

WARRINGTON PREFERRED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017 (PLDP):

WHY WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE SCRAPPED

Main Issues with the PLDP:

- Housing:
- Significant loss of Greenbelt, landscape, ancient woodland, woodland rural character. Open spaces are vital for our mental and physical health as well as helping the planet deal with carbon dioxide. In the area covered by the plan there is an abundance of wildlife – owls , buzzards, herons , bees as well as protected species such as voles & great crested newts , which once lost can never be replaced.
- Loss, destruction and / or alteration of heritage assets and local village character and architectural distinctiveness e.g. listed buildings, ancient monuments and ancient woodland.
- Traffic congestion / transportation: result in intensive and destructive road works throughout ALL Warrington both north & south.
- Latchford & Bridgewater Canal listed bridges and under-pass under very severe threat of widening, alteration, demolition
- Rural lane character under threat.
- Poor consultation: residents not contributing to the principles of the PLDP.
- Lack of a detailed plan to preserve and enhance the urban quality of north Warrington

Preamble

- The Warrington Preferred Local Development Plan 2017; Local Plan review and the Council's initial Local Plan 'evidence base' was formulated between 24th October and 5th December 2016 with an input of 78 response from developers and landowners. Responses were also received from Parish Councils, local residents and other stakeholders.
- This suggests that the plan is property / land speculator led and not community led from Warrington's citizens & ratepayers.
- The PLDP document is an imbalanced report in that whilst it says much about south Warrington 'development', it says virtually nothing about how it intends to improve the urban environment in north Warrington (including the town centre) which has significantly deteriorated over the years. This should be a top priority. Any Local Plan should focus on improving quality, bringing the town's communities together and not accommodating urban sprawl

Quality of Consultation & Information:

- The quality of consultation with the public has been disappointing giving the appearance of a fait accompli.
- The public has not been consulted upon the framing of any plan aims, principles, values or proposals for Warrington. The public has been objector rather than contributor to the purposes and aims of the plan.

- Warringtonians need to be fully informed as to the precise and transparent procedures of public consultation, government guidance on this issue, WBC policies and as to how and by whom the consultations, comments and contributions will be independently assessed for the benefit the quality of life and urban environment for citizens.
- “If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, e.g. over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, consideration should be given to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation”(Landmark Chambers: Sept. 2013: Halebank PC v Halton BC)

Statement of Disclosure of Interests:

- In the name of democracy, transparency and accountability, it would be useful if Warringtonians were informed of the identity of property speculators, land & property owners, corporate bodies and other vested interests who would & are most likely to benefit financially from the proposals of PLDP. We also assume all public officials and councillors have signed a Declaration of Pecuniary Interests.
- The plan’s ‘evidence’ justification is by commercial/business consultancies such as the globalist oriented Oxford Economics and credit rating Experian thus indicating that the plan is a business venture without a substantiated social and environmental basis. Consequently it has been difficult to identify the assumptions made in this plan.

Historic Warrington & Local Distinctiveness: Urban Quality

- The PLDP is about quantity and not quality for Warrington as an integrated town. It hardly refers to Warrington north of the Manchester Ship Canal where quality of urban design, streetscape and open space should be top priority. The town and inner urban areas are in dire need of very high quality urban design that respects Warrington’s unique historic architectural quality. Over the years, development control, enforcement and highway works have done little to improve the quality and attractiveness of Warrington. The town centre should create pride and identity with Warrington.
- The PLDP. Para.4.38:W5 claims to ‘secure high-quality design and reinforce character and local distinctiveness....’. However, WBC has had difficulty in demonstrating sufficiently this ambition and capability. The quality of the new constructions in the town centre and of development control and enforcement are not in keeping with the traditional historic character and scale of the town centre.
- Importantly, there are no existing or proposed conservation areas indicated on Fig 4 ‘City Centre’.
- Fig 4 ‘City Centre’ indicates land-uses on numbered development parcels. Such a notation suggests that WCB views the town centre as ‘speculative property development’ parcels.
- City status will put pressure on Warrington Town Centre to demolish even more of Warrington’s unique architectural heritage. Warrington is becoming a mall town in which property speculators now own extensive tracts of central Warrington including streets formerly in the public realm. Warrington town centre increasingly does not belong to Warrington. (see Google Earth)

- There are doubts about the commitment to urban conservation e.g. partial demolition of buildings contiguous with the Water Tower & furniture works. WBC does not have a dedicated Conservation Officer at Principal Officer level i.e. where it really counts. The formal post of Senior Conservation Officer disappeared some years ago

Traffic & Transportation: (not fully addressed in the PLDP e.g. Fig 10)

