

Chapter 3: Core Strategy

“We want Warwick District to be Safe, Healthy, Fair and Prosperous, Now and into the Future”

- 3.1 The above statement is taken from the Warwick District Community Plan 2001-2003. This is the joint vision for the District developed in partnership with other organisations and in consultation with the local community. This represents the community's aspirations for the area.
- 3.2 The Core Strategy is intended to demonstrate how the Local Plan will contribute towards delivering this vision in an integrated manner with regard to economic, environmental and social aims.
- 3.3 The Strategy is therefore structured under the four main aims taken from the Government's definition of sustainable development. These are:-
- to maintain high and stable levels of economic growth;
 - effective protection of the environment;
 - prudent use of natural resources; and
 - social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- 3.4 Objectives have been identified under each aim although it should be recognised that some will contribute towards more than one aim. These will conform generally to the overriding purpose of the Structure Plan and to the Government's aim of promoting more sustainable patterns of development. Development proposals which are consistent with all these objectives will therefore be encouraged.
- 3.5 The objectives will influence the nature and scope of policies within the following chapters of the Local Plan. These policies will be used to control and influence the location and nature of new development to ensure that the vision is delivered on the ground. Furthermore, the objectives will guide the Council in undertaking its land use planning function in relation to enforcement, policy guidance and conservation.
- 3.6 The objectives are intended to complement each other as far as possible although it is recognised there is potential for conflict, e.g. objectives to achieve economic growth may in some instances compromise environmental protection and vice versa. Balancing and integrating such objectives is acknowledged as the challenge of achieving sustainable development. This Strategy attaches equal weight to each objective and development proposals will therefore be expected to take account of, and balance, all objectives.
- 3.7 Most of the objectives in the core strategy could apply equally to all areas of the District. It is important therefore also to set out a spatial strategy to make clear where most new development will be directed. This spatial strategy is therefore set out first, with the main aims and objectives of the core strategy following it.

The format of the remainder of the Local Plan has been set out to provide a planning policy framework to implement this spatial strategy.

The Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan

Most development will be directed to the four towns of the District; Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick, Kenilworth and Whitnash.

- 3.8 Policy GD.3 of the Warwickshire Structure Plan clearly directs most new development in Warwickshire over the period of this local plan into towns with a population of over 8,000. Within Warwick District, these are the towns of Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick, Kenilworth and Whitnash. Furthermore, the Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands identifies Warwick and Leamington Spa as key nodes within one of the regions High Technology Corridors. This Local Plan identifies boundaries to all four of these towns and has a distinctive set of policies for land and buildings within them. These are the **Urban Area Policies (chapter 6)** of the Plan.

The three town centres of Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick and Kenilworth will be the main shopping and service centres within the district.

- 3.9 Policies TC.1 and TC.2 of the Warwickshire Structure Plan require local plans to ensure that town centres are the focus of a balanced mix of retail, office, entertainment, leisure and residential development and furthermore that all main shopping, entertainment and leisure development should be located there. The Structure Plan identifies the above three town centres within Warwick District; with Leamington Spa town centre recognised as the main town centre within the District. This Local Plan identifies boundaries to these town centres and has a distinctive set of policies for land and buildings within them. These are the **Town Centre Policies (chapter 7)** of the Plan.

The remainder of Warwick District is defined as rural and development here will generally be provided only to meet the needs of the local population and to support rural communities except where development is identified and site specific policies apply.

- 3.10 Over 90% of land within Warwick District is outside of the four main towns and the majority of this is rural in character. Within rural areas, policy RA.1 of the Warwickshire Structure Plan requires that development, other than for minerals and waste, should be provided specifically to meet the needs of the local population and to support rural communities. The local plan identifies boundaries to these rural areas and has a set of policies for land and buildings within them. These are the **Rural Area Policies (chapter 8)** of the Plan.
- 3.11 This rural area of the District is diverse. Whilst much is rural in character, it also contains a number of significant areas of developments. Where appropriate, these areas have been identified and policies to control and where appropriate, support development within them included within the **Site Specific Policies (chapter 10)** of the Plan. These include the Stoneleigh Park (policy SSP3), Coventry airport (SSP7) and a number of other institutions and major developments (SSP2). The University of Warwick (SSP2) is identified as a key

education/research facility within one of the region's High Technology Corridors in Regional Planning Guidance.

