

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

18441/A3/MJ/cc

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

29th July 2013

Dear Sirs

**RE: WARWICK NEW LOCAL PLAN – REVISED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF JOCKEY CLUB RACECOURSES**

Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on the Council's Revised Development Strategy 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.

Additionally it is 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 very substantial reduction in funding from the Horse Racing Betting Levy Board 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. These adverse industry conditions have resulted in the recent closure of both Folkestone and Hereford Racecourses. 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 had to consider diversification options. A replacement Grandstand and new hotel have been provided at Epsom Downs Racecourse, planning permission has been granted for a new hotel at Sandown Park

Racecourse and most recently planning permission has been secured for a major new grandstand and improved facilities at Cheltenham 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.

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,



MARIE JASPER
Associate

Enc.

cc: Colin Fellows – Jockey Club Racecourses

"Proposals for development at Carlisle Racecourse will be favourably considered where they enhance the existing sporting economic, recreation and tourism function of the racecourse. Proposals for redevelopment will be judged against their impact on the surrounding environment, highways and road safety and other policies of this Plan. Enabling development may be considered where this would improve the existing operation of the racecourse."

".....

Within the Market Rasen Racecourse Area as defined on the Proposals Map, development proposals for leisure, recreation, education and rural business opportunities together with ancillary equine related activities, retail and food and drink uses to serve the racecourse visitors will be permitted provided that:

- i) The development is compatible with the main racecourse use; and the ancillary equine related activities, retail and food and drink uses are located within the core of the existing built racecourse development;**
- ii) The development is of an appropriate scale with regard to the existing built form, its open landscape setting and would not have an adverse effect on the characterised appearance of the open countryside;**
- iii) The development would not have a detrimental effect on highway safety."**