

Planning and Development Brief

Station Area,

Royal Leamington Spa

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Plan 01 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Development Brief Area

Plan 02 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Land Use Plan

Plan 03 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Access and Movement Plan

Plan 04 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Constraints Plan

Plan 05 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Policy Allocations and Designations

Plan 06 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Preferred Land Uses

Plan 07 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Land North of Railway (Option 1)

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Plan 09 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Station Area

Plan 10 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Area South

Plan 11 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Area South of Railway, Former Ford Foundry

Plan 12 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Area West of Railway

Plan 13 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Triangle Area

Plan 14 – Station Area - Royal Leamington Spa : Composite Masterplan

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 last year 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 of this year 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 this first draft of the planning and development brief. The output from this technical work is available as a series of baseline environmental reports.
- 1.4 This draft brief has been prepared for the purposes of engaging with the public and local stakeholders as to the nature and type of future development that may come forward in the future within the Station Area. The Council recognises the importance of public consultation and opportunities will be provided for people and groups to give their views on the draft brief during June and July of this year. To help guide the public, a number of questions are shown at the end of each section of the brief.

- 1.5 In order to understand the rationale behind the proposals for the Station Area, the draft 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 at Chapter Six. The brief concludes with a summary and details of the public consultation (Chapter Seven).
- 1.6 Following consultation, the Council will review the draft brief and make any necessary changes before adopting the final brief as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This will then be used by the Council for the purposes of informing its determination of future planning applications within the Station Area.

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.
- 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 important site and the railway station, as a means of promoting a more sustainable approach to development;
 - Encouraging good integration and linkages between different land uses;
 - Promoting a sense of place with buildings and space of a townscape quality; 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 draft 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.

Feedback Sought

2.5 The Council would welcome your comments on the vision and whether you consider any changes are required.

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 Waste Transfer Site 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 are 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;
- 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.

Feedback Sought

3.22 The Council would welcome your comments on the appropriateness of the boundary of the area and whether you agree with the description of the Station Area and its constraints and opportunities.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 There are a number of planning policies at a national, regional and local level which will guide the future development of the Station Area. These are contained in National Planning Policy Statements, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands, the Warwick District Local Plan 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.

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

- 4.3 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,
- 4.4 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

- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 The WMRSS is currently 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 35ha (86 acres) of employment land, including 45,000 square metres of office development within or on the edge of the town centre.
- 4.7 The recently 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 park and garden of Victoria Park.

Transportation Proposals

- 4.8 The Warwickshire Local Transport Plan also 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.

Feedback Sought

4.9 The Council would welcome any comments you may have on the planning policy context and how it affects 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 for the area which it is seeking your views on. 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 The following generic development principles have been put forward to guide the redevelopment of the Station Area:
- Redevelopment should fit within an overall planning framework for the Station Area which will guide and establish 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 contribute towards sustainable development, including adapting and mitigating for climate change through resource and energy efficiency and reductions in emissions as part of a comprehensive approach to low carbon or zero rated carbon and renewable energy;
 - High quality design must be achieved in order to provide an attractive entrance to the town and external spaces, 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 its impact on the congested local highway network through reducing access points for vehicles where possible, providing parking at suitable levels to discourage unnecessary car use but without having an adverse impact on parking availability in the local surrounding areas, and providing alternatives by making contributions towards transportation improvements, including the proposed Park and Ride proposals to the south of Leamington, improvements to the accessibility of the railway

station to the wider Station Area and the provision of pedestrian and cycle links to nearby areas; and,

- The design, layout and landscape must be used to create an attractive, safe and acceptable living and working environment for residents, employees and visitors, that also enhances the ecological value of the area.

Feedback Sought

5.3 The Council would like your views as to the appropriateness of these principles and whether there are any additional principles that should apply to the area as a whole.

Former Ford Foundry and Associated Landholdings

- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 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.

