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16th July 2012

To The Development Policy Manager

RE: New Local Plan

I am writing this letter to outline my thoughts with respect to the considered future development within Warwick District. I have read quite a bit of literature around the proposal, especially the Preferred Options Summary and the Preferred Options Executive Summary published by Warwick District Council in May 2012.

As a resident of Leamington my whole life I feel an affinity to my town and wish to ensure its future prosperity continues in a measured fashion so that it remains a town that I recognise and am proud of. Some of the Council's proposals do not match my sentiments for what constitutes this future development. Part of my past has disappeared under housing during my 36 years; I do not wish to see my future disappear in the same way that where I was born (Warnford Hospital), where I went to school (Trinity School, Dormer Hall) and where I worked (Ford).

I accept the natural evolution of society and more pertinently my town, what I cannot reconcile myself to is what it is at the expense of and this is what I wish to outline in my letter to ensure the rich heritage and natural beauty of Leamington and its surrounding town's is preserved for future generations otherwise the proposed adjustments to the Green Belt zone becomes a slippery slope that will ultimately only end when all the land has gone.

Within the Executive Summary document it is noted that there is a requirement for 10,800 dwellings to be built by 2029. The document outlines its arguments stating the need to encroach upon the Green Belt because there is insufficient Brown Belt land for development. As the various sites and number of dwellings are stated there is reference to the new developments supporting housing, open spaces and employment opportunities.

Level of Housing Provision

Based upon the Council's projections there appears to be an over-provision of housing which appears to be out-of-kilter with other sources.

The Council's Executive Summary document suggests that 10,800 dwellings are required between 2011 – 2029 (600 houses per annum). However, the Office for National Statistics show that between 2011 – 2020 population growth is 0.81%; 2021 – 2030 population growth is 0.65%, so clearly over time the trend is for a slowing of population growth not rapid growth that the Council suggests. Over this 20 year period this is annual growth of 0.73%.

Applying the Council's figures that there was 12% increase in population in Kenilworth, Warwick, Whitnash and Leamington from 124,000 in 2000 to 138,800 and using the 0.73% annual growth rate, this would suggest that in 15 years time the population will have increased by 11% (or 16,000 residents). This works out to less than 1.5 persons per new build. Is this logical? This is also working

on the premise that all of those 16,000 people are of an age whereby they can take out a mortgage to buy a property.

On the premise that not all of these people will be of such an age then using the Office of National Statistics figures, and taking the age range 15 – 59 years, 57.4% of the population would be old enough to buy a property. Therefore, of these 16,000 residents only 9,600 (using a 60% assumption) would be in a situation, due to their age, to buy a property. Suddenly, we have 0.9 persons per new build meaning that there is clearly an over-provision of houses in the Council's plans and forecasts!

Even accepting for natural population growth, the requirement for housing seems to be less than half of the proposed 10,800 properties as an assumption that most buildings will be multiple occupancy and not single occupancy. With this being the case then the new housing could be accommodated in non-Green Belt zones (that the Council has failed to recognise) without causing a shortage of housing and destroying the environment.

The growth assumptions used above are derived from national figures and are considerably more aggressive than the Office of National Statistics which forecast only 6% regional growth for the West Midlands by 2026.

Around Leamington and Warwick there is already a surplus of housing and this would increase this over-provision. Property is currently available at such places as:

- Chase Meadow – only 50% of the Phase 1 housing has sold and this development has been in place for a few years
- Portobello Riverside – another recent development which is far from occupied
- new property is being developed opposite Leamington train station

With these developments currently remaining unoccupied why is there a requirement for further (excess) property at present? The current economic climate is not conducive to offering people certainty. These housing developments will not automatically lead to full employment or fully occupied housing; it will merely add to the increasingly empty premises to the detriment of the Green Belt.

