

Warrington Development Plan

Part A – Reflections on the Warrington Preferred Development Option for the Local Plan:

: We can acknowledge the expertise of professionals working in the field of population growth projections. However, history informs us that over a 20 year timescale in order to remain “unqualified” the UK political and economic environment would require considerable stability. Alas, the UK environment will be anything but, given our looming “Brexit.” The Authority is therefore correct and to be commended for its actions in consulting widely and in depth, to proceed slowly and carefully in the finalisation and towards submission, of the Plan. Prime Ministers Cameron and May learned valuable lessons, when underestimating “democracy” and the popular vote. Essentially, the British people hold that current population levels are unsustainable, placing excessive burdens on the costs and delivery of essential services – health, education and care – together with failing infrastructure.

: We can all agree that Warrington centre and its water front have suffered historically through being spectacularly unattractive. The Authority has been addressing this through the regeneration and transformation programme, but as the Plan recognises much remains to be done in the centre, to the south west and on the waterfront and this is comprehensively addressed in the Plan. Nevertheless, the plans for those areas remain uncoded at this time, and perhaps more importantly, looking to the future, unfunded.

: There is ample evidence in the Plan of Warrington’s ongoing association and regard for its neighbours to the west along the Mersey and the M62 corridor. One may even say there exists interdependency between Warrington centre, north and west; the Liverpool City Region; St Helens and Halton. The Plan may benefit if this could be balanced with more extensive coverage of the linkages in the South (of the Manchester Ship canal) with N.E. (or East) Cheshire. The LEP with Cheshire is mentioned, but this area is also well served by the south running A49/A50, together with the M56/M6. The recently completed A556 by-pass, makes for smoother operation of the A50 southbound. The existing links of the area to e.g. Altrincham, Knutsford, Northwich and even Chester are all supported by Warrington Network public transport, and there are mutually beneficial economic aspects. Perhaps these should be addressed through more extensive coverage within the Plan.

: There will doubtless be many conflicting views over what central Government intended, when testing the water over limited house building incursion onto the Green Belt. The “nimby” reaction was readily predictable and can be dismissed. However, more considered reactions emphasised the need to both exhaust brownfield site availability and to ensure the residential housing mix addressed and delivered against the three priorities of “first time buyers”; “social housing”; and suitable “developments for the elderly”, especially those desirous of downsizing. In this regard, the Plan would certainly benefit given its 20 year timescale, from further detailed work on the future of Fiddlers Ferry, the more so in the context of Government’s sustainable green energy ambitions, if not targets. With regard to the Green Belt - population projections and the resultant housing assessment of 20,000+ units, indicate some 36% of the total should be developed on the Green Belt, mostly within the rural and village settlements in the South. This is considered excessive, highly destructive of the rural environment, places too high a demand on infrastructure provision, which in itself is uncoded and therefore unfunded, and, given the nature of the locations selected will not deliver the requisite housing mix. This aspect of the Plan needs to be more widely consulted and considered, the more so, given the south’s linkages with its neighbours in Cheshire and Trafford.

: There must be concern, if not doubt, regarding Government support and authorisation of investment for infrastructure development outwith those projects already committed to, given the preoccupation with BREXIT and its potential consequences. Sadly, Nuclear Power generation, HS2 phase1, London’s North/South crossrail and Heathrow’s third runway seem to have kicked Northern Powerhouse into the long grass?

Part B: Opposition to Release from Green belt –R18/076, Land east of Crouchley Lane [SHLAAref 2901/Parcel LY22]

: This site and parcel makes a strong contribution to satisfying the fundamental aim of the Green Belt under para 79 of the national PP framework in protecting the openness of the Green belt and guarding against encroachment. From our position in the NW corner of the site, we enjoy commanding and uninterrupted views across the entire parcel to the surrounding Cheshire countryside.

: Much use is made of the public footpath which traverses the site from Crouchley Lane through to Tower lane, enjoying the seasonal variations evident on the cropped land. To the NW, and readily visible lies our own property and the Grade 11 listed and historic St Mary's Church. Directly ahead, lies the Grade 11 listed Water Tower, a feature of outstanding architectural quality and beauty.

: To many residents and visitors, the site forms part of an arc of walkable attraction running from Lymm Dam, via Crouchley Lane and across the site public footpath to Tower lane and back down Higher lane to the Dam. The Water Tower, St Mary's Church, green space and the working farm form an integral part of the walk.

: For the [REDACTED] we have lived at this site, the land has been farmed, mostly for arable grain crops and on an annual basis. The site has presumably benefitted from our EU membership, Regulation and the CAP. With the presumed UK exit from EU scheduled for 2019, there is surely a compelling case for safeguarding our farmed land and its produce and to not build on farmland, especially where it is situated within the Green belt.

In considering the submission put forward by Berrys, on behalf of the Landowners, we make the following observations:

: The A.50 and A.56 are linked via Mag and Crouchley Lanes. However, the route offers only restricted use to vehicles in view of the steep gradients, narrow lanes, tight bends and restricted lines of site. The exit from Crouchley Lane onto the A56 at Higher lane has a restricted line of site to the west. There is only light vehicular (farm and farm support vehicles aside) utilisation of Crouchley Lane at and beyond 2901. However, it is very popular with cycling clubs and walkers. Crouchley Lane from Manor Close to its junction with the A56 has on road parking; access and parking on and off road for Lymm RFC; car parking at St Mary's Church Hall (multiple activities); and main access parking for the pathways leading to Lymm Dam. The Lane will not support the additional traffic movements and volumes that the proposed development implies.

: The frequent (sic) bus service along Higher lane referenced is hourly and only runs between mid morning and mid afternoon.

: From our observations, the biodiversity of the site is well supported by the annual crop cycle and the border areas to the farmed land. There are no negative aspects and we would welcome investigation and research by the recognised conservation authorities, should such prove necessary. (e.g. bats are present here!)

: We have a very old and protected tree on our land [REDACTED] It is hard work and expensive to maintain. We wouldn't miss it, in the event of Green Belt being lost.

: To score highly on "accessibility" measures as suggested, ignores the reality that both Lymm High and Ravenbank Community schools are already at or near capacity. It may also be the case that additional GPs can be sourced, but it would be uncertain where they would reside.

: As noted in Part A, the housing priorities as stated are unlikely to be addressed or met via this submission. Berrys own analysis points to the likelihood of any and all developers targeting professional and managerial buyers.

Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances and from the above analysis, we hold that the case for removing SHLAA 2901 from the Green Belt cannot be made and should not be progressed.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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