

# Warwick District Local Plan Key Issues Report Report of public consultation

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John Archer  
Head of Planning & Engineering  
September 2002

The images on the front cover show various aspects of the public consultation. These are explained more fully in the report.

Exhibition held at Royal Priors shopping centre Leamington Spa

Painting from pupil at Shrubland Street School, Leamington Spa

Painting from pupil at Shrubland Street School, Leamington Spa

Discussion Forum at Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

Exhibition held at Sikh Temple, Leamington Spa

Exhibition held in the Market Place, Warwick

If you would like further information about any aspect of the public consultation, or about the review of the local plan generally, please:-

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# Warwick District Local Plan

## Key Issues Report

### Report of public consultation - Summary Version

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## Appendices

**In the summary version of this document, the appendices are not included. These are available separately by writing to the Local Plan Team at the Planning & Engineering Department, Warwick District Council, P.O. Box 2178, Riverside House, Milverton Hill, Leamington Spa, CV32 5QH, by telephoning the Team on 01926 456502, or by emailing [localplan@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@warwickdc.gov.uk)**

1. List of all those responding to the Key Issues Report.
2. Detailed analysis of the responses to the Key Issues report questionnaire.
3. Summary of other detailed submissions made as part of the public consultation.
4. Detailed analysis of the response to the “Planning the Future” leaflet questionnaire (postal response - April-June 2001).
5. Detailed analysis of the response to the “Planning the Future” leaflet questionnaire (from Citizen’s Panel, September 2001).
6. A list of all those who participated in the Forums.
7. A summary of the views expressed at the Forums (including the Local Transport Plan Transport Forum)
8. Potential development sites proposed during the public consultation.
9. Summary of responses received from the “Hard to Reach” groups
  - Youth Forum
  - Council for Disabled People
  - Senior Peoples’ Forum
10. Newspapers articles and advertisements regarding the public consultation.
11. Photographic record of the public consultation.
12. Copies of:-
  - questionnaire from “Key Issues Report”
  - “Planning the Future” leaflet

# 1. Introduction

1.1 This is a report of the public consultation carried out by the Planning & Engineering Business Unit as part of its review of the Warwick District Local Plan. The public consultation was carried out between April and June 2001, with the intention of:-

- Raising awareness of the local plan, its process and the key issues it needs to address.
- Making the public aware of any key themes in the local plan.
- Exploring the options open to the local plan and seeking to achieve a broad consensus over the approach the local plan is to take.
- Identifying any other issues which we have not previously identified which the local plan needs to address.

1.2 The public consultation was carried out primarily by members of the Policy Team within the Planning & Engineering Business Unit, however the overall direction of the public consultation was guided by a working party of councillors drawn from across the Council (the Development Plans Working Party).

1.3 The public consultation was undertaken using a variety of means, and these are described in more detail in [section 2](#) below.

1.4 A public consultation such as this inevitably draws in a very wide range of views and comments. Although an effort was made to focus comments by means of questionnaires, the opportunity was given for people to raise any other issues which they felt the local plan should be addressing. It is therefore difficult to present any summarised “findings” of the public consultation as such. The output from the public consultation is therefore reported as a brief “summary” of findings, particularly drawing from the responses to the questionnaires. This is presented as [section 3](#) below.

1.6 There are a number of appendices to the report and these can be viewed separately.

Appendix 1 A list of all those individuals, groups and organisations who responded to the Key Issues report.

Appendix 2 A more detailed analysis of the results of the “Key Issues report questionnaire.”

Appendix 3 A summary of other detailed submissions

Appendix 4 A detailed analysis of the response to the “Planning the Future leaflet questionnaire distributed throughout the district in April 2001.

Appendix 5 A detailed analysis of the response to the “Planning the Future leaflet sent to 614 members of Warwick district’s Citizens’ Panel.

Appendix 6 A list of all those who participated in one or more of the forums.

Appendix 7 A summary of the views expressed at the five themed Forum meetings.

Appendix 8 A list of potential development sites proposed by various parties.

Appendix 9 A summary of responses received from the “Hard to Reach” groups.

Appendix 10 Various articles which appeared in local papers regarding the public consultation.

Appendix 11 Photographs showing various elements of the public consultation.

Appendix 12 Copies of the “Key Issues Report” questionnaire and the “Planning the Future” leaflet.

## 2. The Public Consultation

### 2.1 Background

2.1.1 The Warwick District Local Plan was adopted by Warwick District Council in 1995 in conformity with the Warwickshire Structure Plan Alterations No.1 (1989-2001). Since 1997 Warwickshire County Council has been preparing a revised Structure Plan to provide a strategic planning framework for Warwickshire up to 2011. This was adopted in August 2001, thereby creating a need for all the districts in Warwickshire to review their local plans and prepare a detailed policy framework up to 2011.

