

[REDACTED]

Dear sirs

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed development plan for a Garden City Suburb in South Warrington. I am not completely opposed to development in the area as I appreciate the importance of this and am also completely aware that my own house [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would also have previously been fields or similar. However I do have huge concerns regarding the extent of the proposed plans. As a family [REDACTED] living and working in the area we are all too aware of the potentially massive impact on the area.

Green Belt Land

- The PDO includes the release of greenbelt land to support in excess of 9,000 new homes over the next 20 years, with the majority of those being in south Warrington.
- The significant loss of green belt land as a result of this seriously concerns me – this is hugely important to the quality of life in the area – we chose to live here because of that and paid a premium on that basis. I can accept use of some of it, but the extent proposed is unreasonable.
- There are many locations in the area where future development has been indicated for some time and these plots are currently sitting waiting idly. However many of the proposed plans include areas that are currently used for agricultural purposes which is important to the economy in the area and is not spare land at all. Surely these areas should be focused on first before wiping out all green space in the area.
- The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that established Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in “exceptional circumstances”. There is no definition of “exceptional circumstances” and WBC indicate that they believe that these are exceptional circumstances, but I do not agree with or understand their reasoning for the proposed extent of this development.

Scale of the proposed development

- As a resident of Stockton Heath I am horrified at the proposal of a Garden City Suburb in South Warrington. The smaller villages of Appleton Thorn, Grappenhall and Stretton, which are currently separated by fields, will be completely merged by the new residential developments. This will completely change the character of the area and destroy its history and heritage. The proposed plans do not show any respect for this.
- The ability to access and enjoy green space is an amenity in itself and important for human life. The loss of such a significant amount of green space will be hugely detrimental to residents of the area – the government considers children living in inner cities without access to green space to be underprivileged, yet these proposals will do just that to the residents in the area. As residents in the area we have made choices to pay a significant premium for our homes so that we can provide our children with a balance of village life and green belt space. These plans will take that away from us.

Stockton Heath is already over capacity

- The impact of the Garden City Suburb and the Warrington South West Extension on

Stockton Heath will be enormous.

- The many roads in the village are congested in the middle of the day and this reaches ridiculous levels at the beginning and end of the day with journeys through the village taking more than 4 times what they should be and a journey from Stockton Heath to Bridgefoot taking approx. 45 minutes at rush hour. This is longer than it takes to get to Manchester.
- It is not only the main roads through the village that are already struggling, many of the side residential roads are also at capacity with traffic trying to take alternative routes to avoid the ridiculous congestion. The impact of this is already seen through the destruction of the road surfaces that have clearly not been designed to withhold this extent of traffic, but also the danger of speeding vehicles trying to nip through on the residents and families.
- Parking is also a huge problem in the village – additional traffic flowing through an additional residents using the facilities of the village will only exaggerate this problem further.

Traffic issues and geography

- Consideration to the impact of through traffic has not been considered - A high level traffic survey should be included.
- Warrington is conveniently positioned close to the M6, M56 and M62 motorways with good proximity to the transport network. But Warrington is affected detrimentally whenever there are problems on the motorway network.
- Whilst I support investment in infrastructure should housing developments take place, the proposed routes which cause serious concern. These routes will result in the deterioration of the quality of life for current residents who will be subjected to increased noise, air pollution and vibration from the increased traffic flow:
 - The 'Eastern Link Road' from M56 Junction 10 to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal would cut right through the proposed new residential areas. On the downside, this would provide a new HGV access road to the Barleycastle Trading Estate (which, at the moment, is only accessible from the M6 junction). It would also provide an alternative route for traffic caught up in problems on the M56 / M6 motorways.
 - The PDO also suggest the use of an old railway embankment and bridge to the west of Latchford Locks as a new strategic transport route. Again, this route would be detrimental to the people currently living in this area.
 - The "Howshoots Link" from Grappenhall Heys to the M6 junction would effectively become an alternative HGV route for traffic coming to/from Warrington and Runcorn areas, leading to even more traffic flowing through the A49 and A56 in Stockton Heath.
 - Warrington residents have to pay the tolls to cross the new Mersey bridge crossing. There is concern that the Link new roads through South Warrington will attract traffic that would otherwise have used the Mersey crossings if there was no toll to pay.
- In the 2011 Census, 81% of Warrington households had access to at least one car / van with 39% having access to two or more cars / vans. Nationally, just over a quarter (26%) of households had no access to a car / van which was considerably higher than in Warrington (19%) indicating higher levels of car ownership in Warrington. If a further 24,000 households are created in Warrington without substantial investment in sustainable transport options, the traffic situation will deteriorate further.

Environment

- The impact on the environment has not been considered and this should be assessed as part of the proposal.
- A wide variety of animals and birds live in the greenbelt areas including badgers, water voles, great crested newts and bats.
- In May 2016, the World Health Organisation reported that Warrington is the second worst town / city in the North West for breaching safe levels of air pollution (second behind Salford). According to the WHO, ambient air pollution is the greatest environmental risk to health and causes more than 3 million premature deaths worldwide each year. Although Warrington Borough Council claims to take air pollution seriously, recent council decisions suggest this is not the case (e.g. the new multi-storey car park in the town centre and the increasing bus fares / reduced bus services). Unless the Warrington transport infrastructure can be improved significantly through

appropriate investment in sustainable transport, the level of air pollution will increase – this will affect all Warrington residents, not just those living closest to the new housing developments.

Higher density in the town centre, lower density in outer areas should be explored

- Surely there should be a difference between town / city centres and village / rural areas yet WBC have used a housing density of 30 dwellings per hectare throughout the PDO.
- Achieving a higher housing density in the town centre (such as apartments) of up to 40 dwellings per hectare could mean that a lower density could be achieved elsewhere in the PDO. This would have the advantage of requiring less greenbelt land or enabling a different type of housing mix to be built (such as bungalows for elderly residents).
Proposing a higher density in the town centre would match the desire of many new potential home buyers for housing without gardens, close to the town centre for social life and close to public transport hubs to avoid needing cars.

Healthcare

- Warrington and Halton hospitals are already operating at or near to capacity. Almost all of the GP / medical centre in Warrington are operating at or near to capacity.
- Whilst the PDO makes mention of providing new health facilities in the Garden City Suburb and the South West Extension, there is notably no mention of increasing capacity at Warrington Hospital. The residents occupying the additional 24,000 dwellings will also need access to healthcare facilities.

Equality

- South Warrington is disproportionately affected by the PDO. North and Eastern Warrington are barely touched by the proposals.
- It seems as though South Warrington has been targeted due to the house prices in the area and the higher potential profits available to the developers and council as a result of this.

Again, I am not opposed to development completely – whilst I would prefer it didn't happen and I reasonable enough to understand that it is necessary. But I have huge concerns about the detrimental nature and extent of the current plans and ask that these be reconsidered for the sake of the current residents quality of life and the environmental impact.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature block]