

# Planning and Development Brief

Station Area,

Royal Leamington Spa

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Warwick District Council is committed to supporting regeneration within the Old Town area of Leamington Spa and with various partners has contributed towards improving this area over the last few years, with significant investment in economic, environmental and social projects. This has included the preparation of a number of supplementary planning guidance documents for various sites in the Old Town, including the Station Area, during the late 1990's which sought to encourage regeneration through new development. Notwithstanding the efforts of the Council and its partners, only limited built development and environmental improvements have occurred within the brief area.
- 1.2 The closure in 2007 of the Ford Foundry on Old Warwick Road was a significant blow to the local economy and it was recognised by the Council that there was a need to consider the best future use of this site in order to support the economic regeneration of the Old Town. As a substantial and prominent site, its potential for redevelopment along with other areas of disused and vacant land within the Station Area presented an opportunity to positively plan for the future regeneration of this area of Leamington Spa in a comprehensive and sustainable manner through the preparation of a planning and development brief.
- 1.3 With the support of the regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands, the Council therefore appointed in February 2008 GVA Grimley Limited to prepare a planning and development brief for the Station Area. They have undertaken, with the assistance of WSP and TWS Architects, research into the physical and environmental characteristics of the area, the market and development viability considerations, and undertaken consultations with key stakeholders, including landowners, Network Rail, Chiltern Railways and local amenity groups. This work has identified a number of constraints and opportunities and has helped to inform the planning and development brief. The output from this technical work is available as a series of baseline environmental reports on the Council's website [www.warwickdc.gov.uk/stationarea](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/stationarea).
- 1.4 A draft version of the brief was prepared and was the subject of a period of public consultation between 13<sup>th</sup> June and 25<sup>th</sup> July 2008. Over 70 responses were received and these are summarised in the Statement of Consultation which is also available on the Council's website. These responses have been taken into account in finalising this brief.
- 1.5 In order to understand the rationale behind the proposals for the Station Area, the brief begins with the Council's Vision for the area (Chapter Two), followed by a brief assessment of the

site's context and characteristics (Chapter Three) and an analysis of the relevant current and emerging planning policies at all levels (Chapter Four). The brief then sets out and explains the Council's proposals for the area (Chapter Five) with an assessment of them against the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist and local sustainability objectives at Chapter Six. The brief concludes with details of how the Council will assist with delivery of the redevelopment (Chapter Seven).

- 1.6 The Council has adopted the brief as Supplementary Planning Guidance. It should be noted that this is not being adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document as it does not directly relate to an adopted Local Plan policy. However, it has been subject to the same consultation procedure as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement and will therefore be afforded weight by the Council when determining future planning applications within the Station Area. This brief replaces the previous Council guidance document 'Development Principles for Station Area' (1999) which is withdrawn and any references to the Station Area within the 'Urban Coding Exercise – High Street/Clemens Street/Tachbrook Road' (1999).

## 2. VISION FOR THE STATION AREA

### **“The Gateway to Leamington Spa”**

- 2.1 The Council has a vision to promote and enhance the image and character of the area as a functional gateway point for Leamington Spa town centre through high quality, landmark buildings with a mix of uses and improved linkages to other areas of the town. It wishes to see development enhancing the sense of arrival into Leamington Spa by all modes of transport, including through contributing towards improvements to the means of access to and from the railway station.
- 2.2 The Council sees a real potential for revitalizing the area both economically and environmentally by:
- Regenerating the Ford Site and seeking new economic activity on that site and elsewhere;
  - Exploiting the juxtaposition of this area and the railway station, as a means of promoting a more sustainable pattern of development;
  - Encouraging good integration and linkages between different land uses;
  - Promoting a sense of place with buildings and spaces of a high standard of urban design and townscape quality;
  - Preserving and enhancing the historic designations within and surrounding the area;
  - Delivering sustainable development that contributes towards a low-carbon economy and is designed to accommodate the expected effects of climate change; and
  - Providing a landscape framework that brings cohesion between individual developments and helps to unite the development with the town and neighbouring green spaces.

### **Objectives of the Brief**

- 2.3 The brief seeks to articulate this vision through identifying realistic and achievable proposals for the future development of the Station Area. Its primary objective is to provide clear guidance to landowners and potential developers as to the form and type of development appropriate to the area and the likely needs and aspirations of the Council and local community.

- 2.4 The brief is not intended to be prescriptive but provide a flexible approach in order to enable the 'sustainable' regeneration of the area. This approach also recognises the fact that there are a number of existing local businesses successfully operating within the Station Area and who may continue to do so.

## 3. THE STATION AREA

### Location

- 3.1 The Station Area is defined on Plan 01. It is centrally located within the urban area of Leamington Spa and lies immediately to the south west of the Town Centre and at the western end of the Old Town area. The area, particularly the former Ford Foundry, is prominently located on the southern approach to the town from the M40 Junctions 13 and 14. The area is also intrinsically linked with the railway and the station and will form the first impression of the town for many visitors by rail.
- 3.2 The area includes land to the north and south of the railway lines. The northern boundary is defined by the backs of properties fronting onto Avenue Road and includes all land between Princes Drive to the west, and Lower Avenue to the east. The land to the south of the railway is bounded to the south by the Old Warwick Road. It includes at its eastern end the station and its forecourt adjacent to Lower Avenue, and to the west the former Ford Foundry adjacent to Princes Drive. In addition, two adjoining parcels of land are included as they fall within the same ownership as the former Foundry, namely the Ford Car Park to the west of Princes Drive and the land to the north of the Foundry between the two main railway lines.