2.1.2 Government guidance on how the Council should approach public consultation on local plans is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 (PPG12) on Development Plans, published in December 1999. This guidance has made a number of changes to the way in which local planning authorities prepare local plans, not least of which is the means by which public consultation should take place. The key features of current Government guidance are as follows:-

- consultation with the public and interested parties remains an integral part of local plan production.
- consultation should aim, where possible, to achieve a degree of consensus over the future development and use of land,
- there is no prescribed way by which pre-deposit consultation<sup>1</sup> should be undertaken. The only requirement is that authorities should consider representations made by consultees, and prepare a statement of who and how they have consulted.
- Pre-deposit consultation need only focus on the key issues of the local plan, ie: on the main matters and choices which need to be resolved in the local plan.
- Once the deposit draft has been produced, public consultation becomes more formalised, with objectors to the local plan being required to make clear objections to the local plan within a prescribed period of time (the “deposit period”).
- After the “deposit period” has finished, Councils are urged to negotiate with objectors where appropriate, and make changes to the local plan in appropriate cases. These are then produced as a second “deposit draft”, upon which a further period of public consultation is undertaken.
- The public inquiry into the local plan allows a formal opportunity for those individuals and interested parties who have made an objection to present their case to an independent inspector.

2.1.3 The approach taken by the Council in carrying out this “pre deposit” consultation is in accordance with this advice. The key elements of the public consultation were developed by officers and councillors on the Development Plans Working Party, and approved by the Council.

2.1.4 A number of key objectives underpinned the Council’s approach to the public consultation:-

- it is important that profile of the local plan is raised, and that people understand the

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<sup>1</sup> This is the consultation undertaken before the preparation of the deposit draft local plan. Under new Development Plan Regulations, local authorities are not required to produce initial “consultation draft” local plans, but simply to consult on the key issues affecting the local plan. The results of this work and consultation will inform the production of the deposit draft local plan.

role and purpose of the review.

- the public consultation should seek to be as inclusive as possible, reaching out to as many people as possible in the district. Particular emphasis should be placed on reaching out to those “hard to reach” groups in the community.
- the Council should look to innovative and new ways of reaching people, aware that “consultation fatigue” should be avoided.
- the opportunity should be taken to seek peoples views before the Council develops its policy framework. The emphasis should be upon “asking the questions” rather than “offering the answers”.
- rather than carrying out a large number of public meetings, the consultation should seek to bring together people with different viewpoints to discuss issues with each other. Having set the agenda, the Council should seek to have a passive role in these discussions, rather than trying to steer them in one direction.
- notwithstanding the above, there is a role for the Council to go out and explain its policies to different groups. A limited number of public exhibitions should take place.
- the involvement of the media should be sought to help raise the profile of the local plan consultation.
- the consultation should link into, and be aware of, other community consultation activities being undertaken. These include the work being done to prepare the first Community Plan for Warwick District.

2.1.5 The public consultation itself had a number of key elements, all aimed to achieve the above objectives. These are discussed below, and are as follows:-

- A launch event
- A Key Issues report
- A summary Key Issues leaflet
- Public exhibitions
- Forum events
- Meetings with local groups
- Consulting with “hard to reach groups

## **2.2 The Launch Event**

2.2.1 It was considered important that a press launch take place which would formally start the public consultation. This was timed to coincide with the distribution of the “Key Issues leaflets to people s homes (see below).

2.2.2 The launch involved schoolchildren from Year 6 of Shrubland Street Community School in Leamington Spa. They had been asked to do pictures of their vision for how the district may look in 10 years time. The pictures were brought to the Town Hall for the launch on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

2.2.3 The event was well supported by local press and BBC local radio. The Courier newspapers ran a full page colour story of the event with interviews with the children under the heading “Pupil power says how the future should look . A copy of this in included in appendix 10 to this report.

## **2.3 The Key Issues report**

2.3.1 A Key Issues report was prepared by the Council to provide background information and

context to the local plan review, and to raise what Council felt were the key issues which the local plan would need to address. The format of the report was that for each subject area of the plan (housing, shopping, employment, etc) a context was provided (giving the main relevant guidance from both Government and the County Council through the Structure Plan) and then a number of broad key issues were raised. At the close of each key issue was a question or series of questions. All the questions were also pulled together at the end of the report as a questionnaire, which respondents were invited to complete and return. The report also contained information on why the Council was undertaking the review of the local plan, and what will happen next in the process.

2.3.2 The report was sent to over 300 individuals, groups and organisations with an interest in the district. These included:-

- All parish and town councils in the district,
- All district and county councillors with wards in the district.
- 69 “statutory consultees” identified by Government advice. These include public utility companies, neighbouring local authorities (and the County Council), Government agencies (such as English Heritage and the Environment Agency) etc.
- 118 different interest groups operating in the district. These ranged from Civic Societies and Resident’s Associations to the local representatives of national pressure groups (such as the Ramblers Association and the Council for the Protection of Rural England).
- 90 different developers, landowners or their agents with an interest in the district. These included all the main Housing Associations operating locally.
- A number of local residents who asked to be sent the document.<sup>2</sup>

2.3.3 In compiling the database, the Local Plan team in the Planning Department made use of contact addresses it had already gathered, but also incorporated a number of other databases already used by the Council. These included all the community partners who had been engaged as part of the process of developing the Community Plan and all those involved in the Council’s Housing Association/District Council Liaison Group.

