

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

29 September 2017

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

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Warrington “Preferred Development Option” Regulation 18 Consultation

I write to express my objection and comments to the current Preferred Development Option for the following reasons:

1. Pollution. As you know, according to the WHO report, Warrington is the second most polluted town in the North West. This is set to worsen if plans to build high-level dual carriageways and bridges go ahead. The Council should conduct an independent, expert assessment to find out what would be the effect on people's health of increased traffic emissions. In addition, the Council should take action to improve air quality throughout the town as a matter of urgency. These insights should inform the decision-making of every development plan.

2. Loss of natural habitat. Having local recreational areas such as the Transpennine Trail and Moore Nature Reserve are essential to the health and well-being of the people who use them. What's more, they protect plant species whose existence benefits humankind. Removing these essential spaces will seriously impair the health of thousands of people. I recommend an impartial expert report to determine those effects and to formulate plans which includes keeping the natural resources which exist now and taking proper account of human need.
3. Flood risk. The seriousness of flooding in south Warrington became more widely known in December 2015 when Latchford Locks submerged under the murky canal waters. It left many people in fear of their homes and businesses. The Council should communicate exactly what measures are planned to reduce flooding in Warrington before any development plan is approved.
4. It must be said that the process for finding the correct information and communicating with the Council has been difficult (to say the least). Openness and transparency must be the new method of communication. Remarks such as: "use social media to communicate with local citizens....we couldn't do that" are unacceptable. Find the channels to communicate and do it. There is a wealth of expertise and experience in our town and much of this can be used for the benefit of us all. No one team or committee has all the answers but collectively we do have the knowledge, passion and commitment in Warrington to come up with solutions most people will support. Of course, the Council can go ahead and find legal ways to enforce its plans. But is that ethical? Is it what Warrington wants to be known for? Or does Warrington want to take the opportunity to become a UK leader in its process – and outcome - for town-to-city development?
5. Volume and type of housing and business premises. How is the proposed amount calculated? Why is it necessary to build 24,000 houses in Warrington? Why on green belt and nature reserves? Who needs them and why? What's the forecast demographic? Which brownfield sites are available now and due to become available during the period of the plan? No-one knows the future post-Brexit and how this will affect the economy, positive or negative. These factors must be considered – and communicated.
6. Who benefits? This needs to be clearly stated in all future communications with the public. People will support initiatives for development if they understand they are for the greater good. Nowhere can the current PDO demonstrate this.

Here are 3 alternative suggestions:

- Implement an improved public transport infrastructure as a matter of urgency
- Build tunnels, not bridges, to cross the river and canals
- For architecture: adopt designs like the Bosco Verticale in Milan.

In the process:

- Fully engage with residents
- Talk to Objection Groups

- Listen to those people and take the best of their ideas to make Warrington a place people love to live and work.

If Warrington is to become a city, let's make it a city with a difference.

We are neighbours to 4 cities: Manchester, Salford, Liverpool and Chester. How will Warrington be different?

Where is the creativity and innovation needed for redeveloping a town we can be proud of?

No-one truly wants to live, work and prosper in a town or city where they can't feel confident about their quality of life.

What people do want is for Warrington to improve. But as things stand now, this seems unlikely if these ill-considered plans go ahead.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully

—

[Redacted signature]