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Dear all

I am writing in response to the current consultation on proposed building/housing development around Warrington (as per this website: <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/localplanreview>)

We are strongly against the proposed development in the South Warrington areas of Higher Walton, Appleton, Grappenhall and Stretton. The proposed plan for development in these areas is not sustainable and should not be proceeded with. Our response is based on the following key issues:

### **1. Major traffic issues**

Traffic through south Warrington is already problematic at peak times as there are only a few main arteries through the area. This is compounded by fact that Warrington is built around a river and has two canals running through it. These are natural traffic obstacles which will always create traffic bottlenecks with even the slightest traffic flow. If any of the motorways have an issue this traffic problem is much, much worse, to the point where the entire Warrington area comes to a standstill.

Adding another 9,000 homes to south Warrington (each potentially adding two cars) is unimaginable. Any potential traffic improvements suggested by WBC to alleviate this will not even scratch the surface of the issue. Huge investment and changes to the infrastructure would be needed and these simply wouldn't be possible given the spending constraints on local government. It would need a construction project along the lines of Thelwall Viaduct to even come close to dealing with extra traffic - i.e. financially and geographically inconceivable.

The increased traffic brings with it negative environmental implications and any traffic management proposals would not only eat into the green belt but are unlikely to have any impact, given that traffic is already an issue without the additional proposed housing.

### **2. Loss of green belt land**

One of our prime reasons for settling in south Warrington as a family was its semi-rural location. We lived in a city for a few years and purposefully chose to move to this area for the green belt benefits. If we wanted to live in a city, we would have moved to a city. The vast majority of south Warrington residents will probably feel the same.

The proposal to build 9,000 homes on this green belt land is preposterous. This isn't a case of "not in my back yard" because if the development was necessary then we could understand it. However, this isn't a necessary development to improve an area in desperate need of improving. Instead you are trying to redefine the area and create an urban environment where it is not needed or wanted.

The green areas in south Warrington are vital in providing leisure and social benefits to residents. We want to enjoy these green areas and we want our children (and their children) to benefit from them too.

It is important to encourage outdoor leisure opportunities for the health and wellbeing of both adults and children. Removal of the greenbelt for urban development is in direct opposition to current government initiatives to promote healthy living and combat rising obesity and other related health issues. Building the occasional playground in a residential development does not make up for the loss of acres and acres of open space and woodland used by families, cyclists, walkers, joggers, children and so on.

In addition, the destruction of habitat for wildlife does not bear thinking about.

### **3. Access to services (e.g. medical)**

The local hospitals and GP and dental surgeries are already stretched to capacity and the proposed development does not address this in any detail. New facilities are promised, but without factual information about these facilities we cannot support the proposal to add 9,000 homes (bringing potentially 27,000 people based on 3 per household) into south Warrington alone. The wider development for the whole of Warrington is for 24,000 extra houses; given that Warrington's Hospital is under possible threat of closure it will be interesting to see how the medical needs of this increased population will be managed!

Local shops and amenities (and related car parking) is already very limited in south Warrington. The newer

developments in this area (e.g. Grappenhall Heys) do not have local facilities so they drive into Stockton Heath for even the most basic of items such as bread or milk.

Does the Local Plan include plans for shops and commercial services? If so this has a further negative impact on the current character of the area when considering the large amounts of land that shops require, as well as the extra land required for parking.

#### **4. Social impact of growth (or trying to create a city)**

Cities invariably have a variety of challenging social issues such as crime, unemployment, anti-social behaviour and homelessness (often as a result of health and social issues, not necessarily a lack of housing!)

South Warrington has an excellent community atmosphere where families feel safe and happy. Growing the area beyond its intended size will almost certainly have a negative impact and if this growth continues up to city status/size then the social issues above are simply inevitable. People will become anonymous and isolated through this growth and we will lose the supportive community which is working so well at the moment. There is also a risk that the very people who make this area such a successful community will leave.

#### **5. Environment impact**

The Local Plan appears to have no environmental plan related to these developments. The development will cut through huge areas of farmland, woodland and general green areas and the impact to the wildlife appears to have been ignored by the planners.

There are large brown field sites which are available (or will become available soon) which can be used instead of the green belt areas currently proposed. These should be considered by any local authority before proposing to build such a vast development on green belt land.

The onus should be firmly on WBC to explain exactly why brown field sites are not being used before any green field development plans should be entertained. The green belt land was established relatively recently (2002), it was deemed necessary to the well being of this town at that point - it is difficult to understand why it could so easily be disregarded for urban development a mere 15 years on.

#### **6. Adverse impact on Stockton Heath (as the most centrally affected village)**

Stockton Heath is a hugely popular village, partly because of its central location in south Warrington. The village already has a number of issues as a result of growing populations and this will only get much worse with the proposed development of 9,000 houses in the area. Traffic through the village (e.g. London Road) regularly comes to a standstill at rush hour. The swing bridge opening causes absolute chaos. Motorway issues push traffic into the village and turn it into a no-go zone at times. Parking is limited. All of this will be unimaginably worse if the number of residents in the surrounding area was increased by the proposed numbers.

We lived in a small town/village in south west London for [REDACTED] years and saw first hand the negative impact that excessive house building and population growth had on the village high street. The traffic through the village became impossible and the popularity of the high street declined. As a result the independent traders sold up and left to be replaced by Pound Shops and chain brand shops. The vibrant and popular high street that existed when we moved in to that area steadily turned into a bland, generic clone of non-descript high streets around the UK.

#### **Summary**

In summary, the proposal for 9,000 of these homes in south Warrington is unsustainable and poorly thought out. It will have a negative impact on so many areas for the existing community and it is incredibly unpopular. This is not a development that the area is desperate for or that residents are crying out for. It seems to be a personal agenda by WBC to turn the town into something it doesn't want to be.

I hope you consider our response carefully.

[REDACTED]