2.3.4 Detailed replies were received from 76 individuals, groups and organisations. A list of all these is included in appendix 1. Many of these groups completed the detailed questionnaire, and the results from this are included in [appendix 2](#). Other organisations made detailed submissions, and these are summarised in [appendix 3](#). A number of the organisations proposed sites which the local plan should consider for development. A list of these sites is included as [appendix 8](#).

## **2.4 Key Issues leaflet - “Planning the Future”**

2.4.1 In order to ensure that as many people as possible had the opportunity to learn about, and comment on, the local plan review it was decided to produce a “popular” version of the Key Issues report and circulate this as widely as possible around the district. This was produced as a A5 sized leaflet and included a brief summary of the main information in the Key Issues report and a short questionnaire. This questionnaire sought to duplicate as much as possible that contained in the larger Key Issues report however because of space constraints could ask fewer questions. The questionnaire also included space for

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<sup>2</sup> As part of the “Planning the Future” leaflet sent out to households and businesses across the district, the offer was made of sending out the more detailed “Key Issues” report free of charge to anybody who was interested.

respondents to make their own comments. The questionnaire was designed as a tear-off form which could be returned freepost to the Council.

- 2.4.2 Over 44,000 of these leaflets were distributed to households and businesses throughout the district (most during w/c 2<sup>nd</sup> April). Furthermore, copies were placed in all libraries in the district, the Kenilworth Connection, tourist information centres, the Regenes office in Leamington Old Town, and in some village shops. As well as the initial distribution (mainly via the Observer newspaper within the urban areas and a solus distribution firm within the rural villages), help in distributing leaflets was given by a range of groups including Budbrooke, Lapworth, Rowington and Stoneleigh & Ashow Parish Councils, the Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, the CHAIN in Lillington and Newbold Comyn Resident's Association.
- 2.4.3 The leaflet was also translated into Punjabi, and made available in the Old Town area of Leamington Spa. The leaflet was used at an exhibition mounted for members of the Sikh community (see "Hard to Reach" groups, below).
- 2.4.4 A total of 2,216 questionnaires were returned to the Council between April and July. Although respondents were not asked to provide their name or address, they were asked to provide their postcode and 90% (2003) did so. This enabled an analysis to be carried out, not only of the overall responses to the answers, but by geographical area. A detailed analysis of the questionnaire responses is contained in [appendix 4](#).
- 2.4.5 In October, the leaflet was also sent to those members of the Warwick District Citizens Panel who had not responded to the original distribution. The response to this is summarized in appendix 5.

## **2.5 Public Exhibitions**

- 2.5.1 An travelling exhibition was mounted to support the public consultation, and this was set up at the following locations:-
- Kenilworth (Kenilworth Connection) - 19<sup>th</sup> April 2001
  - Leamington (Royal Priors Shopping Centre) - 21<sup>st</sup> April
  - Warwick (a stall at the market) - 28<sup>th</sup> April
  - Whitnash (a vacant shop unit on Heathcote Road) - 7<sup>th</sup> July
- 2.5.2 The exhibition ran all day at the various venues and was staffed by members of the Local Plan team at all times. It offered an opportunity for people to talk through the issues raised by the local plan review in more detail, and make comments to the Key Issues report on the spot. Publicity was given to the exhibitions at Kenilworth, Leamington Spa and Warwick via the "Planning the Future" leaflet, and through half page advertisements placed in local newspapers.
- 2.5.3 In total, over the four days approximately 470 people visited the exhibition and discussed the local plan review with officers.
- 2.5.4 Some photographs showing the exhibitions are contained in appendix 11.

## **2.6 The Forums**

- 2.6.1 The forums were a key part of the public consultation process. Their purpose was to



bring together people with different viewpoints to discuss the key issues in the local plan face to face. In order to allow this discussion to take place, the Council adopted the following approach to the management of the forums.

- The forums were “themed into five topics; shopping, employment, a quality environment, housing and countryside & villages.
- Attendance at each forum was by invitation only. Everybody receiving a copy of the Key Issues Report (including members of the public) was sent a form asking them to register an expression of interest in attending any of the forums. The attendance list was drawn from those who responded that they wished to attend the forums. (As it transpired, there were very few cases where we were not able to accommodate people’s wishes to attend the forums.)
- The total number of people invited to each event was limited to approximately 25. This was because the nature of the events (see below) worked best with not more than that number of people.
- At each event the Council sought to ensure that a balance of views/interested parties were represented. Parish/town councils, developers, interest groups and statutory consultees were represented at all events, and no one “group” was allowed to numerically dominate.
- The format of each forum varied according to the subject, however each revolved around a number of key questions posed by the Council. These were the same as those contained in the Key Issues Report. The majority of time at the forum was available to open discussion by all participants (in small groups) focused around these key issues.
- In order to ensure that the discussion was as open as possible Council officers were on hand to answer questions, but did not take part in the discussion. The forums themselves were led by independent facilitators. For all but the final forum, the sessions were led by an outside facilitator, Brendan Hickling. The final forum (countryside & villages) was led by members of the Warwick District Quality Facilitator network.<sup>3</sup>
- The Royal Pump Rooms in Leamington town centre was chosen as a neutral venue for the Forums. It was a deliberate decision not to use a “council” building such as the Town Hall.
- No elected members from Warwick District Council were allowed to take part in their capacity as Warwick District councillors.