The Council has previously identified areas to develop that were not detrimental to the Green Belt and these areas, should growth justify it, could cope with more realistic projections of what the District will look like in 20 years. This is a pragmatic solution as well because this identified land near Heathcote or Radford Semele is closer to the areas of employment such as Heathcote Industrial Estate, Tachbrook Park, Spa Park and Shires Retail Park. The infrastructure is already in place with the M40 and A46 very accessible. This would also facilitate further regeneration and gentrification of an ailing south Leamington.

A bigger picture view is that the issue is not the availability of housing in the District. It is only necessary to walk around to see the estate agent boards showing properties "To Let" and "For Sale". A search on the internet reveals available properties running in to hundreds. Occupying these would in some way go towards accommodating the population growth. The question is affordability insofar as people are not able to get mortgage applications approved. Building excess new housing is not going to circumvent the very real issues confronted today and get banks and building society's lending money which is one of the real issues. The reality is that people would rather have a job and job security, in one of the many unoccupied units, than have a property. One cannot happen without the other.

The current global recession impacts the District like it does everywhere else and a perspective needs to be taken and not viewed through rose-tinted glasses hoping things will improve. We are living in an economic environment which has been going on for over 4 years and showing no signs of abating. With several national and multinational industries located in the District we are as much at the mercy of market forces as anywhere – such as the Ford foundry. Therefore, is there really the confidence and demand for new houses? It does not appear so and therefore the Green Belt does not need to be developed to meet non-existent demand. Demand is further hampered by the cost of living as reflected in the creep in food and fuel prices. By developing Green Belt it removes the opportunities to utilise this arable land in the future to grow our own scarce resources, making us even more susceptible to the influence of global conditions because we will not have our own “bread basket”.

There seems to be an obsession with building property, but why? To the local economy it may provide a short-term impetus with construction work but once the development is completed then what? Why are we not focussing on utilising what we have first? The Council should be taking a longer-term view and preserving what we have for the benefit of future generations. They are already going to be saddled with debts, at least they should be given some countryside to enjoy and escape to.

With several local and global factors suggesting the growth projections look unfounded and therefore the new housing could be accommodated in non-Green Belt zones without causing a shortage of housing and destroying the environment, the housing would be better located nearer to the employment opportunities such as Gallows Hill etc. It is a real fact that a large proportion of the employment opportunities are located in the south of Leamington (and Warwick). This would have several benefits as it would reduce commute times, have a smaller environmental impact because people could walk to work or take advantage of the established public transport links in that part of the District. This would sensibly utilise the good infrastructure that is already in place.

What the Council have also failed to demonstrate is how affordable housing is “retained as affordable housing in perpetuity”. By the very nature of the society that we live in, market forces through supply and demand control the cost of goods, including housing. The Council is in no position to influence house prices, even of a local nature. Prices are determined by a multitude of factors not least what an individual is prepared to pay for a property.

The Council in its Summary document talks about protecting the historic environment, providing links to green areas and encouraging recycling. How does the development of the Green Belt protect the historic environment and beauty of the District when there is Brown Belt land available for these housing developments? If the Council wants to provide links to the green areas then as opposed to reducing the Green Belt, make them more accessible through the introduction of cycle networks not by building roads and houses. This is how the Council can maintain the qualities of the District that make it desirable, by keeping the natural features that currently make it what it is.

Hopefully this is not a paper exercise and the land has not already been sold to developers such as in the case of fields at the back of the new developments up in Sydenham near Asda whereby A.C.Lloyd already own land at the back of roads such as Withy Bank and that the reasoned arguments for preserving the Green Belt are listened to.

Green Belt

In short, Green Belt should not be developed (or certainly have wholesale development) in Leamington, or the District, when other suitable land is available such as Grove Farm and Radford Semele. As has already been demonstrated thus far, the provision of housing does not suggest a

requirement – nor has the Council in their Summary documents shown how they intend to guarantee complete utilisation of any new development that would come at the expense of the Green Belt.

