

WESTON UNDER WETHERLEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL: Jane Chatterton

Email: westonpcclerk@gmail.com

South Warwickshire Local Plan Consultation: Template Exemplar Response Deadline 6th March 2023

21st February 2023

Dear Resident,

A New South Warwickshire Local Plan is being Developed by Warwick District Council and Stratford District Council. A site has been submitted for a potential mixed development of 91.62 Hectares in Greenbelt Land between Weston Under Wetherley and Hunningham, alongside an additional site next to Weston Church. It is entirely likely in the current “second call for sites” process that further greenbelt land may be added.

We know there has been significant concern from local residents about this, including creation of a petition. **If we are to prevent large scale greenbelt development, it is essential residents provide a response to the current consultation being conducted by Warwick District Council, it is essential that consultation responses are received in addition to petition responses.**

The consultation process is relatively complex and responses must be aligned to specific questions asked by the council. A response that simply opposes greenbelt development in Weston will likely be rejected. To support residents to respond to the consultation we have created the attached template letter.

We would suggest residents respond to the consultation in one of three ways:

- 1) Create an account on the consultation portal, and respond to individual questions within the portal. This is located at <https://southwarwickshire.oc2.uk/document/124>. You may wish to use the below template to guide your responses.
- 2) Email your response to swlp@warwickdc.gov.uk. If you would like a word version of the attached template, one is available on the Village Facebook Page, we are adding one to the village website or please email drtrobbins@gmail.com with “SWLP” in the subject line).
- 3) Post your response to the below address (to arrive before 6th March, or if you drop off at 14 Rugby Road, Weston Under Wetherley, CV33 9BW by 5pm on the 5th March 2023 we will hand deliver it for you – this is the house with the blue fence). We have formatted the template letter to support this, however please annotate any points you think are important. **Individual responses are the most valuable.**

Postal address: Warwick District Council The SWLP Team Warwick District Council Riverside House, Milverton Hill, Leamington Spa, CV32 5HZ

Any consultation response must include your name and address. Responses are counted individually, so if you have multiple individuals in the same household, please consider responding individually.

Yours Faithfully,

Weston under Wetherley Parish Council

Any questions please email drtrobbins@gmail.com with SWLP in the subject

Individual consultation response from name:

Individual consultation response from address:

Re: South Warwickshire Local Plan Consultation Response

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in response to the South Warwickshire Local Plan Consultation. I am submitting my comments via email. Due specifically to the complexity of the online portal, I am submitting this as an email, it should be treated as an individual personal response to the consultation.

Q-V3.1 & 3.2 – Vision and Strategic Objectives: I believe that the Vision and Strategic Objectives should specifically state that avoiding development on greenbelt land will be prioritised at all stages of the plan development. This is not currently the situation with a heavy (unjustified) bias towards development in the greenbelt. The reasoning for this is that the greenbelt in local area has a vital importance in preventing urban sprawl (especially creeping sprawl towards Coventry) and keeping land permanently open. The protection of greenbelt should be given higher priority.

Q-S3.1 - Urban Capacity Study: We feel that the use of Brownfield sites should be prioritised and that where Brownfield development is not possible, then development should not occur in Greenbelt land. In particular, we do not feel that the “call for sites” approach sufficiently prioritises the identification of non greenbelt brownfield or greenfield sites, these should be actively sought out. I feel the consultation document is heavily biased towards development in the greenbelt North of Leamington and this should be avoided, especially when only 1/3 of the plan area is greenbelt. I feel that appropriately planned development from the outset will avoid the need for greenbelt development in “exceptional circumstances”. Greenbelt development must be avoided as an absolute priority.

QS4.1 Growth of existing settlements – Growth of existing settlements should only be considered where it does not require development in the greenbelt. Previous growth of existing settlements in non-greenbelt locations should not prevent further development and infrastructure should be invested to support further non-greenbelt development. Where growth of existing settlements cannot be assured without using greenbelt land, alternative solutions should be considered that do not involve development in greenbelt land.

Q-S5.2 - New Settlements: I feel that it is wholly unacceptable to consider the development of a new settlement within greenbelt land. There are not exceptional circumstances to doing so. It is unacceptable that despite the NPPF principles, multiple new settlement locations are illustratively suggested in the current consultation document. If a new settlement is to be considered, this should only be in non-greenbelt land. There are ample non-greenbelt options for new settlements. A new settlement in non-greenbelt land should be prioritised over any other development options in greenbelt land. New infrastructure can be developed to support such a non-greenbelt site.

Q-S5.3 – Rail Corridors. I feel that the prioritisation of rail corridors may offer a sensible option for development. There is substantial scope to include development alongside rail corridors outside of the greenbelt. I feel development alongside rail corridors to the South of the region, explicitly avoiding greenbelt development should be supported. The plan outlines that an indicative 6000 new homes would be sufficient to support a new rail station, and there is ample geographical options to achieve this outside of the greenbelt. Additionally, this would reduce the likelihood of overcrowding existing areas/stations in locations with existing stations in the Greenbelt. Development in North Leamington is not appropriate to use Leamington Spa station as there is already heavy traffic congestion in people moving from the North to the South of the town. A new station in the greenbelt is unacceptable.

The Climate Emergency must not be used as justification to develop on greenbelt land, this is a weak argument as there are other ways of mitigating against the climate emergency without developing on greenbelt.

Q-S7.2 – Dispersed Development - I am strongly opposed to the “dispersed” development option which includes frequent development in the greenbelt. I am particularly opposed to dispersed developments in small greenbelt villages such as Weston Under Wetherley. Dispersed developments of small villages in Warwickshire destroys the character and rural nature of these villages. This is an important feature, character, and culture of the local rural area and must be protected.

For the remaining spatial growth options, I feel it is important that the priority is to avoid developing greenbelt land. The need for greenbelt development in each spatial option should be considered before selecting a specific spatial growth option. This is needed to fulfil NPPF “exceptional circumstances” principle. It is not acceptable to select a spatial option without first considering the need to develop greenbelt to deliver that option. Instead, it should be assessed whether another spatial growth option could be selected that requires less (or no) greenbelt development, and that option with the least greenbelt development should be selected, even if more infrastructure work is needed. Retrospectively claiming exceptional circumstances are needed because there is no other way to meet a selected spatial growth option is not acceptable. The climate emergency should not be used as a justification to develop greenbelt land.

Q-S8.1 – Settlements falling outside the chosen growth strategy: I do not feel a threshold approach to small scale development is appropriate in greenbelt areas. We do not feel the plan should allow for more small scale growth developments to come forward in greenbelt areas.

Q-S10 – Any other comments: I am specifically opposed to development of land in the greenbelt areas in/around Weston under Wetherley and other similar small greenbelt villages due to the impact on the rural character of the area of the North Leamington Greenbelt.

The Climate Emergency must not be used as justification to develop on greenbelt land. This is a weak and bizarre argument. There are other ways of mitigating against the climate emergency without developing on greenbelt land, which itself is truly harmful.

There is no option to comment on issue S6 within the plan (A review of the greenbelt boundaries). I do not feel it is necessary or appropriate to redefine greenbelt boundaries. This issue should not have been included within the consultation without the option to comment. The number of respondents (561 responses) to the first consultation was exceptionally small indeed and can in no way be considered representative of the population area. It is possible given these very small numbers they were from developers or others who would directly benefit from such development (there were almost as many sites submitted as responses received!). This tiny number of respondents is so small it should not be used as a basis for decision making and should not be used to justify development or review of the greenbelt.

Yours Faithfully