

Response to Consultation – Warrington Local Plan

As residents of Warrington [REDACTED] please find below our comments on the WBC Local Plan;

Plan as a whole

We do not believe the draft local plan is either sound or justified. It is over ambitious and focuses unnecessarily on largescale development of a predominantly Green belt area. It will not deliver its objectives in terms of affordable housing or 'high value' employment opportunities just the creation of a soulless commuter belt and the destruction of local villages and communities.

Our comments focus on, firstly the removal of a huge area of green belt in a disproportionate and unfair manner, secondly the lack of consideration of the infrastructure in particular the dependence on already overstretched roads and the subsequent pollution and environmental damage, and thirdly in the unjustifiable number of houses and huge logistic development.

Green belt

The case presented by this plan to release 600 acres of Green Belt predominantly in South Warrington provides weak and inadequate justification. It is unfairly weighted to one area without due consideration to the huge detrimental impact to the communities, the people who already live there and the character and distinctiveness of the area. There is inadequate justification for the huge numbers of new houses and significant expansion of warehousing space.

The amount of green belt being lost should be significantly reduced and most, if not all redevelopment focused on brownfield sites. Allowing developers to build on green belt is taking the easy option (and most profitable option) when there are many brownfield sites available. This plan does not properly consider the use of these brownfield sites nor has the long-term damage to the environment been taken into account, as a consequence of sacrificing so much greenbelt and historic countryside. The focus appears to be about rushing this plan through, making Warrington into a city and, what appears to be, profit-making.

The plan should pay greater regard to the impact on existing villages and communities. It should remove the unnecessary and unjustifiable over development to the area south of Warrington and especially with regard to the congestion, air pollution, and the general wellbeing of the people living there whose lives are being ruined with the loss of real countryside and being forced to live in a huge commuter belt.

Environmental Impact

We find it impossible to understand why in a year when the Government is setting targets for becoming carbon neutral and cities like Manchester are making plans to be carbon neutral by 2038, Warrington is making plans to increase pollution and the area's carbon footprint. The impact of a huge logistics site, a significant increase in LGVs, traffic and houses alongside the reduction of vital green space and countryside is unjustifiable.

Ecologically the damage to the area of south Warrington is unmeasurable. Many people chose to live in the area because of the natural countryside and vast array of animal, bird and plant life. This will be killed or driven away by the huge amount of development planned, and calling that a garden suburb or garden villages isn't fooling anyone, nor will some planned manmade green space be able to in anyway replace what will be lost environmentally and ecologically.

Infrastructure

The roads and motorways are already overcrowded and sources of significant pollution. Pollution levels in South Warrington are already at unacceptable levels and changes to the Motorway junctions will cause massive problems for residents and road users. In addition a link road between the logistics site and junction 10 M56 can only exacerbate this and will creates a 'rat run' for lorry drivers and adds no value to the communities existing and new. The plan provides little detail on these developments and the likely route and impact which is unacceptable.

There is also little real detail of additional infrastructure needs in terms of the already madly overstretched and underperforming hospital, an inherent need to increase police and emergency services to cope with the huge increase in residents in the area. Utilities are already struggling – slow internet, poor water pressure, regular power cuts. There is very little information whether this has ever been properly considered and what the solution is.

Garden Suburb

This huge development is significantly over and above what the town needs. Much of this housing will not be affordable unless the damage to the area with the loss of communities and character to the drives down house prices so much they all become affordable? We believe the moneymaking developers only need to make 30% affordable, which seems too low to actually make any difference to the housing needs locally or nationally.

The area will become blighted by even worse traffic jams, mainly caused by the M6 and commuters. This area will just be a huge commuter belt for people trying to travel to Manchester, Liverpool and Chester and will add no value to the villages and communities trapped in the middle.

Large logistic site

The desire for an even bigger logistics site is baffling. Sadly logistics jobs are increasing at risk of becoming automated and are not likely to prove sustainable, so offer little in the way of quality job opportunities for local people. Very few young people in schools want to work in logistics, so the few opportunities there are will potentially end up being short term and being taken by people who live out of the area and will need to therefore travel in adding to the congestion.

The amount of lorries on the roads and immediate stretches of motorways is extremely high already and this will increase even more adding to the general harmful pollution.

In conclusion, we add our household's concerns to the many others with regard to this fundamentally unsound and unfair local plan. The damage and devastation resulting from this plan will be focused squarely on South Warrington and does nothing to address the problems it is supposedly trying to tackle.

In a time when pollution and damage to the environment and atmosphere is top of the agenda for everyone, Warrington Borough Council seems set to take the area back to the dark ages and actually make the situation for the area and the country as a whole much worse.

We hope WBC will put politics aside and see how wrong what they are planning to do is before It's too late.

Many thanks

Nicky Martin and Matt Longster

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