2.6.2 The events were supported by 49 organisations. A list of these is given in appendix 6. A number of the organisations attended more than one event.

2.6.3 At each Forum, all the views expressed were written down on large A0 sized sheets of paper, and the formal “output” from each Forum was a photo-report prepared following the event. These were sent to each participant. A typed summary of the report for each event is shown in appendix 7.

2.6.4 There was no forum arranged on the theme of transport. This was because the County Council had organized a very similar event in April 2001 to discuss transport issues in the district as part of its review of the Local Transport Plan. Many local organizations and interests were represented at this event, including Warwick District Council. A

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<sup>3</sup> The Quality Facilitator network is made up of officers from across Warwick District Council. All those officers helping to facilitate the events were not from the Planning department. This was made clear to all participants.

summary of the comments coming from this event are summarized in [appendix 7](#).

## **2.7 Meetings with local groups**

2.7.1 During the course of the public consultation, a number of meetings were held with local groups and organisations. These gave an opportunity to discuss the “Key Issues” report in more detail and particularly pick up any local or topical issues affecting that group. The purpose of the meetings was to help the group themselves consider how they may respond to the “Key Issues” report, not for officers to shape their response for them. Meetings were held with the following groups.

- Action 21
- Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council
- Burton Green Residents Association
- Cubbington Parish Council
- Housing Association/District Council Liaison Group
- Kenilworth Town Council
- Kenilworth Chamber of Trade
- Leamington Conservation Area Advisory Forum
- Regenes S.E.T.H. (Safety, Environment, Transport and Housing) Theme Group
- Whitnash Town Council

2.7.2 In addition, meetings and events were held with various “hard to reach” groups (see below).

## **2.8 “Hard to reach” groups**

2.8.1 It was a key objective of the Council to seek to reach out to those groups within the community which are most likely to feel disenfranchised by a process such as this public consultation. It was important that the Council employed a range of methods to obtain peoples views and seek to try different methods of consultation where possible.

2.8.2 The Council identified a number of “hard to reach” groups; the young, the elderly, the disabled and ethnic minorities.

### **Youth Forum**

2.8.3 A Warwick District Youth Forum has been established involving pupils from Sydenham School in Leamington. An event with this Forum was organized on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2001. The event was run as a seminar with active involvement from the 12 young people present. A summary of the outcome of this event is contained in [appendix 9](#).

### **Senior Peoples’ Forum**

2.8.4 Warwick District Council helped establish a Senior Peoples’ Forum for Warwick District in 1999. This group is independent of the Council and seeks to be representative of the views of Senior People across the District. An event with this Forum was organized on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2001. The event was run as a seminar involving over 40 members of the Forum. A summary of the outcome of this event is contained in [appendix 9](#).

### **Council Of Disabled People**

2.8.5 The Council Of Disabled People were invited to all of the Forum events (see above), and

attended one of these. A special event was held with the CDP in July 2001 and this was attended by 8 members of the group. A summary of the feedback from this event is included in appendix 9.

### **Ethnic Groups**

- 2.8.6 The Council arranged for the key points of the “Planning the Future” leaflet to be translated into Punjabi ( a copy in included within appendix 12). This was distributed throughout the Sikh Temple in Leamington Spa and at the Regensis office in Clemens Street. Officers from the Council, with the aid of an interpreter, also mounted an exhibition at the Sikh Temple on a Sunday morning in July where they met with the Sikh community and were able to discuss the issues raised by the public consultation.

## **3. Analysis of public consultation**

### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 As has been referred to previously, the public consultation produced a wide range of comments from a range of individuals, groups and organisation. In total approximately 2,216 people responded to the Planning the future leaflet (plus a further 187 as part of the Citizens Panel consultation later in 2001) and detailed representations to the Key Issues Report were received from 11 residents, 20 interest groups, 11 statutory consultees, 6 parish and town councils and 26 developers, agents and landowners. A total of 49 organisations (including many of the above) took part in the five Forum events and 470 people attended the various Local Plan exhibitions.

3.1.2 It is clearly very difficult to attempt to summarise the views of such a wide and disparate group of people, and not surprisingly there was no issue discussed over which there was universal agreement. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw a number of broad conclusions from the public consultation, and identify issues over which there was a broad consensus of opinion. These are summarised below. The appendices provide a much more detailed summary of all the views expressed, and allow the wide range of views to be better understood. Further analysis in particular is provided in the following appendices:-

- Appendix 2 Detailed analysis of the responses to the Key Issues Report.
- Appendix 3 Summary of the other detailed submissions made as part of the public consultation.
- Appendix 4 Detailed analysis of the responses to the “Planning the Future” leaflet
- Appendix 5 Detailed analysis of the responses to the “Planning the Future” leaflet from members of the Citizens Panel.
- Appendix 7 Summary of the views expressed at the Forum meetings.

