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.
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 into 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 30th 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 30th 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.