



# Kenilworth Town Action Plan





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## Introduction

Kenilworth lies within the jurisdiction of Warwick District Council which is required by Government to put in place a Local Plan to govern its development for the next 15 years. This plan must make provision for the amount of housing and employment land which will be required during that period and where it will be sited. The plan will not only deal with these issues but also the infrastructure and facilities that will be required to service them and how such developments will benefit and complement the area.

The plan will deal with the District as a whole and must also take into account the needs of neighbouring authorities in the sub region. Further, the Plan will require to be examined and approved at a Public Enquiry by a Government Inspector. This enquiry will require robust evidence to show that what is proposed is sufficient to meet the needs of the District and its sustainability in the view of the Government, or it will fail. These requirements affect all parts of the District including Kenilworth and have been borne in mind by the Town Council in drafting its Action Plan.

Kenilworth was a medieval settlement attached to the Augustinian Abbey and Castle both of which were nationally prominent until the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Civil War when the Abbey and the Castle respectively were ruined. These two historical features still govern the character of the Town in the form of the Abbey Fields and the Castle ruins and it is the Town Council's intention to ensure that the character that these features have engendered is preserved.

The population of the Town has grown over the last 50 years by something of the order of 140% but despite this it has been able to preserve the intimacy, image and character of a small market town.

Kenilworth is a Town that supports a variety of community projects including two Cricket Clubs, Rugby and association football clubs, two theatres together with numerous charitable organisations and voluntary associations and also Church communities representing a variety of faiths. Further all of our Schools are of a very good standard at all levels. All of these assets are bound in a reasonably tight community which sees the Town as an important entity which we wish to preserve.

It is with this in mind that the Council has approached the Action Plan. Our view is that the Local Plan is not only about the number of houses that will be allowed or the amount of Industrial land allotted but how these will be developed and what effect they will have on the existing structure and character of the Town.

It is our view that this development must complement and preserve that which exists. This will require infrastructure that will connect those developments to the town and complement what we have. The Plan's object should be not only to preserve current facilities but to improve them in order to provide for the new developments. It should ensure that the Town continues to enjoy improved facilities and that those existing are not degraded.

Our object is to ensure that the new developments become part of our community and thus enhance it.

Funding for many of the projects or improvements that are required could and should be financed by the large sums that will be generated by the developments that will be allowed by the Local Plan. This funding should be used to improve the Town which has attracted the development as it will be necessary to keep services and facilities at their current level for the Town and its new residents.

In relation to this Action Plan we have found it necessary to consider a number of areas in detail in the first instance and then how these will be integrated into the Plan as a whole and their effect on the adjoining areas and the infrastructure and services.

In regard to those areas which merit particular mention in our plan we have the advantage of a recent consultation which has gathered opinions from over 1800 respondents as well as comments from owners of some of the areas affected and other organisations.

The following areas and subjects amongst others will need detailed consideration:-

## **The Abbey Fields**

The Abbey Fields is in many respects the heart of the Town and is an essential part of its history and character. As a result any development within the Fields should be viewed very critically. As an ancient monument it has protection and has for many years only seen an evolution of existing uses. It was on this basis that the swimming pool was allowed because it fell within the footprint of that which had existed since the turn of the previous century

### **A) Swimming Pool**

The Swimming pool has recently been renovated and is an important asset of the Town and has the advantage of an outdoor pool. We feel that both of these should be preserved as the main pool is well used and together with the outdoor pool provides excellent exercise facilities which can be and are used by people of all ages.

### **B) Children's Play Area**

The Children's Play Area has been relocated onto the bowling green which has been redundant for many years. This now provides a secure area for this feature and being fenced facilitates the exclusion of dogs from the area. The existing Pavilion is in our view an important feature in the Fields and should be found an alternative use such as a shelter for the users of the play area, provided that this can be achieved without any breach of safety for the play area.

### **C) Picnic Area**

Some of the site of the Old Play area is not now needed for the new scheme and should be converted into a picnic area. This area adjacent to the Play area and the Swimming Pool will complement these facilities and also the ancient Barn which houses the Abbey Museum.

### **D) Tennis Courts**

We propose that the existing surface of the tennis courts be replaced with a more modern self-draining surface so as to allow for greater usage of this existing facility in the interests of providing more facilities for sport and the health giving exercise that flows from it.

### **E) Performing Arts**

The relocation of the Play area may also allow one of the standings formerly used by the play equipment to be used as hard standing for the Bands and other entertainments that play and appear from time to time in the Fields. This will again enhance the picnic area and other facilities in the Fields. Otherwise an alternative site should be found.

### **F) Car Park**

The refurbishment of the car park surface has recently been carried out in accordance with the approved plan with inbuilt protection for the roots of the Lime Walk trees. It is important that the drainage arrangements made are maintained on a regular basis so as to improve the drainage in the meadow below the car park and ensure it is not made worse by any run off.

Great care must be taken to comply with the requirements of English Heritage in respect of any works to ensure no damage occurs to the Ancient Monument of the Abbey beneath this area.

It is also essential that the landscaping of the car park is dealt with sympathetically in order to preserve the character of the Fields and that in particular that any trees that are removed are replaced.

This car park is not only essential for visitors to St Nicholas Church and the Abbey Fields but also to certain local residents and businesses which have no parking facilities. In those circumstances it is essential that there is a regime of charging which makes allowance for this as otherwise there is a danger that local streets will become congested and businesses will suffer.

**G) The Lime Walk**

The works to the car park were also necessary for the protection of the Lime Walk as part of the plan was the safeguarding of the Lime Walk trees from the compaction around their roots. The compaction resulting from parking has caused damage to these important trees and already shortened their life span. This protection must continue. The plan for this area of the Fields should also provide for the replacement of the trees in the Walk during the next 20 years.

