

## Introduction

This is a unique opportunity to have a say in how your local community changes and develops over the next 15 years.

The Government is changing the law to give councils and neighbourhoods more responsibility in deciding the type and size of any new developments that take place in their local area. It is also planning to give councils new powers to make sure that local communities benefit from new developments.

This means that for the first time in many years we have a real opportunity to choose how much development we will have in our district, and use development and money generated from new developments to meet the needs and aims of local people and businesses.

Previous growth targets imposed on the area have therefore been abandoned, but the work undertaken on the Core Strategy and your responses have helped inform this paper as our first step forward in preparing a new local plan for Warwick District. This plan will guide the area's future development for the next 15 years.

To make the best use of this opportunity, we need to understand what sort of place you want your community to be in the future. You know the area better than anyone, and we want to work with you to prepare a new local plan that produces the changes that local communities want to see in their area.

Like many areas of the country, we face a number of issues such as traffic congestion, a lack of affordable homes, and flooding. These issues have got worse over time as the area has grown and changed, and as investment in public services and facilities has failed to keep up with that change. There is now an opportunity to use new development and the powers that will be given to councils to help deal with these issues.

The idea of this short paper is to support the discussion we want to have over the next few months with local communities, businesses, voluntary groups, public organisations and landowners about what sort of place you want your area to be in the future.

It sets out what we think are the important issues facing your community today, and some scenarios for how the area could change to deal with these issues. Finally, the paper includes some draft objectives that we think the local plan should work towards.

To find out how you can join in the discussion, give us your views, and get more information about the local plan, please go to our website:

[www.warwickdc.gov.uk/newlocalplan](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/newlocalplan), or visit one of your local Council offices where information and a questionnaire will also be available.

## What are the important issues?

Over the last few years, we have asked local communities, businesses and members of the public what they think are the important issues affecting their communities. Based on these responses and the other information we've collected, we believe the following are the important issues facing the local area today. They are in no particular order.

- 1 The effects of the recent recession and not knowing how the local economy will change in the future.
- 2 Relatively high house prices limiting local people's ability to buy or rent property in the area, creating the need for more affordable housing for families in towns and villages. Another issue is the need to provide more housing to meet people's needs in the future, particularly those of older people.
- 3 The economic strength of the town centres of Warwick, Leamington Spa and Kenilworth, and the threat to these from retail and leisure developments elsewhere.
- 4 The size and condition of existing community facilities and services (particularly schools and health-care facilities) and whether they can meet current and future needs.
- 5 People's general health and well-being, and the need for people (particularly teenagers and young people) to have access to sport and cultural experiences, such as cinemas and community events.
- 6 Road congestion and air pollution, particularly around the main junctions along the A46 and M40, the routes into the towns, and within the town centres.
- 7 The threat of flooding of homes and businesses in some areas, particularly where surface water may flood towns and villages, and the concern that the threat of flooding will increase because of climate change.
- 8 Areas of poverty in Warwick and Leamington Spa.
- 9 The pressure for new development threatening the high-quality built and natural environments in the district, particularly historic areas, and the cost of maintaining historic buildings and areas.
- 10 Crime and the fear of crime, particularly in town centres, and the need to protect the community from harm.
- 11 The Government's planned High Speed 2 rail line and its possible effects on the area. (The Government is consulting the public separately on this issue.)

Do you agree that these are the important issues facing your local area today?

Are there any important issues we've missed?

We have explained why we picked out these issues in a background technical paper published separately on our website: [www.warwickdc.gov.uk/newlocalplan](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/newlocalplan) or available to view at one of your local Council offices.

Some of the issues are more relevant to particular parts of the district than others. We realise that different areas may have different issues, so we have also included what we consider to be the important issues for specific areas of the district in the background technical paper.

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## How should we tackle these issues?

We realise that tackling these issues will not be easy, we cannot solve them on our own, and that there is a wide range of factors that will affect whether or not they can be dealt with. However, we believe we can make a difference if we work together with local communities, businesses, the voluntary sector, other public organisations, and landowners.

