

Some key points to raise in your response.

Significant loss of Green Belt Land

- The Plan Option includes the release of Green Belt land to support 9,345 new homes over the next 20 years - 8655 (93%) of them in south Warrington.
- The National Planning Policy Framework says Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in "exceptional circumstances". It is not clear why WBC believes these are exceptional circumstances.
- This land is not 'spare' land, it is being used for agriculture. With the current uncertainty over 'Brexit' and climate change, we should not plan to lose any more agricultural land than essential.
- The strategic importance of the Green Belt between Halton and Warrington at Walton has been ignored to extend development.

Desire for City status is driving growth

- The Plan is based on an assumption of 1,113 new homes per annum over the next 20 years - around 24,000 in all. The Council admits this is higher than required and their reason for going this high needs to be challenged. A lower figure could significantly reduce the amount of Green Belt needed.
- The Council's desire for Warrington to become a City is given in the Plan as one reason for the high housing and employment targets. This ambition is not necessarily shared by residents.

The scale of the South Garden Suburb

- The size of the proposed Garden City Suburb would completely change the character of the area and destroy its history and heritage. Smaller settlements such as Appleton Thorn, Walton, Halton, Stretton and Grappenhall Village - now separated by fields, will be engulfed in one huge urban area.
- The ability to access and enjoy the countryside is a vital amenity. Loss of such a significant amount of green space will be detrimental to the whole town.
- No detailed traffic survey has been included in the Plan and the roads roughly penciled in do not remotely address the transport needs for this huge development.

Adverse impact on Stockton Heath

- Stockton Heath is a delightful village and preferred shopping centre for many residents in south Warrington. Though not mentioned in the Plan, the adverse impact of the extra housing in Appleton and Walton and the traffic generated, will be enormous.
- Road are frequently at a standstill and junctions are already at capacity. The unique geography of the Mersey, Ship and Bridgewater Canals does not seem to have been taken into account.

Traffic issues and geography

- Warrington's position close to the M6, M56 and M62 results in the traffic situation becoming extreme whenever there are problems on the Motorways. The extra traffic from so many houses will make gridlock more likely.
- An 'Eastern Link' from M56 Junction 10 to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal is one of the roads suggested in the Plan which cuts right through the proposed new residential areas. This would attract extra traffic trying to avoid problems on the M6/M56 and residents will be subjected to unacceptable noise, pollution and vibration.
- The Plan also suggests using the old railway embankment west of Latchford Locks as a new strategic transport route. This route would be detrimental to the people currently living in this area, north and south of the Canal.
- None of these routes have been seriously assessed.

Environment

- No high level environmental and ecological impact survey is included in the Plan.
- Protecting wildlife matters, and a wide variety of animals and birds live in the Green Belt areas including badgers, water voles, great crested newts and bats.
- South Warrington's countryside is being unfairly targeted. Our area is a green lung for the town enjoyed for centuries by people from right across the town.

Using 'Brown Field' sites first

- There are large Brown Field sites likely to be released within the 20 year period of the plan which have not been taken into account. Fiddlers Ferry is nearing its end and Warrington Hospital is planning to move to a new site. These areas could make a significant contribution to the town's housing needs so that Green Belt land could be spared unless essential.
- WBC have used a housing density of 30 dwellings per hectare throughout the PDO. A higher density of 40 per hectare might be appropriate in some places such as apartments in the Town Centre. This would relieve pressure to use green field sites

Healthcare

- Warrington and Halton hospitals are already operating at or near capacity as are most of the towns GP practices and Medical Centres. 24,000 extra houses means some 55,000 extra residents. This huge increase in population will require more medical services. The Plan promises new health facilities but the Council is not able to provide these. That will depend on the NHS and availability of staff.



We believe that practically all of Warrington's Green Belt could be preserved by scaling back on the planned housing and employment numbers and better use of Brown Field sites. This massive increase in the size of the town is neither necessary nor wanted.