### Context

- 3.3 Leamington Spa is the largest town within Warwick District with a population of approximately 45,000 at the 2001 Census. The town has a rich heritage of Regency buildings built within a predominantly grid-iron street pattern with broad avenues and public gardens. The town has experienced significant growth in recent times and is now an important centre for employment, homes, shopping, services and leisure pursuits. The town centre also has a number of tourist attractions, including the Pump Rooms and Jephson Gardens.
- 3.4 Its high quality environment and strategic transport links by road and rail, make the town an attractive location for businesses and employees. The economy of the area is more buoyant than average for Coventry and Warwickshire and 50% larger than the average for the West Midlands, with relatively low levels of unemployment and higher household income levels,
- 3.5 However, the Old Town area of Leamington Spa exhibits many of the symptoms of multiple deprivation. Brunswick ward which forms the majority of the Old Town is in the 30% most deprived wards in terms of education, skills and training. Higher unemployment levels, lower

levels of education performance, high crime rates, higher numbers of empty properties, and higher than expected mortality rates have also been identified within the Old Town area.

## Character

- 3.6 The Station Area comprises 16.5 hectares (40 acres) of mostly previous developed land and buildings, with approximately 85% of the site covered by buildings or hard standing. The area is generally flat and at 50 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) is located at one of the lowest points in the area between the River Leam and the Grand Union Canal. There are no bodies of water within the area and few natural features of interest, with the exception of a number of mature trees. The area is, however, adjacent to the nearby natural greenspaces along the Grand Union Canal to the south and Victoria Park and the River Leam to the north.
- 3.7 The area contains a variety of land uses and activities, including the railway station, bus depot, trade retail centres and car sales. Alongside these uses are large areas of redundant or under-used land and buildings, some of which detract from the appearance of the wider area. Plan 02 illustrates the range and location of uses.
- 3.8 The existing buildings are of limited architectural merit, with the notable exception of the Grade II listed railway station. This is a recently refurbished three storey building of art-deco style facing southwards onto the station forecourt. Alongside the station building are the station garden and terraces which were influential in getting the Gold Britain in Bloom Award for the town. The gardens are now looked after by The Friends of Leamington Station. The character of the remainder of the area is typically defined by industrial/commercial type units generally surrounded by significant areas of hardstanding, car parking or maintenance yards and with little or no green space, planting, or public access.

## Environment

- 3.9 The environment of the Station Area is heavily influenced by the surrounding transportation routes. The area is bordered to the south and east by the heavily used A425 and A452 and is also dissected by the mainline rail route which is used by diesel trains for freight and passenger services. The presence of these sources of noise and air quality emissions has a negative effect on the environmental quality within the area. The closure of the Ford Foundry has removed a source of noise and air quality emissions from the area. However, there are other existing uses within the area which generate noise, particularly the bus depot.



- 3.10 In relation to the wider area, the air quality along nearby roads within the Old Town immediately to the east is currently poor and has led to the Council declaring an Air Quality Management Area in relation to exceeding the Government's standards for acceptable levels of nitrogen dioxide.
- 3.11 There is limited ecological interest within the area due to its nature and existing land uses. A small area of land adjacent to the railway is designated a potential site of importance for nature conservation due its good range of plant species. This comprises broad leaf semi-natural woodland and associated scrub and grassland communities. In addition, there are numerous buildings and mature trees within the area which have varying degrees of potential to support roosting bats. Other areas may also have potential to support nesting birds and reptiles. A small area of Japanese Knotweed was also found along the northern boundary of the area which is an invasive species which needs to be eradicated to protect the nature conservation value of the land.
- 3.12 There is also limited archaeological interest within the area. No known archaeological sites of Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval or post-medieval periods are recorded within or in the vicinity of the area. There is, however, potential for archaeological remains of former buildings and structures associated with the railway to be present within the site area. The site of the Ford Foundry (formerly the Imperial Foundry) is likely to have the highest archaeological potential and significance. The Foundry was originally established by Sidney Flavel in the mid-19th century producing cooking stoves. It is unclear if any 19th century foundry buildings still survive within the Ford site, although it is likely that elements are still extant, and it is considered very likely that early 20th buildings will be present.
- 3.13 The Station Area is outside of the flood plain and the only recorded flooding problems relate to the two low points on Lower Avenue and Princes Drive where the roads go underneath the railway. There are no known watercourses within the area or drainage problems. There is however potential for land contamination given its history of industrial and commercial development. The area has historically supported a foundry with ancillary activities including railway sidings, fuel and chemical storage. Contamination is likely to be encountered across the site, particularly in areas of known fuel storage.

## Access and Movement

- 3.14 Plan 03 shows the main access and movement routes within the Station Area. The local highway network around the area currently experiences peak hour congestion due to constraints on the network, partially attributed to the fact that there are few places the railway

can be crossed. The existing railway line is a barrier to movement in the area and means that a number of roads experience large volumes of traffic and queues during the morning and evening peak periods, particularly Princes Drive to the west, Avenue Road to the north and Lower Avenue to the east. The existing roundabouts on Princes Drive to the west of the former Ford Foundry are also known to be at, or near, capacity. There are also a number of nearby land uses which generate additional traffic, including the County Council's Princes Drive Recycling Centre to the west of the Station Area, and the Shires Retail Park to the south.

- 3.15 The majority of the Station Area is served by existing access roads onto the public highway, although some of the entrances are sub-standard in terms of the required visibility for drivers. Vehicular access onto Princes Drive and the Avenue Road/Adelaide Road mini-roundabout is likely to be more limited due to the existing volumes of traffic using these routes.
- 3.16 Accessibility to public transport services is high within the area. The railway station provides regular services to a number of destinations across the UK, including Birmingham and London. The station layout and parking could be improved to deal with the levels of commuter traffic which it sees today. There are also a number of existing bus services that serve the Station Area, particularly the railway station and along Avenue Road to the north, which connect with other parts of the town and nearby areas.
- 3.17 There are a number of pedestrian and cycle linkages within the Station Area, although these are of varying quality and attractiveness. Permeability north to south is constrained by the railway line to routes along Lower Avenue and Princes Drive which in some places are narrow and often disjointed either ending abruptly or with no safe crossing point. The volume of traffic on the roads and at junctions often makes crossing difficult for pedestrians and cyclists. The only other north-south route is the existing underpass alongside the railway station which links the station to the town centre. This route is poorly lit in places and lacks natural surveillance making it potentially feel unsafe and unattractive for users. The route also forms part of the National Cycle Network with potential for conflict between cyclists, pedestrians and other road users, particularly within the station forecourt.

