

# PLANNING FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 February 2006 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 7.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Davis (Chair), Ashford (Vice Chair), Evans, Gill and Smith.

## **Representatives of Town and Parish Councils and other organisations**

Kenilworth Town Council – Trevor Martin  
Kenilworth Society – Joanna Illingworth  
Ramblers Association – Steven Wallsgrove  
Bishops Tachbook Parish Council – G Box  
WALC – Alan Moore  
Warwick Society – R Higgins  
CPRE – Mick Jeffs and M Sullivan  
Budbrooke Parish Council – John Reid

Apologies were received from Councillors Butler, Mrs Compton and Shilton

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

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. **NOTES**

Mrs Illingworth stated that the minutes did not reflect the nature of the discussion on the scheme of delegation and the concerns that were expressed by Kenilworth Town Council and Kenilworth Society. They fell short of fully explaining the concerns of the organisations over the introduction of the new procedure.

John Archer informed the Forum that two members of the Planning Committee were also on the Forum and a full précis of what was discussed would have been relayed to the Planning Committee.

The notes of the meeting held on Monday 26 September 2005 were accepted.

### 3. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

### 4. **UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

John Baldwin and Bob Wilson from the University of Warwick attended the Forum.

John Baldwin gave a detailed presentation on the University of Warwick.

Bob Wilson gave a presentation to the Forum on the history of the development plan and the University's vision for the future, which, was the need for further expansion, student accommodation and to give clarity on the University development within the green belt whilst recognising that this was an

issue for Warwick District Council. It was confirmed that access options would be the subject of a separate presentation.

Feedback to the University representatives would be welcomed and an application should be submitted to Warwick District Council within the next couple of months.

It was explained that the expansion was to enable the University to develop and meet the need to provide a continuing first class educational resource. As one of the top ten Universities in the country research work was fundamental to the University needs which provided resources for development in many areas of benefit to society, particularly in pharmaceuticals and the expansion would enable this area of work to develop further.

The Rapid Bus service was discussed and the route was detailed to the Forum.

## 5. **CYCLE ROUTES**

Lisa Jones from Warwickshire County Council's Transport Planning Unit gave a presentation to the Forum on Cycle Routes within the district.

Lisa gave background to cycling in the County which accounted for less than 2% of all journeys made. National and local policies were also discussed.

Warwickshire's Cycling Strategy was *"to bring about an increase in the amount of cycling in Warwickshire by improving safety and the quality of the cycling environment and promoting cycling as a healthy, sustainable and attractive transport choice"*.

Lisa then went on to detail the cycle route development and a map of the current and proposed cycle routes was handed out to the Forum. Cycle route developments were planned for Leamington Spa, Warwick, Rugby, Stratford and Nuneaton. The policy was to focus resources on urban areas, inter-urban routes and smaller towns in the medium to long term. Warwickshire County Council also worked with Sustrans to develop the National Cycle Network in Warwickshire. Further developments would be made to the Safer Routes to Schools (SRtS) Scheme.

The completed cycle routes in the district were discussed as were the cycle routes currently under development.

Lisa detailed the cycle scheme priorities for 2007 – 2011 which were:

- Warwick – Leamington Town Centre.
- Extending Tachbrook Road cycle route.
- Warwick Town Centre – Rail Station.
- A429 Coventry Road (Woodloes – A46): NCN52.
- Improvements to cycle / pedestrian access to Shires Retail Park.
- Bishops Tachbrook – Warwick Gates (Safer Routes to School scheme).
- Work with British Waterways to further improve towpaths in Warwick District (SRtS).

Monitoring of the usage of cycle routes was discussed. Monitoring was done through cordon counts, auto counters and manual counters.

## 6. QUESTION FROM WARWICK SOCIETY.

Roger Higgins attended the Forum on behalf of the Warwick Society and asked the following question:-

*“We wish to question the manner in which the procedures are being operated, enabling planning officers to exercise delegated powers for agreeing planning applications; in so far as they impact on conservation areas, also they relate to amendments to planning applications already approved by the Warwick District Council Planning Committee as principal items.*

*Protection of these matters do not appear to have been covered by the new procedures – Appendix B approved by the Planning Committee – effective 1 February.*

*We welcome the principle of processing planning applications as quickly as is reasonable – so long as reasonable democratic Council management is maintained – also the environmental interests of Warwick’s conservation area is maintained”.*

Four examples were then used to illustrate the concerns of the Warwick Society.