One of the main ways we can make a difference is through our approach to encouraging new development and investment. New development, and any money generated from it, can help us deal with the important issues and benefit local communities by providing:

- more opportunities for local businesses to grow and create jobs;
- more new homes and affordable homes for local people who need them;
- more shops and businesses in our town centres, making them more attractive and safer;
- more and better school buildings, health and community centres, and sports facilities and play areas;
- safer and less congested roads, and better public transport;
- more flood-defence schemes;
- regeneration of run-down areas and buildings; and
- more opportunities for improving the environment.

As the Government reduces spending on public facilities and services over the next few years to help tackle the national debt, new development will be increasingly important as a means of dealing with important issues in the local area.

This means that how much new development takes place in the future will have a significant influence on how we will be able to deal with the important issues, and whether or not we can make a difference.

The more development we encourage, the more potential there will be for new jobs, homes and money for improvements to public services. But too much new development could put pressure on roads, schools, and green spaces, and threaten the characteristics of the area that make it an attractive place to live, work and visit. Getting the right balance will be important.

Now is the opportunity to work out how much new development we want, and we would like to discuss with communities the sort of place you want your local area to be in the future.

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## Three possible future scenarios

We have set out three scenarios for how the district and your local area might change over the next 15 years as a result of different levels of future development. We want you to consider which scenario best addresses the issues that are important to you.

**Scenario one** is the lowest level of new development and investment that would be realistic. This option would limit any new development to the levels that we have had during the recent recession. It would only allow development of land that already has permission for building works, and of redundant or vacant land and buildings within the towns and villages.

**Scenario two** is a level of new development and investment which is halfway between scenarios one and three. This would see new development return to the levels we had in the later part of the last decade, before the recession.

**Scenario three** is the highest level of new development and investment that would be realistic. This scenario would return levels of new development to the levels we had during the economic growth in the early part of the last decade which is considered the maximum level likely to be achieved. It would meet forecasts of the amount of new development needed in the future to support the economy, and projections for the district's housing needs based on population and household growth.

We have explained why we picked each of the three scenarios in the technical background paper published separately. We have also checked each of these options against a number of sustainability objectives and have also reported this in the technical background paper.

It's not just the amount of new development that is important – encouraging and enabling the right types of new homes and jobs in the right place is also important in dealing with the issues facing the district. We will discuss these matters with you at a later stage as we prepare the new local plan.

The following table will help you consider each scenario. It sets out how each scenario might contribute towards tackling the important issues.

Which of these scenarios do you think best addresses the issues?

Which of these scenarios would you support?

Are there any other scenarios which you think would better address the issues?

**Table showing the three scenarios and how they could affect how we tackle the important issues**

<b>Important issues</b>	<b>Scenario one</b>	<b>Scenario two</b>	<b>Scenario three</b>
<b>Summary of likely effect</b>	<b>Low levels of new development and investment with the least potential to deal with the important issues in relation to providing more jobs, homes and investment in our town centres. This scenario will have the least impact on the environment and character of the area. It will also place the least additional demands on local services, although it has the least potential to generate additional money for maintaining, improving and providing new community facilities and services.</b>	<b>Average levels of new development and investment with the potential to deal with the important issues in relation to providing more jobs, homes and investment in our town centres. This scenario will impact on the environment and character of the area. It will also place additional demands on local services, although it has the potential to generate additional money for maintaining, improving and providing new community facilities and services.</b>	<b>High levels of new development and investment with the greatest potential to deal with the important issues in relation to providing more jobs, homes and investment in our town centres. This scenario will have the greatest impact on the environment and character of the area. It will also place the greatest additional demands on local services, although it has the greatest potential to generate additional money for maintaining, improving and providing new community facilities and services.</b>
Uncertain future of the local economy	Limited increases in opportunities for businesses to grow or move to the area, with potentially fewer new jobs available for local people and more need for people to travel outside of the area to work.	Increases opportunities for businesses to grow or move to the area, with the potential for more and varied new jobs available for local people.	Significantly increases opportunities for businesses to grow or move to the area, with the potential for many more and varied new jobs available for local people, with less need to travel out of the area to work.

