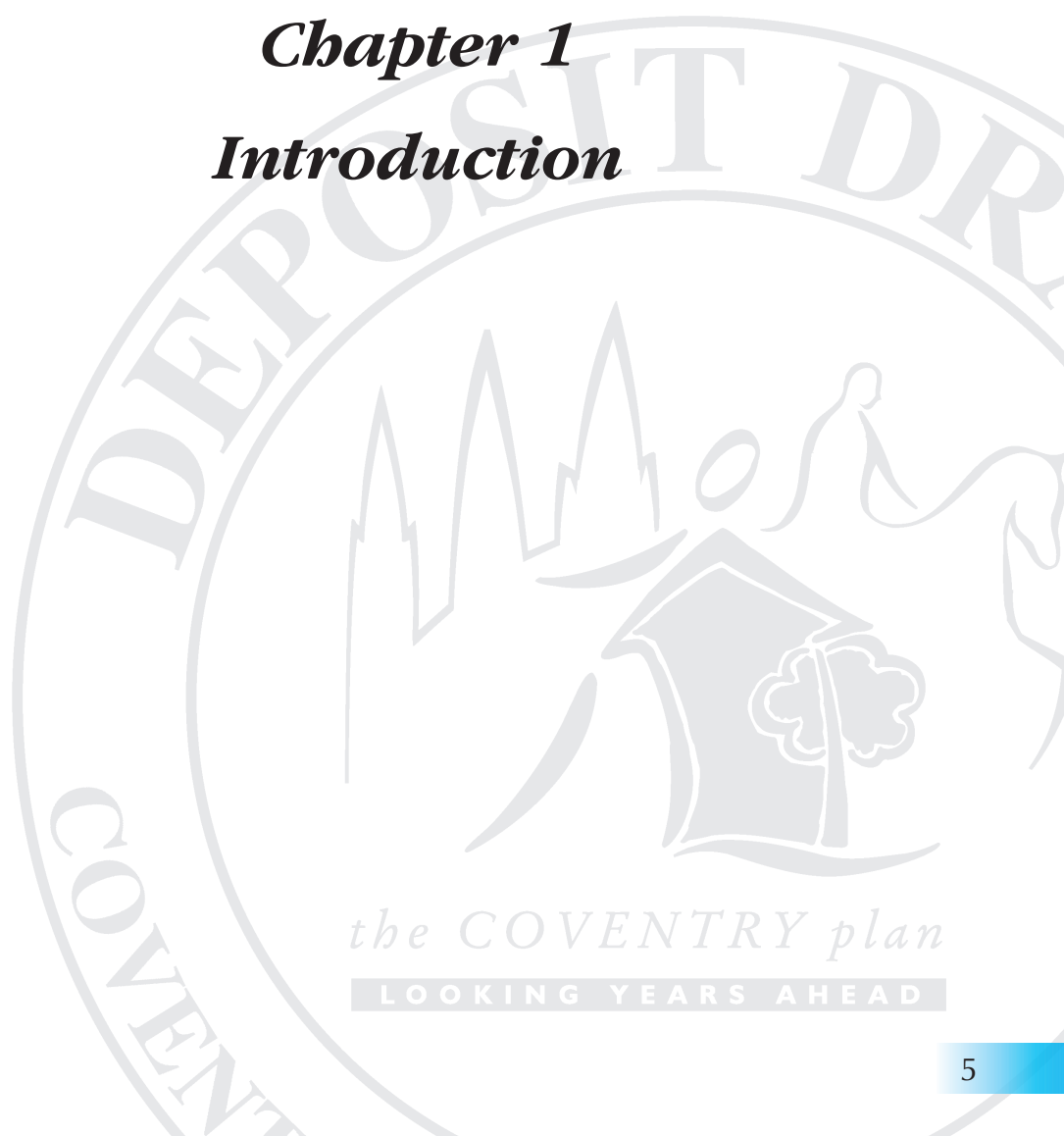




Chapter 1

Introduction





Introduction

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THE COVENTRY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 1.1 The Coventry Development Plan ("the Plan") is the second Unitary Development Plan for the City of Coventry Metropolitan District. It is a full replacement plan for the City of Coventry Unitary Development Plan 1993 ("the 1993 Plan"), rolling the end date forward from 2001 to 2011. Both have been prepared under Part II of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The Plan consists of this document plus the Proposals Map, including the City Centre Inset Map.
- 1.2 The Plan contains policies and proposals for the physical development and other uses of land, including measures for the improvement of the environment and management of traffic, and takes social and economic factors into account. It is long term in nature but forms a basis for the consistent short term promotion of investment and job creation, environmental and social improvement and the day-to-day control of development under Part III of the 1990 Act. It relates to the boundary of the City as modified on 1 April 1994.
- 1.3 The Plan has been prepared for the whole Coventry community; all those who live, work, invest and visit the City. It recognises and builds into its policies the needs of the community for housing, employment, shopping, access and movement, green space, social, community and leisure facilities and a quality environment.
- 1.5 The Plan has been prepared in the light of national Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs). In particular, PPG 1 "General Policies and Principles" 1997 emphasises a three-fold approach consisting of:
 - sustainable development;
 - mixed use; and
 - good design.

