



Dear Warrington Borough Council

Whilst we appreciate the need to build more housing in the South Warrington area, and the potential that exists for expanding of current development around Grappenhall Heys, we are very concerned that the current proposals completely fail to consider the negative impact that additional population will have on both current residents and on those who will occupy the new homes.

Amongst the many concerns raised by the many public objections, there are four key issues that are of great concern even now, and that are set to be severely exacerbated by the development proposals as they currently stand. These issues are: school provision, road infrastructure, public transport, and GP provision.

School Provision – With regards to local school provision, Bridgewater High School is already struggling to cope with pupil numbers, with the amount of children present being almost double what the buildings were designed for. This presents a very serious health and safety issue, one which we believe the school have not properly risk assessed, have are not addressing. Crushing in the school corridors is an ongoing issue, putting children in an often dangerous situation with children occasionally suffering physical injuries. We have a disaster waiting to happen at Bridgewater High School, and with the school able to cope with current numbers, and the local authority seemingly unwilling to get involved, how will the school cope with an increased demand for school places? Furthermore, what proposals are there to increase the Grappenhall Heys primary school from one form-entry to two form-entry to accommodate the doubling of families in the immediate area?

Road Infrastructure - At present, particularly during morning rush hour, getting into Warrington town centre is difficult due to the bottle neck at Lumb Brook underpass near the junction with Grappenhall Road. Bottle necks also exist on the A49 at Stockton Heath, and further south at Stretton. The current problems with passing through Warrington town centre are well known, being a town constricted by limited crossing points across the Mersey river; when the M6 Thelwall Viaduct is closed, Warrington town centre is crippled. This has never been properly addressed. Once in Warrington town centre, there is a distinct lack of parking facilities, particularly around the Central train station. The current proposals fail to address any of these wider town issues. But of most concern, they fail even to address to immediate local issues of how a doubling in vehicle numbers will be accommodated into and out of the Grappenhall Heys estate, and then through the Lumb Brook/Bridgewater Canal bottle-neck. Furthermore, if the Grappenhall Heys primary school were to be increased to accommodate the extra children, what provision is there for the increase traffic during drop off/pick up? And if it is not to be increased, what provision is to be made around the Cobbs / Broomfields schools to address the extra drop off/pick up in these already overstretched locations?

Public Transport – In recent years, the bus service to the Grappenhall Heys area has been reduced to almost no service at all. This is particularly noticeable during the traditional work rush hour times when working commuters have to walk 20 minutes to a bus stop with bus service,

leading directly to an over-reliance on cars in the South Warrington. Furthermore, the opening of UTC Warrington should provide an attractive opportunity to school children in Warrington, but for those in the Grappenhall Heys area, we find there is no bus service whatsoever during the school run times. If there is to be any effort made to reduce residents dependence on cars in the South Warrington area, a functioning bus service is essential. In addition, once at the Warrington Central train station, there is woeful lack of rail service through Warrington. Only last week on two days, paying passengers were left stranded on the platform, unable to board trains to Manchester due to them being at full capacity, with those fortunate enough to squeeze on being subjected to dangerous conditions. This is a regular problem for many who live in and commute from Warrington, and WBC should be exerting pressure on the rail companies to provide adequately for those coming into and out of Warrington.

GP Provision - Getting a doctor's appointment in South Warrington has become so difficult that Appleton Primary Care (or whatever they call themselves this year) have all but suspended taking advanced bookings and you can only get a doctor appointment by calling immediately after surgery opens and making yourself available all that day. There is insufficient GP provision for the current population, and the proposed increase in population is going to proportionately increase the demand on GP provision.

Summary - Considering that the type of housing being proposed in the Grappenhall Heys area is being designed to appeal more to working families, it follows that the issues relating to the functioning of working families - school provision, road congestion at peak hours, public transport, doctor appointments - need to be factored in when planning for this development.

The complete disregard for how additional population will be catered for in terms of these needs only serves to emphasise how oblivious or ambivalent Warrington's local authority is to the current problems being experienced in these areas. If WBC really is aspiring to be a new city, they need to start thinking like a city and providing the infrastructure and amenities that cities have, over and above shopping and cinemas. Indeed, why would those outside ever view Warrington as a city, when those running the town are still running it like a town.

I hope you will pay attention to what your residents are telling you and recognise that we are best positioned to tell you what the key issues are, and are going to be if these development proposals are approved in their current form.

Regards,

