

**Warwick District Council**  
**Local Plan Examination**

**Response to Inspector's Matters and Issues**

**Matter 8**

Policy DS14 – Land for a community hub

**Issue**

Whether the proposed site allocations for education, a country park, a community hub and outdoor sport are justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

**October 2016**

## Policy DS14 – land for a community hub

- 1) What is the justification for the proposed allocation and the specific requirements of the policy in terms of infrastructure and services?**
- a) As part of the high level planning for the proposed allocations for the area to the south of Warwick, the District Council worked with stakeholders (including the County Council, other infrastructure providers and developers and housebuilders) to agree a comprehensive approach to the development of the area. This work identified the need for:
- Design parameters
  - A coordinated approach to the provision of new spine roads
  - A coordinated approach to cycling and walking networks
  - The provision of land for new schools and other infrastructure
  - The provision of land for local centres and other related facilities
  - The provision of a Country Park
- b) This high level work resulted in a design parameters document being agreed as the basis for planning applications across the area.
- c) Alongside this, policies DS12, DS13 and DS14 were prepared. Policy DS14 seeks to provide certainty by identifying a specific area of land for community facilities and a community stadium, in line with the agreed high level comprehensive approach.
- d) This Policy is required for three reasons
- i. To provide an identifiable location for the provision of a community stadium to enable the relocation of Leamington Football Club back in to the urban area. Not only is this part of the Club's strategy, it is also supported by the District Council as locating the club within the urban area enables better community use of the facilities, a stronger sense of connection between the town and the local football club and a more sustainable location for a facility that is subject to a significant number of journeys and at present is only easily accessible by private car. In addition, the land currently occupied by the Football Club has been supported by the Council as a suitable location for the provision of a gypsy and traveller site (see the Council's Matter 12 statement)
  - ii. To help address a shortfall of 3G pitch provision within the District as identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy (I05). Specifically, Action F2 of the Playing Pitch Strategy, identifies a new Community Stadium as a key priority for the District.
  - iii. To provide an identifiable location for a range of services and facilities that are required to support the new communities being established across the area to the south of Warwick, including land for a medical centre, local retail facilities and a community meeting place.
- e) The land has been included for these purposes within the approved planning application (**W/14/0967**). The Council is currently working with Leamington FC and the landowners to facilitate the relocation of the Football Club and we anticipate a further report will be taken to the Council's Executive on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016.
- f) As a minimum, the Policy requires the provision of:
- i. A local retail store (of no more the 500sq m)
  - ii. A community meeting place/community centre
  - iii. A community sports complex, centred on the proposed community stadium but also including a gym

iv. A medical centre (if required by the CCG).

**2) What is the basis for the limitations of the size of retail development i.e. 500sqm? Does there need to be a limit?**

- a) The area to the south of Warwick and Leamington already has access to a wide range of large supermarkets. The purpose of the local centre (including the retail store) is to meet local needs within the new development whilst maximising the land available for other uses that have an identified need within the District, notably housing, sports facilities, and essential social infrastructure.
- b) Further, as part of the Council's approach to supporting Town Centres, the policies set out in TC1, TC2, TC3, TC4 and TC5 seek to ensure function of Town Centres as the primary location for retail development is maintained. It is considered that the provision of a store over 500sq m could have an impact on the long term vitality of Warwick and Leamington Town Centres
- c) The convenience store proposed at the community hub has a specific floorspace limit of 'up to 500sq.m'. This reflects advice in the Warwick District Retail Study (update 2014) (R01) that indicated that retail stores with floorspace below 500sq.m are likely to be a purely local facility and will not draw trade from outside their immediate catchment and have an adverse impact on the role, function and vitality and viability of the District's main centres (see the Council's Matter 9 statement for further information).

**3) How does the proposed allocation relate to proposed housing sites in terms of phasing, funding etc.?**

- a) At present the southern part of site H01 is owned by Warwickshire County Council. This area has outline planning permission for "Development of up to 425 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), medical centre, community hall, formal and informal green spaces, sports and recreation provision, structural landscaping, new roads, footpaths and cycle ways, site access and ancillary works" (application no. W/14/0967).
- b) The County Council is in negotiation to release this land for development in two parcels. One part would be for the provision of the majority of the 425 dwellings and the other for the provision of the Community Stadium and other facilities required in Policy DS14. The negotiations include discussions regarding the provision of access and the spine road to service both parts of the site.
- c) This approach (which is supported by the District Council) enables the housing development to take place independently from the proposals for the Community Hub, both in terms of phasing and funding. However, the outline planning approval includes a condition that the proposals for the Community Hub (and specifically the Community Stadium) must be implemented within 5 years. In the event that they are not, then the land will be made available for housing along with the provision of essential on-site infrastructure.

**4) Is the proposal realistically viable and deliverable? How will it be funded?**

- a) The proposals are realistically viable and deliverable. The District Council, the County Council and Leamington FC have already undertaken extensive work regarding land values, costs and potential sources of funding. As a result, a report is expected to be considered by the Council's Executive on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016 regarding proposals for the purchase,

funding and delivery of the site.

- b) The development is likely to be funded from a number of sources including
  - i. Local authority capital expenditure
  - ii. Land sales (e.g. the Football Club)
  - iii. The provision of other enabling uses on site in line with the Policies of the emerging Local Plan.

**5) What is the expected timescale for development?**

- a) The development is expected to be completed by 2020 in accordance with the conditional outline planning approval.