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Development Policy Manager
Development Services
Warwickshire District Council
Riverside House
Milverton Hill
CV32 5QH



24th July 2012

Dear Development Policy Manager,

When applying the knowledge and analytical skills I gained in order to become a Warwick University Economics and Politics graduate, to a study of your **New Local Plan**, I find that I am bemused. It does seem that there is a significant number of ways in which it defies logic – and is the cause for very real concern by many local people who are genuinely supportive of improving and developing our towns for the benefit of the community.

Point 1

I would start with my concern about the **erosion of Green Belt land** – the protection of which is, I believe, fundamental to keeping a balance in our lives. I accept there are occasions when it is necessary to build on such a precious resource – indeed I supported such a proposal by my local council in Berkshire when development of a new highway ‘in my back yard’ was proposed. However, I cannot see the justification of bringing closer the urban developments of Kenilworth and Leamington Spa – when other options are available. I regularly walk across the land in the proposed Development 4 and know that, whatever the time of year or the weather, this is a local amenity that is very well used and highly rated by local people including dog walkers, families and lovers of open spaces like myself. Your proposed Developments 4 and 5 will not only remove this much loved open space but lead to the need for further destruction of much loved and used open space (and have a detrimental effect on the village of Old Milverton) because of the highway development that would be an obvious consequence of the building work. Talking to friends and colleagues who live in the south of Kenilworth, I hear similar concerns about the loss of outdoor space that is so valued by inhabitants of that town, particularly the young, who utilise the sporting facilities in Development area 7.

Point 2

I joined the Doctor’s practice on the Warwick Gates estate as a patient when it opened and I clearly recall discussions with those people involved in setting up that practice who were so inspired by the exciting Warwick Gates development which was to include shops, a community centre AND A SCHOOL. It does not. As a teacher in a local state primary (and as a parent) I am very well aware of the trauma that this fact has caused over recent years because of the change in catchment area for Myton and because of the fight for places at the preferred existing primary schools. If, instead of building Developments 4 and 5 on Green Belt land, your

plan included building to the **south of Warwick Gates and Heathcote** then the need for a school in that location would be increased even beyond what it is now and the logic of making that sensible investment would be self-evident and easily justified. How marvellous it would be if that whole area, including the brand new estate (shall we call it Development 15 – re. P7 of your publication ‘Local Plan - preferred options’) and the established Warwick Gates properties, were to be served by a **new school** which would provide such a marvellous focal point for the community. What is more, the transport infrastructure is already better in that area and could be further developed without affecting Green belt land or a small village community.

Point 3

Even more fundamentally, I am intrigued why you consider that there is to be a need for over 8,000 more dwellings by 2029 in the Leamington and Warwick area. As a local Primary School Teacher, I am well aware that my Year 6 pupils have had a great opportunity this year to choose which secondary school they attend as the birth rate is such that none of the secondary schools in Leamington and Warwick was filled when the allocation of places was announced. Looking at the pupil numbers for the next few years, I anticipate that this will continue to be the case for quite a while. These are the people who will be in their mid-20s in 2029 – why does this lead you to the assumption that we will need vastly more first-time buyer properties available by that date? Indeed, as a mother of two children already in the mid-20 age bracket I am conscious that neither of them - or a single one of their friends - has chosen to stay in this area – and that is not due to a lack of housing but to the attractions of London and the wider world! Perhaps it is not a growth in housing requirement but the current level of demand that has led to the creation of the New Local Plan proposal? One of my most regular local walks is by the canal near the old Potterton’s site. As I assume you know, that development includes a range of housing that includes a large selection of properties at the lower end of prices for homes in this area – and yet the majority remain empty and the lack of sales has halted the continuation of the building programme. This leads me to believe that currently there is not a level of demand that exceeds supply. So if this excessive demand is not here at the moment and nor does it seem that an explosion in demand is about to occur then **where are the facts that should inspire me to believe in the need for a vast increase in housing provision?**

In summary, I have taken time to read the ‘New Local Plan’ and to discuss it with as many local residents as possible and I conclude that, although it is well written, **it does not convince me of the need or indeed the justification for building on Green Belt Land.** I conclude with a heart-felt plea that this proposal to build on Development sites 4, 5 and 7 is not approved.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.