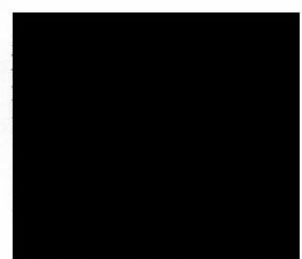


10,001.



Ref : Revised Development Strategy.

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

WDC PLANNING	
Ref	
Officer	
23 JUL 2010	
SCANNED	
CC	CR PD MA
PRE	GEN DIS

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you in objection to the Revised Development Strategy, which is currently the subject of public consultation. I am extremely concerned with these proposals and believe them to be wholly inappropriate and an unfair burden on the small areas of Warwick district that will be affected by these developments. I expect you to respond to all of my concerns in detail, justifying your "Revised Development Strategy" with factual and appropriate data. My concerns can be summarised as follows

New Housing

Number Of Houses & Impact To Local Infrastructure.

In the 20 years to 2011, the population growth in our area has already been unnaturally high at 18% due to the high level of new housing. This has seen a significant number of new people migrating to the area, many of whom do not work in the vicinity. This is already placing an unacceptable and unmanageable burden on the local infrastructure which in turn is having a negative effect on the local inhabitants. To propose a further increase of 20% over the next 15 years is not only inappropriate but also irresponsible toward all of the existing residents. It is quite clear that the local infrastructure will not be able to manage as it is already failing to cope with the existing levels of traffic resulting in congestion ranging from long slow moving queues to complete grid lock Monday to Friday during rush hour and also on much of Saturday. Significant data is readily available in the public domain that proves this to be the case (Appendix E of the Warwick Strategic Transport Phase 3 Assessment). Typical proposals of widening and adjusting existing roads and junctions will not resolve this problem as is clearly evident around the site of the old Ford foundry which is already a traffic congestion black spot since its completion a few weeks ago. Unless major new roads are built with additional crossings over the natural barriers of the River Avon, River Leam and the railway then your proposals for improving the road infrastructure to cope with these extra homes will fail. Such major developments to break these traffic bottle necks will not only be inappropriate in the areas of Warwick and Leamington due to their aesthetic and environmental impact but will also not be financially viable.

All of the major amenities (shops, hospital etc) are located on the opposite side of the river in either Warwick or Leamington. This means that the existing bridges will become a major bottleneck due to the increase in traffic. For example, Castle Bridge in Warwick has a capacity of 900 cars per hour, a figure which is already exceeded on a regular basis, indicated by the subsequent congestion that occurs. The capacities of the other river crossings in the area are likely to be similar. In addition, the adjacent roads leading to and from these river crossings are also restricted and regularly congested.

The siting of 4000 houses between Warwick Gates and Bishops Tachbrook will also result in large amounts of traffic using the M40. The roads that link the two M40 motorway junctions with this area are not capable of coping with this extra traffic capacity.

I therefore challenge you to demonstrate how the current road infrastructure can cope with an extra 12,300 houses or state in detail what changes to the infrastructure you plan to make in the same timeframe to support these additional dwellings.

In addition to the road infrastructure problems, there is also no indication as to how other key infrastructure improvements will be delivered in the same time frame. An increase in population of circa 40-50,000 that 12,300 homes will bring will require additional capacity for the hospital, doctors surgeries, schools, public transport, police and fire services etc. How will these be delivered in the same time frame as 12,300 houses and how will these be funded ?

Housing requirements based upon the natural growth of the population indicates that only circa 5500 new houses are required and not the 12300 being proposed. A recent housing needs survey in Bishops Tachbrook identified a total housing need of 15 additional properties (from a response rate of 500 homes from a total of 750 in the village). So based upon this, why are so many houses being proposed in the locality of the village ? Building an artificially high number of houses will simply encourage more migration to an area which is a nicer place to live than many inner city urban areas. There is also little need to create more local business and industry in the area since the unemployment rate in Warwick District is only 1.7% so if this is reason being used to justify the number of new houses proposed this is also inappropriate and flawed. Building an excess of new houses will promote more commuting which is something that is already causing a major problem in the area through traffic congestion.