There are surely several purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – the identified developments in the Summary documents seem to be encouraging urban sprawl;
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another – development now is merely a stepping-stone for urban coalescence;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment – clearly the development of 10,800 properties would not be consistent with Green Belt;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns - as a town we should be proud of our Royal and Spa heritage. Leamington is a place of immense beauty of which the countryside plays a significant part of this. I am sure the Council frequently reference the Royal title to reflect our past – one recent example is the opening of the Linden Arches by the Duke of Gloucester. Further, one of the main advocates for protecting our countryside is the Prince of Wales. It would seem somewhat hypocritical for the town to continue to use the Royal title if the town is committed to the destruction of the Green Belt, a policy clearly at odds with the future king's sentiment; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land - within the District there are many, many examples of not utilising the land to its capacity initially.

As the Green Belt in the District has been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in:

- providing opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- providing opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- retaining attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- securing nature conservation interest; and
- retaining land in agricultural and related uses.

These opportunities for current and future generations would be lost through development on the Green Belt. The thousands of people that utilise the land toward Milverton and Blackdown every year will lose this recreational access. The Council claim that opportunities will be provided in the Garden Suburbs but these opportunities already exist in a state that is more naturally beautiful than what any construction company can come up with.

A Green Belt should be several miles wide, so as to ensure an appreciable open zone all round the built-up area concerned. Boundaries should be clearly defined, using readily recognisable features such as roads, streams, belts of trees or woodland edges. Well-defined long-term Green Belt boundaries help to ensure the future agricultural, recreational and amenity value of Green Belt land, whereas less secure boundaries would make it more difficult for farmers and other landowners to maintain and improve their land. These difficulties would become apparent under the new development proposals and actually would result in the loss of the Green Belt and redefined as a Green Wedge. The description amounts to semantics because the countryside will be lost – period.

The construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for the following purposes:

- agriculture and forestry;

- essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it;
- limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;
- limited infilling in existing villages

The Council has not demonstrated the essential or exceptional circumstances that require the development of the Green Belt near Milverton or Blackdown. For example, the land here adequately supports outdoor recreation which future development does not.

The Council has not adequately and beyond reasonable doubt identified the insufficiently suitable and available sites outside of the Green Belt, especially with the inflated growth projections. The land near Gallows Hill towards Bishops Tachbrook has not been included as identified growth despite its ready infrastructure and proximity to employment opportunities. The land near Gallows Hill (and Gallagher Business Park with its 700,000 square feet) and Chase Meadow (and Tournament Fields with its remaining 615,000 square feet) seem more logical options in terms of providing the land for housing developments and employment opportunities with the land already available. These are established communities whereby further development would conserve the Green Belt of other identified land.

As the Council takes positive green efforts in initiatives such as recycling, the proposed development seems to run contrary to being "green" as:

- they seek to build on Green Belt land when sufficient land is already available in a part of District that is being ignored in the proposal. Is this political? Why not use Grove Farm?
- they support the building and development of a main road through Old Milverton, a rural community within a stone's throw of the historical charm of the Saxon Mill and Guy's House. This would increase traffic and naturally pollution of noise, visual and environmental varieties;
- they support this development at the expense of encouraging people to use public transport which would have much more of an environmental benefit; and
- additional residential areas would create more traffic in the Green Belt zone through the endorsement of urban creep. It would not be unreasonable to assume that each dwelling will have at least one car, if not two, meaning anywhere between an additional 11,000 – 16,000 cars in the District and the environmental damage that comes with these using the Council's growth projections.

The Council in its Summary document talks about climate change and a requirement to reduce carbon omissions by 20%. Yet, through the development of the Green Belt this is counter-intuitive. Building houses on Green Belt would bring additional car usage as property will be developed at the furthest point in Leamington from where the major employment opportunities lie. This would increase the volume of traffic and journeys that would be undertaken leading to more pollution. By the Council's own admission the District's carbon dioxide emissions are higher than the national average. To help reduce this housing development would be best located near employment in the Heathcote and Radford Semele areas. This preserves the Green Belt and the Green Belt's ability to offset the carbon dioxide.

