

[REDACTED]

Planning Policy and Programmes
New Town House
Buttermarket Street
Warrington
Cheshire
WA1 2NH

Dear Sir

Warrington Borough Council Local Plan - Preferred Development Option - July 2017

I write as a resident of Higher Walton and wish to state that firstly, I am unhappy at the timing of the consultation over the summer period when many people are away and Parish Councils do not meet . I am sure that this was not intentional but a suspicious person may think otherwise .

The quality of the consultation is also an area for concern as the maps provided were difficult to read insofar as they were an overview and did not provide road names and land marks for points of reference. The consultation was confusing for many members of the public as the numerous documents referred to were very difficult to understand .

Whilst I acknowledge that Warrington needs to meet the projected housing needs , I do object to the size and scale of the proposals as well as the undue emphasis to locate the majority of these new homes in the South of Warrington at the expense of the Green Belt, especially when a Council spokesperson has been quoted in the press as saying 'Interestingly, over the last 38 years the average number of new homes completed per year in Warrington is 920 units.' As far as I can see the Council is not far from fulfilling its housing quota as "The objectively assessed housing needs figure the council had calculated for the new local plan PDO consultation is 955 new homes per annum." Why has the methodology to determine the projected housing figures been changed ? How can anybody have any confidence in their accuracy? Is it possible to prove that the PDO is based on the correct facts?

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are

their openness and permanence.

WBC state in their Green Belt assessment that the review will enable them to consider if there are 'exceptional circumstances' to justify altering Green Belt boundaries through the Local Plan Process to enable existing Green Belt land to contribute to meeting Warrington's housing needs. If the methodology for determining the housing need is open to question then the argument for 'exceptional circumstances' to justify building on Green Belt land has to be severely compromised.

The National Planning Guidance Practice says that national planning policy and guidance clearly states that the ' permanence of the Green Belt is of imperative importance as its legacy will last well beyond the planned period.' WBC itself states that the Green Belt boundaries (must remain) fit for purpose and continue to perform well when assessed against the five purposes of the Green Belt. This is completely at odds with the PDO.

I am concerned that the PDO will adversely and materially change Warrington and that overly ambitious targets have been set in what is currently an uncertain future for Britain as a whole.

At least the provision of infrastructure does feature highly in the PDO. The emphasis is purely on the road infrastructure which, I agree, needs significant improvement but there is a disturbing over-reliance on the road infrastructure and the inclusion of one-third of the houses in the suburbs of South Warrington will increase car dependency.

Warrington has the Manchester Ship Canal running through it as well as the River Mersey and the result is that there are daily, lengthy traffic jams at peak times and throughout the day when a ship travels along the Ship Canal. The impact of the new Mersey Crossing tolls for Warrington residents and businesses has not yet been felt; [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] . This traffic problem can only get worse . The provision of new infrastructure is absolutely essential to alleviate this and should be in place prior to any building taking place.

The Western Link is intended to remove traffic from the centre of Warrington but this will only displace it to other areas in Warrington. Far from the further infrastructure supporting the economic growth and prosperity of the town, it is more likely to be a stranglehold on the economy and businesses, large and small, who will start to relocate to other towns and / or cities .

I hope that the Council will take the opportunity to now rethink many of the major elements of the PDO and take on board the strongly held and widely researched views of both myself and many other Warrington residents.

Yours faithfully

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