*“...the Warwick Society whilst respecting the need to process planning applications as expeditiously as practicable – using delegated powers where reasonable – nevertheless – seeks agreement that:*

- *All planning applications, main and supplementary, which impact on the Conservation Area should be subject to the normal notification and consultation process. Delegated powers only then being exercised if there is no significant objection – as defined by Appendix B.*
- *All supplementary planning applications which relate to planning applications already approved by the Planning Committee as principal items – should be subject to the normal notification and consultation process as above”.*

John Archer responded that the delegation agreement was operated with great care and attention. It did not relate any differently to applications in Conservation Areas. Where applications properly met the criteria for delegation, they would be handled in this way. In relation to minor amendments, these had always been subject to delegation where it was considered, carefully, that an amendment to a scheme did not materially affect the appearance or impact. This power was exercised carefully, and, he accepted that there could be differences of opinions over what was appropriate for delegation or not.

Roger Higgins responded that the Warwick Society would ask that no amendments be granted to applications in Conservation Areas. The Planning Authority also needed to exercise care with applications in the Conservation Area that might have an impact on an historic feature.

John Archer stated that he could not amend the current arrangements in place for the consideration of minor amendments.

## 7. QUESTION FROM KENILWORTH SOCIETY

Joanna Illingworth attended the Forum on behalf of Kenilworth Society and asked the following question:

*“Woodmill Meadows, Kenilworth*

*In 1999 the District Planning Authority granted application W/98/1280 for the erection of 42 dwellings at Mill End, Kenilworth after extensive public consultations. During these consultations we were promised that Warwick District Council would adopt as public open space those parts of the site not covered by buildings after the applicant (George Wimpey) had completed the works, such as landscaping, that were required by the conditions of the planning consent. The area in question lies on both sides of Finham Brook and includes the newly created flood plain adjacent to Kenilworth Common.*

*The houses have been built and occupied, but the other works have not been completed and the open spaces have not been adopted.*

*My question is:-*

*Why is Wimpey taking so long to complete the works to the satisfaction of Warwick District Council, what is the Council doing to expedite the process, and is it still the Council's intention to adopt the open areas, including the footpath along the brook, footbridges and floodplain”?*

John Archer responded that Wimpey had not completed the work as quickly as Warwick District Council would have wanted. Wimpey were being pushed to complete the work by Warwick District Council. If issues arose relating to the drains then the Drainage Act might be able to be used to enforce the work. There might be scope for a breach of condition notice to be issued and John Archer would investigate this avenue.

There were no powers to enforce a developer to complete the works in a certain timescale.

John Archer informed the Forum that with regard to the ownership and responsibility for maintenance of the footbridges, he would investigate this and see what options were open to Warwick District Council with regard to enforcement for completion.

## 8. QUESTION FROM KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Councillor Trevor Martin attended the Forum on behalf of Kenilworth Town Council and asked the following question:-

*“Severn Trent are in the middle of a £16 million scheme to upgrade the foul and storm water sewerage of Kenilworth to reduce the flooding of properties. The need has arisen through continued development over many years exceeding existing capacity and significantly through the reduction in permeable area. What actions are the District Council proposing to take to manage the development in Kenilworth in the future so that the new system is not similarly overloaded”?*

John Archer responded that this was an inherited problem from the 1960's and 1970's. The most significant impact on impermeable surfaces was carried out on sites that did not need planning permission, for example conservatories, car

parks etc. Small scale infill developments would increase the impermeable area.

In respect of the large scale developments, for example South Sydenham, there was a sustainable drainage system and this was also the case in the South West Warwick development.

Severn Trent might have to come back to do some more work on these sites, but that would be a decision for them.

Green options, for example harvesting rain water, grey water systems would be something that would happen in the future and this would come through building regulation controls.

Kenilworth Town Council also asked if anything more could be done to protect trees in the District as they played a role in alleviating flooding.

John Archer responded that trees could be removed unless there was a Tree Preservation Order granted and a criteria had to be met for a Tree Preservation Order to be granted. If there were trees on a development site, and landscaping was part of the development, then conditions could be applied for a "planting scheme", for example, if a trees died then it must be replanted. It was preferable to have a planting scheme "up front" but there were some circumstances for a planting scheme to be applied at a later date.

#### 9. **QUESTION FROM KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL**

Councillor Trevor Martin attended the Forum on behalf of Kenilworth Town Council and asked the following question:-

*"Responsibility for the management of traffic in Town Centres, involving both strategy and also operational enforcement, is split between the County Council, the District Council, developers and the police. Which Authority is actually responsible for the matter, and, as the Planning Authority how does Warwick District Council ensure that all the organisations are co-ordinated when major developments are being planned, approved and implemented?"*

John Archer responded that he felt the best course of action to take would be for him to go and look at the details of the scheme himself and look closely at the issues raised by Kenilworth Town Council.

Warwickshire County Council were the highways authority and it would be their responsibility to make any necessary decisions on the scheme.

Warwick District Council would respond to what was received by Warwickshire County Council with regard to the application.

Enforcement would be through Warwickshire County Council and the Police Authority through road traffic acts.

10. **NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Monday 25 September 2006 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 7 pm.

(The meeting closed at 9.20 pm)