

Matter 7A Written Statement – H44 North of Milverton – Kate Stocken (6323)

Further to the points of concern I made to Warwick District Council during the consultation period in relation to the proposed plans for development of the greenbelt land in North Leamington and Milverton I now wish to formally state with you my concerns and those shared by many of my neighbours and users of the wonderful space that is a key part of the Leamington environment.

I believe that the site is unsuitable to meet the development needs of Coventry as it is irresponsible to build houses to meet Coventry's housing need on the greenbelt north of Leamington which is 9 miles from Coventry city centre. As you may be aware the public transport links to Coventry are poor and the proposal will encourage increased commuting by car and further congestion on already over crowded roads. I understand that there are alternative sites, closer to Coventry, which should be used in preference to the land North of Leamington.

I would further state that the green belt at old Milverton is particularly valuable in comparison with other areas as it has been very successful in preventing the spread of Leamington. It has stopped Leamington merging with Kenilworth and I am concerned that if the proposed development goes ahead the "Green Lung" between Leamington and Kenilworth will be reduced to less than 1.5 miles

I would further argue that the proposed park and ride scheme is impractical and will not be used as the proposed site is too close to Leamington to reduce traffic on the A452. There will not be dedicated buses and the proposal is for a "virtual service" using the existing bus services so commuters will need to time their usage in accordance with the bus timetable, making it inflexible. There is no funding presently available for the scheme and similar schemes in Stratford upon Avon have been reduced due to lack of take up by residents.

The area has great value for local residents. As a frequent user, with my young children of the paths in the greenbelt, I appreciate first hand the invaluable access to open countryside and the wildlife which is sustained by it. As my 8 year old daughter said when we told her of the plans, "...but once it is built on we will never be able to get the countryside back".

I do not believe that the "exceptional circumstances" required by the National Planning Policy Framework to release land from the greenbelt have been demonstrated. There are alternative, more sustainable, sites that should be used in preference and whilst Warwick District Council has spent a lot of time and resources trying to justify the proposal, it appears that their only rationale is that the site is suitable for providing houses to meet Coventry's need, which I do not think meets the requirements to trigger exceptional circumstances.

Yours faithfully
Kate Stocken