**H) Annual Fair**

Traditionally this has taken place on the meadow adjacent to Bridge Street. This area is within the flood plain and as such this has presented a problem from time to time. It is suggested that this problem could be alleviated on a permanent basis by relocating the fair and other similar events to the area of the fields below Abbey Hill and adjacent to Forrest Road /Borrowell Lane. The entrance from that side should be improved to allow for easier access although it should remain gated as at present to allow for control of this use.

**I) Cycle Access**

The Town Council wishes to encourage more cycling within the Town as this not only leads to improvement in health but also less congestion on the roads and car parks. However, we feel that it is necessary to separate cyclists from pedestrians in the same way we would wish to see cyclists separated from vehicular traffic where possible. We would therefore not wish the pedestrian path ways in the Abbey Fields to be used for cycling.

We would propose that as an alternative a separate cycleway be constructed which would run from the bridge in Bridge Street along the side of the Brook to the Swimming Pool and then connect to a new cycle path running alongside the existing path to Brookside Avenue. This would connect the cycle paths running up to the bridge in Bridge Street from the University to a new one through the Fields to Borrowell Lane and thence into the Town Centre or the cycle path into the Castle Farm. This new route would avoid the barrier that Abbey Fields creates at the moment and at the same time would provide separation between pedestrians and cyclists which we believe to be essential for the enjoyment of the Fields.

## Castle Farm Sports Complex

### A) Extend Sports Offering

The complex together with the fields does offer a valuable benefit to the Town for exercise sport and recreation and we would wish to extend that offering as part of the plan. This would however require the acquisition of further adjacent land in order to meet those wishes.

### B) Use with Sports Clubs

The Rugby Club and Wardens Cricket Club has indicated a wish to relocate from their existing sites in order to provide additional facilities for their large memberships. This is something that the Town Council would support in order to increase their facilities which are so beneficial particularly for the younger members of our community.

However, their relocation creates a double problem as there is no land for their relocation without loss of further green belt and the possible loss to the Town of their relocating elsewhere. This could be solved by them being accommodated in this area on the west side of the Town and adjacent to the Castle Farm complex. We would then have the benefit of providing an area catering for a multiplicity of sports.

With the concentration of these sporting facilities in this area there would be an opportunity to increase the cooperation that already exists for sharing pitches when available and appropriate. We would also envisage that there would be opportunities to develop joint facilities that could be used by all which might otherwise not be available or practical for a club on its own.

We would envisage that an area set aside in this way for all sports could provide a Running track and other such facilities. Further the provision of this area would leave a large area of open space. The Clubs would obviously wish to restrict access to their pitches and we think that in these circumstances it would be essential that an area around their sites should be acquired as public open space to allow for existing footpaths and general recreation. Our support for the relocations of the Clubs which are in the green belt would be on the basis that no development of their current sites would be allowed until alternative site for their relocation had been agreed and approved.

## **Relocating separately within the Green Belt**

During our consultation three possible new locations were suggested for relocation of the Clubs. These were in Glasshouse Lane, Warwick Road and Castle Farm. We would prefer the Castle Farm area but would be prepared to consider the Warwick Road area provided it did not entail any development other than the Rugby Club within the Green Belt.

### **A) Castle Farm Option**

#### **1) Boundaries**

Any development even of a sports facility, which would in the main be acceptable, is bound to encourage and present a further temptation to build on that land in the future. It would be a further incursion into the green belt in sensitive areas and would require defensible boundaries. The Castle Farm site would be protected by the Castle on the west side but would in the Council's view, require a dedicated public open space along its other boundary which should be provided for in any arrangements made with WDC.

#### **2) Access**

This is an important issue as the concentrated use would lead to greater use of the current access point at Fishponds Road. This could be alleviated by the use of the access point at the end of John O Gaunt Road. These two points could be used as access points to either end of the proposed development thus splitting the traffic into those using the two separate facilities of the Sports hall and the Cricket Club. We would not feel that the connection of these two access points by a road within the site would then be either justified having regard to cost or the extra intrusion caused to residents of Fishponds Road. Both accesses should be provided with adequate parking provision to avoid any use of the estate roads for parking off site.

### **B) Warwick Road Option**

#### **Access and Boundaries**

In relation to Warwick Road we appreciate that the A46 and the railway would provide substantial and definable boundaries for a sports site but access could only be obtained from Warwick Road. This would be acceptable if there were no further development at this time and any access and sports fields in Warwick Road together with the access remained in the green belt and were supported by a Public open space buffer zone along the boundary on the Leek Wootton side.



## Open Space

### a) **Thickthorn**

The new developments will be of a size that will require the provision of open space if it is to meet the District's own standards and also the requirements of the Garden Suburbs Policy which the District intends to apply to all developments and which in the view of the Town Council is essential. **Further detail specific to this development is set out later in this document.**

### b) **Extension to Castle Farm**

As mentioned previously it will be necessary to acquire additional land over and above that for use by the Sports Clubs in order to allow for the continuance of existing footpaths and general recreation.

### c) **Crackley Triangle**

This area is not in the green belt at the present time because of we believe of an error in the last Local Plan which intended that it should be included in the Green Belt. It lies in the very sensitive Crackley Gap which is the only defence against coalescence with Coventry. Further the prospect of the development of HS2 will be a further breach of this sensitive area and will further degrade the green belt in this area.

Whilst we are aware there are proposals for its development we do not think that these are feasible because there is no viable vehicular access.

This site would be an ideal acquisition for Open Space. Adjacent to the Green Way and the Common it would be an area which could be added to the open space that the Town needs and with this use access would not cause any problem.

### d) **The Common**

The Common is a valuable asset for the Town and should be preserved in its natural state and protected from any further incursions and any attempts to make it a more formal area resisted.

## The Castle

### 1) Improve connection with the Town

It is essential that safe pedestrian access is made between the Castle and the Town and the Abbey Fields to avoid the separation that occurs at the present time. This could be achieved by the provision of a footpath from the main car park entrance in the direction of the town. Further, the provision of a pedestrian refuge adjacent to the Ford could provide a connection to a new walk way through the Castle grounds and thus avoid the entrance way to the car park.