## History and Ownership

- 3.18 The history of the Station Area is very closely linked with the development of the nearby Grand Union Canal and the railway. The canal which runs from Birmingham to London was one of the major industrial movement routes of the 19th Century; before being replaced by the rapid development of the railway systems. The Old Town Foundry has existed in this area

since the late 1800's and has expanded over the years to now form part of the former Ford Foundry. The majority of the remaining area was developed for the purposes of the railway or related activities, which included two stations, goods sheds and railway sidings. The closure of the Avenue Station to the north and reduction in land required by the railway over the last sixty years saw new uses move into the area, including a timber yard, garage, bus depot.

- 3.19 The more recent history has seen the expansion of the trade centre uses along Old Warwick Road and the closure of the garage to the north of the railway station. Various planning applications have been refused for residential development on the former garage and for car parking for the station in this area. Planning permission was, however, recently approved (subject to a Section 106 agreement) for office development on the Former Coal Yard at the western end of Station Approach, although no development has commenced.
- 3.20 The variety of uses within the area is reflected in the number of different landowners. Network Rail owns the operational railway and areas of former railway land to the north of the existing line along with the British Railways Board (Residuary) Ltd. Network Rail also leases the station and forecourt to Chiltern Railways. Ford is also a major landowner, owning the former foundry and adjoining land. There are a number of other landowners who own individual parcels of land, including Stagecoach, Jewsons and the Council.

## Constraints and Opportunities

- 3.21 The following key constraints and opportunities have been identified and illustrated on Plan 04:

### Key Constraints

- Low quality environment due to noise/air emissions from road and rail activities;
- Potential for significant land contamination from previous uses;
- High volumes of traffic on local roads and limited vehicular access in places;
- Poor relationship between the station and the town and unattractive pedestrian and cycle links;
- Fragmented land ownership and uses; and
- Listed structures and their settings.

## Key Opportunities

- Large areas of derelict or vacant previously developed land and buildings available for development and in need of environmental improvement;
- Potential to accommodate a range of uses and become a high quality business environment close to areas of economic and social need;
- Prominent location on entrances to the town with the potential to enhance the image and profile of the town;
- Proximity to good quality public transport connections with potential to improve links to the station and deliver other transportation improvements in the area;
- Proximity to town centre facilities and attractions, and areas of natural greenspace with potential for improved linkages to support tourism; and,
- Potential to develop new architectural and environmental features of local importance.

## 4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 A number of planning policies at the national, regional and local level have informed the brief and will also guide the future development of the Station Area. These are currently contained in National Planning Policy Statements, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (2004), the Warwick District Local Plan (2007) and Supplementary Planning Documents produced by the District Council. The Warwickshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 is also an important document which will inform the way in which transportation issues are addressed within the area. The current policy context is outlined below, although it should be recognised this will be updated as new policy and guidance is produced.

### General Policy Guidance

- 4.2 In terms of the general approach to development within the Station Area, the relevant policies can be summarised under the following key themes:

#### Ensuring Sustainable Development

- Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning;
- Planning should ensure that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community;
- Planning should also help to tackle the causes of climate change through reducing use of greenhouses gases and promoting resource and energy efficient buildings, the use of combined heat & power and community heating schemes, small scale renewable and low carbon energy schemes in new developments; and,
- High quality and inclusive design should be the aim for all those involved in the development process.

#### Delivering Economic Growth

- Planning must promote a strong and productive economy that brings jobs and prosperity for all and ensure suitable locations are available so that the economy can prosper; and,
- Planning must support and promote the vitality and viability of town centres and contribute to wider objectives such as promoting social inclusion, encouraging investment

to regenerate deprived areas, creating employment opportunities and improving the physical environment.

### Increasing Housing Land Supply

- The Government's key housing policy goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live; and,
- The planning system must deliver a flexible, responsive supply of housing land and local authorities should have policies to enable the continuous delivery of housing for at least fifteen years.

### Prioritising Previously Developed Land

- In seeking to deliver sustainable development, local authorities should promote the more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed use development and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings.

### Delivering Sustainable Transport Options

- New development should help reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking, and cycling; and,
- Development should create places, streets and spaces which meet the needs of people, and are visually attractive, safe and accessible.

### Protecting the Built and Natural Environment

- Planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of urban areas as a whole. A high level of protection should be given to the most valued buildings, townscapes and landscapes, wildlife habitats and natural resources.

### Addressing Pollution and Contamination

- The potential for noise and air pollution must be properly assessed and development must incorporate any necessary remediation and subsequent management measures to deal with unacceptable levels of pollution;
- The presence of contamination in land can present risks to human health and the environment which adversely affect or restrict the beneficial use of land, but development presents an opportunity to deal with these risks successfully.

## Avoiding Flood Risk

- Flood risk should be taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding or development making areas elsewhere more susceptible to flooding elsewhere.