The approach to sustainable development is set out in "Sustainable Development: the UK Strategy" 1994. Mixed use is intended to help create vitality and diversity and reduce the need to travel. Good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and should be encouraged everywhere.
- 1.6 The 21 PPGs are all brought into more local focus by Regional Planning Guidance Note 11 "Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands" 1998 (RPG 11). This is based on a shared vision for the West Midlands of an advanced and competitive manufacturing region and sets out development principles which the City Council has sought to reflect in the Plan of:
 - promoting economic growth;
 - supporting urban and rural regeneration;
 - promoting a sustainable pattern of development; and
 - maintaining and enhancing the environment.
- 1.7 There is a steadily developing process of co-operation with Warwickshire County Council, its constituent Districts and Solihull Metropolitan District Council in the pursuit of economic regeneration. The creation of Coventry and Warwickshire Partnerships, which also involves trade union, business and academic interests and the submission of joint bids for grant aid, are part of this. The new Warwickshire Structure Plan is being prepared in parallel with this Plan following the issue of RPG 11. A symbol of the relationship between the authorities is the joint Foreword to both documents. Joint public transport initiatives are also underway, of which the Bus Showcase scheme between Coventry and Nuneaton is the first major example.

POLICY BACKGROUND

European, National and Regional Policy Context

- 1.4 European Union legislation, primarily expressed through national legislation, contains four broad aspects which affect urban areas like Coventry. These are the promotion of:
 - economic competitiveness and employment;
 - social cohesion;
 - connection of cities into the trans-European transport networks; and
 - sustainable development and quality of life.

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1.8 The Warwickshire County Structure Plan Review, 1996-2011, continues to make provision of housing land to accommodate population movement from Coventry, but at lower levels than in the earlier decades when the City's population was in actual decline. This level, like the level of housing provision for Coventry dealt with in the Housing Chapter, derives directly from RPG 11, which took an overall view on population and household growth, and therefore housing provision, firstly for the West Midlands Region as a whole and secondly for each strategic planning authority.

- tackling poverty;
- investing in young people;
- creating an exciting, vibrant City Centre; and
- meeting the needs and aspirations of older people.

1.12 The Community Plan has an initial time horizon of 2003 for its targets and progress monitoring point but is based around priorities that are intended to be relevant for a significantly longer period, a period broadly consistent with the Plan horizon of 2011. The City Council's Community Plan thinking and the Development Plan thinking processes have been parallel and connected. Formally the two Plans exist quite separately, but in practice the Development Plan provides a medium to long term land use context for action, while the Community Plan seeks to galvanise the whole community into creating and implementing projects and initiatives on the ground.

1.13 The City Council in its corporate role also maintains a substantial array of strategies and service plans which have provided an informative background to the Plan and which are referred to in later chapters of the Plan.

Local Policy Context

1.9 The Coventry Community Plan is the City Council's attempt to weld together the energy and initiative of local organisations around a set of common priorities and is not the City Council's plan but "the City's plan and the people's plan." It arose from a simple concept: if all organisations in Coventry agreed on priorities to meet the City's needs, and if they agreed to tackle these priorities together, then they had the best possible chance of success. It was the result of a wide range of meetings, consultations and conferences held in 1997 and 1998 involving many organisations and people with a stake in Coventry's future.

1.10 The Community Plan regards the successful regeneration of Coventry as a long term and continuing project. It is the principal commitment of Coventry City Council to the community across all its services as the leader and principal co-ordinator of initiatives in the City. It proceeds from a single underlying principle that Coventry is a multi-cultural, diverse community in which all organisations commit themselves to equality of opportunity and social justice for everyone. This means that the signatories will:

- engage with all sections of society;
- combat racism;
- improve access for people with disabilities; and
- celebrate diversity of culture.

1.11 The Community Plan contains six main priorities:

- creating more jobs for Coventry people;
- tackling crime and making communities safer;

People

1.14 After 20 years of population decline in Coventry, the 1990s has seen a return to broad population stability which corresponds closely with the forecasts of the 1993 Plan.

Year	Census	Mid-Year Estimate
1901	70 000	-
1931	167 000	-
1951	258 000	-
1961	318 000	-
1971	336 000	-
1981	310 000	-
1990	-	303 700
1991	294 000	305 600
1992	-	304 600
1993	-	304 100
1994	-	302 500
1995	-	303 600
1996	-	306 500
1997	-	304,400

1.15 About 12% of the City's population belongs to ethnic minority communities. Research carried out in 1996 to assist Plan preparation by the University of Warwick on the ethnic minority communities, showed that many concerns are shared with the wider community. However, it identified a number of particular issues for ethnic minority communities:

- the need for a mixture of housing provision including larger dwellings for families, a supply of sheltered and smaller self-contained accommodation for older people, and starter homes for younger people;
- the need to pay attention to certain aspects of design such as larger rooms and space for children to play safely;
- satisfaction with "mixed" uses of land and a requirement for local jobs to respond to unwillingness or inability to travel any great distance to work;
- strong support for local shopping provision, although fear of crime is a serious constraint on trade;
- public transport as a priority for most, whilst parking provision is a priority for ethnic minority traders;
- inter-generation differences in access to and use of transport;
- concern about the presence and condition of green areas and about "aesthetic" elements of local areas; and
- demand for more provision for young people and children and for more sports facilities in local areas.

