



This email is sent by:

 Warrington in response to the Consultation on the Local Plan Preferred Development Option [PDO].

I fully accept the need to build a significant number of houses in the plan period and that inevitably some will have to be built on existing Green Belt. However I believe that the overall demand is over stated, that too much development will take place on Green Belt , and that existing and proposed infrastructure will not cope with the proposed development.

Housing built on Green Belt land should be kept to an irreducible minimum. That is far from the case under the PDO .For the following reasons, there is a need to reduce the overall housing numbers and thus the balance falling to be built on Green Belt.

The latest Government consultation on the assessment of housing numbers [Planning for the right homes in the right places - 14 September 2017] amends significantly the calculation methodology. It produces, for Warrington, a significantly reduced requirement, albeit that some development on Green Belt will still be needed.

This is a material consideration and also a relevant legal consideration which means that the Council must reflect lower numbers before moving forward. That is foreshadowed in paragraph 2.10 of the PDO.

The Warrington Guardian on 28 September 2017 quotes an anonymous Council spokesman as saying that the new methodology will simply produce a minimum requirement and that the Council is free to go above that. Even if that is the case, the need to protect Green Belt should surely mean that the Council can and should stick with the minimum.

The Council should be seeking to strike an appropriate balance between new employment use and consequential housing need. This should favour the lower end of the development spectrum [at 955 houses per annum – paragraph 2.21 of the PDO] and would be consistent with the numbers produced under the new assessment methodology, and reflect the views of adjoining local authorities. Any clash between employment/housing should be resolved in favour of the Green Belt.

The PDO is grossly deficient in its analysis of the deficiencies in infrastructure which will turn existing problems into disaster areas. The Leader of the Council has stated that no houses will be built until the infrastructure has been created. That “promise” has no legal effect. The Local Plan should spell out in unequivocal terms how that will be achieved in legal terms. Reliance on section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy is most unlikely to provide certainty that the infrastructure will be created and created in time. This is a most serious deficiency in the PDO.

[REDACTED]

29 September 2017

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