## Specific Policy Guidance

- 4.3 The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) places a strong emphasis upon achieving an Urban Renaissance. Strategic centres such as Leamington Spa are encouraged to play a lead role in the urban renaissance programme to create a strong sense of identity and act as drivers for economic growth. The RSS is supported by 'Connecting to Success – the West Midlands Economic Strategy' which seeks to ensure that the West Midlands retains and enhances its attractiveness as a location in which people and businesses choose to invest, work, learn and live. Success will be dependent upon a number of actions, including focussing on the role of place in attracting economic growth, i.e. delivering high quality locations and environments which encourage businesses and a highly skilled workforce.
- 4.4 The WMRSS is being reviewed and is considering the future needs of the region for the period to 2026. It is anticipated that this review will require the District to accommodate significant numbers of new homes and jobs over the next twenty years. This is likely to be at least 10,800 homes and 90ha (222 acres) of employment land, including 45,000 square metres of office development within or on the edge of the town centre.
- 4.5 The adopted Warwick District Local Plan also contains a number of site specific allocations and designations of relevance to the Station Area. These are shown on Plan 05. Two parcels of land to the west of Station Approach and west of Princes Drive are allocated for employment uses (Policy SSP1). Land at the eastern end of the railway line is allocated for housing/commercial and business uses (B1, B2 and B8) (Policy TCP7). Other land, including the former Ford foundry, is designated as protected employment land (Policy SC2). In addition, the railway station and forecourt fall within the designated Leamington Spa Conservation Area (Policy DAP8). The Conservation Area also lies to the immediate north of the Station Area along with the registered historic parks and gardens of Victoria Park, York Walk and the Pump Room Gardens.
- 4.6 The Council has prepared, or are in the process of preparing, the following Supplementary Planning Documents and guidance which are also of relevance:

- Vehicle Parking Standards SPD;
- Affordable Housing SPD;
- Sustainable Buildings SPD;
- Open Space SPD;
- Residential Design SPD;
- Development Control Guidance: Achieving a Mix of Housing; and,
- Residential Design Guide.

### Transportation Proposals

- 4.7 The Warwickshire Local Transport Plan identifies a number of proposals which will influence the future development of the Station Area. These include proposals to improve facilities for transport interchange at the railway station, integrate development proposals with accessibility improvements, improve pedestrian linkages between the railway station and the town centre, new pedestrian facilities on Avenue Road/Station Approach and additional car parking for the station. They also include proposals for a Park and Ride facility to the south of the town near the M40 junctions to be served by a Bus Rapid Transit service which will serve Warwick and Leamington, including the station area.



## 5. DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 The assessment of the Station Area and subsequent analysis of the relevant planning policy context has led the Council to a set of development principles to guide the redevelopment of the area. These include both generic principles that apply to the area as a whole and those more specific to particular parts of the Station Area. These principles must be read alongside all other planning policy requirements set out within the development plan, particularly the Local Plan, and all other supplementary planning documents.

### Generic Development Principles

- 5.2 Developers will be expected to have regard to the following generic development principles when formulating their proposals for the Station Area:
- Redevelopment proposals must fit within an overall planning framework for the Station Area which reflects the principles of this brief in establishing an appropriate range of land uses to ensure that new developments make the best use of the land, positively relate to each other and the surrounding area in design, landscaping, access and sustainability terms, and maximise wider economic, social and environmental benefits for the town;
  - Sustainability must be central to the redevelopment of the area and proposals must demonstrate how they will adapt to, and mitigate for, the effects of climate change through the use of sustainable construction techniques, energy efficient layout and design, renewable energy sources, and water conservation measures such as sustainable urban drainage systems.
  - High quality design of buildings and external spaces must be achieved in order to provide an attractive entrance to the town, through providing larger scale landmark buildings of prominent and bold design to the south, reducing in dominance to protect the setting of the listed railway station to the east, with more domestic scale development to the north;
  - Redevelopment must minimise and mitigate its impact on the surrounding congested local highway network which is currently operating at, or near, capacity. This impact may affect a number of routes in the area and, given the high degree of interaction between routes, a detailed Transport Assessment will be required at the planning application stage to include an assessment of impact on all main routes. The County Council are currently assessing the network and investigating potential solutions to ease congestion and address traffic related air quality issues within the Old Town area. Proposals may be

required to contribute towards these solutions and demonstrate how they will address traffic impacts, with particular emphasis given to the provision of robust target-driven travel plans and improvements to access to the Railway Station. A Station Travel Plan will be prepared by the County Council to assist in identifying such improvements. Proposals must also seek to reduce access points for vehicles where possible, provide parking at suitable levels to discourage unnecessary car use but without having an adverse impact on parking availability in the local surrounding areas, and make contributions towards other transportation improvements. These may include the proposed Park and Ride proposals to the south of Leamington, and safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycle linkages with the surrounding area and routes; and,

- The design, layout and landscaping of new development must be used to create an attractive, accessible, safe and appropriate living and working environment for residents, employees and visitors. They must protect and enhance where possible features of the historic and natural environment, particularly those features that are designated within or adjoining the Station Area.. Landscaping proposals must also provide tree and shrub planting to screen the railway, provide an attractive backdrop to development and create a potential wildlife corridor.

## **Former Foundry and Associated Landholdings**

- 5.3 Advantage West Midlands (AWM) has recognised the site as a Regionally Significant Employment Site within the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire high-technology corridor. Furthermore, as existing employment land and buildings, the policies of the Local Plan seek to retain such land in employment uses except in certain circumstances such as where re-use for employment may not be appropriate or viable.
- 5.4 Employment re-use would clearly be an acceptable use of the land and buildings and would contribute towards the economic regeneration of the area. However, there are issues over whether large scale employment uses would be appropriate or viable on the site and whether it would deliver the Council's vision of enhancing the image and character of the area as a gateway point for the town centre.
- 5.5 The location and scale of this site represents a valuable resource and it is imperative the opportunity is not missed to deliver the vision through comprehensive redevelopment of the site to a high standard of new design. Redevelopment must therefore have regard to the development costs associated with site clearance and remediation of contamination. In this context, it is considered that B2 or B8 employment uses are unlikely to deliver development of

