



Dear Sirs

I am writing to you in response to the Consultation on the proposed Warrington Local Plan. As has been set out below I object to the proposals in the plan.

Whilst not part of the plan I am very disappointed in the way the whole consultation process has been undertaken. Whilst this may be in accordance with Government guidelines, I think it is very wrong to have undertaken a consultation on such a major document during a period when many people are on holiday and the Parish Councils do not meet. The process does not appear have been particularly well publicised and the lack of a consultation event in Grappenhall, Stockton Heath or Thelwall is hard to understand. In addition, the mixed messages, some of which differ from information contained in the published documents from Council staff, including some at a high level has confused a lot of people and should result in the consultation process being abandoned.

The Local Plan sets out the Council's aspirations to become a city and the growth needed to sustain this. I do not understand why the Council feels Warrington needs to become a city, the Local plan certainly does not put forward a convincing argument for this. The Council don't seem to have asked the people of Warrington if they wish to have City status and as far as I am aware none of the current councillors were elected on such a mandate.

The growth that the plan suggests Warrington requires is based on a figure of an additional 1200 homes per annum. This does not appear to reflect any figures published by the Government and seems to have been grossly over exaggerated to support the desire to become a city. I presume the allocation of a large number of sites by the former New Town Corporation was based on a similar exercise and 30 years on these are still "awaiting development"

As Warrington is not a designated station site as part of HS2 and new employment seems centred on distribution based on large warehouses employing very few people I struggle to understand the basis of these figures. The full impact of Brexit is still not known however it appears it is unlikely to boost numbers.

The Government recently sought bids and is financially supporting several garden villages. I am not sure if Warrington either didn't bid or did bid and was unsuccessful and on that basis, I am not sure why the Council feel they now need this and have badged it as a garden suburb.

Warrington is currently a nightmare for road traffic and struggles to cope with existing traffic levels let lone anything generated by 24,000 new homes. During any rush hour period, the main roads in and out of the town are at a standstill. A revised junction at Lymm interchange is suggested. As anyone who uses this on a regular basis will know, the junction is not the problem, it is the M6 itself. On weekdays, the M6 is virtually at a standstill, especially northbound during the morning and evening rush hours. This causes a backlog on to the A50 and beyond. A new viaduct was constructed to relieve traffic issues on the M6, this worked for a while but is now at full capacity. This problem is intensified tenfold when an accident or strong winds close or restrict the M6 with Warrington grinding to a halt.

The new Runcorn-Widnes is due to open followed by a complete refurbishment of the old bridge. After this both bridges will be toll roads. As with other toll roads drivers will seek an alternative non-paying route and Warrington town centre or the M6/M62/M56 route will be that alternative. This is bound to increase the level of traffic in and around Warrington especially the town centre.

According to various studies, Warrington currently has very poor air quality, increasing the number of vehicles passing through or going around will not help this situation.

The plan suggests a transport route off the A50, across the Bridgewater Canal and using the former railway line and currently the Trans Pennine trail. Without major expenditure on the embankments and bridges and acquisition of land and houses, this is currently not wide enough to accommodate anything more than a single-track road. Council staff are doing their best to say this is only an "idea" however other documents prepared by the Council seem to contradict this. The Council don't appreciate the impact this uncertainty will have on the people who live in these houses or adjacent to the route. Unfortunately, "a line on a plan" blights home, reduces values and make them unsellable. Are the Council going to compensate people for this?

This proposed new transport link appears to use part of the route of the Trans-Pennine trail. This is a well-used public amenity not just by people of Warrington. It attracts, walkers on their own, in groups and in families. Whilst there is currently a big push to encourage people to get out and exercise, the proposals in this plan will destroy one of the key areas for people to go to exercise.

The Plan talks about creating a "Garden Suburb" to the south of the town. The majority of this development is on current Green Belt. The Green Belt is a very important part of any suburban area providing a boundary for growth and acting as a green lung. The plan gives no justification for the loss of this Green Belt on a small scale let alone the large scale suggested. My understanding is that a full Green Belt review should be undertaken if an authority wishes to amend the boundaries of the Green Belt which I understand has not been done.

A large area of the current Green Belt is farmland which is in use. We cannot afford to lose this and rely on food being transported from other parts of the country or the world. This is not environmentally friendly. This land currently helps with drainage and helping to improve the very poor air quality. The loss of this is of no benefit to the residents of Warrington.

The Green Belt is currently the habitat for a large variety of animals, birds, trees and flowers. The loss of this and replacement with a "Country Park" is not adequate and is likely to lead to a major loss of already threatened species.

The Bridgewater canal provides an oasis of tranquillity leading out of Warrington for both residents and visitors alike. Building many houses on either side and a least one new bridge crossing will destroy this for ever.

At present Warrington Hospital struggles to cope with the number of patients it has to handle. Like most things in Warrington it is over capacity. There is nothing in the plan to show how the current issues are to be addressed let alone how it will cope with a massive increase in the size of the town.

The plan is keen to show how many new homes are needed. It does nothing to indicate the types of homes required and what the mix will be between affordable and non-affordable houses. Based on the types of developers currently interested in South Warrington and promoting sites in this area, I do not think affordable housing will be high up their agenda.

Most of the High schools in Warrington are full or almost full. The plan does not appear to address the requirements for new high schools that the new houses will require.

Why are the Council looking for large scale reduction of the Green Belt rather than concentrating on brown field sites? Fiddlers Ferry is soon to be decommissioned and demolished. Surely this is an ideal time to look at this site and identify how many houses, industrial sites and country parks can be provided on it.

On the basis of the above I Strongly Object to the proposed plans. The plans are not well thought out, information in the plans and given out by Council staff seem to contradict each to mislead residents, and the basis of the whole plan seems to be completely unjustified. The whole process should be abandoned and started again based on what is best for the people of Warrington. Let's start with sorting out existing problems like traffic congestion, air quality, etc, before we rush in to decisions that will make it ten times worse.

Yours Faithfully