These proposals would provide visitors with access to the Town in one direction and would open up the Ancient Monument of the Abbey in the other. The latter would also provide visitors and residents easier access from the Castle to the beauty of the Abbey Fields which many visitors do not see because of the lack of access.

### 2) The Mere

The reintroduction of the ancient Mere around the Castle is a project that has been under consideration for many years and has always been supported by the Town Council. It is a project that would not only enhance the Castle but would provide a Tourist attraction not only for Kenilworth but for the District and the region. Further, it could be used to control the flooding that occurs at the Ford, and in Abbey Fields and the whole of the valley.

The preliminary study carried out by Warwick University Business School suggested a number of ways in which this could be developed and the uses that would be necessary to make the project viable. This required the development of a hotel or some similar development consistent with a rural setting.

Any such project would require very careful consideration bearing in mind the huge cost that is likely to be incurred and also its effects on the local area.

It was apparent from our survey that the developments that would be required to fund this project would not be acceptable to our respondents having regard to the effect on the area around this important Monument and the developments in the green belt that would be necessary.

This is a view that the Council shares as there would be a large incursion into the green belt which would be inappropriate in the sensitive area of the Castle which is an important national Ancient Monument.

Consideration should be given to the project on the basis of the provision of a nature park surrounding the Castle ,which would protect and enhance the current uses in this area, and a mere that could be developed on a scale that was acceptable in financial terms without the need for large intrusive developments. This would provide a valuable addition to the open space within the Town together with the equally valuable drainage advantages that could be obtained from it.

## The Civic Centre

It has been an objective of the Town Council and the District to have a Civic Centre at Smalley Place and this was one of the objectives consulted on locally at the beginning of the refurbishment of the Town Centre and which is still in progress.

## Theatre

There is room between Jubilee House and the Library for the provision of a Theatre which could not only provide a new home for the Talisman Theatre Company but also an occasional cinema and meeting hall. We

would expect that arrangements could be made to allow the Company to have access to the Theatre in order to be able to run their normal programme and allow space in the calendar for occasional cinema and meetings when not being used as a theatre. This would enable them to have a new and modern theatre to replace their current home, which is much in need of refurbishment at a cost below its replacement costs. Further, the other uses would allow the subsidy of this project because of the alternate uses for the public good.

### a) Clinic

It was the original aim when purchasing Jubilee House to re-house the PCT Clinic on the ground floor and thus provide a modern facility for the Clinic patients and the staff in place of the current facility which is in need of replacement. This has stalled because of the reorganisation of the Health Service but whatever the change in the structure of the Health Service, we assume and expect that a clinic will still be provided and as such the original re-siting of the clinic in this way would be a beneficial move for all concerned and would allow for the development of the clinic site.

### b) Medical services

The town has two Doctors Partnerships serving the Community, who, we believe, with extra staffing will be sufficient to serve the enlarged Community. Whilst we are sure they will wish to remain independent, the relocation of the Clinic would provide an opportunity for them to relocate to a site adjacent to the Clinic. This would give them the opportunity to share such services as are acceptable and appropriate to them. It would also enable them to provide additional services in partnership with the Clinic to the community that may not be feasible separately.

This proposal is one that the Council would support but is obviously one that would have to be acceptable to the parties concerned. In this respect there would, we believe, be a case for assistance to be given by the Local Authorities and the NHS to support this proposal which would have considerable benefit to the Community and be in keeping with the present policy of using all NHS services in cooperation to increase the service available.

### c) Other Uses

A business case and survey is being conducted by the District on the Civic Centre site which will no doubt consider all of the above suggestions and others relating to the remainder of the site. We would wish to support this and remain involved as in previous efforts to reach the goal of a full Civic Centre bringing together the various services that our Community needs.

## **Medical Services Generally**

Whatever the outcome of these arrangements it is evident that there will have to be an increase in medical services needed to cover the increase in population resultant from the Local Plan. Further, the increase in the age of the population is another factor, as is the number of Nursing Homes which emphasise that requirement.

## **Community Facilities**

The Town has the benefit of The Kenilworth Centre which has recently been taken over and is now being run by a Charity. This charity has been supported by significant funding from the Town Council for the first three years in order to give the project stability helping it to become self-funding in that period. There is no doubt that this facility is extremely important to the Community and must be preserved and its work expanded.

Adjacent to it, the Senior Citizens Club is now complete and this releases their temporary accommodation at Jubilee House. This purpose built accommodation for senior citizens will allow for an improved service to this part of our Community having regard to its situation in the centre of the Town.

The Club has always hosted other Societies and we would hope that not only would this continue but be expanded to become a centre for all older persons within the town including for instance the Waverley Day Centre. Whilst that would be a matter for the two Societies we feel that a move of this nature would enhance the facilities provided for Senior citizens as a whole and help to ensure the continued viability of this service. This new facility together with the Kenilworth Centre would thus become a hub for assistance to the community.

## **Abbey End**

There is a plan in existence for Abbey End which accords with the Town Centre Plan. This was consulted on widely in the Town and agreed upon some years ago. We would like to see the completion of this. The Shopping Area has developed well to date but unfortunately the development of the rear of the shops and restaurants that was envisaged has never been completed. This should be encouraged with the current Tenants and Owners in order to present a more pleasing and attractive aspect to the car park and encourage entrance to those businesses direct from the car park.

This in our view has become even more essential with the development of the Kenilworth Centre, The Senior Citizens Club and also the redevelopment of Wilton Court. These three important new developments provide a new opportunity to Abbey End as effectively a new street front has been created on the other side of the car park and there is an opportunity for the shopping centre to benefit from it.

## **Talisman Square**

Similarly there is in existence a plan for the completion of Talisman Square which accords with the Town Centre Plan. We would hope to see the completion of that development as a further contribution to the refurbishment of the Town Centre.