- 5.8 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.
- 5.9 In this context, the Council wishes to seek views as to the appropriateness of an office-led mixed use redevelopment of the site. The mix of uses would be predominantly office (B1 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 ancillary retail/leisure uses. The exact split of the mix of uses would need to be informed by more detailed site analysis and appraisal.
- 5.10 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 the preparation of the brief and bringing forward land for development, it is appropriate to identify the residential potential at this stage.
- 5.11 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.
- 5.12 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 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. Within this Eco Park, 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. Other innovative uses which do not generate significant car movements may also be considered. The Council wishes to seek views as to the appropriateness of this area being used for an energy centre and/or works for nature conservation and its interpretation/education.

Development Principles

5.13 The following development principles are therefore put forward for the redevelopment of the former Ford foundry and adjoining land (also shown on Plan 06):

- High quality employment-led mixed use redevelopment will be appropriate, including office (B1 uses), hotel/conference centre, residential apartments and ancillary retail/leisure uses subject to the use of design and layout to provide an acceptable relationship between the proposed uses;
- The use of design and layout including their external spaces to provide an appropriate relationship with future phases of development to the east of the site as part of a comprehensive development 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;
- The provision of an appropriate access arrangement 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;
- The provision of a pedestrian/cycle link along the eastern side of Princes Drive to link the western side of Princes Drive to the east as well as Victoria Park with the development and the Grand Union Canal;
- Employment development on the former Ford car park subject to the design and layout protecting the residential amenity of the adjoining residential properties and providing a safe means of access onto Prince Drive;
- The development of low-intensity uses on the land to the north of the foundry, such as ancillary uses to the adjoining developments, including a potential low carbon or renewable energy centre, and an area for nature conservation enhancement and education; and

- Create new linear blocks of tree and shrub planting to screen the railway, provide an attractive backdrop to development and create a potential wildlife corridor.

Feedback Sought

5.14 The Council would like your views as to the possible uses for the former Ford foundry and associated landholdings and the other development principles and whether there are any additional principles that should be included.

Old Warwick Road Frontage

- 5.15 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.
- 5.16 The existing uses do not make the best use of this highly accessible location or present the type of high quality development that the Council wishes to see in the long term in this area. The Council wishes therefore to encourage further employment-led mixed use development (B1a and b) as part of future phases of growth of the development of the former Ford foundry site. Development would present an opportunity to improve linkages between the development of the former Ford foundry and the railway station and provide alternative accommodation for other 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

- 5.17 The following development principles are therefore put forward for the redevelopment of the Old Warwick Road Frontage area (also shown on Plan 07):
- High quality employment-led redevelopment will be appropriate, including office, research/hi-technology (B1a and b uses) and/or further or higher education uses, and ancillary retail/leisure uses subject to the use of design and layout to provide an acceptable relationship between the proposed uses;
 - The use of design and layout including external spaces to provide an appropriate relationship with future 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 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
- Improve nature conservation values of existing green 'wedge' and establish footpath / cycle links with neighbouring green spaces.

Feedback Sought

5.18 The Council would like your views as to the possible uses for the Old Warwick Road Frontage and any comments you may have on the development principles.

Railway Station

- 5.19 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 a field. 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. Chiltern Railways have been undertaking a number of improvements to the station and its facilities in order to improve its appearance and use.
- 5.20 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. At present, there is a shortage of parking spaces with only 160 spaces available 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 deter some people from using the train as an option for travel. The Council therefore wishes to seek views on the appropriateness of extending car parking through the provision of a multi-deck car park on the site of the existing car park to the west of the station.
- 5.21 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 provide a good impression for visitors to the town. There are therefore clear benefits both for rail users and the town generally from 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 feasibility work.

- 5.22 A new entrance would provide an opportunity to improve access to this area for pedestrians/cyclists and provide space for vehicles for drop-off and pick-up. It would also provide an opportunity to create a more attractive public space with access to Lower Avenue. New development, including residential and/or commercial/business uses, could be provided overlooking the public space to increase surveillance of this area and encourage more pedestrian activity. The Council therefore wishes to seek views on the appropriateness of providing a northern entrance to the station with associated development and improvements to the public space.
- 5.23 The provision of additional car parking spaces and an alternative access to the station 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 removal of parking and rationalisation of these uses and access points onto Old Warwick Road may create the opportunity for development in the south east corner of the forecourt.
- 5.24 The previous supplementary planning guidance for the Station Area supported the potential for development within this corner of the site. This was, however, prior to the station building being listed. Any development would need to protect the setting of the listed building through restricting the scale of development and achieving a high standard of design. There may also be impacts on the setting of the station gardens and any development is likely to require changes to the form of the gardens which could potentially create a stronger relationship with the public space around the station forecourt.
- 5.25 Any use would need to improve linkages between the station activities and the adjoining commercial uses within the Old Town. There maybe potential therefore to support a small scale retail or other bespoke commercial use. The Council therefore wish to seek views on the appropriateness of development of a commercial use on the south east corner of the station forecourt.

