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(Representations submitted by email only to ikemp@icloud.com)

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Re: Warwick EiP Exam 19 & 20

Dear Mr Kemp,

The Inspector has invited comments on the above documents as part of the initial examination of Matter 3 of the Warwick Local Plan, please see our brief comments below.

Firstly the Councils position on windfalls is now that they should be some 200 less than proposed at the hearing sessions. Whilst we understand the reasons why the Council has now lowered the figure we still believe that there is a fundamental issues with the calculation of the windfall allowance, it is discussed in depth in our Matter 3 statement and we will not cover it again in detail here. In short the calculation is based on the failure of the authority to allocate sufficient sites to meet need over a long period, there is high windfalls for a number of years simply because there were no allocations. The Council also continue to rely on public sector land to fulfil the land take for the levels of windfalls anticipated, we now know from Exam 19 that at least one of the confidential sites is public sector land, the possibility therefore for further double counting between the two sources continues to be an issue and will do until all such confidential sites are named. The problem therefore remains that the plan is not allocating sufficient sites to meet its needs and is overly reliant on flawed thinking to justify the inclusion of such a high windfall rate.

It is apparent that even on the Councils disputed OAN and supply figures there is a significant problem in how this plan will deliver its housing requirement over a plan period which is already shorter than the NPPF envisages as being suitable. Whilst the difficulties of plan preparation are acknowledged and the need to get Local Plans in place is important, this should not override the adoption of an unsound plan. In order to deal with the plans identified shortfall a number of options are identified, what is of course still of dispute is how much additional need the Council has to plan for. What is clear is that additional sites need to be identified as a priority and this should be undertaken at the earliest possible

opportunity, the process to identify additional sites should ensure that the full OAN for the HMA is addressed and that a realistic view of windfall allowance is taken, this would mean that site allocations could cover a larger proportion of proposed development to decrease the need to rely on windfalls in unplanned for locations.

The Council's preferred approach to dealing with these issues is to consider an early review of the Local Plan. To support this position the Council refer to recent decisions in Dacorum and North Somerset. There are obviously very specific circumstances with each of these plans, most notably North Somerset have formally agreed to produce a joint planning document with other West of England authorities. Whilst we believe that this plan needs to identify further sites as a priority, there may therefore be a need to put in place a review mechanism to deal with the unmet need from the HMA. If this is a position the Inspector wishes to see pursued we believe that it will be vital to ensure that not only are firm trigger points for the start of the review embedded in the plan, but also commitments that the Council will consider policies out of date should the review not be completed by a certain date. It is vital that any such review is not an endless open ended process.

In terms of the new trajectory contained within Exam 19 we now have the benefit of the Councils evidence on how sites will be built out and the discussions they have entered into to arrive at these conclusions. This data underlines our concerns on a number of sites, notably that sites i.e. Warwick University are included in the trajectory for 167 units of which the vast majority appear to be student accommodation, whilst we recognise what the PPG says about the inclusion of C2 units in the supply we would query whether the SHMA prepared by GL Hearn does include student requirements as part of the OAN calculation, paragraphs 11.47-11.10 of the 2013 SHMA would indicate that it does not. It cannot therefore follow that it is allowed to contribute towards the housing requirement. Similarly the document does not adequately explain the high development rates associated with certain sites, notably the now split Europa Way site is expected in 2018/19 to be delivering 135 units per annum but we do not know how many developers will be on site to achieve this build out rate. There are therefore significant question marks over the Councils supply and trajectory.

In conclusion we do not believe the evidence submitted by the Council gives a realistic position on what level of windfall provision should be included within the Local Plan. Furthermore the fragility of the supply position for the plan is easily shown given the moderate discount the Council have identified and we do not as such consider it to be a robust or sound plan. There is an urgent need for the identification of further sites to ensure that the plan can meet its identified needs and be considered sound.

Yours sincerely

Mathieu Evans
Planning Policy Manager
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