<b>Important issues</b>	<b>Scenario one</b>	<b>Scenario two</b>	<b>Scenario three</b>
High house prices and lack of affordable homes	Limited increases in the supply of new homes, and less likely to provide any affordable homes for local people who need them or are unable to get on the property ladder.	Increases the supply of new homes and affordable homes for local people who need them or are unable to get on the property ladder.	Significantly increases the supply of new homes and affordable homes for local people who need them or are unable to get on the property ladder.
Economic strength of the town centres	Limited potential to attract new shops and businesses, and little encouragement for investment in maintaining and improving the town centres.	Potential to attract new shops and businesses, and likely to encourage investment in maintaining and improving the town centres.	Potential to attract many new shops and businesses, and likely to encourage significant levels of investment in maintaining and improving the town centres.
Size and condition of public facilities and services	Limited increased demands on local schools and, community facilities, although limited potential to generate money from new development to maintain and improve local facilities and services.	Increased demands on local schools, and community facilities, although potential to generate money from new development to maintain and improve local facilities and services.	Significantly increased demands on local schools, and community facilities, although the greatest potential to generate money from new development to maintain and improve local facilities and services.
Unequal opportunities to improve health and well being	Limited increased demands on open space, sports and cultural facilities, although limited potential to generate money from new development to maintain and improve local facilities and services.	Increased demands on open space, sports and cultural facilities, although potential to generate money from new development to maintain and improve local facilities and services.	Significantly increased demands on open space, sports and cultural facilities, although the greatest potential to generate money from new development to maintain and improve local facilities and services.



<b>Important issues</b>	<b>Scenario one</b>	<b>Scenario two</b>	<b>Scenario three</b>
Road congestion and air pollution	Limited increased congestion and air pollution, although limited potential to generate money from new development to improve roads and public transport.	Increased congestion and air pollution, although the potential to generate money from new development to improve roads and public transport.	Significantly increased congestion and air pollution, although the greatest potential to generate money from new development to improve roads and public transport.
Threat of flooding of homes and businesses	No building on farmland, with no potential increase in risk of flooding as a result, although limited potential to generate money from new development to go towards flood defence schemes.	Building on farmland, potentially increasing the risk of flooding as a result, although potential to generate money from new development to go towards flood defence schemes.	Significant levels of building on farmland, potentially increasing the risk of flooding as a result, although the greatest potential to generate money from new development to go towards flood defence schemes.
Areas of poverty in Warwick and Leamington	Limited potential for new development to encourage investment to regenerate run-down areas.	Levels of new development could potentially encourage some investment to regenerate run-down areas.	Significant levels of new development could potentially encourage more investment to regenerate run-down areas.
Threats to the environment	All farmland around the towns and villages will be protected from being built on.	Some large areas of farmland around the towns and villages will be built on (approximately 125 hectares or 300 acres in total), but other areas will be protected.	Significant areas of farmland around the towns and villages will be built on (approximately 275 hectares or 700 acres in total), but other areas will be protected.

<b>Important issues</b>	<b>Scenario one</b>	<b>Scenario two</b>	<b>Scenario three</b>
Crime and fear of crime	Limited increased demands on the police, although limited potential to generate money from new development to go towards creating safer areas.	Increased demands on the police, although the potential to generate money from new development to go towards creating safer areas.	Significantly increased demands on the police, although the greatest potential to generate money from new development to go towards creating safer areas.
<i>Amount of new development and investment in the district</i>	<p><i>On average around 250 new homes and 4 hectares of land for businesses being built a year in the district.</i></p> <p><i>This means there will be an increase of less than 0.5% in the total number of homes in the district each year.</i></p>	<p><i>On average, around 500 new homes and 4.5 hectares of land for businesses being built a year in the district.</i></p> <p><i>This means there will be an increase of less than 1% in the total number of homes in the district each year.</i></p>	<p><i>On average, around 800 new homes and 5 hectares of land for businesses being built a year in the district.</i></p> <p><i>This means there will be an increase of 1.5% in the total number of homes in the district each year.</i></p>

## The role of the local plan and its draft objectives

The main role of the local plan is to guide future development to deal with the important issues by:

- establishing the right level of growth in the district;
- finding the best location for new development, and working out how that development should be designed;
- working out how we will use the new development and the money generated from it to improve infrastructure and services, such as schools and roads; and,
- setting a framework for neighbourhood planning in the future

Based on the information we have gathered so far, and the important issues set out above, we have set out the following draft objectives for the new local plan under three themes.