In the summary version of this document, the appendices are not included. These are available separately by writing to the Local Plan Team at the Planning & Engineering Department, Warwick District Council, P.O. Box 2178, Riverside House, Milverton Hill, Leamington Spa, CV32 5QH, by telephoning the Team on 01926 456502, or by emailing [localplan@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@warwickdc.gov.uk)

### **3.2 Summary of Key Findings**

3.2.1 The key findings of the public consultation, which emerged from the various questionnaire responses are discussed in more detail in section 3.3 below, but are summarised here.

#### **Awareness of the local plan**

- There is wide awareness within Warwick District of the local plan

#### **Managing our growing district**

- We should strongly resist building on countryside and on open space within our towns.
- We should safeguard and enhance the district’s wildlife sites and species and create new habitats

## **Transport**

- We should ensure that all major types of development are accessible by public transport
- Nevertheless, we should still ensure that easy access to car parking is provided in conjunction with major uses and in some locations.
- We should be cautious when seeking to restrict car parking on new developments
- We should make improvements to pedestrian/cycle routes
- We should investigate opportunities for a Park & Ride site within the district

## **Housing**

- There may be scope for promoting higher densities on housing sites within our towns and for mixing housing and other uses on the same site.
- If the local plan needs to suppress windfall housing, sites which are close to public transport corridors or interchanges should be given priority.
- A range of measures should be considered to increase affordable housing within the district.

## **Employment**

- Making full use of brown field land for new jobs should be a high priority.
- Protecting the countryside and open spaces should also be a high priority.
- We should seek to provide jobs close to where people live.
- The local plan should be identifying a range of sites to meet the needs of small businesses.

## **Shopping and town centres**

- We should support improvements to our town centres
- We should consider pedestrianisation schemes in the town centres
- We should restrict the growth of out of town shopping facilities

## **Our Quality Environment**

- It is vital that we protect the character of our historic areas
- We should recognise the particular character of different areas of the district
- We should take a positive approach to the opportunities for conservation to aid regeneration
- We should introduce stronger design guidance on new development in the district

## **Countryside and Villages**

- In rural areas, certain developments are acceptable where the countryside can be protected
- There is no overriding support for taking a more flexible approach towards village envelopes
- More should be done to protect village shops and services
- Proposals for affordable housing on “exception sites” within villages should be treated with caution

## **Recreation and tourism**

- It is important that leisure, recreation and tourism developments are accessible by public transport.
- New indoor recreation/leisure facilities should only be located in or near town centres and neighbourhood centres
- In considering tourism proposals, their impact upon traffic and the local environment

- are of paramount importance
- We should be protecting public playing fields, parks and green spaces from new development
- We should support the use of developer contributions to improve existing areas of open space as well as providing new ones
- Provided that the countryside can be protected, we can encourage leisure and tourism developments in the countryside

### 3.3 Key Findings in detail

3.3.1 The key conclusions of the public consultation are shown below. These draw from all the main elements of the public consultation noted above. Where people responded to the leaflet their postcodes were requested, and 90% of all respondents provided this information. This has enabled a geographical breakdown of all information between urban and rural areas. The results of this analysis are contained in appendix 4, and where the results are significant, they are quoted below.

#### 3.3.2 Awareness of the local plan

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- **There is wide awareness within Warwick District of the local plan**  
One of the main aims of the public consultation was to raise awareness of the existence of the local plan and the issues which the review must address. The leaflet questionnaire asked whether respondents had previously heard of the existence of the local plan prior to receiving the leaflet. The response was that 50% of people had previously heard of the local plan<sup>4</sup>. There was some variation across the district with rural residents being particularly aware (58%).

It must be remembered that local plans only have a high public profile at key stages during their preparation (such as during public consultation exercises such as this and during public local inquiries). The last major consultation on the present Warwick District Local Plan took place in the early 1990's. In view of this, the high level of public awareness demonstrated is to be welcomed. This is amplified by the high response rate received to the leaflet, with over 2,100 returned.

#### 3.3.3 Managing our growing district

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- **We should strongly resist building on countryside and on open space within our towns.**  
There was a very strong consensus that we should make best use of land with our towns before using green field land on the edge of towns. In the leaflet questionnaire, 91% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed we should do this, and 89% said we should not build on Green Belt land or high quality farmland. Support was also given to protecting all green open spaces within towns (91%) and avoiding building on areas of wildlife value (92%).

Respondents to the Key Issues Report were asked which of the major landscape designations in the present local plan (Green Belt, Areas of Restraint, Special Landscape Areas and open countryside) are most important for defending the countryside. Whilst

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4 A similar question was asked of the Citizens' Panel in September 2001. Here 48.5% Panel members responded that they had previously heard of the local plan.

several respondents felt all to be equally important, and several others highlighted more than one, Green Belt came out as the most important, followed by open countryside.

