



To: The Planning Policy Manager,  
Warwick District Council

22 April 2016

**Consultation on Old Milverton Development**

Dear Sir,

This is in regard to the plan to develop farmland between Kenilworth Road and Old Milverton in Leamington Spa. This will greatly extend the northern border of the town into greenfield land. As a resident of north Leamington, I have strong objections to this.

First, the area of proposed development is an important and much valued green lung for those of us who live in the north of the town. There is a footpath running from Northumberland Road to old Milverton, and beyond to Saxon Mill and the River Avon, that runs through open countryside; one that I personally use frequently for walks. I always meet plenty of other walkers, runners and cyclists on this path who clearly value it as I do. Without this open space within walking distance, I would be forced to drive to different ones, requiring car use and an addition to traffic congestion.

Second, and following in part from the last point, the whole project would cause a great increase in traffic in the north of the town. The Kenilworth Road is already a very busy one, with long tail-backs at peak hours. The congestion will increase exponentially. There will no doubt be additional roundabouts, all of which will create tailbacks at certain times of day. The same would be the case with the country lane from Blackdown to Old Milverton, and on down to Rugby Road.

Third, this will hugely compromise the village character of Old Milverton, making it a suburb of Leamington.

Fourth, the green belt that lies between Leamington and Kenilworth is much-valued feature of the area, and there is already going to be considerable encroachment on it if HS2 goes ahead. Some beautiful countryside to the east of Cubbington towards Stoneleigh will be affected. Can we allow this green belt to be compromised yet further with an insensitive development like this?

Fifth, development on greenbelt land is something that should be considered only in very special circumstances, as is stated in the Planning Practice Guidance issued by the Government in March 2014. I quote: 'unmet housing need (including for traveller sites) is unlikely to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm to constitute the "very special circumstances" justifying inappropriate development on a site within the Green Belt'.

Are there alternatives, given the housing needs that there are? The first focus should always be on brown field land, with the cost of cleaning it up something that developers must be made to bear. As it is, developers hold much land in reserve that should be used initially, and the council should insist that they do so. The other is that the density of urban development must be much greater, with terraced houses and apartments rather than detached and semi-detached houses. This, coupled with proper provision for dedicated cycle ways, would help preserve the character of a medium-sized town such as Leamington as well as provide the much-needed housing.

Yours sincerely,

Professor David Hardiman