

Matter 7A Written Statement – H44 North of Milverton – Mike Molesworth (13751)

Warwick District local plan – a leading local business perspective.

There can be no doubt that there is significant demand for housing in Warwick District. This is evidenced by the recent increase in property prices as people relocate to the area as a result of the success of local businesses.

As one of the larger employers in the District, Dennis Eagle is poised for further growth following significant investment in new products and the relocation of the parent company's global head office to Warwick. A critical factor in realising this future growth is the ability to recruit staff, both professional and shop floor. As well as pay, affordability of housing and quality of life are key decision making factors for the modern worker. Proximity of housing to the workplace, and the ability to walk or cycle to work are important factors for the individual and for the environment.

In Warwick District, almost all the major areas of employment are south of Leamington & Warwick. Both of these towns already suffer from significant congestion due to their historic nature & limited river crossings. Commuting from the north of these towns to the south has been increasing in time and contributing to deteriorating air quality. It must be a priority of any local plan to consider the environmental impact. Minimising the miles travelled for commuting should be a key priority, as well as ensuring congestion is reduced if possible, but at least does not deteriorate further.

A similar argument applies in the north of the district, where housing is being planned to meet a need in Coventry. Whilst it is understood that neighbouring districts should support housing needs, it is important that such housing is located close to where the businesses are located. As such it is impossible to justify the planned development in greenbelt to the north of Leamington as it will inevitably increase levels of commuting. As people are seeking to reduce their travel times, these homes would risk both failing to satisfy the needs of Coventry and exacerbating the already congested situation in Leamington & Warwick.

I understand that it is proposed, as part of the potential future development to the north of Leamington, to include some limited provision for employment. Given the high concentration of businesses to the south with outstanding access to the motorway network, I cannot see that such a development to the north will be attractive, and unlikely to be of interest to businesses or to a commercial developer. The south of the district is in desperate need of more business premises. In Dennis Eagle's case, we are restricted in our future development, and if our new products are really successful may have to consider expanding elsewhere. I know of a number of SME's who have the potential to grow in the future, who cannot find the premises they need in South Warwickshire where their existing staff live. Businesses need good access to the road networks and infrastructure. South of Leamington and Warwick has excellent access to the M40 & A46 plus Leamington Station & Warwick Parkway are convenient. In the North of the district, businesses would want to be located close to Coventry to access the station and roads such as the A45, M6 and M69 quickly.

M.J.Molesworth