

Response to 'Warrington Local Plan 2017-2037'

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I have been advised that I do not need to use the online form to respond to the Warrington Local Plan 2017-2037. I am not using the online form because it is not user friendly. The instructions and format are complicated and and if I used it, the format would detract me from the comments that I want to make. It is unfair that the online form is the main format that people have to use to voice their concerns. It is going to exclude several groups within the local population who might not be able to use it including older people, children, homeless people, people with severe mental illness and learning disabilities and people with English as a foreign language. There is a growing population of people living in Warrington who come from outside the UK, for example Poland and Romania.

In regards to the Warrington Local Plan 2017-2037 my concerns are as follows:

1. Time scale covered by the Plan (2017-2037):

The Plan covers the period from 2017-2037. It is supposed to guide decisions on planning application and to identify areas where investment and growth should be prioritised. A plan that has been designed in 2017 cannot accurately predict what Warrington will need over 20 years. During 20 years, lots of things can change such as government policies and initiatives regarding housing, climate change, pollution, employment and local demographics can also change, such as age and business. It is irresponsible of the Council in 2019, to sell areas of green belt for housing and employment land which may not be needed next year or in 5,10 15 20 years time.

2. The delivery of 18,900 new homes.

In the Plan, the Council has estimated that they will need to build 18,900 new homes (3.2.3).

This is supposedly to meet the government's demand for housing and business locally and to meet the requirements for more affordable housing. The Plan provides insufficient information about how this figure was estimated. It appears to rely on the Council's assumption that Warrington will attract a huge amount of business and will therefore need a huge amount of homes, to accommodate for this. There is no guarantee that Warrington will attract the amount of business needed for people to want to buy or rent in Warrington. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I am aware that a number of families are moving to Warrington from Manchester but they still work in Manchester, such as Salford Quays. There is no guarantee that they will stay in Warrington because their place of work is in Manchester. Lots of commuter towns around Manchester, such as Northwich and Altrincham are also building new houses.

Also, there are insufficient services (education, health, social care including children's centres) to provide for the influx of people moving into new housing estates. For example, in the Penketh area, several new housing estates have been built including Chapelford. The local health visiting team is struggling to offer its core visits to the families in these areas, as set out in the Healthy Child Programme, (2009) a public health document because of staff shortages and the number of new families moving into the area. This means that the children (0-5 years) and their families in this area are at increased risk of accidents (admissions to hospital), sickness, obesity, tooth decay, etc than other areas of the country. The Plan makes no reference to how the Council will support local services to meet the needs of people moving into these new estates.

The Plan makes reference to the need to increase the percentage of affordable housing for local people to buy (4.1.25). The Plan states that there is a need to release 11% of green belt land to accommodate the number of people needing accommodation over a 20 year period. Again, there is insufficient evidence presented in the Plan to justify that there is a sound need for 18,900 houses to be built (and for green belt to be released). The Plan states that the need for houses is in response to the government's demand to build extra housing but 18,900 is above the government's minimum requirement for housing from Councils. Also, there is no guarantee that local people will be able to afford to rent or buy these new homes. As stated earlier, families are moving into Warrington from Liverpool and Manchester because the housing stock is cheaper (to buy or rent) than city prices. There is no scheme that the Council are going to put in place (according to the Plan) to make sure local people are given priority. It is possible that the prices of rented and owner occupied housing could increase because people from the city are moving into Warrington which means that local people will be displaced to areas with cheaper housing stock, such as St Helens.

Instead of creating 18,900 new homes, a better suggestion would be to re develop disused buildings or land in/around the town centre. As the Council states in it's Plan, there are areas of the town centre which are underused and underutilised (6.1.13). To use existing housing stock or disused land for housing in the town centre would prevent the need for green belt land to be used. This accommodation would also be closer to local businesses/employers which would reduce transport costs for people commuting to work thereby decreasing congestion and pollution.

The Plan states that a Garden Suburb would be built in south Warrington amongst other housing developments. If it is the Council's intention to create affordable housing in these outlying locations, how does this fit with the Council's plan to make housing more affordable (4.1.34)?

People from the Garden Suburb will have to travel towards the town centre for employment which will greatly increase their expenditure and make it difficult to afford to live on these new estates. Also, more commuters will increase congestion and pollution in Warrington. The government has recently announced that by 2050 there is to be zero emissions. The Council's Plan is inconsistent with the Government's policy.

3. The release of 11% of green belt land for housing and employment.

The rationale for releasing 11% of green belt land for housing and new employment is unsound. The Plan states that in 'very special circumstances' (5.1.13 policy GB1) will planning permission be given for green belt land. Building new housing and industrial estates are not 'very special circumstances.' There are greener alternatives to building on green belt land as stated previously.

The Plan makes reference to the need to 'minimise the impact of development on the environment through the prudent use of resources' (page 21) which contradicts the Council's plan to build on green belt land. There is no reference in the Plan to the cost on the environment (and people) of the proposed loss of green belt land. This 'cost' will include the loss of trees, shrubs, plants which support the growth of each other and new plants and the lives of animals. There are trees on this green belt land which are 1,000 plus years old. Also, this green belt land is used by local people for recreational purposes. The plan makes reference to the need to improve recreational facilities e.g. build bars and cafes along the Waterside. How can the Council justify replacing 11% of recreational green belt land for housing and industrial estates? Green belt land appeals to a wider range of people e.g children, parents, older people, single people not just age groups who frequent bars and cafes. It is used for school trips for

children to learn about nature which is a key part of the curriculum for pre- school and primary school aged children.

In Policy DEV4, 4, the Plan makes reference to several sites being removed from green belt to be allocated as new employment areas. This is very worrying. It is not just the loss of green belt land that is concerning but also the problems which warehousing and distribution businesses bring to these areas. An example is Appleton and Stretton Trading Estates (3.3.29). The traffic created by these trading estates is massive. It creates huge congestion along the roads between A49 and A50/M6 roundabouts. [REDACTED] I regularly use the roads through Appleton Thorn to the M6. Every day, I witness the congestion caused HGVs and coaches from these estates and the high speeds at which they drive at. The amount of animals e.g. badgers killed on these roads is increasing. The amount of litter around the Trading Estate on Barleycastle Lane is a massive problem. There is litter in the hedgerows and roads including trainers, clothing, cartons, plastic etc and more recently I have noticed that building materials are being dumped in laybys. Despite the road sign banning HGVs to drive down the road between Appleton Thorn to Stretton, HGVS drive down the road regularly and stay overnight in the layby. The Plan suggests that the development of Appleton and Stretton Industrial Estates is set to continue. In the Plan (3.3.29), it states that the development of warehousing and distribution businesses will primarily be directed towards locations, such as Appleton and Stretton Trading Estates. The Council is not fulfilling its duty to protect green belt areas, reduce pollution including litter and to reduce congestion which is inconsistent with national policies, as stated previously. The Council need to make trading estates financially responsible for the litter surrounding these estates. The Council plan to regenerate Warrington Waterfront with new businesses and facilities. The Council's Plan makes no reference to how it is going to protect the

wildlife along the waterfront, for example plastic pollution which is major issue nationally and internationally. The Council is not being responsible towards the environment.

Ashley Chadwick

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