The Council also states on page 15 in its Summary document "the Green Belt covers a large part of Warwick District and seeks to stop urban sprawl that would harm the open nature and rural character of the open countryside around the towns and the urban areas of the West Midlands." This is the Council admitting that developing the Green Belt would harm the countryside and

undermine the rural character of places like Old Milverton. So why develop on it when alternatives are available?

The Council further states on page 19 in its Summary document "providing and improving...walking networks, improving access to the countryside, improving biodiversity and looking after the District's unique landscape are all important in making Warwick District a great place." All these natural requirements are already in place. The District should be promoting them and allow the community the chance to continue to use them in the best state possible, their natural state. Green Belt development is not going to be in keeping with making the District a great place to visit if there is no countryside. Housing developments are not high on people's list of places to visit and appreciate.

In the Executive Summary the Council talks about Biodiversity Offsetting to avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity. This is the Council's open acknowledgement that Green Belt development will have a negative impact. By reshaping nature, once it is altered by its very definition it is no longer natural. How is biodiversity offsetting going to help local communities if the sole aim is to ensure that developments secure net gains? What this amounts to is the destruction of the Green Belt on the indemonstrable hope that it will be offset somewhere, anywhere!!! This is not very helpful to local communities. How does the destruction of the Green Belt in Leamington benefit the community if the offset is in Kenilworth???

Employment Opportunities

One of my main objections would be around the justification for using Green Belt land for employment opportunities. As I look around the District there is already sufficient land that is available for development that has not been developed or units that are available to be utilised. My feeling is that building additional housing and using employment opportunities as a screen will end up with further "white elephants" as buildings designed specifically for employment remain empty.

There are currently vacant premises and/or land at the following sites that would comfortably create employment opportunities:

- Gallagher Business Park – 700,000 square feet for development
- Tournament Fields – 700,000 square feet for development and only 85,000 square feet has been developed
- Tachbrook Park – 20 acres for development
- Shires Retail Park (former Focus unit)
- Budbrooke Point (units For Sale)
- Wedgnock Industrial Estate (several units up To Let)
- Portobello Riverside (by the doctor's surgery)
- Warwick Technology Park – I work in the Icen building and over half it has been empty for the 18 months that I have been here
- The Barford Exchange

This is not an exhaustive list either.

The Council should be focussing on filling these units as opposed to creating further surplus capacity that will also remain empty. This can be done by offering tax incentives or rent free periods to encourage employers to relocate (or with landlords to encourage such). There is no guarantee in the Summary documents that these employment opportunities will be filled or filled by local residents.

As these sites are already established they have good infrastructure links that make the M40 and A46 accessible. That is one of the significant advantages that the towns of Leamington, Warwick and

Kenilworth enjoy; their proximity to these major transport arteries in the middle of the country. With the recent positive redevelopment of the Longbridge Island to alleviate congestion this has increased the accessibility of these sites. They are on the south side of the towns of Leamington and Warwick, we should be looking to take advantage of what is in place and improve on what we already have than trying to create additional opportunities all over the District. Financially, this would also make more sense because development would not be from scratch.

The proposed development in places like Milverton and Blackdown would necessitate material improvements to the infrastructure using valuable cash the Council does not have, especially as it will be several years before there is a return on such investment. With the current spare capacity at such places listed above it would be more economic, effective and efficient to target investment here so that further infrastructure development and disruption is kept to a minimum.

If employment opportunities are deemed to be on a scale like recent residential developments at Warwick Gates and Chase Meadow then this would appear to mean approx half-dozen retail outlets of various stripes, but generating employment for maybe no more than 30-40 people. This seems a disproportionate argument for permanently removing Green Belt land for the sake of creating such a small number of jobs.

