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28/09/2017

Dear Sirs

**Local Plan 2017 - Preferred Development Option, Regulation 18 Consultation
July 2017**

I wish to write and state my opposition to the details contained in the above document.

I am a local resident and moved here following my marriage. I chose to live here as I was born in a city and no longer wished to live in that environment . I wanted the benefit of being able to access the local countryside easily and use the town centre facilities and when the desire arose access the nearby cities. These proposals will completely remove this much-used footpath network through open fields.

I am not opposed to development but feel this is far too much. Following the dissolution of Warrington & Runcorn Development Corporation large areas were identified for future residential development and have been held pending such development by Commission for New Towns, English Partnerships and latterly Homes and Communities Agency. I accept that and have always anticipated it will eventually be developed, but the creation of a Garden City is appalling and completely overwhelms the area.

The development of south Warrington in recent years has already had significant impact on Stockton Heath and A49 which will continue to be used. The traffic on Red Lane and Hillcliffe Road is constant and dangerous. Here there is only a footpath on the eastern side and the road narrows to the north but the road continues to be used as cut through, this will worsen. My elderly in-laws live there and it is difficult to get in the car with them due to the fast-moving traffic. This situation will only be worsened by the development.

The points I wish to raise to in relation to your objectives are as follows: -

- 1) I completely object to objective W1 – I do not support the development of the town into a city, and object even more strongly if this means the removal of the surrounding greenbelt
- 2) I do not support the release, sensitive or otherwise, of Greenbelt to support W1.
- 3) W3, Warrington is already a strong town centre which needs supporting, but access is currently hampered by a poor road system around the town centre which is gridlocked when there are incidents on the local motorway network.
- 4) W4, agreed, new infrastructure is needed.
- 5) W5 this proposal will not “protect and embrace “the local countryside but will completely remove it in the southern area of the town.
- 6) W6, the air quality in the area is terrible, this will worsen it.

Desire for City Status – this is not something that I wish to see and after speaking to my friends, family and neighbours neither do they. It will ruin our local communities and put increasing pressure on our already stretched resources. If this is why we need 24,000 new homes then the proposals for city status should be scrapped forthwith and the target for local development reduced.

Size and Scale of South Garden suburb

I indicated above that I acknowledge there will be some development of greenspace as a legacy of the Warrington New Town, but this proposal is too drastic. It will completely change the nature of our local environment for the worse. The villages of Stretton, Hatton, Walton, Appleton Thorn, and Greenhill will all be developed into one large conurbation with no identity. The history of the area will be lost as well as the identity of the villages.

One of the jewels of Warrington is the greenspace to the south of the town which is accessed via a good footpath network and attracts many people to the area. Why on earth would you want to ruin one of the towns best features? This enables locals to take part in health and wellbeing activities and it promotes healthy living and exercise options.

As far as we are advised no detailed traffic survey has been undertaken and the increase of vehicles from housing would invalidate any works which are being done to improve the access with the proposed western access route.

Stockton Heath – Impact

Currently the A49 is the main route from north to south through the borough, it will always be used, even if the proposals are accepted.

Traffic flow though Stockton Heath is already poor due to the many junctions of main roads, but especially due to the impact when the swing bridges close to allow boat traffic up The Manchester Ship Canal. The village comes to a standstill, the area is grid locked and the pollution from vehicles is high. The proposed developments will make this worse

The village centre already suffers as a result of local housing developments and this will be exacerbated by further developments

The drainage works along Ellesmere Road by UU have recently had a severe impact on traffic in the village which shows that a slight problem, however well managed, will only make the situation worse.

In view of these recent works I question if the current drainage system is capable of dealing with the proposed alterations.

Healthcare

Currently the Warrington and Halton Hospitals are frequently noted in the local press as being at capacity and they would not be able to cope, especially when there are proposals to close Warrington A & E department! Local GP services are in crisis with practises in Warrington effectively being put into special measures as they are unable to cope with current patient numbers. It has been widely reported they are unable to fill GP posts and this situation will only worsen.

Traffic Issues

Currently Warrington is surrounded by M6, M56 and M62. This should be classed as an asset but frequently is gridlock if there is an accident or long running roadworks on the motorway. This affects business and new businesses are unlikely to locate here unless the road system is eased. This significant new proposal is not going to ease this.

The proposed Eastern link will be counterproductive as it will attract traffic from the motorways trying to by-pass the problem areas. This additional traffic through residential areas will produce noise, vibration, pollution, and danger to residents.

The plan to use the old Latchford Locks as a strategic route is flawed as there has been significant development around this area following its demise and the width of the existing route would require substantial widening. Also, is the proposal of a new high-level bridge viable when we have not yet achieved a high-level route which was proposed in the days of the Warrington New Town which was abandoned by the Government?

The impact of traffic was noted when the outbuildings at Hillfoot Farm were developed over 20 years ago. At that time planning consent was granted on condition that access was taken via Houghs Lane as Red Lane was too busy. It is far busier now as there is not the capacity in the road network along Houghs lane to facilitate the development of housing on the former Hill foot Farm land (from Red Lane to Houghs Lane).

Has a strategic transport survey been compiled to support these proposals? I understand from local press articles it has not and so surely this will be needed before any assessment can be made and proposals drawn up.

Use of Brown field sites

There seems to have been little consideration of using Brownfield sites which may become vacant soon such as Fiddlers Ferry and perhaps Warrington Hospital. There are several schools which have closed in recent years such as Sycamore Lane Primary, Barrow Hall Lane Primary, and others in the town, surely these are areas with existing links and networks where the impact of development will not be so great. These should be considered.

If a greater housing density is used where applicable for say development of apartments and flats then this will reduce the requirement for release of green belt.

Environmental Issues

The south Warrington Area has been an attraction to the town for many years and yet now there are plans to remove this vital greenspace.

The proposals do not state any ecological or environmental surveys have been undertaken, surely this is part of the Council's responsibility to ensure these areas of agriculture remain.

The agricultural areas are required to support the nation's food basket and currently with the Brexit negotiations it is important that we ensure we have sufficient resources to feed ourselves. This Greenbelt should be retained for this purpose. If the current landowners do not farm the land then perhaps they should release their "investment" to those who will.

The wildlife in the area is important to maintain an environmental balance of nature and not provide a concrete jungle.

I hope these comments will be taken into account in the future deliberation regarding this proposal and that a more reasonable proposal is found.

Yours Faithfully

