



29<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dear Sir

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

I wish to object to the current Preferred Development Option for the following reasons:

- Public and parish council consultation without adequate advertising and held throughout peak holiday season.
- The whole plan must be reconsidered in the light of ‘Brexit’ and the forthcoming government review of the requirement for new build housing.
- Misleading by the council leading the public to believe that the volume of housing required is something set by Government when it is the executive at the Borough Council who have calculated the volume requirement.
- The plan exceeds any **local requirement** for more housing and will as it stands provide high end housing for people with no connection with Warrington. There is a greater need for providing low cost housing (one or two bedroom bed/sit type apartments) that are truly affordable. These can be build near existing housing on existing brown field sites within Warrington.
- Even if the current plan is forced ahead the choice of option 2 does not outweigh option 4; except for those with business interest
- There is enough Brownfield land in the area to build 15,000 houses. Potentially enough to meet a reduced housing requirement. Therefore allowing the council to protect and preserve existing green belt land. There is also the very real prospect brownfield sites at Fiddlers Ferry and the Warrington Hospital site (when it closes and health services are moved to Halton, Whiston and St Helens) thus releasing substantial areas for much needed low cost housing.
- Warrington is a sad, run down town as evidenced by the state of buildings in Bridge Street, the market and the number of pound shops and charity shops. Even M&S have pulled out in favour of Stockton Heath and Gemini. Nobody in their right mind ever came here for a pleasant holiday. Rather, other than the low waged local employees, Warrington is a dormitory town for high end salaried people who work in Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire; just look at the rush hour traffic on the M56. The reason for Warrington’s attraction to such people is its green spaces; green and beautiful, relaxing spaces that will be sold off. **Houses are always being built but green belt is not.**
- The 2016 study by the World Health Organisation recorded Warrington as having the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest air pollution levels in the North West. Impact on health and mortality. Why would the Council wish to increase this further?

- Congestion reaches its peak during most working days. This becomes gridlock when the Thelwall viaduct, M6, M56 or M62 are congested by accidents. Warrington is used as a 'rat run'. With the advent of the new tolled Mersey crossing traffic can be expected to increase.
- The proposed western link is the only sensible suggestion put forward so far. However, it is in danger of becoming yet another 'rat run'. Therefore, a congestion zone should be established between the River Mersey and the Manchester ship canal. There are currently only six crossings; Bridgefoot and Kingsway on the north side and Chester Road, London Road, the cantilever and Kingsway on the south side. Each of these crossings has the facility for the installing of congestion cameras with the option of turning around and not paying. All vehicles registered at DVLC with a WA postcode would automatically be exempted as well as public service vehicles, taxis, disabled class vehicles and those used by people who work in Warrington (who can apply for exemption). Otherwise a charge of £25 to enter the area between the two major water ways would deter 'rat runners' and generate substantial revenue for the Borough.
- Concerning the proposed option 2 development of the south eastern sector, these houses would typically be four or five bedroom dwellings isolated as gated communities and costing upwards of £800,000. Certainly not a price that most people in Warrington could afford. They would be built on beautiful greenbelt (Warrington's principle attraction as a dormitory town).
- The proposed extended Appleton Thorn/Barleycastle industrial area would result in a 'stock concentration area'. It would provide a limited number of low paid jobs for people who could not afford to live in the area. It would also attract HGV's to a mid-England stopping point and necessitate a new junction with the M6 or M56.
- Agricultural land in this sector is mostly grade 2. However, the grading of land to the south west around Walton and Moore is generally grade 3. If there has be sacrifices that after all the brownfield sites have been built up the logical choice resulting in the least sacrifice is to build in the south west sector. Such housing would also have access to the proposed western link.
- Destroying greenbelt in the south east sector will also destroy valuable wildlife. I have personally seen many species of birds, we have Kestrels nesting in our gables, there are owls, bats and bees in an about my property in Weaste Lane. We also have many pheasants and some hares in nearby fields.
- The proposal of a road from Stretton towards the Knutsford Road and crossing Weaste Lane before consuming part of the TPT will have devastating effects. Even this proposal has blighted existing property prices. The bridge over the ship canal would have to be rebuilt and widened and where would the road end? Clearly, there is nowhere for it to go at Latchford and Bridgefoot is already congested.
- If there must be a transport link then putting in a tram way has the following advantages, it would be narrower, be able to occupy a railway embankment originally designed to take trains, only require structural work on the high level bridge, link current and any future development at Stretton and Appleton directly to Bank Quay for the western main line, a spur up Bridge Street (already public service only traffic) would take it to the bus station and Central Station. People living in that area who work in Merseyside or Manchester could therefore avoid their cars and use public transport. There would be no need for a park and ride as one would park the car at home walk to a tram stop and ride to the town. Future development of Fiddlers Ferry could see extension of the line down the current mineral railway from Bank Quay. This would significantly improve air quality by reducing car journeys and the pollution so caused. Busses are not the answer, the service is abysmal and therefore underused. Despite bus lanes there is still congestion and pollution.
- Concreting over the fields and widening the railway embankment would significantly increase water run off and flooding. Weaste Lane is in danger of being cut in half. Already the current drains cannot

cope with floods in Weaste Lane (where the road would cut it in half) at Massey Brook and in Half Acre Lane and Cliff Lane at the underbridges. Residents of Weaste Lane are in danger of being isolated by increased flooding.

- Therefore, any developer would have to install a major drainage system. Another expense would be dealing with Japanese Knot Weed. There are areas south of Weaste Lane towards the Knutsford Road that are contaminated by this notifiable plant. Is the Council aware of the regulations for decontaminating areas so infected? The soil has to be dug out to a specified depth and disposed of at a registered site, plastic liners need to be laid and at the end of works vehicle tyres have to be destroyed. In affected areas the cost of decontamination would not be covered by the profit from building new homes. I am aware of areas of Knot Weed near my residence but has there been a survey in the farmland beyond and south of the Knutsford Road?

Yours faithfully

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