Location Of Proposed Development

It is wholly inappropriate for a few small areas of Warwick District to shoulder the entire burden of the number of houses being proposed. This will guarantee that a small amount of the current population of Warwickshire will be significantly and unfairly affected by the building of these new homes while the majority of the district will not be affected in any way at all. Warwick district is a large and diverse area and the burden of extra home requirements should likewise be shared across all of the district's towns and villages calculated by conducting simple housing needs surveys as already completed in Bishops Tachbrook.

The visual impact of 12,300 houses in the rural area of Warwick District will be very significant, particularly those being proposed on the higher greenfield lands south of Harbury Lane. To back this up, during the previous round of proposals to build new houses in the area, a government planning inspector stated that "no build now or in the future" should occur at the site of Woodside Farm. WDC's landscape consultant, Richard Morrish also referred to the land south of Gallows Hill that "this study area should not be considered for urban extension and that the rural character should be safeguarded from development".

The building of these extra homes in such few areas will decimate two historic villages, Bishops Tachbrook and Tachbrook Mallory. Your previous "Preferred Vision For Warwick District to 2026" contained quotes and statements which are clearly breached by the proposals now being made one of which related to the importance of retaining this rural area, an example as follows :-

"a mix of historic towns and villages set within an attractive rural landscape of open farmland and parklands, that have developed and grown in a way which has protected their individual characteristics and identities."

This is a rural community. The building of 12,300 additional houses in this area will result in significant parts of it ceasing to be rural !

My personal view is that you have proposed to build these houses in such a few areas to reduce the overall cost of the project and to limit the number of people that are affected (and hence those likely to object). This then makes it easier for you to secure developers whilst limiting the amount of "fallout" and "challenge" you receive from the residents of Warwick District. Spreading the number of required houses across all of the District's towns and villages would significantly reduce the impact of those houses on the local infrastructure. This is therefore an example where cost and ease of execution have

taken priority over what would cause least impact to the District as a whole and therefore be in the best interests of the Warwick District residents.

Location Of Proposed Development Near To Bishops Tachbrook.

Whilst I am in favour of retaining green space between Bishops Tachbrook and the houses proposed South of Harbury Lane, there is little point in this if it results in a major development being within a few hundred yards of the village and being on an elevated site. This will have the affect of dominating the village both aesthetically and from a noise perspective. This area of restraint should be from the Harbury Lane which already forms a natural juncture between the development of Warwick Gates and the "green field" areas surrounding Bishops Tachbrook and Tachbrook Mallory. Any breach of this existing boundary by large housing developments will challenge the criteria of a village and hence negate the green space acting as an "area of restraint" It will also make future development of what will be a smaller area of undeveloped land between the new development and Bishops Tachbrook more likely. I consider the current distance between Warwick Gates and Bishops Tachbrook to be a minimum of that required to protect and maintain Bishops Tachbrook and Tachbrook Mallory as villages. The area of restraint also does not give any protection to the existing mobile home park off Harbury Lane. This is destined to be completely engulfed. Why is no area of restraint being afforded to this existing development. Again, maintaining the current natural boundary of the Harbury Lane as the edge of the area of restraint would also protect these local inhabitants.

The filling in of the various vacant areas around the Warwick Gates site would provide sufficient extra housing in this area if the overall burden of the required increased housing is spread across the whole of Warwickshire as I have previously suggested. The village of Bishops Tachbrook could also accommodate its own requirement for new houses which has already been determined through a housing needs survey.

The reason why I am so passionate about Bishops Tachbrook remaining a real village and not just by name is that it enjoys all of the benefits of an English country village. The local children go to the local school, this then ensures that the adults mix and communicate with one another. The local parents help out at the school, they also run Brownies, Rainbows, Youth Club etc. These organisations then support the local church and vice versa. All of this ensures that the village is a safe, happy and rewarding place to live. This is not something that can simply and easily be created but it can be very easily lost. All of these things will gradually fade away if the village loses its identity. The development of Warwick Gates is a good example where, due to a lack of up front planning and foresight, there is precious little sense of community and engagement between the residents.

