

REPORT TO A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA TO BE HELD ON 18TH NOVEMBER 2014

LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

1. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To consider the recent announcement of a further period of Consultation in relation to the Warwick District Local Plan and implications arising for the Council.

2. **BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Council will be aware that the Draft local Plan covering the period 2011-2029 was published in May 2014 following a period of extensive consultation. Warwick District Council is now proposing significant focused changes to the Local Plan prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for independent examination. These amendments are described in the document "Publication Draft Local Plan: Focused Consultation", and are now published and subject to consultation. Copies of the Local Plan Publication Draft and Focused Changes, along with all accompanying documents including a Sustainability Appraisal, Statement of Representations Procedure, Representation Form and Guidance Notes, are available on the District Council's website.

2.2 As a Statutory Consultee, the Town Council has been notified of these proposed amendments and invited to respond. It is considered that as the amendments relate to sites outside Leamington Spa and are not significantly contrary to the submissions made by the Town Council previously, there is a limited impact on the Town.

2.3 The various areas contained within the consultation are summarised in this Report for completeness. The period of consultation ends on Friday 12 December 2014.

3. **Draft Local Plan: Focused Consultation**

Land off Europa Way/Gallows Hill

3.1 The Publication Draft Local Plan was subject to a period of consultation under Regulation 19 of the 2012 Town and Country Planning Regulations during May and June 2014. The Draft Plan included the allocation of 8 hectares of employment land close to the Europa Way/Gallows Hill junction to the south of Warwick. As part of that consultation Severn Trent Water (STW) made representations indicating that their land, along with other land at Stratford Road, Warwick could be made available for commercial development. This resulted in discussions with STW regarding the potential for the inclusion of the District Council's depot within a development area. Appendix 1 shows the extent of the area to be considered for inclusion in the consultation.

3.2 Additionally three landowners of the potential development area (including Warwick District Council) have commissioned detailed site assessment work to be undertaken

including: heritage and archaeology; flooding; ecology; landscape; access; noise and odour assessments. These studies have indicated that with the exception of flooding, noise and odours, there are no significant impediments to the development of the site. With regard to flooding, the studies show that the flood risk can be almost entirely mitigated through the implementation of relatively simple flood mitigation work. With regard to odours these can be mitigated through further investment in the sewage works. With regard to noise, there are significant issues in the area immediately adjacent to the M40 motorway that cannot easily be mitigated. However a significant part of the area does not exceed noise thresholds, whilst a further area can be considered for development with the right mitigation.

- 3.3 Whilst further work is required to provide further detail of the mitigation schemes, the District Council considers that the vast majority of the area shown in Appendix 1 is potentially suitable for development.

Allocation of Land for Employment

- 3.4 The 2013 Employment Land Review indicated that approximately 16 hectares of new employment land needed to be allocated in the Local Plan. The Publication Draft Local Plan provided for this on two 8 hectare sites at Thickthorn, Kenilworth and North of Gallows Hill, Warwick. A further allocation of 3.7 hectares at the IBM Car Park, Warwick was also included, to re-establish a previous employment commitment.
- 3.5 In response to representations from Severn Trent Water and in light of the site assessment work, it is now considered that the land at Stratford Road, Warwick shown on the Plans within Appendix 1 provides a preferable employment site to that at Gallows Hill, Warwick, particularly due to its access to the motorway, its proximity to other available employment sites and its availability for employment. In addition, the IBM Car Park is being promoted for housing. Appendix 1 therefore sets out a proposed amendment to the Publication Draft Local Plan involving the allocation of at least 11.7 hectares of “B use class” employment land at Stratford Road, Warwick.
- 3.6 These proposals will therefore be put forward as an amendment to the Draft Local Plan subject to the outcomes of the six week period of consultation.

Joint Employment Land Study and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

- 3.7 The Joint Employment Land Study and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) were relevant documents in the preparation of the Publication Draft Local Plan agreed by Council in April 2014. However, although both these documents had been drafted at that time and were used in the preparation, neither was published in full until after the consultation period had ended. Specifically, the SHLAA was published prior to the commencement of the period of consultation, but a number of errors/omissions have since been corrected and an updated SHLAA was published in the summer of 2014 after the end of the previous consultation period.

- 3.8 The Joint Employment Land Review was in draft form at the time the Publication Draft Local Plan was prepared. It was expected that it would be possible to publish the study prior to the commencement of the period of consultation but this did not prove possible. Presently, it is not considered that the updated study provides grounds to amend the Publication Draft Local Plan, although this view is subject to the outcome of this further period of consultation.
- 3.9 An opportunity is therefore provided for interested parties to amend their representations and/or add new representations in light of this more recently published evidence, particularly as this evidence was used in preparing the Publication Draft Plan. For this reason a further six weeks consultation is now taking place.
- 3.10 Both the Joint Employment Land Review and SHLAA documents can be viewed on the District Council website <http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/newlocalplan>

Gypsy and Travellers Site Allocation

- 3.11 The Gypsy and Travellers Site Allocation Draft Planning Document included an allocation of land somewhere within a wider area at Stratford Road, Warwick. Since that time the site assessment work described in paragraph 3.5 above has been undertaken. This has enabled a more specific proposal to be identified as shown in Appendix 2. As this proposal has not previously been subject to a consultation and as further work is required to finalise the master-planning of the wider area in discussion with other landowners, it is proposed to consult on the site at this stage as a Preferred Option rather than an allocation.
- 3.12 Subject to the response to the consultation, the Stratford Road site would then become one of three sites that would be taken forward as allocations within the Local Plan. The other sites are at Europa Way and Harbury Lane (Leamington Football Club). Representations on the Gypsy and Traveller Preferred Options consultation will be taken into account before the allocation sites are consulted upon at the next stage of the Development Plan Document.

4. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The further period of Consultation enables the Council to consider a response to the recently published amendments in relation to the additional allocation of sites for housing land at Gallows Hill Warwick and employment land at Stratford Road Warwick together with the identification of a site for use by Gypsies and Travellers at the latter location.
- 4.2 The observations of the Council are requested.