What are not set out in the Summary documents are guarantees provided by the Council over employment being enduring in these newly developed residential areas. Why is there certainty that employment would be "full" and that units/buildings would continuously be occupied when there are multiple developments already unoccupied or waiting to be developed? Empty premises would soon fall in to a state of dilapidation to the detriment of the community they are supposed to enhance. The current economic state of the country (ne the world) does not support confidence that such targeted opportunities would come to fruition and persist.

One only needs to consider the Court Street Arches which are empty. This is a project that was supported and funded as a Business Enterprise Project by the Council. On the one hand I congratulate the Council for the significant aesthetic improvement as a consequence of this initiative; on the other, it has not served its primary objective of creating employment and thus paying back to the community the cost of this undertaking. Employment is not guaranteed in any situation.

The development of buildings for employment opportunity needs to be clearly demonstrated. If the presumption is the employment would be retail (similar to Warwick Gates and Chase Meadow) then what is to stop the buildings becoming another Regency Arcade? Planners and councillors should have strategies considering the welfare of the Districts a whole. When unsuccessful businesses fail, this can mean years of dereliction before new trades move in. This is evident in Old Town, Regency Arcade and at the bottom of The Parade. Brand new buildings that never have tenants are even more depressing and are likely to continue due the current economic climate combined with the permanent change in shopping habits.

So, when the Council talks about its vision and objectives that it wants to achieve in its Summary document i.e. support the growth of the local economy, why is this not being undertaken already and utilising the land already set aside for development, why does housing and employment opportunities have to come at the expense of the Green Belt? As has been demonstrated above, providing employment land close to new housing in Milverton & Blackdown is unnecessary as there is already abundant land set aside near Grove Farm and Chase Meadow with 1.4m square feet available for development. Setting aside further land on Green Belt is not necessary. This is not in

keeping with the Council's stated objective of "maintaining and protects the vast majority of the District's Green Belt".

Local Amenities

Clearly, the land proposed to the north of Leamington is already an important local amenity for exercise and recreation as there is very little publicly accessible open space in this area. Developing the Green Belt in to Green Wedges would not have a positive effect because it would erode the land available and impact upon pedestrian safety which is a natural by-product of residential areas and the increased traffic it would bring.

Within the current locality of where I live, the only public park is near Dragon Cottage on Guys Cliffe Avenue. Therefore, having the land from Milverton to Blackdown is the alternative local amenity and one which can be enjoyed in absolute safety and the pleasure the natural beauty of the local countryside brings. This does not necessitate having to drive to places like Newbold Comyn or St Nicholas Park and making those meaningless five minute car journeys which are the bane of society but symptomatic of the hectic world we live in. The countryside provides an outlet and release from this.

How ironic the Council is facing this issue at the very time when the Olympic torch has made its way through Leamington and Warwick. At a time when we should be revelling in hosting such an event, an event that encourages sport and activity amidst perpetual cries from politicians to get out there and compete and live healthier lives, the Council wishes to remove the Green Belt. In Milverton and Blackdown the countryside is popular with walkers, runners and cyclists; individuals and families alike. The irony and hypocrisy is not lost. How is the development of the Green Belt going to help overcome the challenges of motivating the Playstation Generation to go and appreciate the outdoors when there is none; or if they need to visit parks they have to drive. It seems self-defeating!

This appears to be an example of failing to appreciate the importance of the countryside to the public and recognition that once it's gone, it is gone. The visual amenities of the Green Belt should not be injured by proposals for development within the Green Belt which clearly the new buildings would be visually detrimental by reason of their siting (when places like Grove Farm and Radford Semele can be developed without eroding the Green Belt), materials and design.

