



Dear Sir/ Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the PDO, produced as a result of the Review of the Local Area Plan for Warrington.

Like many people, I wish to object, in the strongest possible terms, to the plans to build 24,000 new homes in Warrington in the next 20 years.

More particularly, the proposal to put 9,000 of these houses in green belt land.

I would also wish to object to proposal to build more roads as a solution to current traffic problems as these more likely to increase the volume of traffic

NEW HOMES; I accept that there is demand for new homes in Warrington.

However, I understand that the WBC modelling used to arrive at the current figures is flawed.

TIMESCALE; While accepting the need for future planning there is no requirement for the proposed plan to cover such a long and increasingly uncertain timescale of twenty years.

It is therefore inappropriate to use a twenty year timescale given that it inflates the development figures.

For example, if the timescale were to be reduced it would allow for future changes, such as the decommissioning of Fiddlers Ferry, to be taken in to account in later plans.

It is therefore obvious that the timescale for the PDO is inappropriate and it should therefore be reduced to 15 years. In doing so this would enable the redevelopment of Fiddlers Ferry to be included.

**ECONOMIC GROWTH:** Predicting economic growth and development has always been problematic for both industry and governmental agencies. Such uncertainty, in increased when the time scales become longer and at times of major changes in the economy. Thus, choosing a timescale of twenty years, particularly given all the uncertainty arising from Brexit would appear inappropriate.

**It is therefore evident that the timescale for the PDO is inappropriate and should be reduced to 15 years in order to ensure it would be more responsive to unforeseen future economic changes.**

**NUMBERS;** If the new Government guidelines on the assessment of housing need / housing plans are applied to Warrington these would lead to demand for little more than 15,000 new homes.

This figure, 15,000, is one which WBC planners are confident can be accommodated on brown field sites in the town.

While accepting that the council lost a High Court case with a developer relating to the figures in the 2014 plan, revising the figure to 15,000, instead of 24,000, would still represent a 50% increase in the 2014 figures.

**It is therefore apparent that the number of houses should be reduced to a more realistic figure in light of recent changes in relevant Government guidelines.**

**GREEN BELT;** The green belt areas of Warrington were designated as such for important purposes and these purposes remain. I am aware that green belt is under pressure across the region and nationally, and it is time for Warrington Borough Council to reaffirm its commitment to the preservation of the green belt, as it did in the 2014 Area Plan. The 2017 Government White Paper on

Housing states that 'maintaining existing strong protections for the Green Belt, and clarifying that Green Belt boundaries should be amended only in exceptional circumstances when local authorities can demonstrate that they have fully examined all other reasonable options for meeting their identified housing requirements'.

**I therefore suggest that WBC should resist the pressure of developers to build on green belt land.**

**TRAFFIC EASING;** There are huge traffic problems in Warrington, which are likely to be exacerbated when the new toll bridge opens between Runcorn and Widnes, and drivers choose to come through Warrington Town centre to avoid toll charges. The impact of this on air quality and our health, and costs to businesses and individuals, is already huge, and will get worse.

Research has shown that the net effect of more roads is more car journeys, and that any benefits from new roads are quickly lost and congestion recurs. Alternatives to car journeys, such as public transport, park and ride, or cycle ways in Warrington are woefully inadequate.

One suggestion we should consider, alongside improvement in cycleways and public transport, and the introduction of park and ride, is the introduction of congestion charging for the centre of town (with exemptions for Warrington residents, such as has been granted to Halton residents for the new toll bridge).

I would therefore argue that such alternative traffic management options have not been fully considered in the current plan and further work should be commissioned on traffic easing with a clear emphasis on reducing use of our roads by cars and the resultant findings included in a revised version.

**CONSULTATION;** It is unacceptable that there were no public consultation meeting held in Grappenhall, an area that will be significantly effected by these proposals. Reportedly, there was no suitable location available for such a meeting. Despite the lack of a public meeting in Grappenhall I, as resident of that area, am unaware of any additionally methods of consultation that were implemented to compensate for this.

As a Grappenhall resident I had to travel to Culcheth to attend a meeting. You can therefore imagine my surprise when the venue had minimal parking. In practice, the Bell House Community centre, in the heart of Grappenhall could have provided a suitably sized rooms and a significantly larger car park. Even the Community Room in Grappenhall Village and the Grappenhall Community Library would have provided similar sized venues to that at Culcheth.

WBC could have used any one of a number of suitable premises for consultation meetings within Grappenhall and by not doing so has disadvantaged residents of this area. People with disabilities, older people and families with small children will have been disadvantaged because of this.

I therefore propose that the lack of a consultation meeting within Grappenhall means that WBC cannot have meet with government guidelines / standards with respect to public consultation.

**CONCLUSION;** I believe that the process of arriving at the PDO, the problems with the consultation process, the cavalier drawing of a road line on a fuzzy plan, which has now blighted the lives of many people, means that it is unacceptable.

In addition, it has resulted in unnecessarily considerable anger and distress in members of the communities affected.

Finally, I would note that there is still an opportunity for some of this ground to be recovered if the Borough Council has the good sense to dispose of the current PDO and develop an integrated plan for our whole town which enhances rather than damages our much loved community.

Yours sincerely

