

10: Warwick District Council - Consultation on
New Housing & other Development on Green Belt.

BLAST (Bringing Leamington Allotment Societies Together)
Response to the Local Plan July 2012

950

BLAST represents several allotment societies in and around Leamington.

Binswood

Old Milverton

Milverton New

Cliffe

St Mary's

Dobson Lane

Campion Hills

The group have over 700 members producing fresh and wholesome food for
nearly 3000 people

We are reassured that the land proposed for development in the Preferred Options of the draft Local Plan does not encroach upon existing allotment sites. Access to the proposed sites is close, however, particularly approaching the Binswood allotments from Northumberland Road, and passing the Campion Hills allotments on Black Lane. At the former, there is a wetland field adjacent to the track leading to the allotment site which is highly likely to have European Crested Newts, which are a protected species. The hedgerow bordering the Black Lane allotments is ancient, and teeming with wildlife.

BLAST has been assured that allotment provision would be made for any new development of over 100 dwellings, yet this doesn't appear anywhere in the local plan. An increased local population will need to be fed and put more pressure on the existing food supply chains. The sharp increase in allotment interest has meant that many more individuals and families are coming to rely on allotment grown food as a budgetary necessity, physically and mentally healthy, enjoyable activity. Fruit, vegetables, fowl, rabbits, goats and bees are all current on the local allotments. As important areas of wildlife habitat, rainwater and ground water collection and storage, allotments can also be sited to provide community facilities.

We are conscious that more houses are needed, however we are opposed to building on the Green Belt until sufficient evidence is shown that the available Brownfield sites, Council and non-Council owned, have been used in priority.

Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that in reviewing Green Belt boundaries, authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable

WDC PLANNING	
Ref	
Officer	
24 JUL 2012	
SCANNED	
CC	CR PD MA
PRE	GEN DIS

patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages which are within the Green Belt, or toward locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.

7.19 of the Consultation Document states that the sustainability appraisal of the options showed that development which is not in the Green Belt has clear advantages such as the provision of sustainable transport options and reducing the need to travel at all. The carbon impact of increased vehicle travel will be huge. Therefore the proposed development of Green Belt land fails the review criteria of paragraph 84 of the Framework. Development of non-Green Belt land to the South of Leamington meets the review criteria both in offering more sustainable transport, services and utility options, and are existing predominantly Brownfield sites.


At Paragraph 80 of the Framework, five purposes of the Green Belt are indicated;

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- to assist in safeguarding the country side from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic town's; and
- to assist in urban regeneration.

The Green Belts around the town were intended to conserve the open space between Leamington and Kenilworth, Radford Semele, Warwick and Coventry. Encroachment upon this land will negate this purpose, by reducing the buffer between them, leading the way to even further infringement. The reduction in the existing wildlife corridors will further lessen the opportunity of migration of species as the effects of climate change continue to effect flora and fauna. We need to protect and safeguard these areas in order to be provided for by them. At PO 10, Built Environment, the Council gives an objective 'to protect, enhance and link the natural environment', which these Green Belt developments will seriously compromise.

As part of the work on the BLAST response to the Options for Growth, a Bio-Diversity Survey was carried out by the Ecology Unit of Warwickshire County Council. Ecological diversity demonstrated at allotment sites by a survey showed the presence of the rare and protected European Crested Newt. Environmental surveys will need to be carried out to assess the impact and subsequent legality of these proposals.

As a committee member of the Motwaston New Allotments Association Limited and the holder of an allotment there since 1972 I strongly support the response above by the BLAST committee.



(Tel: 01926 424702)

(Email: anthony3@talktalk.net)

S.E.G. ANTHONY

8 CAMPION TERRACE

LEAMINGTON SPA,