

Warrington Borough Council,
Planning and Policy Programmes
New Town House,
Buttermarket Street
Warrington
WA1 2NH

28th September, 2017

Dear Sir,

RESPONSE TO WBC PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT OPTION

I wish to object in the strongest terms to the PDO.

As a resident of Winwick I have particular concern at the inclusion of the following greenbelt land included in the "call for sites"

R18/007 – Land at Newton Road /Old School House Lane ,

R18/064 - Land off Hollins Lane / Ladies Walk

R18/040 - Highfield Farm, Waterworks Lane, Winwick

Winwick is a small village steeped in history and the loss of this land would have a detrimental effect on the character of the village and quality of life of its residents. These 3 sites include ancient public trails and also have significant historical significance . In particular historical documents and maps show field R18/007 off Hollins Lane as "Winwick Green " , which is documented as a site involved in the 1648 battle of Winwick. This battle has now been added to the Battlefields Trust Resource Centre who have applied for its registration with Historic England.

Greenbelt

I believe that the release of our precious greenbelt land for development would have a devastating effect on the countryside, communities and quality of life. This PDO would lead to the destruction of greenbelt land of high landscape and agricultural value forever.

The National Planning Authority Framework states that greenbelt boundaries should only be altered in "exceptional circumstances".

What “exceptional circumstances” has Warrington Council demonstrated in this proposal?

The Council plans to give away our greenbelt land to developers whose only aim is to maximise their profits. It is these developers who again only to maximise their profit, successfully challenged the 2013 Local Plan adopted by Warrington.

This PDO completely contradicts the Councils own policies on greenbelt land.

The better use of brownfield sites has not been explored. The planned closure of Fiddlers Ferry will result in a large available site probably within the first 10 years of the plan, but this has not been taken into consideration.

Helen Jones and the Chief Executive of Warrington Hospital have confirmed in the media that the hospital is set to move sites which would result in a very large site ideal for higher density affordable housing..

Housing need

The Councils desire for Warrington to become a city is given as the reason for the higher housing and employment targets.

This ambition is not shared by Warrington residents and evidence is now showing these projections to be greatly inflated . Population projection by the Mid Mersey SMHA updated in May 2017 indicates that only half the houses the Council wants to build are needed and that there is no justification for releasing greenbelt land. The consequences of Brexit are also significant.

Warrington residents have the 2 large cities of Manchester and Liverpool on their doorstep. They have chosen Warrington for their homes and don't want city status with the lifestyle destruction it would bring.

The Council have purposely overstated the need for homes by a selective use of data in order to achieve their dream of city status.

Interestingly Warrington has a high number of unused industrial units, with Realla.co alone advertising 90 vacant units on their website

Infrastructure

Warrington residents suffer regular gridlock which has not successfully been addressed since we became a “New Town” in 1968.

Surrounded by motorways gridlock results from any problem on the motorway network and there is barely a day when this does not happen. As an example the whole of Warrington

came to a standstill on the 17th August resulting from “loose grid plates” on Thelwall Viaduct. Travelling from Stockton Heath to Winwick on that afternoon took me 2 ½ hours.

This needs to be addressed before and **not after** ambitious planning options are even considered.

Helen Jones states in the media that “Warringtons existing health infrastructure is struggling to cope with demand”

The Councils promises to build new Health Centres, Hospitals, GP surgeries to cope with our city status. However NHS departments already cannot recruit new staff. Empty posts are causing strain on services and staff, with Brexit making this even worse.

Conclusion

I strongly object to the Councils “Preferred Development Option” for all the reasons stated above.

I believe that the figures are inflated and should be adjusted to accurately reflect need, instead of to fulfil the Councils aspiration for city status or be driven by developers

The Councils aim should be to make better use of brownfield sites and to preserve our greenbelt for the enjoyment and well-being of future generations.

With accurate figures and a 15 year plan this is very achievable.

The consultation process for this plan has been poor and it is only now that many people are learning about the plans with little time to respond.

The National Planning Policy Framework states

“It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.”

I look forward to your response and for confirmation that my objections have been properly considered and addressed in any future plan

Yours Faithfully,

