

## **Matter 7A Written Statement – H44 North of Milverton – Graham Cooper (9968)**

I wish to supplement my concern over Warwick District Council's Local Plan insofar as it effects Old Milverton.

The area is a valued facility for residents of north Leamington Spa and elsewhere, offering refreshing country walks through farmland, and for many even the prospect of crossing the River Avon and taking refreshments and a break at the Saxon Mill. In view of the Government's campaign to persuade the public to take more exercise this is a valuable asset. To intrude on it by the building of housing or its prospect would remove this facility.

The loss of the open countryside in Old Milverton would be all the more fruitless when the following matters are considered. It would be irresponsible to build houses to meet Coventry's housing need on the greenbelt north of Leamington 9 miles from Coventry city centre: public transport links to Coventry from this location are not of the best and it is unlikely that people who work in Coventry will want to buy houses in Old Milverton, especially since there are alternative sites closer to Coventry, which should be used in preference.

There are alternative sites outside the greenbelt, which should be used in preference to the North Leamington Green Belt land which has been very successful in preventing the spread of Leamington stopping its merging or nearly merging with Kenilworth. This land has preserved the A452 approach to the historic Regency town of Royal Leamington Spa which approach was constructed in the 1840's to facilitate and enhance entry from the north. Taking this land would encourage further development here requiring the release of even more green belt land.

The exceptional circumstances required by the National Planning Policy Framework to release land from the greenbelt have not been demonstrated.

There are alternative, more sustainable, sites which should be used in preference. Warwick District Council has spent a great deal of time and resources trying to justify Exceptional Circumstances but has been able to do so only by claiming that the site is suitable for providing houses to meet Coventry's need.

In addition, the proposed Park and Ride scheme is impractical and will almost certainly not be used to such an extent to justify its existence, since the proposed site is too close to Leamington to reduce traffic on the A452 and there would not be dedicated buses: the proposal is for a "virtual service" using the existing bus services so as a consequence it will be necessary for commuters to time usage in accordance with the bus timetable, making it inflexible. There is adequate parking available in Leamington Spa and, indeed, Warwick District Council is planning a new multi storey car park.. Commuters are unlikely to use the facility to cross Leamington to the south as envisaged by Stage Coach. Oxford appears to be the only real example of a successful Park and Ride because there is so little parking in that city; in the local area the Stratford-upon-Avon Park and Ride scheme has been

reduced.

Old Milverton is one of the last surviving hamlets on the outskirts of Leamington and its integrity will be destroyed by the proposals which will see it subsumed into Leamington and valuable productive farm land and important wild life habitat will be lost .