## **Station Road/Warwick Road**

### **Semi Pedestrianisation of Station Road**

It was decided when the new plans for the Town Centre were adopted, that the eventual aim was to make the Warwick Road end of Station Road from the car park entrance onwards, pedestrian friendly by the use of block paving and the slowing of traffic so as to allow a mix of vehicles and pedestrians, in a manner similar to West Street in Warwick. This plan met with mixed reaction in our survey and if advanced should be subject to further careful consideration as to its feasibility.

## **Warwick Road**

It is similarly essential that we put in hand measures to make the pavements in Warwick Road more users friendly. We do not believe there is room for the pavements to be widened without the provision of a one way system which would not be acceptable. The management of the footpaths could however be improved by limiting the number of A boards which appear to proliferate year by year and there should be restrictions on their positioning. There should also be a more careful positioning of the planters, which we feel must be retained. Careful management of the footpath furniture should be used to ensure that the pavements are kept as clear as possible.

## **Town Centre Shop Fronts**

The Kenilworth Society produced a helpful Guidance document concerning shop fronts in the Town Centre. Whilst we would not wish to incorporate this without further consideration, this is a matter which should be given detailed consideration in order to improve the street scene and to give some conformity to the main shopping centre. We would wish at a later stage to agree a similar policy for implementation for the future and as part of the guidance for new developments.

## **Car Parking in Town Centre**

The Town car parks are already well used and on many occasions are completely full. With the advent of possibly 1500 more cars on the new developments, we envisage that there will be insufficient parking in the Town centre. We would wish to take advantage of the new development to increase the viability of the Town Centre and thus it is essential that not only is there easy access to the Town but also more parking provision is made available.

The location of the existing car parks does not lend themselves to multi-storey parking as they are close to residential development. In this situation we feel that the only reasonable option would be to redevelop Square West in a similar fashion to the Waitrose car park with the first floor being semi sunk so that a second tier would not be at a high level. This would also allow for Pay on Foot parking which we believe would encourage shoppers to stay longer.

Likewise a similar method of construction could be considered in Abbey End Car Park where advantage could be taken of the existing gradient.

## **The Rail Station**

Re-establishment of the Station on its original site at the junction of Priory Road and Waverley Road has been a desire of the Town Council for many years and has been discussed on many occasions. Kenilworth is the largest Town in the Country without the benefit of a railway station and the addition of a further 3000 in population make the provision of a station essential. Confirmation that this project will now proceed is therefore welcomed.

It will be necessary however, for this development to have regard to the Traffic that will be generated in this area by reopening of the station. It will also be necessary to make provision for a connection with the local bus routes thus providing a public transport network which would bear in mind the needs of the Town and Warwick University. These would both benefit from the reintroduction of this service. A careful traffic management plan and strategy must be part of any such development and should also take into account access across the line at the new Station site.

## The Fire Station

The provision of a fire station has been established as essential for the Town and confirmed recently after careful evaluation and consultation by the WCC. However, the station is not full time and is not ideally situated in School Lane which is a narrow residential street.

The allocation of employment land at Thickthorn presents an option for the establishment of a full time Fire Station near the Thickthorn junction. This location next to the by-pass would allow for easy access to Leamington and Warwick. It is also ideally placed to serve the new proposed developments at Baginton and Stoneleigh Park and the large area of the University now situated in the County thus benefiting the whole District. The Town would also benefit from having a full time station within its boundaries.

This would also allow for the development of the existing site at School Lane for housing which would be a more appropriate use for that site as well as being of benefit to the public purse.

## Allotments

### a) Beehive Hill

There are insufficient sites to meet demand as there are currently some 150/200 applicants on the waiting list. This has to some extent resulted in the more efficient use of some of the sites by offering half plots which are sufficient for most users. We feel that in these circumstances that the area allotted in Beehive Hill should be increased by a similar number of similar size plots to those now existing. However, we would still wish there to be an area remaining for general recreational use.

### b) Thickthorn

Allotments can be successfully incorporated within a successful block structure, create a valuable community asset and add function to public space. If the new development proceeds consideration should be given to a provision for allotment land which would not only make provision for the actual need but provide further open space and encourage healthy exercise and life style.

## Major Sites provided in the Local Plan

The local plan requires that major sites have a Development Brief or Master plan to address the policy in BE2 and the delivery of services and infrastructure. We feel that this is essential in regard to not only the Thickthorn Site, which is mentioned in the plan, but also the Kenilworth School sites in Leyes Lane and Rouncil Lane and the Crackley Triangle. All these sites will have a major impact on the areas of the Town in which they are situated and also on the infrastructure of the Town as a whole. Further, if the District Council wishes to provide development of Garden Suburbs, this detailed planning is essential.

We would wish to avoid new developments being bolted onto the community without due consideration as to their effect on the adjoining area and the Town as a whole.

It is the desire of the Town Council that the design and implementation of any developments are delivered with absolute best practice principles embedded at every stage. As part of the development of any proposals for all the major development sites, we expect the following general provisions / processes to be included as a minimum:-

1. **Design Review** – NPPF promotes the use of regional design review services (such as MADE – [www.made.org.uk](http://www.made.org.uk)) to ensure high quality development is delivered. We expect that this is carried at numerous key stages in the development of the design such that advice can be taken on board and influence the design. The Town Council will not be supportive of development brought forward paying lip service to this process. The Town Council will expect any final proposals to be fully supported.
2. **Design Coding** – In advance of the submission of any detailed design or reserved matters proposals, detailed design codes will be expected to be agreed. These will set clear qualitative performances and set clear rules for how the development will be structured. It will be expected that the design codes will focus on the delivery of high quality public spaces and set the character approach for streets and spaces.
3. **Building For Life** – It will be expected that the development will achieve the full 12 ‘Green lights’ under the Building for Life scheme and receive a ‘Built For Life’ Commendation.
4. **Consultation** – We view that a positive process of consultation with residents and stakeholders is essential for the development to be successful and that this is carried out at early stages in the design development to allow proposals to be shaped and informed by a creative and collaborative process with residents. It is expected that early stage designs will set a vision for the quality of the schemes and that these visions will be delivered in detail.