- the quality or image required for the site. There may also be issues of demand and viability for such uses.
- 5.6 The introduction of a B1 employment use would however be more appropriate and deliver the higher quality design required. This would be consistent with the AWM designation and provide a substantial office development of a scale capable of making a significant contribution to the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy need for offices within or on the edge of Leamington town centre to 2026. Such development would therefore be supported by the Council as it represents arguably the most attractive site for office development that is near to the town centre and within a highly accessible location.
- 5.7 However, it is acknowledged that the scale of office accommodation (circa 50,000 square metres) that could potentially be accommodated on the site for a single employment use may not be achievable or attractive to the market given the current level of demand. Moreover, the scale of development possible would lend itself more to a mix of uses in order to create a more vibrant and sustainable form of development that enables people to use the development for a variety of uses throughout the day, thus reducing the need to travel. Consultation on the draft brief supported this more flexible approach.
- 5.8 In this context, the Council would support an office-led mixed use redevelopment of the site. The mix of uses should be predominantly office (B1a uses) in order to support the economic regeneration of the Old Town area and help to meet the emerging RSS requirement for growth in jobs within Leamington. Other uses would need to be compatible with a high quality office location and might therefore include a hotel/conference centre, residential apartments, and small scale retail/leisure uses that may support the office use and not harm the vitality and viability of the town centre. The exact split of the mix of uses will need to be informed by more detailed site analysis and appraisal.
- 5.9 It is acknowledged that residential development on this site would be contrary to the Council's current housing policy (Managing Housing Supply SPD) which seeks to restrict housing growth in accordance with the housing requirements of the previous RSS and Structure Plan to 2011. These restrictions will, however, need to be lifted in due course as the emerging RSS establishes a new requirement to 2026. To ensure the appropriate forward planning of the area therefore, and given the timescales involved in bringing forward land for development, it is appropriate to identify residential uses..
- 5.10 In addition, the two adjoining parcels of land to the west and north fall within the same land ownership. The former Ford car park to the west of Princes Drive is allocated for employment uses within the Local Plan and the Council would support low intensity employment

development (B1 or B2 uses), subject to the level of traffic generation and impact on Princes Drive, and protecting the residential amenity of properties to the west off Myton Road. The consultation on the draft brief raised the potential of other existing uses within the Station Area re-locating to this site. Having regard to opportunities to make better use of the available land elsewhere within the Station Area, the Council would support in principle the re-location of the bus depot and/or builders merchants uses onto this site. Further investigation is however required in relation to highway matters, particularly the ability to provide suitable access arrangements for these uses, and the potential impact on nearby properties.

- 5.11 The land to the north is a small triangle of land bounded by the two railway lines and Princes Drive with very limited access and a low quality environment due to the railway lines. This site could provide an area for nature conservation enhancement that links to the existing wildlife corridor along the railway line, with opportunities for environmental education. There was a great deal of support for this use from the consultation on the draft brief. Within this site, other uses associated with the development of the former Foundry and wider area, such as a low carbon or renewable energy centre serving the development and potentially other developments within the Station Area will be supported by the Council. Other innovative uses which do not generate significant car movements may also be considered.
- 5.12 The need for highway improvements to Princes Drive and nearby junctions will be considered at the detailed planning stage. There is the potential for the use of land associated with the existing County Council Waste Depot to the west of Princes Drive to provide land for such highway improvements.

### Development Principles

- 5.13 Developers will be expected to have regard to the following development principles for the redevelopment of the former Foundry and adjoining land (indicative proposals are shown on Plan 06-08):
- High quality employment-led mixed use redevelopment will be supported on the former Foundry, specifically office (B1a uses) with hotel/conference centre, residential apartments and small scale supporting retail/leisure uses subject to demonstrating compliance with the tests of PPS6 and the use of design and layout providing an acceptable relationship between the proposed uses;
  - The use of design, layout and landscaping and external works to provide an appropriate relationship with future phases of development to the east of the site as part of a

comprehensive redevelopment of the Old Warwick Road frontage and to reflect the hierarchy of the Town's traditional street pattern;

- High standards of design will be required for buildings and their external spaces in order to provide an attractive gateway to the town centre, with strong design and building heights ranging from three to five storey;
- Appropriate access arrangement will be required using the existing access point off Old Warwick Road which maintains or improves highway safety, and the closure of the existing access off Princes Drive;
- Improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes will be required, including the potential for a link along the eastern side of Princes Drive with improved crossings at the two roundabouts to provide a safe and direct link between Victoria Park to the north, the development site and the Grand Union Canal to the south;
- Employment uses will be appropriate on the former Ford car park, including the possible re-location of the bus depot and builders merchants uses, subject to the design and layout protecting the residential amenity of the adjoining properties and providing a safe means of access onto Prince Drive; and,
- The development of low-intensity uses on the land to the north of the former Foundry will be appropriate, such as ancillary uses to the adjoining developments, including the potential for a low carbon or renewable energy centre, and an area for nature conservation enhancement and education.

## Old Warwick Road Frontage

- 5.14 To the east of the former Ford foundry, lies an area of land that accommodates a number of existing businesses including car sales and trade centres/builders merchants. This area is an important approach to the Old Town and its proximity to the railway station means that it is well served by public transport.
- 5.15 The existing uses do not make the best use of this highly accessible location or represent the high quality development envisaged by the Council for this area. Redevelopment of the adjacent former Foundry will significantly change the character of this area and present an opportunity to consider new uses that make the most of this opportunity and location. As an alternative to the current uses on the site, the Council encourage further employment-led mixed use development (B1 uses) as part of future phases of growth of the development of the former Foundry site. This would require the re-location of the existing uses to suitable alternative sites. Development would present an opportunity to improve linkages between the

development of the former Foundry and the railway station, enhance the appearance of the streetscene through built development, and could also provide accommodation for employment generating uses such as research/hi-technology uses and/or further or higher education uses that in land use planning terms would make better use of this highly sustainable location.