Almost 83% felt we should encourage as much development as possible in town centres. There was some small difference in the results between those who lived in rural and urban areas with 57% of rural dwellers strongly agreeing with this principle, compared to between 47 and 50% of those living in the towns.

- **We should safeguard and enhance the district's wildlife sites and species and create new habitats**  
Not surprisingly, a large number (78%) of respondents to the Key Issues Report felt we should be doing this.

### 3.3.4 Transport

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- **We should ensure that all major types of development are accessible by public transport**  
There was strong support overall for this. In particular, 90% of all respondents to the leaflet either agreed or strongly agreed that housing and shopping should be accessible by public transport. There was also strong support for employment (87%) and leisure/recreation (83%). Support for public transport tended to be slightly less in Kenilworth and the rural areas than in Warwick/Leamington/Whitnash. Those expressing *strong* support for public transport were between 4 and 11% less in Kenilworth and the rural areas than in Leamington/Whitnash.

Respondents to the Key Issues Report had a large number of suggestions for what improvements should be made to the public transport network, and these included improving links:-

- Between new development areas (eg: Warwick Gates) and town centres/railway stations,
- Between the villages in the rural areas.
- To the Warwick hospital.

Suggestions were also made by respondents to the Key Issues Report to how public transport interchanges should be improved. A wide variety of measures were proposed including improving access to bus/train stations by all green modes of transport, improving linkages between buses and trains and providing better information.

- **Nevertheless, we should still ensure that easy access to car parking is provided in conjunction with major uses and in some locations.**  
It was widely considered that provision of adequate car parking is still important in all major land uses. Respondents to the leaflet placed housing as the most important land use where parking is needed (87%)<sup>5</sup>, followed by shopping (86%), employment (85%) and recreation/leisure (77%).

In terms of locations where parking is important, there was strong support for adequate parking in town centres (78%). (Interestingly however, when Key Issues Report respondents were asked whether the town centres would benefit from improved/increased

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<sup>5</sup> This percentage of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that easy access to car parking is important .

car parking provision, only 58% felt strongly that they would).

There was some recognition that where good public transport exists car parking may not be so essential, but even here 54% felt that parking remained important.

- **We should be cautious when seeking to restrict car parking on new developments**

Notwithstanding the provisions of current government advice which seek to place upper limits on the number of car parking spaces which can be provided on a new development, the Key Issues Report asked whether it is acceptable to do this where viable alternatives to the car are available. Whilst 47% agreed that it is acceptable, 23% had no view or were uncertain and 30% felt it to be unacceptable.

- **We should make improvements to pedestrian/cycle routes**

Respondents to the Key Issues Report had a large number of suggestions for improvements to pedestrian/cycle routes in the district. These included:-

- Safer routes to schools
- Providing links between Kenilworth and the University
- Town centres
- Dealing with dangerous “hot spots” including the provision of cycle refuges and pedestrian/cycle phasing on traffic lights
- Ensuring routes are continuous

- **We should investigate opportunities for a Park & Ride site within the district**

Almost all leaflet respondents had an opinion on whether Warwick and Leamington should have a Park & Ride facility. There was broad support for this (62%)<sup>6</sup>, with only 13% disagreeing (or strongly disagreeing) with the principle. Support was slightly higher from the urban areas (particularly Warwick at 66%) than rural areas (58%).

### 3.3.5 Housing

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- **There may be scope for promoting higher densities on housing sites within our towns and for mixing housing and other uses on the same site.**

Respondents to the leaflet gave general support (59%)<sup>7</sup> to allowing higher density housing within towns provided that the quality of the environment can be maintained. Only 19% disagreed (or strongly disagreed) with the statement. There was a more cautious response to the concept of mixing uses such as housing and employment on the same site. Whilst 50% supported the principle, a further 28% did not, and 20% neither agreed or disagreed.

Across the district, it was those living in the towns who were more cautious about supporting higher density housing (58-9% compared with 65% in rural areas). Conversely, support for mixed use developments was higher in Leamington/Whitnash (54%) than in other areas.

- **If the local plan needs to suppress windfall housing, sites which are close to**

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<sup>6</sup> This percentage of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

<sup>7</sup> This percentage of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.



### **public transport corridors or interchanges should be given priority**

The Key Issues Report asked respondents what priority should be given to a range of criteria in the event of the local plan needing to suppress windfall housing. The percentage of respondents who gave each criteria a (high) priority of 1 or 2 are as follows:-

	Priority 1 or 2 (%)
Near to public transport corridors or interchanges	91
Focussed on town centres	67
Focussed on more than one of the urban areas	67
Only where they provide a contribution to affordable housing	39

- **A range of measures should be considered to increase affordable housing within the district**

In both the Key Issues Report and at the Housing forum, the issue of how to increase levels of affordable housing was addressed. Not surprisingly, a wide variety of views were expressed, however a number of themes emerged:-

- A lowering of minimum thresholds should be considered however this should be within the parameters of Government advice (circular 6/98).
- Increasing the percentage of affordable housing sought on all sites should be increased, but not where this prevents there being a mix of tenures on a site.
- The Council should not require all developments to make contributions towards affordable housing.

