



26 September 2017

DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SOUTH EAST WARRINGTON - OBJECTION

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to object in the strongest possible terms to the proposed Development Plan for South Warrington (WA4). I fully understand that as a nation we need more housing but development needs to be sustainable, taking into account the needs of residents (existing and new), the impact on roads, traffic, noise and local services and infrastructure – which this extensive plan does not.

The development is on a massive scale that will totally destroy the unique character and quality of life in South Warrington – Pewterspear, Stretton, Hatton, Appleton Thorn, Walton, Grappenhall and Stockton Heath. These historic villages, most with their own community centres and unique character are separated by greenspace including both leisure areas and agricultural land. The plan proposes to eat into Greenbelt yet there are large brownfield sites in Warrington (Fiddlers Ferry and Warrington Hospital) which are likely to be released within the next 20 years. Including these brownfield sites in the longer term plan, alongside a commitment to provide new affordable housing for first time buyers and young families would address the greatest need in the town while preserving precious Greenbelt which once developed is gone forever

The development is being driven at a scale commensurate with the need to build a large (1500 pupil) secondary school in WA4. Yet the Plan freely admits that it is planning development well beyond the objectively assessed need. The proposed 6000 houses in the Garden Suburb in SE Warrington will mainly attract buyers from outside the town who want to live in big, new houses but who will commute to Manchester, Liverpool and elsewhere for work. These are not the same people who will be working in the new proposed employment areas.

On paper Warrington has good transport links (motorways, rail and the airports at Liverpool and Manchester) – but it also has the unique waterway network of the Manchester Ship Canal, the Bridgewater canal and of course the river Mersey. The limited crossing points coupled with the serious disruption of three swing bridges opening at every high tide brings a unique challenge and one more crossing will not alleviate the problem. This is coupled with generally increased traffic on the local motorway network, which at the first sign of trouble diverts through Warrington. The A49, the main North South route through the town, is at a standstill at peak times and can be severely congested at other times through the day. Traffic congestion has become much worse over the last 20 years and development on the scale of 24,000 extra houses in the town will bring another 48,000 cars into the equation.

The Plan makes absolutely no mention of public transport. Public transport in South Warrington is infrequent, unreliable and does not connect with trains. In particular there is no convenient bus service to Warrington Bank Quay or Warrington Central – being able to travel by car is not a luxury, it's a necessity. As everyone is well aware, the train services between Liverpool, Warrington and Manchester are well below the standard needed in terms of punctuality, frequency, cleanliness and comfort. It is therefore of little surprise that people in South Warrington who commute daily to Manchester or Liverpool choose to use their car and the motorway. Despite the motorway congestion it's quicker, more comfortable and cheaper than driving into Warrington town centre, to park on waste ground then stand on an overcrowded train to Manchester – assuming it turns up. This is a long term problem that is here to stay without serious investment in rail services by Government. But at least the motorways are being upgraded to 'smart motorways' which will provide some breathing space – and yes that means residents will continue to prefer to commute by car. But Warrington itself cannot cope with another 48,000 cars on local roads.

Finally why does the Council aspire to Warrington being a city? In the later pages of the Plan, the phrase City Centre is used as if this is a done deal. This is not the ambition of residents, the Council Tax Payers who were either born here or have chosen Warrington as their home, specifically because of the Warrington's amenities and ambience as a successful town with proximity to the cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Chester. If South Warrington residents wished to live in a city they would have settled in Liverpool or Manchester in the first place.

I hereby register my objection to Warrington Borough Council's Development Plan.

Yours sincerely