Development Principles

5.26 The following development principles are therefore put forward for the redevelopment of the Railway Station area as part of a comprehensive package of proposals to improve accessibility (also shown on Plan 08):

- Provision of a multi-deck car park to the west of the station with a green roof;
- Provision of a northern entrance to the station and improvements to access arrangements for vehicles and pedestrians on the northern side of the station;
- Improvements to the layout of the station forecourt; and,
- The development of a commercial use on the south east corner of the station forecourt subject to the design and position not adversely affecting the setting of the listed building or associated gardens.

Feedback Sought

5.27 The Council would like your views as to the possible developments to the railway stations and the development principles.

Land North of the Railway

5.28 This area is allocated for a mix of uses within the Local Plan and planning permission has been approved (subject to a Section 106 agreement) for office development on the former coal yard at the western end of Station Approach. This reflects the previous supplementary planning guidance adopted in the late 1990s and the current Local Plan and 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 uses on the former garage site. The adjoining Kingdom Hall and café use to the north of Station Approach would not be affected by these proposals.

5.29 Notwithstanding this, the Council recognises that a number of constraints have 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 uses and deliver the necessary access improvements is uncertain and the

attractiveness to the market of this area as a commercial office location is considered marginal given potentially more attractive alternatives.

- 5.30 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 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 which will hinder redevelopment of this area.
- 5.31 As an alternative option, and in order to address the particular environmental and highway access issues associated with this area, the Council wishes to seek the views on 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 consider that residential uses may also include sheltered housing within the retirement sector. The adjoining Kingdom Hall and café use would not require to form part of the comprehensive redevelopment of this area but may wish to in the event they wanted to re-locate elsewhere.

Development Principles

- 5.32 The following development principles are therefore put forward for the redevelopment of this area (also shown on Plan 09):
- Employment and residential uses will be appropriate subject to the use of design and layout to provide an acceptable relationship with the existing uses in the area, namely the bus depot, Kingdom Hall and café (subject to their potential re-location);
 - High standards of design and layout will be required in order to enhance the appearance of the adjoining Conservation Area and provide enhanced views of the town from the railway;
 - The use of design, layout 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;

- 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.

Feedback Sought

5.33 The Council would like your views as to the appropriateness of residential uses across the land to the north of the railway and the suggested development principles.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

- 6.1 To promote the principles of sustainability in the redevelopment of the Station Area, the West Midlands Regional Sustainability Checklist was used as a guide. This can be accessed via www.checklistwestmidlands.co.uk.
- 6.2 The West Midlands Sustainability Checklist 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.
- 6.3 The Checklist is an on-line tool that identifies a range of different economic, social and environmental sustainability issues covered in National Guidance and the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. It enables an assessment to be made to determine to what extent a development site proposal will deliver on different aspects of sustainability. The checklist can be used to inform a masterplan or specific project with the outcome being a score against one of the eight objectives listed in Table 6.1 below. Each objective contains a number of questions for which an answer can be given based on the level of best practice implemented.

6.4 Access to the completed checklist is available online and with login details available from Warwick District Council.

- 6.5 In preparing this development brief, the checklist was used to:
- Highlight sustainability objectives for inclusion within the Brief; and,
 - Identify any additional technical studies that may be needed to promote sustainability in the Brief.
- 6.6 A summary of the key areas of the checklist is provided below together with a summary of the sustainability work used to inform the brief.

General Sustainability Issues

- 6.7 The Station Area benefits from a number of other sustainability features which promote the principles contained within the Warwick District Local Plan and 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 thereby promoting a live / work environment;
 - 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.
- 6.8 Development proposals should capitalise on these principles in order to maximise the sustainability benefits of the station area.