## Thickthorn Development

This title has been used throughout the process of consultation to describe the whole of the Eastern Kenilworth development but we feel it is necessary to split the treatment that is required in developing the area into two main areas namely that between the Leamington Road and Rockey Lane (**The Thickthorn Development**) and then the area north of Rockey Lane currently comprising the sites of the Rugby Club Cow Patch and the Wardens Cricket Ground (**The Glasshouse Lane Development**) These two areas will be separated by Rockey Lane, which we believe should be conserved for the benefit of everyone.

As to the area generally this will provide for Employment land as well as housing and facilities. It is a large area and may take several years to complete. For the benefit of the Town and also those who will come to live in there, it is the view of the Council that this area should have a defined plan to cover all of the infrastructure and the development and that this overall plan should be a prerequisite to its removal from the green belt for this purpose. Having regard to its size, it may well be that the work will be carried out by a number of builders. In such circumstances it is absolutely essential that there be an overall plan put in place. Only in this way can the Town Council's objective of preserving the Town's Character and the District Council's desire to develop Garden Suburbs, which is shared by the Town Council, be ensured.

We are convinced that if this estate is developed in the light of an overall plan it will be a better place to live and work in as well as an asset to the Town rather than a liability. An overall plan will avoid several parts being bolted together and thus losing the atmosphere of a Garden Suburb which is the District's wish for all its developments.

Kenilworth in many respects has the character of a garden suburb not only on the private estates but in the areas of the Council accommodation with adequate space allowed for a pleasant setting for residents. We feel it is essential that this is carried on through the new developments to meet the objects of Town and District.

## The Thickthorn Development

It will be expected that the design of this development will follow the general provisions / processes set out above in the 'Major Sites provided in the Local Plan notes.'

The overall plan must therefore address:-

### a) Road Layout

The layout of the original roads is an essential component for the proposed scheme. This should take into account not only the pressures that will accrue from the development as a whole when complete but also its use for through traffic to the east of the Town.

Further to the above requirements for the practical functional characteristics of the street network, the design of highways will need to follow best practice approaches focused upon streets as multi-functional spaces and not simply corridors for the movement of motor vehicles. The street network will follow a clear hierarchy that adds legibility and clarity to those moving through the development. Streets will be arranged to foster well-conceived views and carefully choreographed vistas that support a strong and preconceived character and design language. This visioning of streets will be key in early consultations with the Town Council and local residents. This is particularly relevant in the use of design features to control vehicle speed, which should be approached by more natural means than more intrusive 'engineered' details.

Lower order streets should be carefully arranged and will be designed in careful consideration with house types and parking styles such that the street balances allocated and visitor parking with sensitively detailed soft landscape features and high quality hard surfacing. The focus should be on the promotion of pedestrian and cycle movement and informal community activity over and above the physical movement of motor



vehicles. Best practice principles set out in Manual For Streets and English Partnerships' design guide 'Parking: What Works Where should provide a clear and auditable foundation for the design of all streets.

**b) Spine Road**

There should be a spine road through the estate which is able to cope with through traffic as well as for the estate. This road should be used to alleviate traffic through the town centre which is already congested by traffic using roads constructed before the increase in the use of the motor car.

This road should provide for traffic accessing the east of the Town from the Leamington direction and the A46 and thus avoid the town centre. Likewise, traffic exiting from the estate or the east of the Town could also avoid the Town centre further easing congestion.

The construction of this road should be a pre-condition for the commencement of work on the site as a whole so as to keep construction traffic off the Town centre roads which are too narrow and congested to bear any further burden.

Bearing these requirements in mind, it should be of a width that will allow for its being a through route as well as access to the new development. In accord with policy, it should also provide for a cycleway. Further, it should be landscaped to provide a pleasing environment and access to the town.

In the interest of road safety it should be designed and constructed so as to constrain speed.

**c) Junctions**

The access to and egress from this development needs very careful consideration as it could cause extreme congestion as is only too apparent from the chaos caused by the Horse fairs which are hosted on this site. These give a clear indication that only by very careful traffic management is an entry and exit from this area possible without causing considerable congestion. We feel that having regard to the adjacent Thickthorn Island on the A46, that another island would be necessary at the Leamington Road end of the spine road. This island would allow traffic to flow more easily than traffic lights.

We believe this would also allow for a filter or slip road to be constructed from the new development to access the slip road onto the A46 in the Coventry direction. This would allow a filter of traffic from the estate directly to the highway road without entering either this island, or the main junction island and thus spread the traffic. The spine road would allow access through the estate from eastern Kenilworth without using Birches Lane and the St Johns traffic system. This would alleviate traffic at St Johns and also further the flow of traffic onto the main road.

Likewise the access into Birches Lane /Glasshouse Lane is equally important as this will be an access to the east without further congesting the town roads. It will however have to handle traffic not only from the development but also that attracted to the exit through the new development. We believe this would require another island which would provide easier access than the provision of traffic light.

**d) Speed**

The spine road would also separate the employment element from residential, but will bear through traffic. It will need to be constructed in a way that will reduce speed. This would hopefully be attained by its shape, **form of enclosure and geometry** rather than through the **exclusive use of engineered details** speed humps or similar methods. It is essential that this is borne in mind in designing the road as otherwise there is a danger of excessive speeds and the danger resulting from it.

**e) Housing Layout**

It will be expected that the design of this development will follow the general provisions / processes set out above in the 'Major Sites provided in the Local Plan' notes.