In the Executive Summary it talks about "it will be important to maximise linkages and access to the wider countryside for recreational purposes for all". I would suggest that the people who wish to take advantage of the beautiful countryside in the locality do so already. People who also live in close proximity to the countryside probably do not use it so improving the linkages will not equate to more people using the land for recreational purposes. The Council also talk about "protect the quality of existing open spaces in the District and enhance the quantity and quality of open space". Building housing on Green Belt is definitely not protecting anything, let alone Green Belt. I am also curious as to how building houses on Green Belt is ever going to increase the quantity of open space!!! Surely the very essence of building something means that you will lose space, Green Built space at the expense of land which has previously been set aside at places like Grove Farm and Radford Semele, the very places which are closer to the employment opportunities and better infrastructure.

Local Services and Infrastructure

Development should not require additional expenditure by the public sector on the provision of infrastructure, nor should it overload local facilities such as schools and healthcare facilities. It does not appear as though the Council taken in to account any additional infrastructure requirements i.e.

roads, which may have significant adverse effects on the Green Belt. Nor has it been outlined the adequate financial provisions that should be made for the future maintenance of landscaped areas.

Clearly, by diversifying the number of locations which are to support the new developments it is going to take considerable investment as well the utilisation of further land to provide for adequate infrastructure development, leading to further destruction of the countryside as Milverton and Blackdown is not geared up for this kind of development when places like Grove Farm are already set-up to cope with future development.

The proposal also talks about the North Leamington Relief Road (at a cost of approx £28m) which would destroy the very fabric and tranquillity of Old Milverton. Aside from its impact on this small rural community it is diverting resources away from other public services, services which are more pressing and more important to the council tax payers such as me. Additional houses would place a greater burden and stretch Council resources further.

The public have seen cut-backs in services such as the opening time of Princes Drive Recycling Centre. Would additional houses lead to further "reductions" as services would have to be spread more thinly as council's have to rationalise and reorganise like all other business. Conversely, would the council tax increase to pay for the additional services required to sustain more houses?

What has not been outlined is how the additional burden from an increasing population will be met, addressed or how they are expected to cope:

- on over-subscribed local schools such as Trinity, Brookhurst and Milverton. An incidental side affect on these schools would be the increase in traffic and the impact this would have on child safety as people would use the new infrastructure as a potential cut-through to the relief road; and
- on policing. Nationally there is going to be a 20% cut on policing by 2015. As part of the council tax is weighted towards paying the cost of policing are council tax bills going to go down which would seem only fair as the service is being cut?

I would suggest it is unlikely the Council will reduce the taxes I am expected to pay. I accept that I now get less "bang for my buck" such are the times we live in. But what I do expect from my Council is the application of common sense and applying a zero-based budgeting approach to wisely spend the funds in their coffers. Spending £28m on a road which actually has no proven tangible (economic) benefit would advisably be better channelled elsewhere, supporting the provision of public services or improving existing infrastructure in already established communities where new housing development is more sensibly undertaken.

Furthermore how does the development of a relief road fit in with the Council's preferred option, as stated in the Executive Summary, of "supporting a low carbon economy within the district"? By its very nature it is encouraging more traffic and commuting in to the area. Considering the District has carbon emissions above the national average this is not going to help tackle the environmental problem. If the District is committed to the employment opportunities it talks about then it should look to continue to support the infrastructure in the developed areas of the District which have the natural advantage of being close to the major arterial links of the M40 and A46 i.e. Grove Farm and south Leamington as a whole or looking at improving services through better and reliable provision of public transport. The Council should be doing this already as opposed to relying upon proposed infrastructure levies.

What this road and housing development on the Green Belt would do is lead to urban creep (or urban coalescence) because the Council would effectively be signalling that there is no land which is considered off-limits. It would tacitly be condoning the spreading of boundaries within Leamington, Kenilworth, and Old Milverton.

Old Milverton could very easily lose its identity, which is inextricably linked to the countryside, with the housing development of land in the Milverton and Blackdown area. This identity, of a tiny, picturesque rural community would further be destroyed by the encouragement of additional traffic as a consequence of a relief road. Each of our local communities has something that its residents can be proud of and easily identify with, the growth of the District should ensure that Leamingtonians can still relate to their Royal Spa town, Warwickians and people for Kenilworth with the iconic castles etc, but the consistent theme should be that our countryside and Green Belt remains intact in the face of the human thirst for growth and money.

