



Planning Inspector, Mr Kevin Ward,
C/O Programme Officer, Ian Kemp idxemp@icloud.com
By email

29th August 2016

Dear Mr Ward,

I write to express objections to the plans to build in Old Milverton.

Firstly I wish to challenge what I believe is a fundamental assumption, for which Warwick District do not clearly have the gift of choice. In 2011 Warwick District Council issued a consultation paper asking if we wanted low, medium or high levels of growth in the District. Later Cllr Mobbs concluded a public meeting with a bullish statement that he was going for growth. More recently the WDC housing numbers have been ratcheted up by projections of a greatly increased need for Coventry housing. Against the background that any plan needs to be fully founded upon fact, and a proper factual case made, I have to seriously question this key assumption behind the high housing numbers being considered in the plan, both for relevance and legality. "Growth" level high housing numbers are being used in my view, and I have to ask on what legal basis is this ? Indeed I see very little of affordable and rented housing , another serious omission.

Secondly I wish to object to the published plan in six main categories

1 The site is unsuitable to meet the development needs of Coventry

- It is irresponsible to build houses to meet Coventry's housing need on the greenbelt north of Leamington. (And see my first point also)
- The proposed location is 9 miles from Coventry city centre
- Public transport links to Coventry are poor and the proposal will encourage increased commuting by car and further congestion on already over crowded roads
- There are alternative sites, closer to Coventry, which should be used in preference to the land North of Leamington

2 The appropriate sequence for identifying sites for development should look at the greenbelt as a last resort

- A substantial part of the site is to be "held in reserve" to meet Leamington's future housing need (is this more inflation of actual need to drive the Growth assumption in my first point above?)
- There are alternative sites, outside the greenbelt, that should be used in preference to the land North of Milverton
- Further development north of Leamington can only be achieved by using more of the greenbelt

3 The green belt at old Milverton is particularly valuable in comparison with other areas

- The greenbelt North of Milverton has been very successful in preventing the spread of Leamington and has stopped Leamington merging with Kenilworth
- The greenbelt North of Milverton has preserved the setting of the historic, regency town of Royal Leamington Spa
- If the proposed development goes ahead the "Green Lung" between Leamington and Kenilworth will be reduced to less than 1.5 miles
- Further development North of Leamington will require the release of more greenbelt land

4 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 that should be used in preference
- Warwick District Council has spent a lot of time and resources trying to justify Exceptional Circumstances but has only been able to do so by claiming that the site is suitable for providing houses to meet Coventry's need.(another aspect of the consequence of a key assumption of "Growth" ?)

5 The proposed park and ride scheme is impractical and will not be used

- The proposed site is too close to Leamington to reduce traffic on the A452
- There will not be dedicated buses, the proposal is for a "virtual service" using the existing bus services. As a consequence it will be necessary for commuters to time usage in accordance with the bus timetable, making it inflexible
- There is plenty of parking available in Leamington Spa. Indeed Warwick District Council is planning a new multi storey car park
- Commuters are unlikely to use the park and ride service to cross Leamington to a similar scheme on the south of Leamington as envisaged by Stage Coach
- Few park and ride schemes work in practice, Oxford being the typical real example because there is so little parking in Oxford.
- The Stratford upon Avon park and ride scheme has been reduced
- There is no funding presently available for the park and ride scheme

6 The area has great value for local residents.

- Many walkers, horse riders, cyclists and runners use the area
- The area enables residents from the neighbouring towns to experience the open countryside
- 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.
- Valuable, productive farm land and important wild life habitat will be lost

I hope you will carefully consider the right of WDC to target Growth as a trajectory, and the sound reasons given above for not assigning greenbelt to this ill-founded plan.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Bruce Paxton