

Development Policy Manager,  
Development Services,  
Warwick District Council,  
Riverside House,  
Milverton Hill,  
Leamington Spa,  
CV32 5QH

**VIA POST AND EMAIL (newlocalplan@warwickdc.gov.uk)**

18441/A3/MJ

27<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Dear Sirs

**RE: WARWICK NEW LOCAL PLAN  
REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF JOCKEY CLUB RACECOURSES**

Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on the Council's Preferred Option for the new Warwick District Local Plan. These representations are made on behalf of Jockey Club Racecourses in relation to Warwick Racecourse.

Warwick Racecourse is an important leisure and recreational facility within the Borough and as such our Client considers that the racecourse should be the subject of a site specific policy within the Local Plan.

The site specific policy should enable development within the racecourse to make it easier to progress redevelopment proposals should they arise during the plan period. This approach recognises the role of Warwick Racecourse within the Borough, and the need to support ancillary activities to assist the racecourse in providing an attractive and viable visitor destination in order to ensure the future viability of the racecourse.

We support the reference to the sustainable growth of the retail and leisure offer in the existing town centres to improve the vitality and viability of these centres. Development of this nature would serve to enhance the status of the both Warwick and Leamington Spa and continue to maintain their profile as tourist destinations. We highlight however that town centres such as Warwick which have a historic core and are not best suited to major development proposals. It is therefore considered that specific reference should be made to the suitability of alternative locations within these towns, such as the racecourse, in accommodating such development proposals. It is considered that Warwick Racecourse provides the ideal opportunity to accommodate further development being an existing tourism and leisure destination. Its location in close proximity to the town centre means that enhancement of the racecourse will have other spin off benefits for the town with additional income generated.

It is important that flexibility is built into the development framework to cater for changing circumstances during the plan period to ensure the future vitality and viability of the racecourse. In recent years the racing industry has suffered a reduction in media rights income and the levy and as a result of this and other circumstances, Warwick Racecourse, along with several other racecourses, has lost much of the income it relied upon. Warwick Racecourse will need to diversify or consolidate the racecourse functions during the plan period in order to remain financially viable. Other racecourses including Epsom Downs and Sandown Park are experiencing a similar situation and have

Certificate No. FS 29637



had to consider diversification options. A replacement Grandstand and new hotel have recently been provided at Epsom Downs Racecourse and in 2009 planning permission was secured for a new hotel at Sandown Park Racecourse.

JCR is keen to ensure that the policies within the New Local Plan have regard to their need to improve facilities at Warwick Racecourse in order to remain an attractive visitor destination. The adopted Local Plan does not make reference to the potential for future development at the racecourse and as such contains no policies specifically advocating or encouraging its improvement and development. There is a need to improve and/or enhance the facilities at the racecourse to ensure its continued viability and continue the programme of re-investment which is expected to include the following:

- a hotel
- replacement saddling boxes
- a new members entrance
- renewal of the Chandler Suite
- a new main racecourse entrance
- extension to the caravan park

JCR have a strategic business plan and are aware of a number of issues that need to be dealt with in the short to medium term to secure the future of Warwick Racecourse. Generally, in order to compete with other sporting facilities and leisure activities, JCR are seeking to improve the standard and range of facilities at the racecourse. Corporate events, in particular, are an important market that the Racecourse Management are keen to encourage. JCR are seeking a policy within the New Local Plan which would give favourable consideration for the improvement of facilities at the racecourse. Such a policy would provide a higher degree of certainty for future investment decisions at the racecourse.

On the basis of the above our Client considers that the racecourse should be the subject of a policy which specifically relates to the use of the site and which recognises the role of the racecourse and its facilities to the Borough and to aid the ability for the racecourse to refurbish and develop itself to protect its long term operation as an important sporting venue without compromising the nature and character of the borough or its Conservation Area setting.

#### Suggested Policy and Supporting Text:

##### **Policy**

**'The Borough Council supports the role of Warwick Racecourse, within the area defined on the proposals map, in providing a recreation, leisure and entertainment facility, within the Borough, in order to ensure the continuing vitality and viability of this facility for the benefit of the local economy.'**

##### **Supporting Text**

**In general terms applications for additional equine support facilities, hotel use, conference facilities, alternative leisure and recreation will be permitted, provided that the requirements of all other relevant policies of the plan are satisfied.**

Carlisle and Market Rasen Racecourses provide two examples of local planning authorities supporting racecourses within their administrative boundaries by means of site specific policies as reproduced in the enclosure.



In addition to the above, we generally support the proposal to replace the existing policy of Areas of Restraint with designated Green Wedges as set out in Policy PO15. However with regard to strategic green infrastructure we note that Map 6 Possible Green Infrastructure, proposes that the racecourse be designated as "Public Parks and Gardens". It is unclear from Policy PO15 what the intention of this designation is, and as such what potential implications this might have for the racecourse business, and in particular in relation to race day activities. On the basis of the limited information presently contained in the emerging Local Plan regarding this proposed designation, our Client objects to Policy PO15 due to concern that this could potentially conflict with operation of the racecourse business.

We would be grateful if you could confirm that the above representations have been duly made and keep us informed regarding forthcoming Local Plan/LDF consultations.

Should you wish to discuss the above matter please contact me on 0207 4466888.

Yours faithfully,

*pp C Hawkins*

**MARIE JASPER**  
Associate

Enc.

cc: Colin Fellows – Jockey Club Racecourses