It is the stated desire of the Local Plan that all development shall be carried out on the principles of the District Council's Garden Suburbs Policy. Our desire is similar in that all new developments shall be required to be in accordance with this policy. This type of planning is essential for this area to be in keeping with the character of the town which we are anxious to protect. We also wish to ensure that the new estate becomes part of the town and benefits it, as well as benefiting from it. If this can be achieved, then the number of houses which are to be constructed will be more acceptable and be accepted as less of a problem. We wish the development to compliment the character of the Town, and thus become part of it. This can only be achieved by careful planning.

The housing layout should be developed in partnership with the establishment of a clear hierarchy of movement and hierarchy of streets. The selection of buildings and types will be key to the reinforcement of the street hierarchy and aid the delivery of compositional street design and delivery of a predetermined character vision. Uncontrolled, amorphous design (both at the block structure and plot scales) will be avoided. The consideration of the placement and geometry of building lines will be fundamental and clearly controlled.

Affordable housing will be carefully integrated into the layout and sensitively pepper-potted in small clusters throughout the block structure to aid the delivery of a mixed community and tenure-blind streetscene. The clusters will be organised to support the wider design of the street and will not exhibit extensive runs of frontage parking.

Building massing and scale will be carefully controlled to reinforce the street hierarchy and aid the definition of the structure of the form of the development. The treatment of corners will also be fundamental and will have clear strategy upholding the character vision. Corners will also avoid blank gables throughout and encourage natural surveillance of streets to all public realm facing elevations.

The control of services within public realm will be carefully controlled. Any shared spaces and shared surface streets will need careful consideration as to how services can be accommodated, whilst not allowing these to dictate the design and composition of streets as multi-functional spaces. The servicing of plots will also be fundamental to the plot structure of urban blocks, and contrived access ways and alleys to rear gardens are avoided. This will include a clear refuse and recycling strategy that avoids the need for residents to store bins etc. in prominent street side locations.

**f) Business layout**

The positioning of the employment land is an extremely important feature of this development. At present it is shown adjacent to Warwick Road which could have a detrimental effect on this important and pleasant entrance to the town. We suggest this area to be located along the Highway boundary. This would still have the advantage of easy access to the highway junction and further it would serve as a barrier to noise from the Highway. The noise from the A46 is considerable and the employment units could form a noise barrier which would be an advantage to the proposed housing and also that which already exists in adjoining areas.

The employment land should not in our view, allow for industrial use as this would be inappropriate in this area. It should be limited to Business Park /office type use and no retail out of town shopping should be allowed or envisaged. The introduction of any out of Town shopping provision would be highly inappropriate and devastating to our small town. The layout of the business use should be carefully developed to promote a strong network of landscape and built form and not the result of inserting parking around standard blocks. The architecture of these buildings will be developed sensitively such as to respect their position at a primary

gateway into the town and should 'introduce' the town and not create an abruptly scaled form. The scale, materials, orientation and appearance of these buildings will be of particular interest to the Town Council.

**g) Open Space**

It will be expected that the design of this development will follow the general provisions / processes set out above in the 'Major Sites provided in the Local Plan notes.'

In keeping with the character of the Town and also the Garden Suburb principle, there will be a need for open spaces in an area of this size and provision must be made for this so that there is an opportunity for children and adults to have room to breathe. The current District suggestion that approximately 45% of the site should be occupied by open spaces and similar uses would appear to us to be reasonable and attainable in relation to the proper development of this site. Every opportunity should be taken in planning the development to preserve natural features such as ponds or stands of trees to soften the development, complementing the Gardens Suburbs approach.

Open space will be expected to form a key driving factor in the character and will form the primary structure of new developments. Open space will be expected to provide both visually attractive and functional contribution to public realm and will not form negative subservient elements or in any way arise as uncontrolled left over space. The design of open space will arise from a focus on the needs of the desired use and not as a secondary result of plotting houses. Open space will form the basis for a strong network of routes for walking and cycling, using a presumption in favour of retention of existing trees and hedgerows to animate experience and retain ecological assets. Open space will form a key component of promoting permeable links into the wider existing urban fabric. The design of any engineering features such as storm water balancing basins etc. will be carefully considered as part of a landscape-led concept. Any balancing depressions should not be visible as engineering features and their capacity should be the by-product of an attractively contoured landscape design.

**h) Primary School**

Having regard to the number of houses suggested, the provision of a primary school for the new population would appear to be essential. This should be situated on the estate and should be located so that safe access can be easily being gained on foot. Such access should be encouraged in order to promote health and also prevent additional car movements and congestion. This should form part of the overall plan. There will also be a knock on effect on the need for Secondary School places which is estimated to be over 100. This in its turn will affect Kenilworth School, but the majority of primary school pupils will be in this area and as such it is a priority that the Primary School should be sited here. One would also hope that these facilities could be used on a community basis as well as a school alone.

Schools can form a key focus for families and the wider community. As such, the location and arrangement of the school and associated spaces should be explored as part of a wider set of community facilities. This will maximise activity and potential success creating footfall for any non-residential uses and create potential cross-over functions such as nursery facilities etc.

**i) Community Facilities**

Whilst we would hope that the new development would use the Town facilities and thus integrate more quickly into the Community there is a need also for local facilities such those that are enjoyed on the Oaks Estate, Leys Lane and Albion Street. These facilities enable some services being available within easy reach and should be encouraged. The scale and number of any non-residential uses and community facilities should be explored sensitively with Local Authority officers. The Town Council will be more supportive of proposals that demonstrate clear narrative and justification to the scale of the proposals to ensure they cater for the new

community and do not detract detrimentally from activity in other mixed use centres such as that located on Leys Lane etc. It will be expected that any mixed uses are explored with a strong focus on the creation of 'place quality' and focus for the development.

## Rocky Lane

It had been the Council's view that development of this area should stop at Rocky Lane in order to have a clear and defensible boundary to the incursion into the green belt that this Lane would make. Further, this tree lined road is an important local feature that should be retained especially as it gives access to the countryside. The preservation of Rocky Lane and its character is essential, in the view of the Town Council, as part of the conservation of the character of the area. It should be preserved and allocated as a Local Wildlife Site and will thus divide the two developments.

