



28th September 2017

Planning Policy Team,
Warrington Borough Council,
New Town House,
Warrington.
WA1 2NH

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir/Madam

Warrington Borough Council – Local Plan Preferred Development Option

We've lived in South Warrington for more than ■ years; ■ years in Grappenhall and then in Higher Walton for over ■ years.

One of the main reasons for moving to this area was that it has a distinct identity and we very much appreciate its rural feel and setting. Given that we are both professionals who work in Manchester and are originally from Liverpool, we made a conscious decision that we didn't want to live in a city. We chose to live somewhere where there is countryside on our door step which we can walk or cycle too and we can bring our children up in a safe environment.

In summary

We believe that the proposed plan is flawed, and doesn't take into consideration the needs of the people of Warrington.

The consultation itself has been flawed. Not only was it carried out over summer (although extended until 29th September) but there has been poor communication and engagement with local residents. The first thing we heard about it was via Facebook rather than receiving clear proposals from you.

The requirement of 24,000 homes is I believe overstated and given the fact that Halton, Liverpool, and Manchester plus other towns are all producing plans, there is no joined up thought process and holistic view being taken of how this would impact on the region as a whole.

We wish to make the following points of objection:

- 1) the flawed vision for making Warrington a city.**

Given the location of Warrington, few people who live here would want to live in a city. If they did, they would move to Chester, Manchester or Liverpool. Many people who work here already commute to these places.

The town centre has suffered from years of neglect and pressure from out of town shopping centres means that it's lost many of its shops. It can't compete with the local cities for variety. Bridge Street is an example of how lack of investment in this town has led to real issues.

If 24,000 houses are built, how would Warrington and its infrastructure cope with the demands of an additional 48,000 people?

Transport links are already poor with railways overcrowded and the single transpennine line not being fit to commute on given the fact it is one line. Bus routes are limited and not practical. This drives people to the already overcrowded roads – and being a town surrounded by motorways, as soon as there is a problem we face a gridlock.

What residents want is a vibrant town – town centre where there aren't any empty units – there are many examples around the country of successful towns.

2) The inadequacy of the consultation process

Involvement in previous “consultations” shows the lack of engagement that has been made with the people who really matter – those who live in Warrington. This lack of proper process would merit a challenge so that a full and proper process can be undertaken.

There is also an unjustified end point. The residents of Warrington don't want to live in a city (see above).

3) The miscalculation of the housing needs

What considerations has the planning officer made in relation to demographic changes and economic growth? How would this area (which is popular due to its small communities and countryside) attract people to fill these homes? The cost of these homes would also be excessive so only high earners would be likely to be able to afford to live in them. These jobs are usually found in the cities of Manchester and Liverpool. Warrington would never be able to compete with the markets there.

4) The lack of exceptional circumstances for reclassifying the Green Belt.

My understanding is that building on the green belt should only be in exceptional circumstances. There are many brown field sites in and around Warrington and would merit development (although not on the scale proposed in the plan).

We live near Moore. The main purpose of green belt is to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another – clearly as this proposal would mean housing coming right up to the village boundary at the eastern side of the village, there would be no green belt left and Moore would be ‘swallowed up’ by characterless housing estates.

5) Impact on local villages and communities

Living with the unique village of Moore on our doorstep, we're very aware of the impact that this plan and that of Halton would have on Moore. In writing the Local Plan Warrington have only considered the natural and historic assets within their own borough boundary and have completely overlooked that the village of Moore which immediately adjoins their proposed South Western Urban extension, is both a historic village (with a Conservation area and several listed buildings) but

also provides a fantastic natural resource enjoyed by numerous residents from Warrington and beyond, who use the footpath network, towpaths and access Moore Nature Reserve via Moore Lane (which is in Halton).

6) Port Warrington

The Port Warrington proposal indicates a large distribution centre with huge warehousing to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal. This development would have a devastating impact on the lives of the residents of Promenade Park as their homes directly overlook this area. There are 80+ homes on this site and it accounts for nearly a quarter of the population of the village of Moore. The site is beautifully maintained by the residents and is regularly commended by the Cheshire Best Kept Village Judges. The majority of residents have chosen to retire here because of its pleasant, open setting and relatively peaceful environment. Residents need the reassurance that proper assessments will be made before any permissions are granted, together with enforceable control measures, especially in relation to noise and the visual impact of development.

How would the road system (already choked) cope with the increased transport that would come here. It's already bad enough when these large lorries try to come down the country roads near us.

7) Moore Nature Reserve

We are also very concerned about the impact of Port Warrington on Moore Nature Reserve which is important for both wildlife and people in equal measure and must be protected for future generations.

8) Infrastructure

All of the above proposals would have a huge, adverse impact on existing services in the area. All of our local medical centres are full, schools are full and the local roads are regularly clogged with traffic trying to find a route either from Warrington or Runcorn, when there is either a hold up on the M56, the Runcorn Bridge or the M6. Even with a link road and the proposed schools this is unlikely to change.

Has the Council taken into account the increased traffic on the road network including the increase in pollution? I would be interested to see what studies have been done in relation to this.

There's no Government requirement to produce a 20 year plan and our view is that a 10 year plan would be better. We believe you should reconsider the plan. Given the uncertainties on the economy with Brexit (and whatever that means!), the impact of other initiatives and the consequences of technological change on work and home life balance. The future of the site at Fiddlers Ferry would also be more certain then – which would give a brownfield site requiring regeneration.

Yours sincerely

