

# PLANNING FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7 December 2009 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 7.00 p.m.

## PRESENT:

**Warwick District Councillors of the Forum:** Councillors; Barrott, Coker, Ms Dean, Dhillon, and MacKay.

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

Ramblers Association	Mr S Wallsgrove
Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton Joint Parish Council	Councillor J Murphy
Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton Joint Parish Council	Councillor R Mulgrue
Kenilworth History and Archaeology Society	Mr N Stevens
Kenilworth Society	Mrs J Illingworth
Kenilworth Society	Mr M Synott
Kenilworth Society	Mrs M Levy
Warwick Society	Mr R Higgins
Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe Parish Council	Councillor R Coates
Warwick Society	Mr J MacKay
CPRE Warwickshire	Mr M Sullivan
Royal Leamington Spa Town Council	Councillor S Wheeler

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Malcolm Doody.

Councillor Coker substituted for Councillor Illingworth.

Apologies for absences were received from Residents of Central Kenilworth organisation.

### 1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Dhillon, be appointed as Chairman of the Forum for the ensuing municipal year.

### 2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Barrott, be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Forum for the ensuing municipal year.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2009 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

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

### **6. DETAILS OF THE NEW PLANNING REGIME FOR NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROJECTS**

The Forum received a verbal report from the Group Leader Development Control regarding the details of the new planning regime for nationally significant infrastructure and projects.

Nationally significant infrastructure and projects had been defined by the Government to include power lines, power stations, harbours, railways and other similar infrastructure. The legislative framework was designed to provide a streamlined approach to allow for one consent to deal with all aspects.

Applications would be determined by a commission, based on national policy statements which would be published by the government about infrastructure areas. The policy statements would establish the need for specific types of infrastructure and their location.

Each statement would establish the government position including thresholds for the need for an application to be centrally rather than locally. The statement would also provide guidance for similar schemes that were below the established threshold. Local planning guides would need to reflect any positions set out in national policy statements.

To date two policy statements had been issued. These were; Energy (including nuclear power, power stations and power lines) and Ports. It was anticipated that statements on; strategic roads, railways, waste water and hazardous waste (including incineration of waste) would be issued in 2010, with a statement on airports following in 2011.

Warwick District Council would be a statutory consultee for any application and all applicants had a statutory obligation to consult local residents effectively.

Following the acceptance of an application there would be a second round of consultation, when the Council would have the option of producing a local report, into what local considerations the commission should have regard to when determining the application. Following the conclusion of the second round of consultation the commission would aim to determine the application within one year.

The Planning aid website now had details of the new regime and to date details of any appeals process had not been published.

The Chairman thanked the Group Leader Development Control for the information.

### **9. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Group Leader of Policy, Projects and Conservation provided an update, by way of a presentation, on developments with regard to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

The Examination in public had concluded in June 2009, where there had been good representation from local parish/town councils and community groups and the inspectors report was issued in September 2009.

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

There has been a lot of debate on the requirements for new homes within Warwick District between 2006 and 2026. The figure in the draft RSS was 10,800. Nathaniel Litchfield Partners report suggested there was a need for a further 10,000 homes in addition to this figure. At the conclusion of the examination in public the panel recommended a figure of 11,000 new homes for Warwick District. This increase was purely to round numbers up for ease and clarity.

There was a significant amount of discussion regarding the new homes allocation for Coventry and specifically the development of some of their allocation in the Gibbet Hill/Kings Hill area of Warwick District. The decision on this was that 3,500 new homes of the allocation for Coventry could be built into this area.

The report of the Panel was not open to comment but for the government to take a decision on. Following the decision by the Government on the Panel's report, the next stage would be proposed changes to the report by the secretary of state which was envisaged to be published by 14 December 2009. A consultation period, on the proposed changes to the Panel's report by the Secretary of State, would follow into 2010.

The Government would consider responses to the comments on the consultation, publish and adopt the final strategy by the end of March 2010. Warwick District Council would be consulted and it was anticipated that a report would be taken to the Council's Executive in February 2010.

The RSS phase 3 revision consultation regarding environment, minerals/aggregates, gypsies/travellers options ended in August 2009. The Regional Assembly reviewed options and decided that they would not be progressing with Phase 3 revision but this would be fed into Single Integrated Regional Strategy made by the Regional Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands and the Leaders Board.

It was recognised that this would leave a policy gap but position statements would be provided by the Regional Assembly to fill the gaps on minerals/aggregates and gypsies/travellers as there is a need for these. However, definitive consultation timescales and processes for the production of these had not been published yet.

The Chairmen then invited questions from members of the forum for the Group Leader of Policy, Projects and Conservation to respond to, as summarised below:

- The Council was surprised with the allocation of Coventry's new homes that had been permitted to be built within Warwick District, but it was as overspill and as a last resort in later years of the time frame;
- It had been noted that the Secretary of State had announced that there would be an eco town in the Keresley area of North Coventry;
- The proposed changes by the Secretary of State would be clear and explicit, outlining what would be allowed. If the Secretary of State did not comment on the proposed change by the Panel, then it is assumed the change was not accepted and the Strategy reverts to the previous position;
- The Phase 3 revision would have provided a response to a regional issue and set requirements for pitches, both temporary and permanent, for travellers and gypsies within the boundary of each authority. These would then be set in the position statement, but as yet the figures proposed were not clear;
- All principle authorities had undertaken a survey detailing what the site provision should be for gypsies and travellers. Within Warwick District it was accepted that around 11 permanent and 15 temporary positions were