Within the rural area, development to meet local needs will be focussed in the villages of Barford, Bishops Tachbrook, Hampton Magna, Lapworth (Kingswood) and Radford Semele.

- 3.12 Policy RA.3 of the Warwickshire Structure Plan requires that housing and industrial development should be related to a hierarchy of settlements and should meet local needs identified by the community. The local plan identifies the five villages of Barford, Bishops Tachbrook, Hampton Magna, Lapworth (Kingswood) and Radford Semele as the most suitable villages within this strategic context to be the focus of any development to meet local needs within the rural areas. Policies to guide this development are set out in policy RAP1.

The Core Strategy of the Local Plan

Aim 1: To Maintain High and Stable Levels of Economic Growth

Objective 1A: To maintain high levels of economic growth

- 3.13 We will meet the employment needs of the whole community in the district by making provision for the release of up to 132 hectares of employment land to be built within the District between 1996 and 2011. This requirement is set out within the Structure Plan and is to meet employment demands arising from in-migration as well as stemming from the resident population. Appendix One of the Local Plan identifies the current supply of employment land at April 2005.
- 3.14 This objective will be achieved by allocating 7.5 hectares of land for employment uses and by protecting employment sites from redevelopment for other uses. We will continue to monitor our progress towards achieving this objective.
- 3.15 Within this objective we will support the needs of small businesses by allocating land suitable for small investment sites. These sites will provide opportunities for small businesses to establish and develop. We will also encourage the concept of home working by supporting appropriate proposals.

Objective 1B: To promote and enhance vibrant rural communities

- 3.16 We will safeguard rural communities and enterprises by supporting proposals that seek to meet genuine local needs. We recognise that the rural economy is changing and that there is pressure for diversification of farm-based operations in order to support agricultural operations. It is also recognised that the countryside of Warwick District is a rich asset that if managed properly can contribute towards the success of the diversification of the rural economy. We will therefore support genuine proposals for farm diversification that protect the character of the rural area. We will also encourage the conversion of appropriate rural buildings to employment uses that meet local needs.

Objective 1C: To meet the housing needs of the whole community to 2011

- 3.17 A key factor in enabling an economy to grow is there being sufficient housing choice for everyone. We will therefore make provision for the release of sufficient land to meet the strategic housing requirement as set out in Appendix 2. This requirement is set out within the Structure Plan and Regional Planning Guidance and is to meet demand arising from in-migration as well as stemming from demographic change within the resident population. It includes need for affordable as well as market housing (see objective 4A). Appendix 2 of the Local Plan identifies the current and forecast supply of dwellings at April 2005.
- 3.18 This objective will be achieved by granting planning permission for windfall proposals on previously developed land in urban areas, i.e. sites not allocated in the Local Plan but where residential development is acceptable. This objective will be achieved without allocating any land for new dwellings or renewing any allocations from the previous Local Plan (1995). We will continue to monitor our progress towards achieving this objective.

Objective 1D: To enhance the vitality and viability of town centres

- 3.19 Town centres play an important role in supporting local economic growth and encouraging investment. An attractive, diverse and accessible town centre will attract people to use its shops and services, supporting investment and jobs. We will therefore maintain the shopping function of Leamington Spa, Kenilworth and Warwick and support proposals which enhance their respective roles within the town centre hierarchy, as set out in the Structure Plan. We will also encourage proposals which diversify the range of uses in the town centres without compromising their shopping function, particularly uses which make the town centre more attractive to residents, employers, shoppers and visitors.

Objective 1E: To promote the regeneration of deprived areas

- 3.20 We recognise that despite the District-wide indicators suggesting a healthy local economy, there are areas experiencing particular deprivation. Regeneration activities within Warwick District aim to alleviate the social and economic problems faced by communities and neighbourhoods. We will support proposals which contribute towards the achievement of regeneration objectives, particularly within the Old Town area of Leamington Spa.

Objective 1F: To promote sustainable tourism

- 3.21 Tourism is an important part of the Warwick District economy. It is recognised that the historic towns and open countryside are a tourism asset and if managed properly can contribute towards the success of the local tourism economy. We will encourage sustainable tourism that protects local communities and safeguards (and where possible enhances) the environment and particular character of an area. In particular, tourism related proposals should, wherever possible, be accessible by various transport modes.

