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Warrington Borough Council

Local Plan

Preferred Development Option

Regulation 18 Consultation

Standard Response Form

July 2017

2: Questions

Question 1

Do you have any comments to make about how we've worked out the need for new homes and employment land in Warrington over the next 20 years?

Response:

We support the aspiration of the Council to deliver an additional 31,000 jobs between 2015 and 2040. This level of jobs growth results in the requirement for a minimum of 1,113 dwellings per annum. Warrington clearly benefits from an excellent location in terms of transport infrastructure and is located between two significant City Regions, Warrington is therefore well placed for the level of economic growth that is proposed.

The housing requirement should however be considered as minima rather than maxima to ensure that additional sustainable growth can come forward where appropriate over the life of the plan – additional housing above and beyond the requirement identified would also allow the faster delivery of affordable homes which would assist in reducing the backlog that otherwise would not be achieved for at least 20 years.

Since the Preferred Development Option has been published, the Government has issued a consultation document 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' which relates to a standard methodology for assessing housing need. It is noted the current consultation document does allow for deviation from the approach set out where there are specific circumstances that would justify this. It is our view that given the growth potential for the area and its position between the two City Regions, there would be justification for deviating from this methodology if necessary.

Question 2

Do you have any comments to make about how we've worked out the number of homes and amount of employment land that can be accommodated within Warrington's existing built up areas?

Response:

Whilst the overall objective of maximising development from within the urban area is appropriate, it is our view that to deliver around 10,000 dwellings from the urban area within the first 10 years will be extremely challenging given that some of the inner sites are currently occupied by alternate uses, furthermore, significant infrastructure will need to be in place before much of this potential could be realised. It is therefore our view that some of the Green Belt locations that are being promoted by this plan (such as the south west development area) should be reviewed to determine what levels of growth could come forward earlier (i.e. within the first five years) to ensure the anticipated delivery rates can be achieved from the outset of the Plan being adopted. This would allow those PDL sites within the inner areas more time to come forward but without compromising overall delivery rates.

The Council should engage with all landowners and their representatives to understand potential delivery time scales.

Question 3

Have we appropriately worked out the amount of land to be released from the Green Belt, including the amount of land to be 'safeguarded'?

Response:

Further work should be undertaken to understand the delivery of all sites / locations in the Development Option. The outcome of such work would determine whether additional land from the Green Belt is required to ensure delivery rates can be achieved.

Question 4

Do you agree with the new Local Plan Objectives?

Response:

We agree with the Councils strategic objectives in terms of opting for a jobs growth strategy and in turn the uplift in housing requirements. The document identifies the exceptional circumstances that are required to justify the release of land currently within the Green Belt. We would recommend that further attention is paid to the Sustainability Appraisal when appraising the options for growth to ensure robustness, particularly with regard to meeting the housing needs of the outer lying settlements. Future versions of this plan should make it very clear that housing requirements are minima and not maxima and support sustainable development.

With regard to the preferred locations for growth, we strongly support the identification of the South West Urban extension. The Framework Plan document very clearly makes the case for growth in this location which is supported.

Question 5

Do you have any comments to make about how we've assessed different 'Spatial Options' for Warrington's future development?

Response:

No observations

Question 6

Do you have any comments to make about how we've assessed different options for the main development locations?

Response:

No observations

Question 7

Do you agree with our Preferred Development Option for meeting Warrington's future development needs?

Response:

We strongly support the principles of the Preferred Development Option. This approach provides the opportunity to provide for significant employment growth which will assist Warrington in enhancing its position between the two City Regions.

There is a need for refinement as the plan moves forward and this should be undertaken in conjunction with land owners, promoters and other key stakeholders to ensure the objectives of the plan can be realised. This approach will be critical to ensure timely delivery.

Question 8

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the City Centre?

Response:

No Comments

Question 9

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the Wider Urban Area?

Response:

No Comments

Question 10

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for developing the Warrington Waterfront?

Response:

No Comments

Question 11

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the Warrington Garden City Suburb?

Response:

No Comments

Question 12

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the South Western Urban Extension?

Response:

We strongly support the principle of this Development Option and the inclusion of our site within the urban extension (see attached plan that confirms the extent of land to which we control).

Further work is required before finalising the development parcels within the Preferred Development Option for the following reasons:

1. At present there is no clear justification for the mix or apportionment of development within the urban extension. For example, there is a substantial country park identified within the site area that we control – the Country Park would be better distributed throughout the urban extension so that future residents have easy access. As shown at this stage, many residents would be some distance from the Country Park – a more central location would be appropriate.
2. There is reference to the COMAH Zones of the adjacent chemical works and the impacts this has on some parts of the Preferred Development Option. It is our understanding that operations have changed at the chemical works resulting in a change and possible reduction in the areas affected. We are currently investigating this and will provide the Council with additional information in due course.

In terms of uses within the Urban Extension, there is likely to be the need for some form of mechanism to deal with equalisation of land values. Further information needs to be made available by the Council regarding this and how it may be implemented. As the Plan moves forward, all land owners and relevant stakeholders should be included in the Master Planning process to ensure all parties can agree to the inclusion of their land before the submission document is issued. This will be critical to ensuring the Plan is deliverable.

The Council should be aware that we are undertaking a number technical investigations for our site that will inform a site vision document – this will be shared with the Council once available to inform future iterations of this plan.

Question 13

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for development in the Outlying Settlements?

Response:

No Comments

Question 14

Do you agree with our approach to providing new employment land?

Response:

Yes – the approach adopted to identifying Employment needs and selecting potential sites is supported. The overall locations appear logical given access to the highway network and accessibility to local workforce.

Question 15

Do you agree with our suggested approach for dealing with Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites?

Response:

No Comments

Question 16

Do you agree with our suggested approach for dealing with Minerals and Waste?

Response:

No Comments

Question 17

Having read the Preferred Development Option Document, is there anything else you feel we should include within the Local Plan?

Response:

No Comments

