours. In particular much traffic is generated by journeys to and from school. This congestion is readily observed by those travelling on the roads; no sophisticated survey is required to prove this point. The development of new residential areas would create huge traffic generators which can only exacerbate this problem. Already Warwick town centre suffers from air quality well below standard; additional traffic would spread this problem further.

Although the draft local plan suggests some 13,000 new homes are needed in Warwick District the Office of National Statistics quotes a figure of 8,000. With the very many homes completed on both greenfield and brownfield sites in recent years residential development has been continuing unabated. As there are some 7,000 homes listed as recent completions, committed sites and windfall opportunities it would appear the District could be well within 1,000 of the number quoted by ONS.

The benefits of building on brownfield sites which can generally utilise existing utilities and other services and are generally within the built-up area are apparently ignored. These smaller schemes which are often suited to providing “affordable housing” are within the capacity of local builders unlike the large scale greenfield projects which are usually developed by national firms. These larger firms prefer the large scale schemes as they maximise their profits; their input to the local economy is minimal.

Such developers have argued as there is not land available for five years of house building any planning constraints may be ignored! For some reason the planning department has been slow to clarify this figure but it can be shown that well over five years worth of land is available.

Unfortunately residents of Warwick District are finding that rather than respond to their well-argued reservations against proposed developments the wishes of the developers take precedence. As well as threatening the separate identity of the two towns this would result in creating major traffic generators exacerbating the already unacceptable traffic congestion on local roads and reducing air quality in Warwick where it is already below safe levels.

With a local plan which ignores so many counter arguments in order to support proposals which appear to be just the wishes of developers there must be serious doubt about its true value. Town planning was introduced to avoid the unbridled development such as ribbon development along main roads through the countryside and to introduce Green Belts which restrained the over-development of urban areas. It is such constraints on development which are needed in Warwick District to ensure the towns are not surrounded by characterless suburbs and static traffic through much of the day.

Yours faithfully



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