



Response to consultation on WDC Development Brief for Land East of Kenilworth

The development of the land East of Kenilworth is of vital interest to the whole of the town community, not just to its future residents.

We agree with the statement in the Vision & Objectives section that “The new community will be fully integrated into the existing town,”, but want to see this vision extended to all aspects of the development brief and not just its highways infrastructure and transport aspects.

The key focus for the Trustees of the Kenilworth Centre is clearly the proposed **Community Centre facility** proposed on pages 97-101 of the Development Principles section. We have already made a formal expression of interest to Warwick District Council to be involved in the design and development work for this facility at an early stage, and look forward to this happening soon.

We have the following initial comments to the proposals in the Development Brief:-

1. It is unclear why the proposed Whitnash Community Hub has been used as the template for the centre configuration, as the scope of this hub is considerably wider than that needed for the Land East of Kenilworth. For example, it includes relocation of Whitnash library and town council offices. Also, the quoted cost for the Whitnash hub of £1.6 million has already been superseded, with the latest estimate nearer to £2 million.
2. In relation to the sports facilities proposed for the Community Centre, namely sports hall and sports area with a separate entrance and changing facilities leading out into an open space area, these need to be considered in the context of the sports facilities to be made available to the local community at the new Kenilworth School site to be built only a short distance away. We understand that the footprint of these facilities will be similar to what is at the current school site, with a similar operating model. There appears to be some danger of duplication of sports facilities between the new school site and the community centre.
3. A main hall seating more than 150 people would be a major new asset for the town as a whole. Currently no such community hall of this capacity exists within the town, other than by using one of the churches.
4. It is unclear for what purposes the provision of community offices is proposed.
5. The provision of suitable external space associated with the Community Centre would be excellent. The footprint of the town centre-based Kenilworth Centre includes a small external hard surface sports court, but no grassed area.
6. It is unclear whether the quoted cost of £28k per annum for a 20 hours per week community champion/development worker is the actual cost or a full-time-equivalent rate. If the former it seems high, but if the latter then low.

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7. One member of staff working 20 hours per week seems inadequate for the scale and scope of facilities proposed. Roles to be covered include facilities management, reception and customer bookings, and finance and administration. This is one of the areas where there could be considerable synergies with the current Kenilworth Centre structure, where all of these roles are in place and well developed, and could be expanded to cover another facility at relatively low incremental cost.
8. We have not interrogated the estimated centre running costs of £33,820 per annum in detail, but on the face of it these seem reasonable.
9. It is unclear why the developer contribution towards running costs is proposed for 10 years for the community champion/development worker, but 5 years for centre running costs. The experience of the Kenilworth Centre shows the dangers of a cliff-edge drop in funding. The new facility would need to be managed from Day 1 with a very clear strategic plan as to how long-term financial sustainability will be achieved.

John Whitehouse
Chairman

on behalf of the Board of Trustees

10th January 2019

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