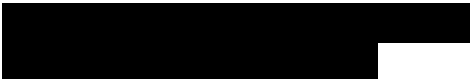




28th September 2017

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



Dear Sirs

RE: Warrington Borough Council Local Plan. Preferred Development Option Regulation 18 Consultation

I am writing in regard to the above plan and associated consultation and wish to place a formal objection against the plan for the following reasons.

Housing Need

Fundamentally the future housing requirement is based on both forecasts for economic growth in Warrington generally but more so by plans for additional growth but acknowledges that the Government will shortly be consulting on a standard methodology for calculating housing needs – Rather than stating ‘housing needs need to be kept under review’ surely plans should not be drawn up now based on methodology and assumptions that will soon be superseded by Government guidance?

In terms of demand for housing this is also driven by the so-called ambition to be a ‘New City’. The PDO document states that the council want to transition Warrington from a New Town to a New City – In my view based on views expressed by other local residents no-one shares the aspiration for Warrington to become a ‘New City’. With Warrington being only 20 miles from both Manchester and Liverpool why would the town want to try and compete with two established larger cities?

Transport Links

Warrington town centre already cannot cope with the huge volume of traffic and the PDO does not confirm how the town will cope with additional traffic resulting from over 22,000 new homes. You refer to

High level spatial options

The PDO defines 3 high level options for spatial distribution of new development, with Option 2 being cited as the preferred choice. Option 2 essentially means the areas outside Warrington Town Centre paying the highest environmental price in terms of green belt release to satisfy the Council’s plans for the transition of the main urban area of Warrington to a New City – This is fundamentally unfair and will permanently destroy the semi-rural areas that surround the town. From the perspective of local residents in these areas we are paying the highest price and seeing no benefit at all from the proposals.

Specifically the proposals for the ‘Garden City Suburb’ under Option 2 of the preferred main development locations will mean that Grappenhall and Thelwall in particular will see the most significant changes in terms of character given the proposed number of houses to be built in this location. The main attraction of this area is the village feel and green space all of which will be lost making the area less desirable to live in and having a downward pressure on house prices in the area.

In particular the plan to utilise the TPT to then link across to the derelict railway bridge over Latchford Locks demonstrates total contempt for residents of Springfield Avenue, Thelwall New Road and into Latchford whose houses would either need to be demolished or who would have a major new road on their doorstep.

The TPT is a unique feature of the area and popular with walkers, cyclists, joggers and any development which affects this trail will be a huge and permanent loss to the local area.

Warrington Borough Council also seem unable to confirm where this new proposed route would end? Bridgefoot roundabout and the centre of Warrington is already hugely congested at weekends and in rush hour, to add more traffic to this would further exacerbate the problem

It is also unclear how the prospect of thousands of new houses – particularly in the green belt areas where individuals would have to drive into the town centre – will have anything other than a further detrimental effect on congestion. In addition what about parking in the town centre how will this be addressed?

In terms of Option 2 being the preferred choice no reasons have been given as to why Option 4 has been discounted – This option would have a much lower impact on Grappenhall and Thelwall which under Option 2 will be changed beyond recognition. Why should these areas bear the brunt of the most significant changes to support the economic objectives for the town centre?

Infrastructure

The PDO includes school provision but no mention of hospital. Warrington Hospital is already at risk of losing its 24hr A&E service as I understand, how on earth can it support all these additional residents?

The PDO makes mention of primary schools that may be required to support the ‘Garden City Suburb’ but what about the impact on high school capacities? Where will the proposed new secondary school be located and what impact will this have on local traffic and congestion?

The PDO – when arriving at Option 2 (Garden City Suburb) as the significant element of the preferred choice for the main development locations – acknowledges that *“more detailed work will still be required to understand infrastructure and character impacts as this option still presents a significant urban extension”*. How on earth can this be cited as the preferred choice before the full impact has been assessed?? As the preferred choice this is will now be the pre-cursor to specific proposals – How are the Council in a position to proceed to this next stage based on limited knowledge of the impacts?

There does not appear to have been any attempt by Warrington Borough Council to seek the views of local residents on the fundamental concept of Warrington transitioning to a New City status – I would argue that if it did it would find the answer would be a resounding no. Given the plans outlined in the PDO are driven by this strategic objective surely the views of local residents who will ultimately pay the price in terms of permanent and detrimental changes areas they and their families live in.

Truth is these plans have unsettled and concerned the vast majority of your residents. I personally, and I know I speak for many of my family and friends, do not wish Warrington to be made a New City and do not want this development.

Please listen to your residents and do the right thing!

Yours faithfully