Spending valuable cash resource on building on Green Belt through the creation of a relief road would not tangibly impact many in the District. The public would much rather the Council spent funds on what really matters to them and where they will have a tangible benefit. A road through a rural community is not what the public consider value for money when every penny counts.

The Council in its Summary document talks about good infrastructure (schools, roads, health care, services and green spaces) but the irony is surely lost. How is developing the Green Belt in Milverton and Blackdown good infrastructure when land that can already be used for development in Heathcote and Radford Semele is ignored? How are the roads of the District good infrastructure when we are always facing road improvements which continuously causes disruption especially at the end of the financial year when there is panic to spend budget; surely improving the roads in south Leamington is advantageous because these are where the major employment opportunities and main road links are as opposed to developing new roads where none are needed? On page 17 in its Summary document the Council states that "new development will inevitably lead to extra pressure on the District's transport infrastructure" but why create this extra pressure by developing new areas when established communities with very good infrastructure are already in place?

Conclusion

There is, in my opinion, no need to build on the Green Belt to the north of Leamington:

- There is the land available to the south of Leamington especially on Grove Farm and the District Council's own evidence shows that. Alternatively, there is land directly to the east of Radford Semele which could accommodate housing and land directly to the south of Bishops Tachbrook that could take a similar number. Both areas are also outside the Green Belt. Both areas do not seem to have been considered by WDC;
- Nearly all the employment is on southern side of the Leamington / Warwick conurbation;
- The M40 is to the south of the Leamington / Warwick conurbation;
- The main supermarkets are on the southern fringes;
- Most importantly, if the Green Belt means anything it should mean that other areas are considered first and only if there is a compelling reason should Green Belt land be used.

The development of the Green Belt is not "enabling people to live healthy, safe and inclusive lives" as expressed in your Executive Summary, nor is it in keeping with "seeking to ensure that open spaces, access to the countryside and habitats are improved" as the said open spaces and countryside are proposed to be built upon.

Such measures as building in Milverton and Blackdown are not in keeping with the Council's preferred option of "protect, enhance and link the natural environment...to ensure physical access

for all groups to the natural environment". Access can be granted through the development of cycle networks etc. This retains the natural landscape whilst being committed to preservation and protection; development of the land for housing does not constitute protection or enhancement. Better adjectives would be destruction.

What the Council is doing seems to be of a very political nature by developing the Green Belt when other sites such as Grove Farm, Radford Semele, and Warwick Chase can already be developed but have deliberately been chosen to be overlooked so that the Council can "spread the pain". By adopting a plan to remove villages from the Green Belt and draw new Green Belt boundaries around the settlements to allow for development is nothing short of gerrymandering and should not be allowed to happen even when all other options have been exhausted. Development of the Green Belt now means that the flood gates will have been opened and sends a message that nothing will be sacrosanct in the future.

This is not the future I envisage for the town I have resided in my entire life and paid my taxes to for the dwindling services I now see and receive. A stand should be made and preserve some of the final bastions that make this district one of the most beautiful in the county. Exceptional circumstances need to be demonstrated to develop Green Belt – these have clearly not been demonstrated and I would suggest the Council has bigger questions to answer over matters such as employment and utilising what we already have before setting aside further land which will go the same way.

The Council needs to be more economic, efficient and effective in the utilisation of its resources and the public's resources that it is entrusted to look after and utilise in the best possible way for the District. This does not extend to building a North Leamington Relief Road and building on Green Belt; it does mean the Council should look to improve further the existing employment and infrastructure in the south of Leamington and utilising this land for housing because local amenities are more geared towards catering for the additional demand. They should not be turning a deliberate blind eye to the natural advantages the south of Leamington possesses for the sake of politicking.

Yours sincerely

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