

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 May 2025 16:31
To: Local Plan
Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Preferred Option Consultation

Dear Rugby Planning Team

On behalf of the Withybrook Parish Council, I submit our formal response to the preferred option public consultation;

We are in unanimous agreement that we do not support the proposed plans for the following sites;

- **Site 96, Site 309, Site 318, Site 104, Site 84**

In our objections to the above sites we list the following reasons;

- Greenbelt is designated as greenbelt for a reason. This should not be disregarded. Brown/Grey belt ONLY should be utilised
- Loss of agricultural land, biodiversity and natural habitats. The Warwickshire Biological Records Centre shows many valuable and in some cases ancient areas of land that MUST be preserved
- Loss of 'village character' and community due to a sudden large influx of homes and residents
- Already oversubscribed schools. Rugby senior schools in particular are already at breaking point
- Already oversubscribed doctors and dentists. The Revel Dr Surgery would end up with occupants of an additional 1116 homes as it's catchment covers Brinklow and Wolvey
- Already insufficient public transport links
- Already challenging road traffic congestion, exhaust fume pollution and noise pollution
- Already high occurrences of flooding around these areas
- Oversubscribed drainage and sewage
- Loss of 'traditional village life' in Warwickshire

Although the statements within the consultation documents outline some great strategies on infrastructure, community needs, meeting housing needs and the introduction of country parks, we cannot support a plan that utilises designated greenbelt land for this use. There are ample sites of Grey/brown belt elsewhere within the county.

We appreciate that brown/grey sites are more expensive and complex to develop than virgin land, but greenbelt should not be released for development just for the ease of the developer. Planning authorities should take responsibility for redeveloping brown/grey sites as a priority.

We hear that Rugby Borough Council currently has no plan to use their statutory powers to make the owners of long term empty properties bring them back into habitable condition, of which there are a significant number throughout the borough, especially flats above shops in the town centre. This would be much more in line with the 'Core Principles' of sustainable growth strategy in the consultation document and within the wider Warwickshire County. This should be a PRIORITY.

In addition, now that the planning laws have been loosened concerning conversions from non-domestic to domestic, the many empty shops and commercial units across the borough can now be put to good use and assist in meeting this housing target.

The overall opinion is that concerns over increased traffic in rural areas is unrealistic. Such access roads and surrounding lanes are often by narrow lanes frequented by cyclists, horse riders, children and dog walkers which will increase the risk of RTA. This will in effect decrease the occurrence of members of the public enjoying exercise and exploration of our beautiful Warwickshire countryside. This will negatively impact mental health as well as physical health of local residents which goes against the strategies in your consultation document. It's not just the main direct 'in and out' roads that will be impacted, but all the hurried cut throughs and rushed diversions of an overpopulated small space.

Brinklow roads in particular are already overly congested, with an excess of cars parked on the road sides as you drive through, especially dangerous for the many school children getting to their bus and the parents dropping off little ones to school further up the road, by the church. Creating a bottle neck down by the chip shop as it approaches the T-junction. Then the HUGE tractors from the biogas plant already posing a high risk of danger to all road users. It is already an accident waiting to happen. Where will the liability lie when an accident does happen and everyone has already protested against this further development? Local people are already warning of the risks.

In the same way that there are only a few precious areas of natural habitat remaining in our country that have to be designated as SSSI status to protect them, we are in danger of losing 'traditional villages'. One day, the few remaining villages that have been left alone and not swallowed up into town suburbs (like Binley for example), will be deemed a rarity and someone will ask why it was allowed to happen. Traditional rural villages will become as rare as temperate rainforest in England.

We urge urban residing decision makers to live in a rural setting for a number of years to fully appreciate rural living, the commUnity care and support that is unlike any urban setting (and yes, we have lived in both urban and rural) and the peace and tranquility of a smaller population. The darker skies. The birdlife. The woodlands. If not live here, at least listen to those of us who do.

If small villages are expected to almost double in size in some cases, the villages will become branch outcrops of suburban living. This cannot be undone.

We urge decision makers to look at maps of Warwickshire from 100 year ago, from 50 years ago and from 25 years ago and see how many villages have been swallowed up by suburbs. How many still hold the traditional format and have their original narrow, quiet rural lanes. At this rate, they'll all be lost or expanded beyond their means. There will be no safe lanes left to explore on bikes or on foot or hoof. No way of getting safely from one bridlepath or footpath to another. Only widened roads, highways, drive thru food outlets, ill health, congestion and car fumes.

Without wanting to repeat ourselves, greenbelt is valuable and designated as greenbelt for that reason. This must be respected and not used for development area.

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Tel: 07518 974 966 (during office hours unless it's a community alert message)

PLEASE NOTE; I work part time hours on a Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday afternoon. If you require an immediate response, please ring or text.