- Details of the huge traffic / transport implications for Warrington have been omitted from the PLDP because no detailed traffic computer models appear to have been tested for the road network. The implications for south Warrington, north Warrington & particularly Latchford and west Thelwall are potentially disastrous. Existing roads and routes will experience increased traffic congestion and pollution. This is a crucial component without which the plan cannot be fully assessed.
- On Monday 4th September 2017 (pm) at Park Royal exhibition, Mr Farrell informed us that no detailed transportation / traffic model had been prepared for the proposals, but was commencing. Thus:
 - There is no detailed transportation / traffic / road infrastructure chapter in the report (see Contents) nor evidence of any computer modelling and analysis of the environmental, road widening or social impact of this 'development' plan throughout the borough.
 - Any traffic modelling for Warrington and its sub-region should take as its basis the existing physical capacity and quality of environment of the roads to limit congestion, road widening, road works, widening of existing bridges. In other, words, the existing roads, streets, lanes, bridges and junctions in Warrington should set the absolute limit to existing traffic flows and traffic capacity & to minimise any increase in the urban foot-print of Warrington.
 - Without such a restricted urban capacity based plan, residents, councillors and decision makers will not be able to assess the PLDP because of such an important omission (Fig 10 is wholly inadequate) Any proposed traffic model based on environmental and social parameters should be analysed and assessed by independent consultants.
- The new housing population will create even more intense traffic congestion and pollution throughout the town thereby negating any benefit that might accrue from the proposed western by-pass to the town centre.
- The draft proposals for Warrington would require more disruptive road widening and engineering works to accommodate increased traffic: For example, the north – south traffic movement will considerably increase the current significant pressure on the rural lanes of south Warrington and on protected Heritage Assets on the Bridgewater Canal which will most likely 'require' their demolition or significant alteration. The threat to the rural landscape, heritage assets and lanes of south Warrington will be destructive.

ROADS & LANES Affecting Heritage Assets - Listed Structures & Monuments

- single lane choke points and narrow lanes under pressure for demolition / widening
- Lumb Brook Road Under-Pass: Ancient Monument (Single Lane Traffic). Will this plan require the demolition of Lumb Brook Bridge & Bethesda Chapel?
- Red Lane Bridge: (Single Lane Traffic): Listed Building: Grade II, currently a 'Rat Run' from Quarry Lane and Windmill Lane which would increase traffic at the crossroads

with the A49 and Lyons Lane, which will function as a major traffic artery by its eastward connection to the new urban highway serving the urban sprawl.

- Hough Lane Bridge: (single lane traffic). The increase in housing along Hough Lane will exert pressure to widen & demolish.
- Walton Bridge: (single lane traffic) very similar to Hough Lane.
- The Bridgwater Canal and the Manchester Ship Canal are a considerable impediment to north – south traffic movement.

ROADS, LANES & PLACES Likely To Be Affected By Severe Traffic Congestion:

- Latchford Village & Knutsford Road: High level arterial road with extensive bridgeworks & slip lanes to take major traffic load of north south traffic (see Fig 10).
- Latchford Village is already a traffic island! Importantly, Figure 7 indicates a sweeping major north – south arterial road along the high - level railway alignment which ends up in Latchford. Also, significantly affects south Thelwall.
- Stockton Heath Village will experience significant increase in traffic from all directions so exacerbating the already high levels of congestion.
- London Road via Stockton Heath which currently suffers congestion for most of the day will be experience even more traffic, this will have an impact on leisure facilities and car parking in the village.
- Walton Road (as an extension of Grappenhall Road) will also experience an increase in traffic as it connects the above roads to the Stag Pub Junction for the proposed Western bypass to Liverpool Road.
- Red Lane / Windmill Lane / Quarry Lane / west end of Whitefield Road, Hill Cliffe Road will become even more of a rat – run owing to its cross road connection with Lyons Lane & the A49
- Lumb Brook Road and Bridge Lane are defined as major arteries to connect with the newly opened (now closed) Stockton Lane. These three roads will converge at Lumb Brook Bridge which can suffer from high congestion.
- Grappenhall Hump Back Bridge will also experience significant pressure
- Now that the Red Route for the Western Bypass has been selected, even more traffic & congestion can be expected across south Warrington
- Residents of the new houses in Appleton will most likely not be employed in Warrington *per se* and will not identify with the town; they will use the M56 & M62 to work elsewhere.
- The way society is going with people working long hours probably means that some gardens will grow out of control and affect the area , perhaps encouraging vermin
- The proposed extensive warehousing is unlikely to provide substantive employment for the incoming local professional classes.
- The so called Green City southern suburbs of Warrington will merely function as suburbs to Liverpool, Manchester and Chester. They will essentially function as rate-income sources for WBC.
- The existing roads and lanes should define the limits of urban ‘growth’. There should be no more urban growth and ‘development’ around all Warrington in order to preserve and protect its green environs, rural character & setting.

- There is no indication that land & property speculators, who will profit from this urban sprawl will pay for the infrastructure, associated road-works and environmental enhancement and up-grades required by this plan

Impact on Healthcare Provision

- Such a large number of houses will increase the need for GP provision . At the moment it difficult to get both doctor and nurse appointments. These plans will make this problem worse. In addition local hospital are already fully stretched which would be compounded by a large increase in population that these houses would bring. It is also likely that it would have a large impact on the need for medical support such as physiotherapists.

Impact on Education

- A considerable number of new schools will have to be built if the houses are aimed at families. This will mean not only teachers but speech therapists, educational psychologists, CAMHS and other support services which are in short supply.

