

JEREMY WRIGHT MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

1320

Mr Dave Barber
Head of Planning
Warwick District Council
Riverside House
Milverton Hill
Leamington Spa, CV32 5HZ

17th July 2012

Dear Mr Barber,

In responding to the consultation on Warwick District Council's draft Local Plan, I want to raise a number of concerns.

I am in favour of local authorities setting their own housing requirements and calculating for themselves future local housing demand, rather than being compelled to accommodate their share of housing numbers set and determined centrally. I do however think it crucial that the assumptions and methodology on which such calculations are made should be set out with clarity. The public must be able to have confidence in the conclusions WDC have reached on future housing demand levels before a sensible and inclusive discussion can be entered into on where new housing should be located.

On that issue of location, I understand the arguments, particularly with regard to the sustainability of a large concentration of houses in one place, which have led the Council to spread new planned housing across more sites in the District. However, there has been a very significant shift of policy away from the last iteration of the Local Plan, where a substantial proportion of new housing provision was located near to the existing Warwick Gates development. In this new draft local plan, relatively little housing is planned for that area. Explanation is needed for this significant change in approach.

The crucial issue raised by this draft Local Plan seems to me to be encroachment of the Green Belt. I do not believe that such encroachment can never be justified, but I do believe that the justification for it must be strong. Green Belt status is widely recognised as a vital tool in preventing urban sprawl and the amalgamation of towns and certain areas of local Green Belt have been defended and maintained for good reason. The green belt which separates Kenilworth from Leamington Spa is of particular importance to my constituents and would be affected by, to cite one example, proposed housing development at Blackdown and Old Milverton. If developments such as these are to proceed the Council must demonstrate clearly that, in particular, brownfield sites have been properly considered, assessed and rejected for good reason before green belt sites have been included in the plan.

Yours sincerely,

JEREMY WRIGHT MP

WDC PLANNING
Ref
Officer
23 JUL 2012
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