The Bishops Tachbrook local history group recently wrote a complete history of the village and sold over 700 hundred copies. I encourage you to read it. You will then get some indication of the depth of feeling towards the village and the number of people who consider it something worthwhile that should be protected. It has developed as a village since before the Norman Conquest (1066) and should not be allowed to disappear into a mediocre suburb of Leamington Spa as Warwick Gates has become.

Use Of Green Field & Brown Field Sites.

In light of the current need to protect the environment as much as possible, it is essential that brown field sites are used for future housing development prior to the destruction of further green field areas. Your plans do utilise a proportion of brown field sites however, as you are planning to build houses in such few areas of the county this is therefore limited. There are also significant brown field sites that have not been proposed. The now defunct Coventry airport site is of significant size which could be utilised to build houses. There are also several smaller areas in the Leamington and Warwick areas such as the Leamington "Arches" area.

I challenge you to confirm the total area of brown field sites within the county and explain why all of these cannot be utilised to provide the necessary building land for the extra houses required to avoid further use of green field areas. Unless it can be shown that there are insufficient brown field areas in Warwickshire and the surrounding West Midlands, it is wholly inappropriate and irresponsible for you to be proposing the use of any green field sites whatsoever.

Gypsy & Traveller Sites.

With regard the proposed gypsy and traveller sites around the Bishops Tachbrook area (Nos 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 & 15) I have the following objections based upon the fact that they do not comply with the Travellers Consultation Document :-

- Sites 3, 4 & 6 are very remote from major amenities.
- Sites 5 & 9 only have access onto a busy road, have no pedestrian access and could result in unacceptable visual impact to Warwick and the listed buildings also on this side.
- Sites 6 & 9 have no pedestrian access.
- Site 10 is close to the Guide Dogs for the Blind National Breeding Centre and so any site could interfere with their sensitive breeding activities ref noise, site contamination (due to business activities) etc. It is also remote from major amenities and has no pedestrian access.
- Site 15 is located on the banks of the Tachbrook so there is a risk of contamination from the site (ref acknowledgement that business as well as domestic activities are likely to occur on the site.

In addition, the school in Bishops Tachbrook Parish is only a single form entry and is fully subscribed in many years. It is therefore not capable of providing schooling for extra 10-30 extra children from local traveller sites.

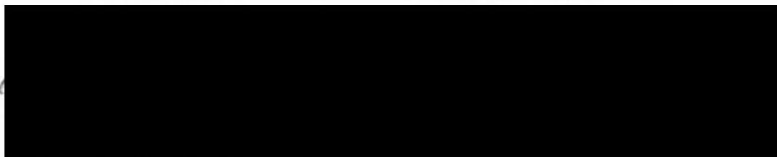
One area that has not appeared on the list of suggested sites is the caravan / camping site that was installed on the Banbury Road south of Warwick near to Temple Hill Spinney. This area was developed into a campsite / caravan site some years ago and has been unused ever since. A suitable junction and pedestrian access has been provisioned for and its location is close enough to the amenities of Warwick to make this an appropriate site. I don't know if this is a private site or if it was developed by the local authorities. If it was the latter then it is a disgrace that this site has not been used since its creation and demonstrates a total waste of local tax payers money. Its use as a gypsy / traveller site would provide at least some value from the monies already spent. As a brown field site it would also constitute a lesser impact on the development compared to some of the other proposed sites.

In the same way that I expect brown field sites to be used for the proposed 12,300 houses, I also expect you to do the same for the gypsy and traveller sites. There are sufficient sites available for this (Nos 17 & 18 for example). Until all the brown field sites in the district have been used, it is irresponsible and unacceptable for you to be proposing green field sites as an alternative. The environment is coming under increasing pressure and by proposing green field sites you are maximising the amount of this pressure.

Overall I expect you to only propose and develop areas that comply with the Travellers Consultation Document and that have a minimal impact to the environment and those existing residents of Warwick District. Any that don't comply should be removed from the proposal list.

I look forward to your response to my challenges and questions.

Yours Faithfully



Paul M. Whitwood.