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

required. This would be tested locally through the Housing Services and would lead to a separate planning development document which would be produced after the Core Strategy;

- The Council was looking for the position of the temporary sites earlier rather than later to allow for improved determination of need and the establishment of these sites would provide a location to move gypsies/travellers to from illegal sites;
- The Panel appeared to consider that the Coventry overspill should come through earlier than anticipated, because the main aim was to ensure the delivery of 33,000 homes. However the overspill into Nuneaton should be first and no definitive timescale for Warwick overspill and the position of this Council was that this should still be a last resort;
- Monitoring of when the threshold had been reached to trigger the use of land within Warwick District for the Coventry allocation would be via the annual monitoring reports produced by each authority;
- All Council's were aware that when the Coventry housing allocation was required to overspill in to Warwick District there would be a need for cross boundary working in terms of infrastructure and service provision as although they would be in Warwick District it would be more practicable for service delivery to be from Coventry City Council.

The Chairman thanked the Group Leader of Policy, Projects and Conservation for their presentation and responses to the questions as well as members of the Forum for their questions.

### **10. CORE STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Group Leader of Policy, Projects and Conservation gave a presentation on the Core Strategy. The Consultation on the preferred options for the Core Strategy had taken place between July and September 2010 and the Council appreciated all the town and parish councils and organisation meetings that were arranged and the Council was invited to attend. Around 2,000 responses to the consultation had been received by the Council.

The next stage would be to produce a draft Core Strategy by the end of May 2010. This would allow for further assessment of the responses received including studies into infrastructure and green infrastructure and to allow further time for clarification on the housing requirement level.

Following its publication there would be a statutory consultation period of six weeks, which the Council would try to alert people to prior to its commencement. It was the Council's intention the draft Core Strategy would be submitted to the Government by the end of August 2010, followed by an examination in public in December 2010 and to have the strategy approved by March 2011.

The Coventry City Core Strategy was a step ahead of Warwick District, was with the Government and the examination in public closed on 5 December 2009. Warwick District Council had submitted evidence to examination. The Inspector would now produce a binding report for adoption, which would be published in April 2010.

The Chairman invited questions from members of the forum for the Group Leader of Policy, Projects and Conservation to respond to, as summarised below:

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

- All responses to the preferred option stage would be considered and would be available via the District Council website for inspection, in the case of petitions the number of signatories would be noted;
- Any petition submitted would be responded to through the organiser of the petition;
- The Council would be producing an infrastructure delivery plan; about what would be required, who would deliver it, when it would be delivered and the cost; and this would be consulted on;
- The Council was aware there could be a need to extend the life of the current local plan;
- At present the timescale for adoption of the Core Strategy was only indicative but it was considered achievable.

### **11. Questions from the Kenilworth Society**

- (A) “If Kenilworth is to evolve as a low carbon and sustainable local economy, the preservation of employment land is essential. Recent developments in the town suggest that vacant employment land is more likely to be perceived as windfall land for residential use rather than an opportunity for new local employment opportunities in the future. Can we have clarification of official attitudes?”

In addition to the question, concern was also expressed regarding the move from light industry to office work, where Kenilworth had a proud heritage of light industry specifically in more technical and detailed areas.

The Group Leader of Policy, Projects and Conservation responded explaining that employment land in Kenilworth was important as there were more workers than jobs and this leads to commuting which was not sustainable. The approach currently was through the application of Local Plan Policy SC2 which was applied to all change of use or re-development applications across this district.

The Council was required to monitor employment land supply and this was set against the structure plan land requirement. Warwick District does have an oversupply of employment land largely in Leamington and Warwick. The development of the Thickthorn site could allow for this and when applications come forward this would be something to consider for the Kenilworth area.

Councillor Mackay highlighted that when a significant industrial site was brought forward for development in Kenilworth the strongest lobby for housing came from Kenilworth councillors and residents.

- (B) High Speed 2 – London to Birmingham and Manchester High Speed Railway Line

The Kenilworth Society posed the following question for response

“High Speed 2’s Newsletter No. 5, dated September 2009, contained the following statement:-

“...my team recently completed an extensive round of confidential discussions with county and local planning authorities from London to the West Midlands about specific options.”

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

It was likely that at least one of the options for the London to Birmingham section of the high speed rail line would cross Warwick District. Can the District Council confirm that they have had discussions with representatives of High Speed 2, and if so, when will information on the proposed route be made available to members of the public? What, if any, were the implications for the proposed Kenilworth Railway Station and rail links?"

In addition, the Kenilworth Society expressed that according to the BBC this week HS2 now know the route they want to take.

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager explained that there was a meeting in August 2009 between all County authorities and to attend they had had to sign a confidentially agreement. However the manager had checked with HS2 on responses to this question and was allowed to say the following:

"A confidential response would be made to the government by HS2 before the end of December 2009, which should be published by February 2010. The consultation process for this was not known.

The implications for the new Kenilworth Railway Station were unclear. However, latest news on the provision of Kenilworth Railway station was promising and it would potentially be completed by 2012. and is looking good for 2012. HS2 size should mean that Kenilworth railway station would be operational long before HS2 construction commenced.

### **12. Date of Next Meeting**

The dates of the next three meetings of the Planning Forum were 4 February 2010, 20 September 2010 and 10 February 2011 at 7.00pm.

(The meeting ended at 8.35pm)