## Development Principles

5.16 Developers will be expected to have regard to the following development principles for the redevelopment of the Old Warwick Road Frontage area (indicative proposals are shown on Plan 09):

- High quality employment-led redevelopment will be appropriate, specifically business development (B1 uses) and/or further or higher education uses, with small scale supporting retail/leisure uses subject to demonstrating compliance with the tests of PPS6 and the use of design and layout to provide an acceptable relationship between the proposed uses;
- The use of design, layout and landscaping and external works to provide an appropriate relationship with other phases of development on adjoining parcels of land in order to ensure the comprehensive development of the Old Warwick Road frontage;
- High standards of design will be required for buildings and their external spaces in order to create an attractive frontage to the Old Warwick Road that respects the setting of the listed railway station, with strong design and building heights of three to four storey;
- The provision of appropriate access arrangements off Old Warwick Road which seek to reduce where possible the number of access points in order to maintain or improve highway safety; and,
- To provide improved pedestrian and cycle links, including links with the railway station and to the canal towpath, and to investigate and implement where feasible and viable the provision of a pedestrian link across the railway to connect with routes to the north.

## Railway Station and Associated Land

5.17 The railway station is an important transportation hub for the people of the town and the wider rural area. In addition, its strategic position on the cross country main line means it is also a destination for people from other areas who wish to travel further afield. The Station Operator, Chiltern Railways, has undertaken a number of improvements to the station and its facilities in order to improve its appearance and usage. However, the increasing demand for rail travel

presents challenges, particularly given the station is a Grade II listed building within the Conservation Area and is constrained by a number of surrounding land uses, including the Station Community Garden.

- 5.18 In order to promote more sustainable transport choices and reduce the use of the private car, it is important that the station is easily accessible by all means of transport. Consultation on the draft brief has confirmed access to the Station as an important issue that needs addressing through the redevelopment of this area. The County Council, alongside the Station Operator and other partners, is preparing a Station Travel Plan which aims to encourage more people to use the station and increase the use of more sustainable modes of transport to the station. This will also identify a range of actions to improve access to, and within, the station for all users. Any development proposals within the station and associated land will therefore need to have regard to, and be consistent with, the aims and outputs from the Station Travel Plan.
- 5.19 At present, it is acknowledged there is a shortage of parking spaces to meet the demand from rail users and this is resulting in high levels of traffic and parking on surrounding streets and residential areas. The lack of adequate parking at the station may well be deterring some people from using the train as an option for travel. The Council will therefore support proposals for increasing car parking through the provision of a multi-deck car park to the west of the station building. The layout and design of the car park will need to protect the setting and appearance of the listed building, as well as provide attractive and convenient linkages between the station and redevelopment opportunities to the west. The capacity of the car park will need to be determined at the detailed planning stage, having regard to the visual impact of the proposals, any highway impacts, and the objectives of the Station Travel Plan which will seek to discourage the unnecessary use of the private car.
- 5.20 Access for pedestrians and cyclists to the station is via the main entrance on the southern side of the station. For travellers arriving from, or heading towards, the north and the town centre and its attractions, the signposted and most used route requires walking or cycling through the existing underpass. This is an indirect and unattractive route and does not encourage travelling to the station by walking or cycling, or provide a good impression for visitors to the town. There are therefore clear benefits both for rail users and the town's economy from improving access to the north for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 5.21 One option to achieve this is through creating a new northern entrance into the station. This could potentially be achieved through extending the existing station subway under the existing railway line to connect with the existing pedestrian route to the north, subject to its feasibility

and cost. A new entrance would also increase the capacity of the station which in the longer term will be important in dealing with the expected continued growth in rail travel, and the additional demand from redevelopment of the surrounding area and the wider growth of the town to 2026.

- 5.22 It is recognised that the provision of a new entrance will require improved facilities and present additional management, security and staffing issues for the Station Operator. There would therefore be additional costs associated with the proposal on the Station Operator.
- 5.23 The provision of a northern entrance will need to be considered alongside other proposals to improve access to the station and it is recognised that this is a major project which raises funding issues. Nevertheless, the redevelopment of the Station Area provides a significant opportunity to help deliver such an important proposal to the town which should not be missed. The Council will therefore support and encourage the provision of a northern entrance to the station, with improvements to the existing underpass being required as an interim solution.
- 5.24 Improving access from the station to the north, either via an improved underpass or a new entrance, must be supported by improvements to the land to the north of the station in order to be effective. Proposals to improve the safety and attractiveness of access for pedestrians/cyclists and to provide space for vehicles for drop-off and pick-up would therefore be encouraged and supported. This should include creating a more attractive public space with access for pedestrians/cyclists to Lower Avenue to the east to provide links with an improved Bath Street Car Park and the Council's Cultural Quarter. Any proposals for additional station car parking in this location would need to be considered in the context of the Station Travel Plan and proposals for parking to the south of the railway, and also be able to demonstrate their ability to improve the use and safety of this area for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 5.25 In the event the land is not required for rail uses, the Council would also support limited development, namely residential and/or small scale commercial/business (B1) uses, in this area in order to increase surveillance of the area and encourage more pedestrian activity. Any development would need to protect the setting of the station and nearby Conservation Area, as well as the amenity of the adjoining properties. Innovative use of design and layout may therefore be required to make good use of this land whilst creating an attractive route to the station..
- 5.26 The provision of additional car parking spaces to the west of the station building and improved access to the station to the north may free up space within the existing station forecourt which



at present accommodates a number of uses, including passenger parking, drop off-pick up activity, buses, taxis, car hire and pedestrian and cycle movements. The consultation on the draft brief has supported improvements to the station forecourt through rationalisation of uses and access points onto Old Warwick Road. The provision of improved access and integration between local bus services and the station building is of particular importance and proposals need to be considered in greater detail through the preparation of the Station Travel Plan.

- 5.27 The previous supplementary planning guidance for the Station Area had supported the potential for development within the south east corner of the forecourt. This proposal was not supported through the consultation on the draft brief, principally due to its potential impact on the setting of the listed building and station garden. This proposal has therefore not been carried forward into this brief. However, the Council will require proposals for the rationalisation of the forecourt to enhance the setting of the listed building and gardens, and also provide the opportunity for public space and/or public art of a high standard of design that could act as a link with the High Street area.

