

Matter 7A Written Statement – H44 North of Milverton – Professor & Mrs Miller (6801)

We would be glad if you would forward our objections to the proposed developments in Old Milverton to the Planning Inspector Mr Kevin Ward. These are by way of supplementing our original objections which have been set out in more detail at an earlier stage of the planning process.

Our understanding is that there is a strong presumption that development should not take place on Greenbelt land and the presumption may be rebutted only if there are exceptional circumstances justifying departure from the general rule. The only argument advanced in favour of departing from the general rule in this case appears to be that this would facilitate the development of the housing needs of Coventry, the city centre of which is located some nine miles away. In our opinion, the argument lacks substance and does not come close to establishing that exceptional circumstances exist.

Our reasons include the following. First, there are no doubt numerous other areas where a similar case could be advanced to justify urban spread. Coventry is not unique or even unusual in this respect and allowing substantial developments in such areas would seriously compromise the existing benefits of the Greenbelt. Secondly, and more pragmatically, it seems singularly unlikely that those whose business or work is in Coventry would decide that they should reside in Leamington Spa. The roads between Coventry and Leamington are already very overcrowded and the resultant bottlenecks would be such that traffic would rapidly grind to a halt. If this occurs the proposed benefits to Coventry would not materialise. Moreover, the topography is such that resorting to dual carriageways or additional lanes on the A452 etc is hardly practicable. Thirdly, it seems most unlikely that measures such as park and ride schemes would be effective. The distances are too short to attract drivers to park and ride.

Finally, those of us who live in the Old Milverton area (such as myself and my wife) benefit greatly from the Greenbelt, as do others who go there to walk, run or cycle. We do not see this argument as being one of special pleading, but rather as something which is invaluable to the local community.

Professor and Mrs John Miller