## Thickthorn Ancient Wood and Glasshouse Spinney

The wood and the Spinney running along Glasshouse Lane and Rocky Lane are important features of the area. They should also be preserved by being allocated as local Wildlife Sites. They should also be protected by a 50 metre buffer. Not only is this important from the point of view of conservation, but it will also serve to soften the effects of the proposed development and also preserve the character of the area and its charm.

## The Glasshouse Lane Development

It will be expected that the design of this development will follow the general provisions / processes set out above in the 'Major Sites provided in the Local Plan' notes.

The preservation of Rocky Lane and the Thickthorn Ancient Wood and Glasshouse Lane Spinney provides a clear demarcation between the Thick thorn development and this area. It is the Town Council's view that separation means that this area need not be affected by the provision of employment land or a spine road. However, the need for a master plan will be essential so as to again blend these two areas, formerly the Rugby Club Cow patch and the Cricket Club into the general character of the Town.

The preservation of the woodland makes them ideal for the Garden Suburbs policy and any development should take full advantage of the present setting and full advantage of that natural setting should be taken advantage of in the master plan.

### a) Access

Again exit and entry from the development onto Glass house Lane will require careful consideration and must take into account the need to preserve the ancient woodland. Again, our view is that the provision of a small island would offer a safe entry and exit without the need for large invasion into the woodland and would also act as a speed mitigation factor.

### b) Design

The design should not only comply with the Garden Suburbs policy but should also take full advantage of the preservation of existing woodland and any natural features such as ponds of the tree line that separates the two sports fields at the moment etc.

## **Glasshouse Lane**

This road is the existing link to the eastern side of Kenilworth and allows access both into and out of the Town. This use will increase as a result of its connection to the Thickthorn Spine road. It will also be a main route for Kenilworth School traffic, whether or not it relocates.

It is therefore essential that provision be made for a footpath and cycleway throughout its length. This latter requirement is in our view essential, as it would provide a link to Dalehouse Lane and thus could almost complete the cycle route to the Greenway in Common Lane and then to the University. This pedestrian access and cycleway would become essential to the development of Kenilworth School if it relocates to the proposed site.

This road will most probably not only attract traffic to and through the east of the Town, but will also have to be able to bear the increased traffic from approximately 1000 new homes on the Thickthorn and Glasshouse Lane developments plus those on the Kenilworth School site as well as that generated by the new school relocation.

This increased the burden on the road will turn it into major main traffic route and careful traffic management must be applied, including attention to the crossroads formed at the top of Knowle Hill. This dangerous junction will require very careful consideration.

## **Boundary of the Eastern Developments**

It has become apparent and accepted that using Rocky Lane as a boundary would not accommodate the amount of housing and employment land that would be ultimately expected for the Town. That extra land will be needed to the north of the Lane by the addition of the Glasshouse Lane development. The need for a barrier still remains however, and the Council would propose that this should be in the form of a Public Open Space dedicated to the District Council along the Northern boundary of the Glasshouse Lane development. This would not only form a barrier against further encroachment to the North, but also provide additional open space which would be part of an essential requirement of the development to comply with the Garden Suburbs Policy.

## **Green Belt**

The Council has always been concerned by the possibility of encroachment into the green belt running along the town side of the A46. Once encroachment is allowed in this area there is a danger for it to continue along the highway to the District Boundaries and thus mean coalescence with Coventry. This is particularly sensitive because the gap between the Town and Coventry in the Crackley Gap is only a field's width in places. This small area of remaining Green belt will, if HS2 continues be further devastated by the line. Whilst the District is not even proposing this, it is felt that this danger should be emphasised in order to confirm the need for a barrier such as we suggest. Furthermore, to make it clear that no further development can, or should take place in that area, other than the new school which is proposed. This would be an advantage in defending this area.

## **Community Facilities**

These areas fall within the Parish of St.John's Church. The Church has indicated that it wishes to be involved and help with the provision of community facilities. We would be supportive of this offer by the Church as it already has facilities available within easy reach of the area and we would hope that this would be developed.

## Leyes Lane School Site

The need for Kenilworth School to relocate in order to have sufficient space to accommodate the School and Sixth Form College on one site has become apparent and this would make this site available for development as it is within the Town envelope. This again, is in the view of the Council a site which requires an overall plan for its development for reasons which are similar to those set out in respect of Thickthorn and Glasshouse Lane sites and as such we will not repeat them.

### a) Design

The plan should provide for a similar layout to come within the Garden Suburbs policy and so as to blend in with the adjoining developments around its boundaries.

The development will form a new frontage and increase the sense of enclosure experienced in Leys Lane. Currently the primary street enclosure is provided by trees as opposed to built-form and it will be expected that these existing trees will be retained in full. The rhythm and form of building along with their materials and architectural language will need to complement the existing streetscene, whilst also being honest to its status as a 21<sup>st</sup> century development. The design of buildings will be expected to be developed using sensitive architectural study to reinforce the character of the existing setting. The use of unresponsive or inappropriate standardised dwelling designs will not be supported by the Town Council. This is with particular regard to the Leys Lane frontage.

The development will be expected to contribute positively to the enhancement of the existing retail and leisure uses on Leys Lane and will reinforce the 'place' quality of this location as the heart of the sub-community by using its frontage position and uses to create a new face to the existing highly active space mixed use space. It will be expected that the use of surfacing and careful street design will contribute to the natural reduction in vehicle speed on Leys Lane and that the development will promote a pedestrian prioritised environment enabling access across Leys Lane.

### b) Drainage

The school fields are known for their poor drainage. Development on the site should not only address this, but also any affect it will have on the adjoining area by decreasing the land available to hold flood water. This should be part of any plan for the area and should be carefully modelled before any development is allowed. The drainage design should be an integral component of the structuring of the masterplan and could aid the character of the landscape of the development through the create use of swales and other above ground features as components of the landscape and not simply as the by-product of engineering design.

