

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

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Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to register my opposition to the Warwick District Council's 2012 Proposed Development Plan. My main concerns are : - 1.The Green Belt. 2.Old Milverton Village. 3.Public Expenditure. 4. Affordable Houses.

### 1. The Green Belt

Building on the Green Belt Land north of Leamington Spa is not justified and does not comply with Planning guidelines.

Despite attending 5 Consultation Meetings, (Trinity School, Baginton Village Hall, The Leamington Society, Old Milverton and Blackdown Parish Council and the Naval Club briefing), where questions from determined people, to establish the robust evidence to support '**VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**' failed to materialise. '**Vague circumstances**' were hinted at, with no evidence to substantiate them. Neither '**Special circumstances**' nor '**very special circumstances**' were demonstrated. **Advantages outweighing disadvantages was an irrelevance.** The Presenters failed to impress their audience that they had fulfilled these essential requirements to justify the new plans. This is a serious omission and can hardly be seen as being in the best public interest, indeed totally ignores the 'spirit of the planning guidelines' for building on precious Green Belt Land!

Not only does this area of Green Belt Land lend a pleasing character to Leamington Spa, it offers high quality amenity and provides valuable wildlife habitat. The area in question also represents some of the best local agricultural land, for food production. The significance of this should not be ignored, when the Minister of Agriculture is emphasising the need for greater self-sufficiency in food production as the world population increases and weather patterns change reducing the ability to produce food crops and animals for human consumption.

**I do hope that planners will finally accept that it was not a good planning decision to develop this Green Belt Land and that with some thought an alternative can be agreed and presented to the government within the required timescale.**

### 2. Old Milverton

The proposed plan aims to avoid Old Milverton. It is inevitable that this little village will be seriously affected and its character changed by building on its Green Belt and constructing the Northern Relief road close by. Old Milverton is highly valued by many for being an easily accessible oasis of peace and calm, giving the impression of being in the middle of the country, whilst Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth are close by. This effect is due to Old Milverton being uniquely surrounded by gentle hills which hide the conurbation. The fields with their plentiful rights-of-way give access to otherwise unseen views, the Saxon Mill and several popular allotments.

Residents in Old Milverton whose houses are sandwiched between the railway line and Old Milverton Road will have their safety and quality of life greatly compromised. This will be due to the increased danger, noise, vibration and lights brought about by an increase in the number of trains on the upgraded Kenilworth line and the inevitable huge increase in traffic from the new developments. The Northern Relief Road will have an immense impact through pollution and the rear outlook will change from fields to houses and/or roof tops.

The Northern Relief Road slicing (on stilts) through the flood plane, will ruin the spectacular view of the fields and railway viaduct seen from both the railway bridge, and houses on Church Lane. The noise pollution from the Northern Relief Road and the inevitable increase of traffic driving through Old Milverton, will add to that from the A46, completely destroying the relative peace and quiet for the whole village. The Church will be similarly affected as will the peaceful graveyard where many come to contemplate. The walk through the fields to the Saxon Mill will be spoiled. The fumes from increased traffic will be detrimental to the village, runners, walkers and cyclists alike.

At present Old Milverton is peaceful, quiet and dark at night. This will be totally altered due to the increase in traffic noise and that from extra trains on the upgraded lines. The train carriage lights and vehicle headlights will be much in evidence. The Northern Relief Road will be lit up as will all associated junctions. Then there will be lights associated with the new houses. It is highly unlikely that the new houses will not be seen from the village. All in all, not only will the Green Belt be destroyed, Old Milverton will lose its special identity and charm for all who enjoy it. Was this an unforeseen tragedy?

**I hope the planners will think again and avoid this legacy!!**

### **3. Public Expenditure**

This plan represents an unnecessary squandering of public money at a time of National austerity, when all need to be prudent with spending. I refer specifically to two aspects of the plan.

#### **a). Infrastructure**

The new road infrastructure to the north of Leamington Spa consisting of a dual carriageway on the A542 and a new Northern Relief Road, will add little to the functioning of the existing road network in that area, whilst both will consume extra acres of Green Belt Land. The Northern Relief Road requires an 'upgrade' to Old Milverton Lane and almost certainly a new bridge over the railway before driving its way on stilts through flood planes to eventually cross the River Avon on yet another new bridge before joining Leek Wootton roundabout. £28m looks like the estimated starting price ! What an extravagance !

This is an unnecessary additional cost brought about by what is increasingly looking like political maneuvering, having little if anything to do with respectable planning decisions. To build on Green Belt land at Blackdown and Old Milverton and deny/ignore the expensive, recently constructed infrastructure, to the south is a travesty. Brown field sites served by this infrastructure were originally included in the 2009 Core Strategy.

**This would be the prudent option!**

#### **b). Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing is needed. The plan proposes to build 45% on Green Belt land in one of the most expensive areas in Leamington. It follows that the affordable housing built in this area will also be very expensive to buy/rent and the location will not help residents to live sustainably and

economically near to employment opportunities, with quick and easy access to public transport, and the existing comprehensive facilities. Inevitably many would add to the traffic congestion as they cross Leamington to and from their places of employment.

Royal Leamington Spa is looking shabby with closed shops and empty houses. It needs an injection of money and inspired initiatives to bring about a resurgence. Surely this is the opportunity to negotiate the occupancy of empty houses and to improve areas by building affordable houses in the most appropriate sustainable locations. It is the only way to improve and revitalise the town.

**Public money should be spent in the place where it is most needed and do most public good.**

The planners have emphasised in their presentations, that the plans are not set in stone and that they have budgeted for nearly 1400 houses more than the estimated requirement, so that if an area is found not to be suitable for development it can be withdrawn from the plan.

It is obvious that to build on Green Belt Land in Blackdown and Old Milverton is not necessary, does not comply with planning laws, would be to the detriment of the town and its inhabitants. So remove it from the plan and build more affordable houses in town, to make good the necessary numbers where possible and then if there is no other choice, build on brown field sites as planned in 2009. Both suggestions negate the need to be profligate by building unnecessary infrastructure and the Affordable Housing built might just be affordable; enabling a sound plan for presentation to the government, in good time.

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Ann Kelsey  
26 July 2012