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# Warwick District Council Proposed Development Review Forum

**1<sup>st</sup> May 2014**

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## **Item: Land adjacent to Morrisons, Old Warwick Road, Royal Leamington Spa Proposed development of land on corner of Old Warwick Road and Princes Drive for headquarters building for Vitsoe**

Chair: Gary Fisher (Head of Development Management)

Presenting item: Mark Adams (Managing director; Vitsoe)

Gary Fisher introduced the item, following which Mark Adams made a presentation on the proposal.

### **Presentation by Vitsoe**

Vitsoe is a British furniture company, founded in 1959 that manufactures and retails furniture designed by Dieter Rams. Vitsoe currently operates from headquarters within Camden in London but wishes to relocate to Royal Leamington Spa. The district is centrally located within the UK for the company's supply chain, and reasonably close to the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal which will be the despatch point for the company's exports (currently estimated at 60% of sales). Royal Leamington Spa, and this site in particular, meets the company's requirements in view of the quality of the environment, excellent connectivity (in particular proximity to the railway station with services to London), the quality of the footpaths and cycleways, and access to FE colleges with an specialism in art and design.

Vitsoe proposes to locate its headquarters on the site. This will incorporate space for manufacture / assembly, warehousing, offices and design. Vitsoe proposes to build a single storey rectangular building orientated north-south containing a number of flexible "tents" (spaces) for its various activities. The building will have the capacity to be extended across the site as the company's requirements change/grow. The design and orientation of the building will maximise natural light and will aim to be permeable, allowing views in from the outside including from along Princes Drive and the railway. The architect will ensure that the landscaping scheme helps link the building with surrounding open space including Foundry Wood to the north.

### **Question & answer session**

Councillors (and others present) strongly welcomed Vitsoe's decision to relocate to Royal Leamington Spa. A number of specific questions were asked.

**Question: Will the quality of the building be as high as the office development that was previously approved (in outline) for the site?**

Answer: Yes. This building will be a long way from being a factory in the traditional sense. Whilst a key design objective of the building is for it to be “modest”, it is Vitsø’s hope that the appearance of the building and particularly its openness and visual permeability will enthrall young people to pursue careers in design and construction. In that sense, Vitsø hopes that it will be an aspirational building.

**Question: What are the likely levels of traffic generation from the site? How will raw materials to the site be delivered?**

Answer: The site currently has outline planning approval for 100,000 sq ft of B1a office space. Vehicle movements into and out of the site will be much lower than what was modelled for that permission. HGV movements are estimated to be c1 per week when the site opens rising to 6-7 per week. Total vehicle movements are anticipated to be 7-10 per day. Vitsø has a commitment to sustainable transport and encourages staff to cycle or use public transport.

Unfortunately, it is inevitable that in view of the scale of deliveries to the site, these are likely to be by road. It is anticipated that this will be in small lorries and vans. Goods leaving the site are likely to be by means of a smaller number of larger vehicles.

**Question: Are there issues with flood capacity and storage of the site?**

Answer: Vitsø have not yet investigated this. Vitsø has retained engineers will look at this to resolve any capacity issues.

**Question: Are links being made with Warwickshire College?**

Answer: Yes. Contact has already been made with the college. The presence of the college was a key attractor for Vitsø to Royal Leamington Spa.

**Question: Trilogy failed to resolve the issue of the new cycle route under the Princes Drive railway bridge. Can this proposal sort this out?**

Answer: Mark Adams commented that Vitsø was keen to see this happen. Philip Clarke (Warwick District Council) added that a proposal has been designed by Warwickshire County Council and funding has been agreed. It is understood that the scheme will be implemented during May 2014.  
*[UPDATE: Since the meeting, we have been informed that there is some slippage in the programme to deliver this. Warwickshire County Council anticipates that implementation will take place during September/October 2014. This is, however, subject to receiving engineering clearance from Network Rail. It is within the gift of Network Rail as to whether this scheme can proceed.]*

**Question: Will the glazed windows on the building’s south elevation result in massive solar gain and heat?**

Answer: No. Vitsø is aware of this as a design issue. It is proposed to mitigate this by canopy over these glazed areas. An environmental engineer is part of their design team and will focus on this technical issue.

**Question: Is Vitsø concerned locating to such a highly trafficked area, bearing in mind its green travel philosophy?**

Answer: This is a recognised issue but other attractions of the site far outweighed this issue. Vitsø could have easily opted for typical industrial estate location or a more rural location, but this held no attraction because of the other benefits of the Old Warwick Road site already covered. Vitsø wants to send out a strong message that people should come to the site by public transport if possible.

**Question: Could better cycling and pedestrian routes to the railway station be provided?**

Answer: Yes. Vitsø would be happy to work with all relevant parties to hopefully address this. Vitsø sees this link as a key linkage for their customers visiting the site.

**Question: What is the timetable for Vitsø to submit a planning application?**

Answer: Vitsø hopes to submit an application by the late summer/autumn of this year.

Gary Fisher closed the meeting by thanking Mark Adams and his team for their presentation.

End

Head of Development Services  
Warwick District Council  
11 July 2012