### **A. Providing sustainable levels of growth in the district**

The local plan will aim to do the following:

- 1 Provide a sustainable level of economic growth (and balance this with housing growth) to maintain high levels of employment, and to deal with pockets of unemployment in deprived areas. It will:
  - a identify and maintain a flexible and varied supply of accommodation and land for business that is the right type and in the right location;
  - b support the growth of knowledge-intensive industries and energy industries; and
  - c improve the rates of business growth in the district to support the 'organic' growth of the local economy.
- 2 Provide a sustainable level of housing growth (and balance this with economic growth) to reduce the number of people who currently need housing, to meet future housing needs, and to help deal with the issues of need for affordable housing. It will:
  - a identify and maintain a flexible supply of land for housing that is the right type, has the right tenure, and is in the right location;
  - b make sure that the district can accommodate university students without harming the balance of existing communities;

- c allow providers to meet the special housing needs of the growing number of older people; and
  - d make provision for gypsies and travellers in order to deal with local need and historic demand.
- 3 Provide a sustainable level of retail and leisure growth that will meet people's existing and future needs, and will maintain and improve the vitality and viability of existing town and local centres as attractive and safe places to visit both by day and night. It will:
  - a identify the role of each of the town centres, and a plan for their future management and growth that will provide sustainable levels of retail and leisure growth.

## **B. Providing well-designed new developments that are in the right location**

The local plan will aim to do the following:

- 4 Make sure that new developments are in places that will reduce the need for people to use their cars, and will improve air quality in the district by reducing road congestion and carbon emissions, and encouraging people to live more healthy lifestyles by walking and cycling more.
- 5 Make sure new developments are designed and built so they use water and energy efficiently and reduce the overall demand for natural resources (specifically by increasing the use of renewable and low-carbon sources of energy to reduce carbon emissions).
- 6 Make sure that new developments are located, designed and built so that they can deal with the expected effects of climate change, particularly flooding.
- 7 Make sure new developments are designed and located to maintain and improve the quality of built and natural environments, particularly historic areas and buildings, sensitive wildlife habitats and areas of high landscape value.
- 8 Make sure new developments are built to a high standard in terms of design, and provide inclusive, lively and attractive places where people feel safe and want to live, work or visit.
- 9 Make sure new developments provide public and private open spaces where there is a choice of areas of shade, shelter and recreation which will benefit people, wildlife, flood storage and carbon management.
- 10 Make sure that if buildings and spaces, particularly in historic areas, need to be adapted to meet the changing needs of the economy and to deal

with environmental issues, they will be adapted in a sensitive way (for example, energy-efficiency measures will be retrofitted).

### **C. Enabling the district's infrastructure to improve and support growth**

- 11 To enable organisations that provide community infrastructure, such as schools and health facilities, to provide and maintain improved facilities and services in locations people can get to and that can meet people's current and future needs, and support sustainable economic growth and deprived areas.
- 12 To enable energy, communications, water and waste organisations to improve their infrastructure and services so they can meet people's current and future needs, protect the environment, and contribute towards dealing with the causes of climate change.
- 13 To enable transport providers to provide improvements, particularly better and more integrated public transport, cycling and pedestrian facilities, to meet people's current and future needs, improve the safety and efficiency of the transport network, and support sustainable economic growth.
- 14 To enable improvements to be made to the built and natural environments which will help maintain and improve historic assets, improve habitats and their connectivity, help the public access and enjoy open spaces such as allotments, reduce the risk of flooding, keep the effects of climate change (including the effects on habitats and wildlife) to a minimum, and support healthy lifestyles.
- 15 To enable improvements to be made to maintain and improve the quality of cultural, sporting and leisure opportunities. This will include maintaining a flexible supply of land and buildings for sport and recreation that is the right quality and in the right location, and can meet people's current and future needs and support healthy lifestyles.

How important do you consider these draft objectives for the new local plan to be?

Are there any other objectives that you think we should include?

We have checked each of these draft objectives against a number of sustainability objectives and we have reported on this separately in the background technical paper.

Please give us your views by completing the questionnaire as this will help us to draft the local plan. By providing your details, we will also be able to keep you informed of the next stages in its preparation.