



Response to Warrington Borough Council's Preferred Development Option

I am strongly opposed to the proposals in the Preferred Development Option.

My greatest concern is the threat to the Green Belt land in the South of Warrington. The Green Belt land is a vital resource for the whole of Warrington, used by the whole of Warrington, and would be totally erased if these proposals were to be accepted. Councillor Brian Axcell informs us that accepted population projections display a need for housing 50% lower than the figures stated in the documents supporting the Preferred Development Option; and used to justify the loss of Green Belt. Indeed his figures would indicate that sufficient development sites could be found to satisfy the genuine need for future housing without the loss of any Green Belt land and probably none of our green space.

In the Appleton Thorn Ward Neighbourhood Development Plan the character and identity of Appleton Thorn Village is highlighted as being of paramount importance. I do not see how a semirural village can maintain its character in this proposed deluge of development. Appleton Thorn Village would become a small part of a city suburb, indistinguishable from the rest of the urban sprawl envisaged in these plans. A sprawl, against which you ironically acknowledge, the Green Belt forms an effective barrier. The Appleton Thorn Ward Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to protect the village's "setting" and "landscape" which would be lost in these proposals.

As I have already said, I believe that the green belt in the south of Warrington is a vital resource; a resource for the whole of Warrington and indeed those communities that border Warrington. Although we are relatively rich in that resource, we are poor in the resources that would sustain the large increase in population the Preferred Development would promote; principally transport infrastructure and healthcare provision.

In support of the Preferred Option you state that these are your "economic aspirations as a council"; but I feel that this process is being driven by a desire to achieve city status and, that this is its *raison d'être*, rather than the future well being of the people of Warrington.

In Appleton Thorn, as in the other villages in South Warrington, there are people who have chosen to make their homes in its semi-rural environment. Many have moved away from the cities to the north and south of this town. Many did so because they do not want to live in a city suburb. I do not want to live in a city suburb and, therefore, must most vehemently oppose these plans.


