

# PLANNING FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 February 2011 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 7.00 p.m.

## **PRESENT:**

**Warwick District Councillors of the Forum:** Councillor Guest (Chairman);  
Councillors Boad, Crowther, Illingworth, MacKay and Mrs Tyrrell.

## **Representatives of Town and Parish Councils and other Organisations of the Forum:**

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Bishops Tachbrook Parish Council           | Councillor R Brookes |
| Bishops Tachbrook Parish Council           | Councillor Bule      |
| CPRE Warwickshire                          | Mr M Sullivan        |
| Kenilworth Society                         | Mrs J Illingworth    |
| Leek Wootton & Guys Cliffe Parish Council  | Councillor R Coates  |
| Ramblers Association                       | Mr S Wallsgrove      |
| Residents of Central Kenilworth            | Mr A Garsed          |
| Warwick Society                            | Mr A Butcher         |
| Warwick Society                            | Mr J MacKay          |
| Warwickshire Association of Local Councils | Mr A Moore           |

Apologies for absence were received from Whitnash and Kenilworth Town Councils and Councillors Mrs Bunker, Ms Dean and Dhillon.

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2010 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **3. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

### **4. ITEMS FROM KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL**

No representatives from Kenilworth Town Council attended the meeting to represent their items, therefore this item was deferred.

### **5. LOCALISM BILL**

The forum received a verbal update from the Planning Policy and Conservation Team on the implications of the Localism Bill for local planning at the request of Bishop's Tachbrook Parish Council, Kenilworth Society and Warwick Society.

The Group Leader for Policy Projects and Conservation, explained that there were a number of key implications of the Localism Bill, which included new arrangements for nationally significant infrastructure projects and the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy. He also explained that designated bodies such as a Town or Parish Council would be allowed to prepare Neighbourhood plans with independent examinations to ensure that the plan conformed to the Local

## **PLANNING FORUM MINUTES (Continued)**

Plan and National Policies and any neighbouring Neighbourhood Plans. Once these had passed the examination a local referendum would take place and the plans would be adopted by the Council if there was support of 50% or more.

He went on to explain that there was a new White Paper regarding Local Growth which was published in November 2010. This gave powerful incentives for local authorities to deliver sustainable economic development with a New Homes Bonus Scheme, options to enable Councils to retain locally-raised business rates and new borrowing powers to enable local authorities to borrow on future revenues for growth. He also explained that there was a Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership in place and that national planning policy would be simplified into one document.

Following the presentation a number of Councillors agreed that the ability to produce Neighbourhood plans was welcomed and that it could allow the communities to grow and decide which areas of land they thought should be developed. It was confirmed that the examinations that would need to take place as part of a Neighbourhood Plan and these would have to be paid for by the the Council and/or community.

Alan Moore from the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) asked for details of how a referendum would be run to adopt a neighbourhood plan. It was explained that this information would not be available until more details were released by the government.

In response to a question from Antony Butcher from the Warwick Society it was confirmed that a community was able to designate a building that they considered an important feature of that community and restrict it from being used for other purposes.

### **6. LOCAL PLAN**

The forum received a presentation from the Planning Policy and Conservation Team Leader on the process for the Local Plan at the request of Bishop's Tachbrook Parish Council and the Warwick Society.

He explained that in September 2010 the Executive took the decision not to proceed with the Core Strategy and that there would be further consultation with the public about different levels of growth. There was a report due to be considered at Executive on 2 March 2011, which if agreed would allow consultation to commence from March 2011 to June 2011.

He also explained the consultation process would be made more accessible with the local community being made more aware to enable them to be involved and engaged with the process letting them have their say on housing numbers and what they would like for the future.

A number of Councillors and Antony Butcher from the Warwick Society were concerned that the local plan should not just be about housing numbers but also about building communities with public services and amenities for the new or larger communities and consulting with communities that are already established to find out what they want for their future.

Councillor Boad asked that economic development was also investigated to enable shops in the town centres to grow and to attract more people into these areas.

## **PLANNING FORUM MINUTES (Continued)**

Councillor Brookes from Bishops Tachbrook Parish Council wanted to know why the plan was going to be set up for 15 years and not a shorter length of time, such as 10 years. It was explained that the current national plan policy required local authorities to plan for a 15 year period with no indication that this would change and that to set a clear direction and certainty for local communities and the development industry and to tackle major issues it would require a long length of time.

Councillors Illingworth and MacKay expressed their concern over the lack of employment opportunity there could be which would not attract people to work in the district as well as live in it, which would mean people living within Warwick District but working elsewhere.

### **7. ITEMS FROM BISHOPS TACHBROOK PARISH COUNCIL**

- (A) An update by Warwick District Council on the proposals for the Gypsy/Traveller permanent and temporary pitch sites.

The Planning Policy and Conservation Team Leader gave a presentation to the forum, which provided an update on the proposals for Gypsy and Traveller pitches which explained that because of the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategies WDC (Warwick District Council) was awaiting a new national policy. He also explained that there was evidence of a local need for transit sites for those travellers passing through the District. Officers of the Council were currently continuing in their search for transit sites but none had been confirmed as yet. In May 2011 evidence testing of the need for a permanent site will be established at the ongoing Beasale inquiry.

Councillor Brookes asked if any land had been identified such as the land at Greys Mallory. It was confirmed that no definite sites had been confirmed but there were ongoing talk with Warwickshire Police and Warwickshire County Council regarding land they could make available.

- (B) An update on the District Councils position as regard to High Speed 2.

The Planning Policy and Conservation Team Leader gave a presentation to the forum, which provided an update on WDC's position with regard to High Speed 2. He explained that WDC supported the position of the County Council which was opposed to the scheme. This was because there was no environmental or economical benefit to Warwickshire. WDC had also agreed to work with other Councils that were along the route of HS2 and pledged £50,000 towards preparing its case once consultation had begun.

Councillor Brookes asked if there was a chance the Councils position could change if the route was altered. However the Council was unsure if this would make a difference to their position until they had been consulted on a new proposed route.

Steven Walsgrove from the Ramblers Association confirmed that a motion opposing the details of HS2 would be put forward at their national AGM because of the high level of concern the impact of the route would cause on paths and country side.

Councillor Illingworth told the forum that the planning authority did not have any impact or influence on the route and that if HS2 went ahead any plan WDC had in place would not be relevant. He also suggested that there be a policy in

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the new local plan that would not allow planning permission for the areas already marked out for HS2.

(The meeting ended at 8.15pm)