

Warrington Local Plan; Preferred Development Option, July 2017 .

The plan would seem to have a principle aim of gaining city status for Warrington, and this appears to be the central pillar throughout the document. I would question why this is the intention; who is backing this idea and who has made this decision?

Warrington has two glaring and long standing problems: infrastructure throughout the area and the town centre. Projects (over many years) have resulted in considerable work and cost in both these areas but limited success. Any plan that fails to tackle these issues across the town will fail whether city status is gained or not. High levels of housing or industrial development will worsen the situation.

There were 5 options considered and option 2 was thought to be the closest fit to the aims of the council. Six objectives are listed in 4.38 relating to these. Of these I consider that, on the limited information available, option 2 fails to meet the criteria set by W1, W2, W4, W5 and W6 in relation to Warrington South. Specifically;

- W1 indicates a significant expansion of requirements from the previous plan plus a move to city status. There appears to be little consultation with the residents of Warrington, who may have different priorities regarding the environment in which they live
- W2 covers sensitive release of green belt to meet needs; would the extensive development planned in Warrington South be classed as 'sensitive'?
- W3 refers to development of the centre of town – is this plan sufficient to deal with the issues? The town centre has steadily deteriorated in the last 50 years and there is little sign of any significant progress.
- W4, there are many issues regarding critical infrastructure and its deliverability. The current situation concerning local and motorway traffic clearly indicates that increasing the housing stock in Warrington by 25% will worsen the situation and damage the residential environment.
- W5, most of South Warrington's distinctiveness and character will be completely removed by this plan. The affected areas would be considered locally identifiable villages with unique characters rather than part of urban Warrington. This seems to have been completely missed by the plan and raises questions of the extent to which those responsible have actually studied the area first hand.
- W6, development on this scale in one area is unlikely to minimise the impact on the environment. Whilst the industrial development is in a logical position for access to the motorways, access to these areas by staff on low wages or zero hours contracts is difficult. They would be unlikely to afford public transport and this is already a considerable problem throughout the area and the current industrial sites on Barleycastle Lane. Littering and fly-tipping on the roadside around the current industrial area is an eyesore.

The choice of option 2 which could result in loss of most available green belt in South Warrington within 20 years would not appear to 'maintain its permanence at a strategic level'. The plan does not justify 'exceptional' circumstances for release of so much Green Belt.

There has been much attention given to landowners, many of whom could be courted by developers, and to business but scant attention has been given to the communities which will be severely affected. Given the large amount of land that has been identified as available for development an option involving a more balanced approach would be preferable. This could lead to improved infrastructure throughout the town. As

much development as possible should be on the many brownfield sites which whilst more expensive to develop would be a more ecological proposal and improve Warrington as a whole.

Finally, the closure date for comment on the Western Link Road coincided with the release of this document. I would suggest that the results of that exercise would not be accurate given the far reaching intentions of this document.