1.16 The City very clearly forms part of a wider sub-region when it comes to both journey to work patterns and the overall social composition of the population. Available evidence appears to show that the commuting patterns between development either side of the City's southern boundary and the City and County are getting more complex as the gross flows become greater. The traditional approach of the County finding employment land for the City seems no longer to fit the facts on the ground and, therefore, no longer forms part of either the County's or the City's Development Plan thinking. Net migration into Warwickshire from Coventry is assumed to continue at a lower level than in recent decades. Assuming, therefore, that this Plan's much increased levels of housing provision are taken up, it is assumed that the broadly stable population level of the mid-1990s will continue during the Plan period.

MANAGING RAPID CHANGE

1.17 In the past decade there has been an acceleration in the rate of technological change. Changes in lifestyles, the way we work, how we take our leisure, and how much education and when we undertake it in our lives - all these are likely to go on changing during the first decade of the new century. It is difficult to predict what their impact will be on the physical environment. The most appropriate Development Plan, therefore, is one that is predictable in its intentions and its thrust, but is flexible in its implementation details and techniques. With this in mind, the Plan develops the previous reliance on criteria-based policies, which avoid excessive fine detail or policies for every possible eventuality.

1.18 As well as rapid physical change there is likely to be a continued rapid development of public policy, especially spending programmes, as our understanding matures of how we can deliver sustainable cities and cope with the financial costs involved. The Plan, more clearly than its predecessor, is committed to the full utilisation of previously developed ("brownfield") land, mainly for built development but also for open space and to ensure the protection of nature conservation value. This approach is designed to minimise the loss of further open land in the built up area, but especially Green Belt on its periphery. On the other hand, the Plan accepts the overriding need to make selective release of greenfield Green Belt development sites to accommodate the job creation needs of the City, since housing is more often able to re-use brownfield land than is much of modern industry.

Partnerships

1.19 The combined public and private sector commitment to the Community Plan and voluntary joint working with neighbouring local authorities, are examples of the developing partnerships which also include Central Government, the business community, local communities and the City Centre Company. These partnerships work for the common good of the City and the surrounding sub-region. To a large extent they all share a common economy, a common housing market and a common interest in speaking with one voice. The City Council and its local authority neighbours each function as the focus of co-ordination and accountability for these new initiatives in their respective areas.

PREPARING THE PLAN

1.20 The stages completed so far are:

- September 1996: Publication of newspaper supplement "Your Street, Your Neighbourhood, Your City" seeking comment on suggested issue areas.
- September 1997: Publication of the "Coventry Development Plan Review Strategy" seeking responses to proposed policy approaches and initiatives.

The detailed steps in regard to publicity and public consultation taken in the period between September 1996 and publication of this Deposit Draft are set out in an accompanying statement prepared under the Development Plan Regulations 1991.

1.21 Following the close of the Deposit period:

- representations made in response to the Deposit Draft will be analysed and considered;
- negotiations will be attempted to secure the withdrawal of objections by agreement wherever possible;
- agreed modifications will be placed on deposit, giving further opportunity for representations;
- a Public Local Inquiry will be held, conducted by an independent Inspector, to consider remaining objections;
- the Inspector will report in writing to the City Council;
- the City Council will publish his/her Report, consider it and publish its reasoned response;
- any necessary modifications will be published, and any further representations will be considered by the City Council, who may choose whether or not to make yet further Modifications; and
- assuming no further Inquiry, the Plan will then be adopted and come into force.

Main changes from the 1993 Plan

1.22 The Plan has been:

- reviewed and replaced in its entirety, rather than amended selectively;
- rolled forward from 1988-2001 to 1996-2011;
- made to fit the City boundary from 1 April 1994;
- shortened by the deletion of the Longford and Foleshill chapters.

1.23 The Plan's policy content has been varied, as follows:

- the housing and employment land supplies have been replenished;
- 3 Strategic Regeneration Sites have been identified for mixed use development;
- new environmental pollution policies have been prepared;
- the waste policies have been rewritten around the waste hierarchy concept;
- the shopping centre hierarchy below the City Centre has been revised and a new Major District Centre proposed in the north of the City
- road proposals have been cut back and public transport given greater emphasis;
- a new emphasis on design policies for buildings and spaces has emerged
- the Green Belt boundary has been modified selectively in order to:
 - accommodate additional employment land provision,
 - provide development sites for sports developments,
 - accommodate proposed Public Waste Disposal Expansion at Whitley;
- many new nature conservation sites have been given protection;
- City Centre policies have been comprehensively rewritten;
- Supplementary Planning Guidance has been given a larger role in support of the Plan.