### **3.3.6 Employment**

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- **Making full use of brown field land for new jobs should be a high priority**

One of the major issues facing the Local Plan review is how the district will accommodate the need for new jobs, and the Key Issues Report made it clear that green field land will need to be found to meet this need. Not surprisingly, a large number of the leaflet respondents (93%) felt we should reduce the amount of green field land we need by using previously developed land within our towns for new jobs wherever possible. Only 3% of all respondents disagreed with this principle.

- **Protecting the countryside and open spaces should also be a high priority**

The Key Issues Report asked respondents whether they agreed that we should protect certain types of land from employment use. There was strong support for all the types suggested; Green Belt land, high quality farmland, open spaces within the towns and areas of wildlife value.

- **We should seek to provide jobs close to where people live**

There was also considerable support, though less strong than for the above principles, for seeking to provide jobs close to where people live. Over 67% of leaflet respondents agreed (or strongly agreed) with this principle<sup>8</sup>. There were geographic variations in how people answered this question, with 73% of Leamington and Whitnash residents

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<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, this figure was 83% for the equivalent question in the Key Issues Report, however with a much smaller base.

supporting the principle but only 63% of those living in rural areas.

- **The local plan should be identifying a range of sites to meet the needs of small businesses**

There was strong support for this from respondents to the Key Issues Report. In making detailed comments, respondents raised a number of (sometimes conflicting) comments:-

- It is important that existing areas where small business are established are protected.
- A degree of flexibility is required to allow for future expansion.
- It is important to ensure that a good mix of sites is provided, including an allowance for small businesses within larger sites.

### **3.3.7 Shopping and town centres**

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- **We should support improvements to our town centres**

Not surprisingly, there was strong support for measures which would improve the range and quality of shopping in the district's town centres. The number supporting improvements to Leamington was 77%, Warwick 76% and Kenilworth 67%<sup>9</sup>. Less than 5% of respondents felt we should not support any improvements to the centres.

Notwithstanding these overall trends, some interesting local views emerged. Whilst 50% of Leamington/Whitnash residents strongly supported improvements to Leamington town centre, 69% of Warwick and Kenilworth residents felt this way about their respective local town centres. Clearly, whilst there is broad support across the district for improvements to Leamington town centre as the main shopping centre of the district, local feeling that improvements are needed is, if anything, stronger in the other two town centres.

- **We should consider pedestrianisation schemes in the town centres**

The Key Issues Report asked whether the town centres would benefit from pedestrianisation. On a scale of 1 (agree) to 5 (disagree), 60% scored 1 or 2 to this question. It should be noted that this question made no distinction between the three town centres.

- **We should support improvements to our local shopping parades**

There was also strong support for protecting and enhancing the many local shopping centres across the district. Over 67% of leaflet respondents supported improvements to the range and quality of shops in local shopping centres with only 6% not supporting any improvements.

The Key Issues Report respondents were asked whether there is an argument for encouraging a more relaxed framework which may allow a broader range of uses in the local shopping parades. Whilst there was some support for this approach, many respondents were cautious with 50% being ambivalent or against the idea.

- **We should restrict the growth of out of town shopping facilities**

A large number of leaflet respondents (69%) agreed (or strongly agreed) that we should restrict the growth of out of town shopping facilities, with only 13% believing we should not.

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<sup>9</sup> This percentage of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

### 3.3.8 Our Quality Environment

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- **It is essential that we protect the character of our historic areas**  
Not surprising, there was almost universal support for protecting the historic environment of the district. Over 96% of all leaflet respondents felt it was essential to protect this character, the highest response for any question asked. Respondents to the Key Issues Report had a wide range of suggestions for how this should be done.
- **We should recognise the particular character of different areas of the district**  
When asked about whether recognition should be given to the particular character of different areas within the district, 83% of leaflet respondents agreed (or strongly agreed) that we should do this. Respondents to the Key Issues Report had a wide range of suggestions for how this should be done.
- **We should take a positive approach to the opportunities for conservation to aid regeneration**  
In a district such as Warwick, there can be conflicts, perceived or real, between objectives of conserving our historic environment and other objectives, particularly those of regeneration (such as, for example, in Old Town). This issue was considered by respondents to the Key Issues Report who recognised that it is a problem however felt that a positive approach should generally be adopted which:-
  - Recognises that conservation objectives can be met through regeneration, and that conservation is not only about resisting change,
  - Takes a more flexible approach to the re-use of buildings,
  - Ensures that public consultation is a priority on some schemes,
  - Supports appropriate modern buildings which are in keeping with their historic surroundings.
- **We should introduce stronger design guidance on new development in the district**  
Of all leaflet respondents, 85% felt we should have stronger design guidance on new developments. Respondents to the Key Issues Report had a wide range of suggestions for how this should be done. These included:-
  - Discouraging bland modern buildings,
  - Ensuring comprehensive rather than piecemeal developments,
  - Ensuring appropriate use of materials in modern development
  - Support for greater use of planning briefs and village design statements in appropriate cases,
  - Recognizing local distinctiveness.
  - Recognizing that a desire to encourage higher density development may not be in keeping with historic character.