### Development Principles

- 5.28 The Council will therefore support the following development principles for the redevelopment and improvement of the Railway Station area as part of a comprehensive package of proposals to improve the appearance and accessibility of the area. The accessibility measures will be developed in greater detail within the Station Travel Plan (indicative proposals are shown on Plan 10):

- Provision of a multi-deck car park to the west of the station;
- Provision of a northern entrance to the station, with interim improvements to the safety and attractiveness of the existing underpass;
- Improvements to access arrangements for pedestrians and cyclists on the northern side of the station, including providing a link through to Lower Avenue;
- Limited development of residential and/or small scale commercial/business (B1) uses on the northern side of the station;
- Improvements to the layout of the station forecourt and rationalisation of uses and access points onto Old Warwick Road, including enhancing integration between bus services and the station and providing an opportunity for public space and/or public art;
- Protecting and enhancing the setting of the listed building and station gardens, and the Conservation Area;

- Protecting the amenity of the adjoining residential properties; and,
- Providing effective linkages for pedestrians and cyclists with redevelopment opportunities elsewhere within the Station Area.

## Land North of the Railway

- 5.29 This area is allocated for a mix of uses within the Local Plan and planning permission has been granted (subject to a Section 106 agreement) for office development on the former coal yard at the western end of Station Approach. The Council will continue to support in principle this mix of uses within this area, namely employment uses on the former coal yard and a mix of residential and business (B1) uses on the former garage site although it is recognised that the detail of the proposals, most notably the relationship between the bus depot and any residential development, is critical to its acceptability.
- 5.30 The Council recognises that a number of constraints have previously prevented development coming forward in this area. Planning permission has been refused on more than one occasion for residential development principally because of the failure to deliver a satisfactory relationship between new residential units and the bus depot use. In addition, whilst a suitable access arrangement with Avenue Road has been designed it has yet to be implemented as part of a viable development scheme. The ability to appropriately develop this area for a mix of residential and employment uses and deliver the necessary access improvements is therefore uncertain.
- 5.31 In considering other uses that might encourage redevelopment of this land, it is noted that the closure of the Foundry has removed a source of air pollution which had previously constrained the development of the area. However, the presence of the bus depot and the acknowledged need for them to operate efficiently in order to meet the public transport demands of the district will remain a significant constraint upon residential development of this area due to their requirement for 24 hour operations and the associated noise and traffic movements during the night time period.
- 5.32 In order to address the particular environmental and highway access issues associated with this area and make the best use of this previously developed land, the Council supports the principle of residential redevelopment across the entire northern part of the site, namely the former coal yard, garage site and bus depot. This would be subject to the satisfactory re-location of the bus depot to a suitable alternative site and such proposals would need to be considered in a comprehensive manner and require the various landowners to work together.

The Council considers that residential uses may also include sheltered housing within the retirement sector. The adjoining Kingdom Hall and café use would not need to form part of the comprehensive redevelopment of this area but may wish to do so in the event they wanted to re-locate elsewhere.

- 5.33 Residential development would need to be of a high standard of design and of an appropriate density having regard to the character and layout of the adjoining residential development within the Conservation Area. The opportunity to provide lower levels of car parking provision associated with the residential development will need to be considered against the requirements of the Vehicle Parking Standards SPD. This will also be subject to providing appropriate pedestrian and cycle linkages, including the potential for a link through to Park Drive.

### Development Principles

- 5.34 Developers will be expected to have regard to the following development principles for the redevelopment of the land to the north of the Railway (indicative proposals are shown on Plan 11):
- Business (B1 uses) and residential (including other C class uses of the Use Classes Order) redevelopment will be supported within this area subject to the use of design and layout to provide an acceptable relationship with any existing uses in the area that do not form part of the redevelopment, namely the existing bus depot, Kingdom Hall and café (subject to their re-location). As an alternative, comprehensive residential (C3 uses) redevelopment of the area will be supported subject to the satisfactory re-location of existing uses to alternative sites;
  - High standards of design, layout and landscaping will be required in order to enhance the appearance of the adjoining Conservation Area and provide attractive views of the town from the railway;
  - The use of design, layout, landscaping and external works to protect the residential amenity of existing properties on Avenue Road;
  - The delivery of an appropriate access arrangement using the two existing access points off Avenue Road which maintains or improves highway safety and improvements to the sub-standard highway along Station Approach;
  - Providing effective linkages for pedestrians and cyclists with redevelopment opportunities elsewhere within the Station Area, including the potential provision of a link between Park Drive and the land north of the station;

- The protection of existing trees on the boundary with Park Drive, Yew Tree Walk and, where possible, along Station Approach and the creation of an attractive landscape / wildlife corridor that improves the ecological value of the area and enhances the appearance of the development; and,
- The use of design and layout of new residential development to provide natural surveillance of the pedestrian/cycle route to the station at the eastern end of the area.

## 6. SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

- 6.1 To promote the principles of sustainability in the redevelopment of the Station Area, the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist was used to inform the preparation of the brief. The checklist can be accessed via [www.checklistwestmidlands.co.uk](http://www.checklistwestmidlands.co.uk) and was launched by Advantage West Midlands in June 2007. It has been developed as a West Midlands specific checklist that is aimed at promoting the principles of sustainability in the built environment.
- 6.2 The checklist is an on-line tool that identifies a range of different economic, social and environmental sustainability objectives covered in National Guidance and the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. Its use enables an assessment to be made on the extent to which the development proposal will deliver on the following aspects of sustainability; namely climate change, community, place making, transport, ecology, resources, business and buildings.
- 6.3 The proposed mix of uses and illustrative plans were assessed against the checklist and completed as far as possible given the level of detail available on the proposals. Access to the completed checklist is available online and login details are available from the Council. Based on the questions completed and assumptions made on achievable targets, 'good' and 'best' practice were scored against all of the sustainability objectives. The achievement of these scores for the final development will require further consideration through the detailed planning phase.
- 6.4 The Station Area already benefits from a number of sustainability features which will contribute to the achievement of the objectives contained within the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist. These are:
- The site has excellent public transport links thereby encouraging a more sustainable approach to transportation;
  - The opportunity to promote a mixed use scheme whereby people can live and work in the same area thus reducing the need to travel;
  - The site will redevelop a redundant industrial brownfield site;
  - A significant number of jobs will be created in addition to those already on site; and
  - No significant ecological features will be lost as part of the development.

