

## **Matter 11. – University of Warwick and Major Sites in the Green Belt.**

**Questions 3 & 5 University:** We wish to make the point that in order to meet the need for development, including new housing, in sustainable locations near to work locations, there will need to be land released from the Green Belt. The identification of the University's needs confirms the point and provides a perfect example of where the commercial advantages of supporting such a prestigious facility must heavily influence the allocation of land. The fact that there is land directly adjoining the existing facilities is not only helpful to the future needs of the University but also allows an opportunity for 'planning' to minimise transportation needs and capitalise upon existing services already associated with the University.

In other words, development in and around the University Campus will represent the most sustainable of development and it is respectfully suggested that this is a strong factor to offset the effects of releasing land from the Green Belt.

We have previously made the point that we support the necessity to meet the University's needs and note the Council's intention to undertake a separate masterplanning exercise to accommodate those needs. We believe that such a masterplanning exercise should be part of the Local Plan process so that there can be a full and transparent debate into the various options and compromises which will be necessary. Development may ultimately comprise both academic and/or more residential uses which needs to be determined.

**Questions 7 & 9 Major Sites:** We support the need for the release of major sites to help meet the growing needs. Without reiterating detail, we believe that the most cost effective provision of essential infrastructure and transport links will be through the allocation of development sites adjacent to main centres of existing population and commerce such as Coventry. Such sites will also prove to be the most sustainable in terms of public transport and journey to work. The land suggested by us for development South of Gibbet Hill Lane for example is on the border of Coventry, has existing extensive public transport links and directly adjoins the University so providing for the likelihood of a high proportion of householders walking or cycling to work. The land may be Green Belt but this is offset by not just the provision of much needed housing land but the sustainability resulting from the existing and future ease of access to public transport.

We do not wish to make comment at this point about the relative merits of the land which we are promoting "South of Gibbet Hill Lane" against others suggested by the Council, including those identified by the Inspector in the Matters and Issues Paper. However, we do believe that the land "South of Gibbet Hill Lane" compares extremely favourably when judged against the stated criteria used to allocate the sites and we have respectfully suggested that the Inspector could include the allocation process as part of the Examination in Public. In that way, there is seen to be an independent and objective appraisal of all the high scoring sites (allocated and unallocated) and not just an acceptance of what one party is proposing.

It is not the case in Warwick but for example, we are aware of one Council which has allocated land purely on whether it is in public ownership or not. Clearly such a selection process is inequitable and it would be reasonable to expect the Inspector in that case to look to an open debate on the allocation criteria. That may be an extreme example but we do think that it serves to demonstrate the advantage of the allocation process being part of the Examination in Public so that all participants can feel that it has been open, transparent and subject to independent scrutiny.