Energy

- 6.9 The Checklist aims to ensure that the design of individual buildings does not undermine the sustainability of the overall development. With regard to energy this relates to the use of resources and the overall aim of reducing the carbon footprint of new buildings.
- 6.10 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 achieving 10% of the development's power through renewable resources. 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. For a full description of the energy solutions please refer to the Energy Appraisal technical report.
- 6.11 Before considering energy supply, focus should be given to designing energy efficient buildings. The Energy Appraisal report contains a number of measures that should be taken to reduce the building energy demand and should these be implemented then it is estimated that this may reduce carbon emissions by approximately 44%.
- 6.12 The appraisal identifies that the site appears suited for a decentralised energy system powered by a gas or biomass (subject to Air Quality assessment) combined heat and power unit. This is in accordance with the supplement to PPS1 (Sustainable Communities) and PPS 22 (renewable energy) and would reduce the carbon footprint of the site by approximately 13%. In considering development proposals for the site, these should therefore include provision for an energy centre. On the illustrative Masterplan that accompanies this Brief, Area 14, the triangle of land between the railway lines, is considered to be an ideal location.
- 6.13 The use of a decentralised energy system powered by a gas CHP unit will not provide a renewable contribution of energy. To confirm if the 10% renewable energy target will be met a

further assessment will be needed during the detailed design phase. The appraisal has identified however that the most viable solutions for achieving this target are:

- 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.

6.14 These solutions should be assessed and incorporated into development schemes for this area.

Application of the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist

6.15 The Checklist has been used as a guide to identify likely sustainability targets for the planning brief (see below). In order to inform the preferred development and design principles for the Station Area, the illustrative Masterplan has been assessed against the Checklist. It was completed online as far as possible. A number of the questions cannot be answered at this stage and therefore this checklist should be used to inform any detailed design and completed as part of the planning application. Where possible best practice should be achieved.

6.16 Based on the questions completed to date and assumptions of achievable targets the following scores have been achieved.

Table 6.1 - Summary of the likely score of the Station Area Development on the sustainability checklist.

Topic	Current Score based on Masterplan information and achievable targets at Detailed Design.
Climate Change	Best
Community	Best
Place Making	Good
Transport	Best
Ecology	Best
Resources	Good
Business	Best
Buildings	Best

6.17 The table identifies that the illustrative scheme would score (and has the potential to score) Best practice in terms of sustainability in six out of eight categories. To guide the development to these scores, the following targets are proposed for development within the study area.

- BREEAM Excellent on all non-residential units
- Code For Sustainable Homes level four on residential units
- Implementation of the recommendations in the energy strategy
- Completion of the regional checklist with a score of Best Practice in each of the categories.

6.18 In summary, development within the station area should be consistent with sustainability objectives in local and national policy. With regard to the regional sustainability checklist, the new development should promote the principles contained in the Checklist and extensive discussion will be required with Warwick DC during detailed design to ensure that the above scores are achieved.

7. WAY FORWARD

- 7.1 The redevelopment of the Station Area presents a number of opportunities to contribute towards the economic regeneration of the Old Town and improve the appearance, environment and accessibility of this part of Leamington Spa. However, there are also a number of issues that need to be addressed to ensure the most appropriate use of this land. The Council have sought to identify these issues through this draft brief and are keen to seek people's views on the potential future use and development of the Station Area.
- 7.2 The Council are committed to consultation on the preparation of its planning policy documents and have an adopted Statement of Community Involvement to guide this process. Although this brief is not being prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document, the Council will follow the same principles of engaging with the public. Preliminary consultation has already taken place informally with key stakeholders and environmental bodies. This is to be followed by more formal consultation for a period of six weeks where comments are invited from all interested parties and the wider community. Details will be advertised in the local press and on the Council's website and methods of consultation will include letters/emails, a public exhibition to be held in a local venue and questionnaire/comments form.
- 7.3 The output from this consultation will be analysed and presented within a report of public consultation before informing the final version of the brief which will be published in September 2008.