

**Rugby Liberal Democrats**

**Press Release**

***EMBARGO:*** *Immediate*

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*Dated*

# Don’t fire the starting gun talk to the People first.

Rugby Liberal Democrats are today releasing their position about a new local plan.

Key message,

* Enhancing our environment and building for the next generation.

In releasing this paper Cllr Jerry Roodhouse Group Leader of the Liberal Democrats on the no overall control Rugby Borough Council is calling on the other two political parties to do the same.

**Jerry Roodhouse (Paddox) said,** *“we are laying out what the Liberal Democrats want to see if a new local plan is to be progressed in Rugby Borough, I hope that both the other political groups will do the same so we can have a robust debate about the future of Rugby”.*

**Cllrs Isabelle McKenzie (Rokeby & Overslade) and Neil Sandison (Eastlands)** who are leading on this work for the Liberal Democrats said “*We are planning for the future, and we need to get this right generations have been let down by poor planning, the Council doesn’t need to fire the starting gun now instead it should engage with our residents and communities to gather their views”*

**Rugby Liberal Democrats Position Statement on a Local Plan for Rugby Borough.**

Councils are required by law to complete a review of their local plans every five years starting from the date of plan adoption. The current Rugby Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 it was adopted in June 2019.

In developing any plan, we should take account that Rugby Borough Council has adopted a declaration of a climate change emergency, the introduction of the Environment Act 2022 and its requirement for biodiversity net gain. Evidence of the future needs for Coventry and Warwickshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2022.The need for policies to support the regeneration of Rugby town centre along with further reasons for updating the plan are the need for policy on houses in multiple occupation and the need to identify sites to meet Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs.

**Our Starting Point**

Rugby Liberal Democrats believe that before we shift to a call for sites under the “Options & Issues” the following steps should be taken.

**Employment land** we want to see greater amount of evidence, this should include taking evidence from the Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub and Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce alongside Warwickshire County council economic forecasts. This should not be all about having very large warehousing locations. Manufacturing and technology companies need space as well.

**Housing & development** we want to see that the Council is using best practice to base its decisions on such as the building better building beautiful commission <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/building-better-building-beautiful-commission>.

Lifetime homes standards should be used and a greater appreciation of the changing demographic along with greater emphasis on Public Health criteria for healthier communities.

* Lifetime Homes <https://www.housinglin.org.uk>
* LGA [https://www.local.gov.uk/sites](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22%2018%20Developing%20healthier%20places_06.pdf)
* Public Health [https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/town-planning-and-public-health](https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/town-planning-and-public-health-shared-competencies)

**Climate Change / Biodiversity** very early on in this process RBC should clearly indicate where new country parks will be located along with green buffer zones, climate adaptability is the key to future planning along with ensuring net biodiversity gain should form the foundations for any new “Local Plan” **if it does not Rugby Liberal Democrats will** **not support it**. Any plan policies must also protect local water courses from human and farming effluent and minimise emissions from buildings (embodied and ongoing), employment land and transportation.

**Transport** though not directly a responsibility of Rugby Borough Council it is clear that a strategic approach is needed. WCC has adopted a high-level Local Transport Plan LTP4 underneath these documents are to be local transport documents this presents Rugby with an opportunity to carry this out jointly. Tackling air quality and public transport with integrated walking and cycling routes (modal shift).

**Engagement should be Underpinning** all of this with a wide ranging strong and robust engagement strategy that takes on board ideas from such bodies as the Royal Town Planning Institute the strategy should be clear as to how it will engage with Parish Councils, Urban areas, and induvial citizens’ as well as interest groups. This should be done **NOW** to pull in as much evidence before an “Options & Issues” paper is released by the Council. We need to get this right for the future generations that will live and work in this area.

**ENDS**

**Notes for Editors: -**

The Issues and Options paper is due to come to Council 25th October prior to this Cabinet 2nd October.