



I wish to lodge three main objections with regard to the Warrington Borough Council Preferred Development Option Consultation Document of July 2017. These relate to:

1. <!--[endif]-->the sheer scale of development proposed for the south of the town,
2. <!--[endif]-->the proposed new strategic road / public transport route along the former railway embankment through Latchford / Grappenhall / Thelwall, and
3. <!--[endif]-->the amount of green-belt land to be built upon.

I moved to Warrington with my work some ■■■ years ago and throughout that period Warrington has experienced traffic problems. Many of these problems can be linked to the fact that we have both a river and a major canal cutting through the town, with limited crossing points across each of these waterways. Moreover, the main crossing points for the canal are swing bridges, so traffic flow comes to a halt at these crossings when ships move along the canal.

Over the course of these ■■■ years, as the number of cars on the road has grown and congestion has worsened, it wouldn't be unreasonable for residents to expect that the Council would develop road infrastructure plans to future-proof traffic movement around the town as its population grows. Strategic routes could then be protected from certain development so that when the time is right and the finances can be found, the roads that would really ease traffic flow through the town could be built. Unfortunately, the Council didn't develop such plans over the years and as a result, with the exception of the "Western Link", it doesn't seem to be able to provide us with the traffic infrastructure now required to alleviate the congestion in and around the town.

In the absence of any substantial transport infrastructure plans to alleviate the present north / south traffic congestion, I think it is completely inappropriate to place the bulk of the proposed new residential development to the south of the town. Why isn't there a more balanced approach that would provide for roughly equal development of the centre of the town as well as the north, the south, the east and the west of the town?

The proposed “Western Link” has been on the agenda for some years now and in recent weeks a revised Red route has been chosen as the recommended route for the project. Whilst a route that takes traffic from the west of the town to the south of the town is much needed (to alleviate problems on and around the Bridge Foot roundabout – particularly at peak periods), it will do little to alleviate the massive congestion problems that will be created on north / south routes, as a result of large scale residential development to be proposed for the south of the town. Further, as the Western Link is to be a high-level bridge over the canal, will this route also be closed when high winds are experienced, as happens now with the bridge at Halton and the Thelwall Viaduct? I guess this is something of a rhetorical question as Warrington will simply become gridlocked in the event of high winds as is always the case nowadays. Thank goodness, such situations are few and far between.

The only other proposal regarding traffic infrastructure to serve the overdevelopment of the south of the town is the new strategic road / public transport route along the former railway embankment through Latchford / Grappenhall / Thelwall. Development has been permitted on, and right up to this embankment over recent years so this plan will devastate a large number of residential properties, either through compulsory purchase and subsequent demolition or via the devastating impact on the character of this corridor. Many properties that remain will suffer from unacceptable noise pollution created by vehicles on a highway that could be above roof level in some cases or level with bedroom windows in other cases.

Looking at the route that this proposed road takes after it crosses the present Stockport Road in Grappenhall, it is obvious that this road is in the wrong place in the way that it has to alter its course by more than ninety degrees. It is merely a line on a map which provides a simple, “lazy” response to a problem. What it doesn’t do is provide the solution that we will need should such massive overdevelopment in the south of the town, outlined in the consultation paper, proceed.

Why, also, do we have to “lose” so much green-belt land? Is it, as a recent letter in the Warrington Guardian commented, to provide fat profits for developers and landowners? We all know that once green-belt land has been built upon, there is no turning back. It will be lost forever, and generations to come will be deprived of the environments we presently enjoy to walk the dog, to run to cycle etc. The use of any green-belt land for future development should be viewed very much as a last resort and certainly should not feature so heavily in future development plans.

In conclusion, whilst my concerns are very much aligned to traffic infrastructure issues, I do hope that as the Council moves forward with its plans, it can address some key questions that may not necessarily feature within a local plan, such as:

--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->why are there so many incidents on the Thelwall Viaduct and its approaches, that result in the consequential gridlock of Warrington Roads? What changes can be put into place on the Motorway by the Highways Agency to minimise such occurrences, and to ensure that, when there is an incident, motorway traffic flow is reinstated with the minimum of delay, and

--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->why can't the Council create Park-and-Ride hubs around the town with excellent public transport links to the town centre, Warrington Hospital etc.?

I do hope that the above broad response to the consultation document is helpful.

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