### 3.3.9 Countryside and Villages

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- **In rural areas, certain developments are acceptable where the countryside can be protected**  
There was broad recognition from respondents to the leaflet that certain types of rural development should be encouraged where it can be demonstrated that the countryside is not harmed. There was particular support for employment which meets local needs (81%

agreed or strongly agreed with this) and for leisure/tourism developments/other types of farm diversification (75%). (Respondents to the Key Issues Report were asked about each of these separately, and whilst 70% supported farm diversification, only 50% supported leisure and tourism developments.)

These results should, of course, be read alongside the other results (noted above) which show that people support building within towns before using greenfield sites on the edge of towns (91%) and wish to see Green Belt and high quality farm land protected (89%). It can be concluded that the key test for what constitutes acceptable development in rural areas is whether the countryside is harmed. Only appropriate rural development which can demonstrate that it does not harm the countryside should be supported.

People living in the rural areas of the district were generally a little more cautious towards any new development in rural areas, however differences were not great. For example, the number of people who agreed (or strongly agreed) we should encourage employment development in rural areas where this meets local needs ranged from 84% in Leamington/Whitnash to 77% in the rural areas.

- **There is no overriding support for taking a more flexible approach towards village envelopes**

Respondents to the Key Issues Report were asked whether, given that we are only seeking development in rural areas which meets local needs, the local plan review should adopt a more flexible approach to village envelopes. Although 40% agreed (or strongly agreed) that we should, 36% felt we should not, and the remaining 24% were unsure or had no view.

- **More should be done to protect village shops and services**

The respondents to the Key Issues Report all felt that more should be done to protect village shops and services. They had a number of suggestions for how village shops should be protected, many of which are not planning or even council matters. It was felt, however, that we should seek to resist changes of use from village shops to other uses.

- **Proposals for affordable housing on “exception sites” within villages should be treated with caution**

The final question on the leaflet asked whether in villages, affordable housing should be allowed for local people to be built on land where development would not normally be permitted. There was a broad range of views on this question. Over 42% felt that it should be supported, however a significant 38% felt that it should not and over 17% neither agreed or disagreed.

When this information is disaggregated down to geographical areas, the results show that there is less support within the rural areas themselves than within other parts of the district. Only 35% of rural dwellers (this includes people living in villages) supported the principle (of which only 11% strongly supported it), and 49% objected to it.

### **3.3.10 Recreation and tourism**

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- **It is important that leisure, recreation and tourism developments are accessible by public transport.**

Of those responding to the leaflet, 83% felt that leisure, recreation and tourism developments should be accessible by public transport.

- **New indoor recreation/leisure facilities should only be located in or near town**

### **centres and neighbourhood centres**

There was strong support for this principle from respondents to the Key Issues Report (76% agreed).

- **In considering tourism proposals, the impact upon traffic and the local environment are of paramount importance**

It was recognised by respondents to the Key Issues Report that when considering proposals for new tourism developments, the local plan should attach some priority to different impacts of the proposal. There was a clear feeling of what constituted the more important criteria.

	Priority 1 or 2 (%)
The traffic implications of the proposal	96
The impact of the proposal on the local environment	93
The importance of the proposal on the local economy	62

- **We should be protecting public playing fields, parks and green spaces from new development**

There was no overwhelming view that from respondents to the Key Issues Report that there is a shortage of public open space in the district<sup>10</sup>. Notwithstanding this, 78% of people agreed or strongly agreed that all public playing fields, parks and green spaces should be protected from new development.

- **We should support the use of developer contributions to improve existing areas of open space as well as providing new ones**

Respondents to the Key Issues Report were asked whether it was reasonable for the local plan to ask for developers contributions to improve existing areas of open space as well as providing new ones. A large 88% felt that it was reasonable. Given the view expressed above that there is no particular shortage of public open space in the district, there could be a case for seeking to direct developer contributions towards improving existing areas of open space, instead of providing new areas, in appropriate cases.

There was, however, little support for losing some areas of open space in order to secure improvements to other areas. Whilst 22% gave some support to this approach, a further 22% were not sure/had no opinion and 56% disagreed. If the local plan does wish to identify areas of open space which are to be lost, it must give very clear justification why it would wish to do this.

- **Provided that the countryside can be protected, we can encourage leisure and tourism developments in the countryside**

Notwithstanding that fact that respondents to the Key Issues Report felt that leisure, recreation and tourism developments should be accessible by public transport and that new indoor recreation/leisure facilities should only be located in or near town centres and neighbourhood centres (see above), there was support for appropriate leisure and tourism developments in the countryside. In total, 80% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that we should be encouraging such developments, provided that the countryside is not harmed.

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<sup>10</sup> In answer to the question “do you perceive that there is a shortage of public open space, opinion was divided fairly evenly with, on a ranking of 1 (Yes) to 5 (No), 36% answering 1 or 2, 28% answering 3 and 36% answering 4 or 5.