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Warrington
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17 June 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find my objections to the Draft Local Plan:

- A sensible, deliverable plan for 5 years should be developed quickly to bring some level of control back to WBC from the greedy developers who currently seem have the upper hand in planning matters as a result of Satnam Millenium's successful challenge to the 2014 local plan.
- The current local planning process is taking too long, and is too aspirational, ambitious, controversial and unpopular in equal measure for it to be accepted quickly. A five year plan, adopted quickly, would allow time for a more rational longer term plan based on actual need to be adopted.
- The local plan period (20 years) is far too long for the predictions in growth on which it relies to be considered in any way reliable. 20 years is not mandated by Government.
- The plan is underpinned by aspirational economic growth forecasts based on old data led by developers who clearly benefit as a result.
- The housing need is based on over-estimated population growth forecasts based on old data (2014). The 2016 survey and 2018 update show lower numbers, and for Warrington a significant reduction in need after 2027. This is not accounted for in this local plan.
- ONS data shows a falling birth rate in the UK; it has dropped in 5 consecutive years since 2012. Immigration figures are also falling. Presumably they will continue to fall post-Brexit.
- The claims on employment numbers generated don't recognise that the logistics sector in which most of these jobs will be created is becoming increasingly automated requiring far fewer people in the long term.
- Warrington already has lower than average unemployment; the likelihood is that more people will commute in to Warrington, adding to the existing congestion on the motorways and surrounding roads.
- Government guidance states that the population figures are not a target, but merely a starting point for a realistic assessment of what is needed and what is achievable. The WBC plan has taken the 2014 figures as a target and then added a further 5% to the housing need.... On the basis that not all of the sites will become deliverable. This makes no logical sense at all!
- The plan does not demonstrate the very special circumstances required for release of such a large proportion of the greenbelt in South Warrington; it is based on an over-estimated need. The approach being adopted in this plan is likely to see huge areas of greenbelt land released and developed on first, then brownfield sites becoming available for which there is no need/desire to develop against falling demand. The plan needs to promote 'Brownfield First'.

- The plan does not include Fiddler's Ferry as a possible development site. Since the start of the consultation, we now know that the power station will close in March 2020, so this large brownfield site needs to be factored in to the plan, before any greenbelt is sacrificed.
- Unacceptable impact to a single area of Warrington – The destruction of the village character and landscape of South Warrington is has a disproportionate effect on the communities of South Warrington. This is unfair and unwarranted and contravenes the adopted Thorn Ward Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).
- I am not at all clear what the benefit the proposed strategic link road (Stretton – Grappenhall) will bring? I am concerned it will simply serve to promote a rat-run for traffic, including HGVs seeking to avoid the Very heavily congested M6/M56 interchange. I don't see any benefit to the existing communities affected - only significant harm, as this would cut across a very important popular strategic pedestrian/cycle route (Green Lane) between Appleton Thorn and Appleton and beyond, bringing unwanted associated air pollution and noise.
- Who will benefit from this plan? Developers - Yes. Communities of South Warrington – No; Garden suburb? – nothing shouts 'Garden' like the loss of almost all the greenbelt, 5000 houses, 362 hectares of logistics sheds, and 2000 HGV movements per hour with associated increase in air pollution, congestion and noise. I vote No! There has to be a better way.

Yours faithfully

Mark Davies