

Orchard House
Hill Wootton
Warwickshire
CV35 7PP

18th July 2012

Mr David Barber – Development Policy Manager

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

Dear David Barber

Proposed New Local Plan – North Leamington Green Belt

As residents in the area, we wish to object to your Council's proposals for development of nearly 2000 houses and employment facilities on Green Belt land to the north of Leamington.

This Green Belt land at Blackdown and Old Milverton is part of the 'green lung' that separates Leamington from Kenilworth and which retains the individual quality of each of these two historic settlements.

If this proposal proceeds, it will reverse the strict policy of your Council to preserve this rural separation, leaving only a small gap of about two fields and the A46 corridor between the towns, and the open space amenity and the well used recreational facilities will be lost.

The Council was right to identify land to the south of Leamington for future expansion in its "2009 Core Strategy" since this land is easier to develop and the infrastructure to support expansion is in place, with good transport connections and existing employment at Heathcote.

The proposal to contradict the Core Strategy policy of only three years ago suggests that the Council is engaged in an exercise in 'Social Engineering' by attempting to share out the areas for future development between the north and south areas of the town.

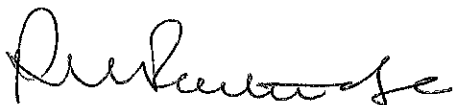
Such an aspiration involves the destruction of very large areas of Green Belt, designated by the Council to reserve the open space and the character of an important rural area, and as such should fail the NPPF 'exceptional circumstances' test; otherwise the importance of maintaining a Green Belt policy is a meaningless sham and could set a destructive precedent for even greater incursions in the future.

Apart from this Green Belt objection, we wish to draw your attention to these further considerations:-

1. The overall number of houses proposed may well prove to be an over-provision since the Council is relying on projections made during a period of economic population growth.
2. Recently Coventry City Council accepted that there had been an over estimate of housing demand for new housing in the City and sensibly reduced the numbers to avoid the need to allow development on Green Belt land.
3. The Council does not appear to have considered the impact of development creating considerable flooding with the fast run off from hard surfaces and overflowing soakaways and drains. The proximity of the Avon which is frequently in flood already must be of concern, particularly when new roads and infrastructure are planned to service the new development sites.
4. The north of Leamington does have some small pockets of employment already. There are some offices, a hospital and schools in the area, but this is nothing compared to the employment available at Heathcote and the new developments to the south of the Town.
5. The development sited to the north of Leamington would apparently require an additional infrastructure investment of £28m whereas the land to the south has most of its infrastructure in place. Such additional expenditure to just satisfy a "political whim," is extravagant and unnecessary, particularly at a time of national restraint.

We ask that your Development Services carefully reconsider these development proposals which contradict your Council's Core Strategy of 2009 and we wait to see how your Council can satisfactorily prove any "exceptional circumstances" that can justify the destruction of the Green Belt in Old Milverton and Blackdown.

Yours sincerely



Michael Partridge Dip.Arch RIBA
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