

# PLANNING FORUM

Notes from the Planning Forum meeting held on Monday 1 October 2012 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 7.00 p.m.

## PRESENT:

**Warwick District Councillors:** Councillors Mrs Bromley, Caborn, Cross, Gill, Mrs Grainger, Mrs Higgins, Illingworth, MacKay, and Mrs Syson.

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

Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton Joint Parish Council	Councillor Clay and Councillor Mrs Gordon
Bishop's Tachbrook Parish Council	Councillor Bullen
Bubbenhall Parish Council	Councillor Symes
Cubbington Parish Council	Councillor Moray and Councillor Saul
Kenilworth Town Council	Councillor Cooke and Councillor Mrs Dickinson
Leek Wootton and Guy's Cliffe Parish Council	Councillor Alan Moore
Old Milverton and Blackdown Joint Parish Council	Mr Cooper and Councillor Kelsey
Rowington Parish Council	Councillor Mrs Clarke and Councillor Mrs Weir
Whitnash Town Council	Councillor Davis, Councillor Sheppard and Councillor Smart
CPRE Warwickshire	Mrs C Kimberley
Warwickshire County Council	Councillor Mrs Compton and Councillor Davis
Kenilworth Society	Mrs J Illingworth
Mid-Warwickshire Group of the Ramblers Association	Mr S Wallsgrove
Residents of Central Kenilworth (ROCK)	Mr A Garsed
Waterways Association	Mr G Nicholson

The revised Forum was hosted and chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Bertie MacKay. He welcomed all to the meeting and emphasised the revised aims of the Forum.

Councillor MacKay explained that the agenda for the evening was two presentations; one on the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the second, an update on the new Local Plan for Warwick District.

## National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Development Manager, Gary Stephens, outlined the NPPF and responded to questions from the floor explaining the following points:

- the NPPF had changed the emphasis for the protection of the Green Belt, but the principles remained and the only real test would be during the appeal process;
- the consultation on the proposed revisions to permitted development rights was due but all were aware of the concerns of residents and potential impact the revisions could have especially after the effort of officers across the District to enhance design standards and reduce impact on amenity of neighbours;
- it was not felt that agricultural land, particularly high quality agricultural land, needed specific protection because of the requirement to consider the quality

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

of the environment and test this as part of any application. However, it was an area that could be considered as part of the Local Plan; and

- it was recognised that the NPPF looked to remove Green Belt wash over of villages unless their openness was key to the village. Whilst not a requirement, this would enable development within the village with less restrictions and was being considered under the Local Plan with their communities;

### **Local Plan for Warwick District**

Development Policy Manager, Dave Barber, updated the Forum on the new Local Plan for Warwick District.

The consultation on the preferred options had now closed. There was a significant level of response and analysis of the submitted views was now underway. However, the responses had delivered the high quality level of understanding and knowledge of the subject which would assist with the formulation of the draft Local Plan.

The next step would be for a report to Warwick District Council summarising the responses this consultation, which along with the responses would be available via the Council's website.

The key themes to the consultation on the preferred options cluded; all parties felt that infrastructure planning was key to any development and as part of that the infrastructure needed to be assessed to see if it could cope or if it could be developed; there was concern over potential loss of further Green Belt land within the District; housing numbers would need to be carefully considered and justified ahead of any inspection especially as the responses from developers suggested higher numbers and those from other parties suggested much lower numbers.

Work had now started on the transport infrastructure requirements and on the green space requirements within the District. Assessments were being undertaken of proposed sites and the Community Infrastructure Levy. Specific work with villages was due to start soon looking at potential development sites in the community. It was hoped to provide a report to Council in January on the next steps, but the timetable might need to be changed because of the significant volume of responses and the need to analyse all of these and provide appropriate responses to them.

The Development Policy Manager responded to questions from the floor explaining the following points:

- the last Local Plan had numbers defined through regional strategy. All bar 500 of those homes had not been built;
- it was understood that some parties felt the housing requirement had been overestimated, but any level of proposed development needed to be based on evidence and significantly robust to make it through the approval process;
- it was recognised that the Gateway Scheme would impact on the Local Plan and its requirements. The Warwick District aspect would be defined by the next stage of the Local Plan and its impact (either through refusal or approval) would need to be assessed;
- WCC transport team had been excellent in looking at the issues faced by the District highways infrastructure and detailed transport modelling would be starting soon;
- Air Quality Management Areas were an issue that was being considered as part of the Local Plan to see what impact could be made in either improving the Air Quality in these areas or not increasing the problems;
- there was a short fall in affordable housing numbers and the Council would be looking to address this but the required 40% of developments could be reduced through contributions under the Community Infrastructure Levy; and

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

- there was a risk of potentially imposed decisions or required approval because of the gap in the end of the current Local Plan and start of the next Local Plan. However, some policies had been saved and were not incompatible with the National Planning Policy Framework and with each stage of approval more weight would be added to the new Local Plan Policies.

### **Other matters**

The Forum was informed that the Council was working closely with Parish/Town Councils on the initiative to viewing planning applications electronically and whilst there were some teething issues, things were progressing well.

It was felt that it would be useful to discuss the Residential Design Guide at the next meeting of the Forum.

(The meeting ended at 8.15pm)