Aim 2: Effective Protection of the Environment

Objective 2A: To protect and improve land quality

- 3.22 We will protect and improve land quality by maximising the use of previously developed land and buildings (as defined in annex B of PPS3) and resist the unnecessary development of greenfield land. We will support proposals which re-use vacant previously developed land and which make the best use of such land for development (subject to protecting land which is of nature conservation value or historic interest in accordance with other policies of this Local Plan). We will give particular encouragement to the recycling of industrial land to new employment uses. We will also support proposals which bring vacant buildings back into use, particularly upper floors of buildings within town centres. We will only permit development on greenfield land where it will significantly contribute towards the achievement of objectives of the Core Strategy.
- 3.23 The Structure Plan has set indicative minimum targets for the percentage of new housing and industry on previously developed urban land and buildings and we will seek to achieve and exceed these targets. Appendices 1 and 2 of the Local Plan identify the position in relation to these targets at 2005. We will continue to monitor our progress towards these targets.

Objective 2B: To protect and enhance the natural environment

- 3.24 We recognise our responsibility to protect important assets of the natural environment, particularly biodiversity, for current and future generations. An attractive and diverse natural environment will contribute towards the achievement of economic, environmental and social aims. We will therefore protect the landscape character, geological/geomorphological features and wildlife habitats and species of value and acknowledged national, regional or local importance from inappropriate new development in urban and rural locations. We will aim, wherever possible, to enhance all of these assets.
- 3.25 In circumstances where there are overriding reasons for development, we will secure a high standard of mitigation and/or off-site compensation. We will also support proposals which enhance and secure the positive long term management of natural environmental assets. Alleged breaches of planning control will be investigated and appropriate action taken to protect the natural environment as part of our enforcement role.

Objective 2C: To protect and enhance the historic environment

- 3.26 We recognise our responsibility to protect and conserve the historic environment for current and future generations. An attractive historic environment will contribute towards the achievement of economic, environmental and social aims. We will therefore protect the character and appearance of listed buildings, conservation areas, historic landscapes including registered parks and gardens, archaeological sites of national importance and scheduled ancient monuments from inappropriate new development. We will support proposals which make appropriate use of, and enhance the appearance of, listed buildings and we will encourage such buildings to be fully utilised. We will also require proposals to enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas. Furthermore, we

recognise that the historic environment includes both designated and non-designated areas, buildings and other structures and we will ensure that appropriate protection is given to non-designated aspects.

- 3.27 We will encourage the upkeep and promote the maintenance of the historic environment through seeking source funding for grant aid and providing advice. Alleged breaches of planning control will also be investigated and appropriate action taken to protect the historic environment as part of our enforcement role. We will also support proposals which secure the positive long term management of the historic environment.

Objective 2D: To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes

- 3.28 The landscape quality of our rural areas and the character and setting of the District's towns and villages are important in giving Warwick District distinctiveness and identity. The historic street patterns and 'green corridors' that run through the towns and villages are important features and distinctive attributes of the District. We will protect sensitive areas from new development to ensure that the towns and villages retain their separate identities and individual characters.

Objective 2E: To promote high quality sustainable design and enhance the built environment

- 3.29 The appearance of new development can have a significant impact on the quality of our built environment which in turn can influence the achievement of other economic and social aims. Securing good design is essential to achieving attractive environments for people to live and work in and to visit. We will require proposals to have regard to their context and to local architectural, historical and natural features. We will support proposals which can demonstrate a positive contribution to the quality of the built environment and will encourage innovative design which is sensitive to its locality. We will encourage excellence in sustainable development through innovation in design, the use of materials, new technologies and construction techniques.
- 3.30 We will also promote good design through supporting design award schemes, undertaking enhancement schemes and supporting regeneration initiatives. Alleged breaches of planning control will also be investigated and appropriate action taken to protect the built environment as part of our enforcement role.

Objective 2F: To protect and improve air quality

- 3.31 Air quality is controlled by numerous factors, many of which are outside the control of local authorities. We will seek, however, to maintain and improve local air quality by guiding and controlling the location of new development, particularly where this would have an impact upon public health or the natural environment.

