

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Rugby's MP has urged business leaders to carry on 'building the case' for more sites to be set aside for employment land in the region.

Mark Pawsey MP met the Rugby branch of the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, which is raising awareness across the region of a chronic shortage of new employment space in the city and the county.

He told the group that the site at Walsgrave Hill Farm, which was recently removed from Rugby's Borough Plan, should be revisited as it was a natural progression from the hugely successful Ansty Park where it benefits from the same infrastructure, close to Junction 2 of the M6.

And Pawsey told the gathered firms that the more examples the Chamber could uncover of businesses being prevented from growing in the area, the stronger the case would be.

He said: "To start with, I believe the site at Walsgrave should go back in the plan because I am hugely proud of what has happened at Ansty – it's a huge success. That is exactly the right area for the development of new employment land.

"I would also urge the Chamber to keep uncovering individual businesses who are saying they want to grow in Rugby, but can't, as that is compelling evidence for the need for more employment land.

"I have, myself, spoken to companies that have wanted to expand in the Borough but just couldn't find the right space so I know it's an issue. We have to use the evidence – both statistical and anecdotal – to continue to make the case for needing more employment land here."

The Chamber has already written to MPs in the area and to Gavin Barwell, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, as well as to Rugby Borough Council regarding its plan.

Property expert David Penn – who chairs the Chamber's Coventry branch – also addressed the meeting.

He said: "We estimate that there is between nine months' and two-and-a-half years' worth of employment land supply in the region.

"We are satisfied, generally, the target number of housing is about right but – put simply – there just isn't enough space set aside to provide the jobs for people to go to.

"Mark did also mention a possibility of designated, affordable commercial property space when planning permission is given and that is certainly an interesting idea that could help businesses in certain sectors find space."

Karen Shuter, the chair of the Rugby branch, added: “We are grateful to David who has put in a lot of work on this topic for the Chamber and also to Mark for coming and listening to the Chamber and its members on this topic.

“He was extremely supportive and we will continue to ensure that this topic remains firmly on the agenda in the weeks ahead.”

Businesses that want to expand but are unable to do so because of a lack of suitable space are urged to email Martynne Manning at the Chamber at [martynem@cw-chamber.co.uk](mailto:martynem@cw-chamber.co.uk)

Pictured: front – Karen Shuter and Mark Pawsey with representatives from the Chamber’s Rugby branch

