

# Warrington Local Plan: Preferred Development Options

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Representation submitted on behalf of  
Persimmon Homes (North West)

September 2017



## Warrington Local Plan: Preferred Development Options

This representation forms the response of Persimmon Homes North West ('Persimmon' or 'the Company') to the Preferred Development Options document and associated Background documents set out by Warrington Council to support the new Local Plan.

Persimmon Homes is one of the UK's leading housebuilders, trading under the Persimmon Homes, Charles Church and Westbury Homes brands and operates from 24 offices nationwide. The Company sold over 13,500 homes in 2014 and has planning consent for 92,404 plots (as of June 2015) and circa 400 active sites. The Company has traditionally been very active within the North West region and in recent years has successfully delivered two major developments in Warrington (Riverside Point, Latchford and Regency Park Bewsey), both previous developed sites and delivery together produced 650 new homes. Furthermore, the Company is actively pursuing new development opportunities within the region and is keen to support the preparation of a plan for Warrington which seeks to facilitate the level of economic growth the town has the potential to achieve.

As identified at paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), it is considered extremely important that the views of key stakeholders, such as the development industry, are considered early in the formulation of the Local Plan, to ensure the delivery of a plan that can best facilitate the delivery of homes to support growth and sustainable delivery.

The Company is in support of Warrington's ambition to provide an increase of housing in the borough and the new requirement of a minimum of 1,113 dwellings per annum (dpa). However, the Company wishes to express their concerns in regards to the preferred development strategy, based on the 'Garden City Regions'. The main concerns have been listed below and this document aims to delve into the reasoning behind the concerns.

The main concerns are as follows:

1. Overreliance on urban extensions and Lack of Flexibility;
2. Infrastructure delivery;
3. Delivery rates; and
4. The lack of housing supply in the north of the borough.

### 1. Overreliance on Urban Extensions and Lack of Flexibility

Within the Preferred Development Options, it is clear that two specific areas have been selected for 'Garden City Regions' supplying around 8,000 new dwellings within sustainable communities.

However, it is understood little of the land proposed to be allocated is controlled by actual developers. Indeed, a key theme of deliverability under the NPPF and the confident development can be realised in the short term, which the formal involvement of a major developer implies.

According to paragraph 157 of the NPPF, Local Plans should be drawn up over an appropriate timescale, usually setting out a 15 year timeframe with longer requirements being taken into account to continually support the growth of the borough. With the proposed Local Plan having a 20 year time frame it would be plausible to expect that the safeguarded land requirements adhere to a similar amount of time. Currently, the provision of safeguarded land within the Local Plan Preferred Deliverable Option appears to only all allow a nine year supply of safeguarded land.

### 2. Infrastructure Delivery

As the Preferred Development Options clearly allocated two potential developments regions, this indicates proposed residential developments will rely on significant new infrastructure investment in order to be realised.

Although the plans for new infrastructure is key to the sustainable growth of Warrington, for such a significant proportion of development and meeting the housing need, to rely on infrastructure delivery, may rise compromising future delivery.

With the reliance of all the proposed residential developments progress resting on sufficient new infrastructure, if unforeseen circumstances create hold ups in the delivery of this infrastructure then it is likely that the number of annual housing completions will also suffer. However, if the proposed locations for residential development were more widely distributed across the Warrington Borough, then other developments could continue to progress and not be halted due to over-reliance on infrastructure.

### 3. Delivery Rates

Due to the locations of the proposed development sites being within close proximity to each other and located within the south of the region, it is likely that it would create a wide variety of choice for potential purchasers. However, this could potentially create an over-provision, or even supply, within a single area of the town.

If the borough were to allocate a wider distribution of land release, it would provide a range of choice across the town; and better meet the identifiable housing needs within, and across, the town, where such needs are not limited to South Warrington.

As real term job growth suggests that Warrington should plan for higher level of employment opportunities, it should be noted that the housing requirements should increase with this number. As mentioned above, allocating a wider distribution of land release would potentially spread the employment growth opportunities to the borough and create equal growth.

<b>4. The lack of housing supply in the North of the Borough</b>
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To insure that the plan delivers the housing requirements it sets out, it should welcome greater provisions for flexibility in the areas with the allocations.

There are limited options presented for residential development to be accommodated to the north of the Mersey, but within the main settlement of Warrington. Given the successful delivery of Chapelford (former RAF Burtonwood Air Base), it would seem misguided to not consider continuing to invest in development in the north of Warrington, given the deliverability credentials.

It is acknowledged Omega will deliver 1,100 dwellings, and development is commencing her now, but into the medium and later stages of the plan there is limited space for supply.

Summary

I trust that Warrington Council find the above observations helpful in the process of creation the Local Plan. Persimmon Homes will happily discuss any comments further if required. We would be grateful to be kept informed of further consultations regarding the development of the Local Plan.