Aim 3: Prudent Use of Natural Resources

Objective 3A: To reduce the need to travel

- 3.32 Reducing the need for people to travel for everyday activities will contribute towards reducing the use of the motor vehicle. The Structure Plan has set targets to restrict the predicted growth in peak period vehicular traffic in the main urban areas and transport corridors. We will contribute towards achieving this target by directing new employment, retail, services and leisure development to locations which are within easy walking and cycling distance of major residential areas and which have good accessibility by public transport. In most circumstances, this will be locations within the town centres of the urban area. We will also direct all new housing to locations which have good access to town centres by means other than the private car. This will mean a concentration of most new development within the urban areas of Leamington Spa, Kenilworth, Warwick and Whitnash. Within rural areas our focus will be on encouraging growth that will meet the needs of rural communities and thereby reduce, as much as possible, their need to travel.
- 3.33 We will also encourage mixed use developments and proposals for home working that provide opportunities for people to live, shop or work in close proximity.

Objective 3B: To promote the use of more sustainable travel options

- 3.34 The availability of public transport and pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is important in encouraging people to reduce their use of the private car. The development of services and infrastructure which is convenient, safe and attractive to use will help to provide a realistic alternative mode of travel. The achievement of this objective will also contribute towards the economic and social aims. The Structure Plan has set targets to restrict the proportion of journeys by car and increase the proportion of journeys by cycle and public transport.
- 3.35 We will therefore make, support and facilitate proposals to improve public transport services and infrastructure, including new transport interchanges. Furthermore, we will direct major travel generating developments to locate near to public transport interchanges to encourage patronage. We will also protect and support proposals to improve footpaths and cycleways. New developments will also be required to contribute towards transport infrastructure to improve public transport, walking and cycling facilities as well as being designed to support these modes of travel.

Objective 3C: To ensure the prudent use of scarce resources and limit and reduce the impacts on climate change

- 3.36 We recognise the need to conserve energy resources, water and high quality land for future generations. The consumption of energy resources can also contribute towards pollution affecting human health and the environment. We will encourage new development to adopt measures to reduce energy and water consumption and minimise pollution. We will also protect the best and most versatile agricultural land and the landscape from inappropriate new development.
- 3.37 The development of infrastructure powered by renewable energy resources can support this and other objectives of the Core Strategy. We recognise the importance of this issue and will support such proposals provided they do not harm the surrounding environment.

Objective 3D: To reduce the generation and disposal of waste

- 3.38 We recognise that good planning and design can make a contribution towards achieving national and local targets for promoting sustainable waste management. We will require that new developments make provision for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation wherever this is appropriate. We will also encourage recycling and the re-use of resources wherever possible.

Aim 4: Social Progress which Recognises the Needs of Everyone**Objective 4A: To make housing affordable and available to everyone**

- 3.39 Housing is a key component of a good quality of life and everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. We recognise the importance of meeting the housing needs of the whole community. The Structure Plan has set indicative figures for affordable housing need. We will adopt realistic and deliverable mechanisms and targets to respond to this need. We will therefore encourage affordable housing development to meet local needs. We will also secure the provision of affordable housing from new residential developments.

Objective 4B: To reduce poverty, social exclusion, crime and anti-social behaviour.

- 3.40 We recognise the importance of everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability, having access to everyday activities. We will encourage proposals that are inclusive by ensuring that development is located in areas which are accessible to people who do not have use of a private car. We will also support inclusive environments that are designed and laid out to provide accessibility to all groups within society, including homes that meet the needs of all within society. Furthermore, we will encourage new development to design out the potential for crime and anti social behaviour.

Objective 4C: To improve the health and well-being of communities

- 3.41 There are many ways in which the local plan seeks to promote healthy lifestyles. These include reducing peoples need to travel and offering them safe and convenient alternatives on foot, cycle or public transport and promoting local shops and services. Providing a variety of leisure and recreational opportunities and protecting open space is also essential to promote the health and well-being of the community and support social inclusion. These measures can also contribute towards the achievement of economic and environmental aims. We will protect open space and recreation facilities from new development and support proposals which improve leisure and recreation provision. We will also secure open space and facilities from new housing and employment development.

Objective 4D: To protect and improve the amenity of the local community

- 3.42 We recognise the importance of people being able to enjoy the use of their homes, places of work and public spaces. We will ensure all new development takes account of surrounding uses and is designed to protect and improve standards of amenity. Alleged breaches of planning control will also be investigated and appropriate action taken to protect the amenity of the local community as part of our enforcement role.

Objective 4E: To protect enhance and improve accessibility to local services and community facilities

- 3.43 We recognise the valuable role community facilities have in supporting people and engendering a sense of community. We will support proposals for new facilities within the communities they propose to serve and seek to protect existing facilities that meet community needs.