### c) Access

Care should be again taken to create a development that compliments the area generally. Use should be made of the current entrances onto Leys Lane. Whilst this opens opportunities to gain access from the other side of the site. It is important that if these are used then they should only allow very limited access as the roads on the far side of the area are not built to accommodate anything other than the traffic currently using them. It will be essential to encourage the assimilation of the development into the wider block structure and movement network and maximise permeability of the neighbourhood. Should vehicular access into adjacent streets be undesirable for practical reasons, pedestrian and cycle links should be explored vigorously to avoid the creation of a large unconnected 'cul-de-sac' development.

## Rouncil Lane School Site

### a) Design

Whilst we have no problem with this site being made available it must be born in mind that any development will affect the surrounding houses. The Garden Suburbs policy must be used so as to blend any development into the surrounding area without offending against that policy either on the school site or the rest of the neighbourhood.

### b) Access

Furthermore, the access to Rouncil Lane will need very careful attention as the current access is not sufficient for the number of houses likely to fit onto the site.

## Kenilworth School and Sports College

It has become apparent during our consultation that the School is experiencing considerable difficulties as a result of being located on two separate sites and an amalgamation would be beneficial. Further, the additional demand from the new developments will increase the capacity and space problems it will generate.

It does seem likely that there will be insufficient room for the Sixth Form to be relocated at Leyes Lane. Site relocation will be necessary. In the absence of any available land within the Town envelope it is suggested that it should be on Farm in Glasshouse Lane opposite the end of Rawnsley Drive.

Here again, it is essential that a master plan be prepared in order to overcome the problems that will arise from the further burden of traffic being imposed on Glasshouse Lane.

### a) Adequate Space

The site will obviously have to make provision for a school of adequate size and capacity together with playing fields and also sports accommodation having regard to its status as a Sports College.

### b) Access

Having regard to the expected use of Glasshouse Lane any access onto the School grounds must allow for visiting traffic to go straight off road without interruption and to exit forwards. A site Traffic management Plan is suggested.

### c) Parking

Adequate provision must be made for staff parking, with sufficient room allowed for dropping off of pupils within the site. It is essential that all traffic visiting the school shall have sufficient space, and be required, to enter the school grounds without parking or stopping on Glasshouse Lane. We cannot emphasise enough, that this must be a pre requisite of any planning application as Glasshouse Lane will be a main artery for traffic on this side of the Town and as such it is essential it is not obstructed.

### d) Green Belt

We believe that having regard to the site's use, there is no reason to take the School site out of the green belt. Indeed, we wish it to remain within in it as it will serve as protection from this side of Kenilworth being developed further and thus increasing the danger of coalescence with Coventry. Any move to take the site out of the green belt should only be for the use of the site for the school development and in those circumstances we cannot conceive of the need to remove it.

## Crackley Triangle Site

We appreciate that this area is not in the green belt and as such is available for developmental. It has always been the wish of the Town Council that it should be included in the green belt as an additional safeguard against to the danger of coalescence with Coventry. This is due to the green belt between the Town and Coventry being extremely narrow at this point. This will be especially so if HS2 is built leading to the devastation of the green belt.

### a) Design

In the event that this area is included then we would expect that a master plan would be prepared and agreed to comply with the policies of the District Council and to blend in with those sites adjoining in a manner that would leave both compliant with those policies.

### b) Access

We foresee that this would not be possible having regard to the difficulties of access. The access suggested would result in an entry onto the railway bridge in Common Lane and the use traffic lights. This suggestion in the view of the Town Council is bizarre. The bridge is hardly wide enough to take traffic currently using it because of its width and also its configuration. The fact there is a bend in the bridge coupled with its narrowness makes it difficult for existing traffic, including buses to negotiate. To add a junction into such a complicated layout appears to be nonsensical.

### c) Deliverability

This area can only be properly developed by the addition of an access point other than onto Common Lane. We are very concerned that this site is deliverable in the absence of an alternative access.

## Community Safety General

The overall plan should allow for Community safety to be taken into account. This should not only be from the point of view of safety in relation to the construction of buildings but also affect the layout of the estate from the point of view of criminal activity and road safety. Whilst this is a requirement, it is frequently overlooked. We would hope that this would form a significant feature in the development of the area so as to benefit those living there in the future and the town as a whole



## **Other matters that may need to be covered further by the Plan**

### **a) Cycling elsewhere in the Town other than Abbey Fields**

The provision of cycle ways throughout the Town would be the ideal solution but it is difficult to see how these could be provided as the existing roads are mostly either inadequate, or only just adequate for current use. The use of pavements for joint use by pedestrians and cyclists is not acceptable in the Council's view within its boundaries. However, in rural areas where there is little pedestrian traffic we could accept that this would be a reasonable proposition. The suggestion that the pavements between Kenilworth and Leamington and Leek Wootton be used on a joint basis would not seem unreasonable.

### **b) Scout & Guide Provision**

It is essential that provision will need to be made for the Scouts & Guides if significant changes are made to Castle Farm. Ideally, with the extension of the Town to the east we should consider additional space for these organisation and similar groups.

### **c) HS2**

Although only a short section of the safeguarded area of the proposed route of HS2 is within the town boundary (from the A46 to Finham Brook) the route passing through the Crackley Gap and on to Burton Green will have a dramatic effect on the town. Only a small number of residents and the Golf Club will be directly affected but both the construction phase and the completed railway will potentially affect thousands of homes. The environment in the Crackley gap will be devastated by the diversion of the Canley Brook and will take years to recover. The Town Council remains opposed to the scheme, which will be of no benefit to the town, but is working with HS2 to attempt to mitigate the effects on the town should the railway be built.

**Councillor Michael Coker**

**Chairman of Action Plan Steering Group**

**8<sup>th</sup> Draft 05.12.14** (Including Initial inputs from IDP Architects).