- 6.5 Development proposals should capitalise on these features in order to maximise the sustainability benefits of the Station Area.

## Energy

- 6.6 The Council attaches particular importance to sustainable building design and renewable energy, and are in the process of adopting a Supplementary Planning Document to provide further guidance on this issue. The AWM checklist includes objectives in relation to promoting and encouraging sustainable energy and ensuring that the design of individual buildings does not undermine the sustainability of the overall development. This relates to the use of resources and the overall aim of reducing the carbon footprint of new buildings.
- 6.7 In order to assist developers in addressing this issue, a high level appraisal of the potential for the use of low and zero carbon technologies on the site was undertaken with the specific aim of demonstrating how the current Local Plan policy requirement for 10% of the development's power could be achieved through renewable sources. This work also assessed a number of energy efficient design measures that can be used to reduce the carbon footprint of buildings and the development. A full description of the energy options considered is set out within the background report to the brief, entitled Low/Zero Carbon Technologies Appraisal.
- 6.8 It should be noted that before considering energy supply, focus should be given to designing energy efficient buildings. The appraisal contains a number of measures that could be undertaken to reduce the building energy demand and should these be implemented then it is estimated that this could reduce carbon emissions by approximately 44%.
- 6.9 The appraisal identifies that the site appears best suited for a decentralised energy system powered by a gas or biomass combined heat and power unit. This would need to be subject to an Air Quality Assessment, particularly given the location of the Air Quality Management Area to the east of the Station Area. The use of this system is in accordance with the supplement to PPS1 (Planning and Climate Change) and PPS 22 (Renewable Energy) and could reduce the carbon footprint of the site by approximately 13%. Development proposals for the site should therefore consider the provision of an energy centre. The brief has identified the triangle of land between the railway lines as a suitable location for such a centre and a good use of the land, although it is recognised other locations may also be appropriate.
- 6.10 In the event that biomass was considered inappropriate for the combined heat and power unit, it is acknowledged that the use of a decentralised energy system powered by gas will not provide a renewable contribution of energy. In this context, an assessment will be needed during the detailed design phase to consider how the 10% renewable energy target can be

met. The high level appraisal undertaken has identified the following alternative options considered to have the most potential for achieving this target:

- Solar Thermal Hot Water Cells on each of the residential houses (not apartments);
- Photovoltaic Cells on selected buildings; and
- Ground Source Heat Pumps to provide a source of cooling for the office and commercial units.

6.11 Other options will also need to be assessed and implemented where appropriate during the detailed design phase.

## **Application of the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist**

6.12 In summary, development within the Station Area should seek to achieve the sustainability objectives set out within national and local policy, including the Council's Sustainable Buildings SPD. There are a number of features within the Station Area which help in this process and this section of the brief and the background reports provide guidance to developers on how they might comply with sustainability objectives. The Council will expect developers to provide sustainability statements and use the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist to demonstrate the sustainability of its proposals and welcome early discussions during the detailed design stage to help ensure that the highest scores are achieved.

## 7. WAY FORWARD

- 7.1 The redevelopment of the Station Area presents a number of significant opportunities to contribute towards the economic regeneration of the Old Town and improve the appearance, environment and accessibility of this part of Leamington Spa. The Council recognises that the private sector will take the lead in bringing forward redevelopment proposals and that they will be the main means by which these opportunities are realised. To that end, this brief establishes a comprehensive framework to guide landowners and prospective developers and ensure that they deliver the aims and objectives for this important area.
- 7.2 The Council also recognises that there are a number of issues which must be addressed to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of the appropriate redevelopment of the area. Some of these issues have been identified within this brief, such as the need for re-location of existing uses to suitable alternative sites. These issues cannot be easily addressed alone and it is appropriate therefore for the Council to set out how it proposes to assist with addressing these issues and supporting the delivery of the proposals within the brief.
- 7.3 The Council welcomes the momentum that has developed through the preparation of this brief and the commitment shown by other stakeholders to engage and assist in this process and with the delivery of development. This commitment is shared by the Council who wish to maintain this through closer partnership working with the landowners, the highways bodies, other infrastructure providers, funding partners, and other stakeholders. This will be vital to bringing together knowledge and expertise to identify solutions that ensure high quality and sustainable development can be delivered.
- 7.4 The Council will therefore seek to establish a 'Station Area Delivery Partnership' which will be a working group(s) of key stakeholders and partners who will discuss and advise on matters in relation to implementation of the brief and work to secure its early delivery. The role and remit of the Partnership will be agreed in due course with the partners, but could consider issues such as progressing further studies and technical work required to assist with delivery, the need for delivery vehicles and other mechanisms, the availability of public and private sector funding opportunities, the approach to sharing development costs and pooling of Section 106 contributions, and other relevant development and planning matters.
- 7.5 The brief has established a land use framework for the area but further guidance in the form of more detailed design guidelines may be prepared together with more detailed transportation guidance, including the potential development of an area-wide Travel Plan of



which the Station Travel Plan would be a key part. The Council will consider the need for any further, more detailed guidance. The Council will also encourage landowners to bring forward detailed proposals in light of the brief and will expect early pre-application consultations with the Council, local stakeholders and the general public.

- 7.6 The redevelopment of the various parcels of land within the Station Area will be a complex and long term undertaking which will require management and co-ordination to ensure that the benefits of the wider vision are achieved. Successful redevelopment will require a combination of land use, urban design and transportation actions that will be brought forward by the private and public sectors working together and, as such, will need to be co-ordinated to achieve maximum regeneration impacts. The Council will also therefore take on an overall monitoring and review role to ensure actions are co-ordinated and benefits delivered.