

**Proposed Submission Version of Warrington Local Plan  
REPRESENTATION**

**Judith Walker**

**[REDACTED] Warrington,**

**[REDACTED]**

**[REDACTED]**

**I am:**

**a local resident who lives in Warrington**

**a local Parish Councillor**

**I do not wish to participate in the oral examination of the Draft  
Local Plan**

A.

**I CONSIDER THIS DRAFT LOCAL PLAN UNSOUND BECAUSE IT DOES NOT MEET THE AREA'S OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEEDS.**

**I object to this plan because its vision and assessment of the areas needs is not objective but subjective. As mentioned frequently it is based on the Council's ambition for a bigger town and not on factual evidence. Likewise there are no objective reasons spelled out as to why there are exceptional circumstances for release of Green Belt land for development.**

**The damage it would do to settled communities, the environment and quality of life in Warrington is, on the other hand, clear and obvious and based on factual evidence**

### **1. HOUSING NUMBERS NEEDED**

**I consider the housing requirement figures used in the Plan to be incorrect**

The plan assumes there is 'identified need for development' (3.4.20 but the reasoning is vague. The only reasons mentioned appear to be the Council's own 'growth ambitions' and 'economic growth aspirations' (4,1,1 and 4,1,6). From this the plan draws the conclusion that a very large number of houses will be needed. The figure chosen (945pa) is far higher than official population predictions would need (528pa) and higher even than the Government's suggested figure (909pa), bringing it above the amount available on brown field sites. Likewise the Plan does not give reasons to justify the amount of land set aside for employment but appears to assume more housing will drive economic development.

It might even be construed that the development of South Warrington for housing is one of the objectives of the Plan and number of houses required has been set high in order to necessitate release of Green Belt in order to achieve this. Though nowhere mentioned in the Plan document, an expected increase in Council Tax revenue has been mentioned in Budget setting papers produced by the Council.

### **2. SPATIAL STRATEGY**

**I object to the spatial strategy set out in this plan because it concentrates almost all the new development areas in one part of the town which has neither the infrastructure or geographical layout to sustain it.**

As stated in 3.3.2 the special strategy was informed by the 'call for sites' and it would appear to be designed primarily to be profitable for landowners and developers and not to benefit the residents of Warrington. Also in paragraph 3.3.2 it states that there is the ability to provide new and improved infrastructure to support employment and growth in the areas chosen. However no planned infrastructure for Warrington South appears in the Plan.

### **3. DESTRUCTION OF GREENBELT**

**I object strongly to the release of Green Belt land for development at this stage.**

There are no exceptional circumstances to justify Green Belt boundaries to be altered. The Green Belt was set only 5 years ago and it was to last 20 years. A plan setting a housing target at the Government's level and for only 15 years would mean there is no need, at this juncture, for any Green Belt release. By the end of 15 years this could be reconsidered and it is likely that new brown field sites will then be available. Fiddlers Ferry is to be decommissioned in 2020 and a new hospital site is being sought. Once Green Belt land in South Warrington is released house building will start immediately as it is easy and profitable. Once lost the country side cannot be restored

#### **4. GARDEN SUBURB AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH WARRINGTON**

**I object strongly to the proposed Garden Suburb and associated land set aside for warehousing and logistics. This development does not meet the Council's stated aims to provide affordable housing, reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, protect the environment or protect settlements and countryside.**

Development of the size of the huge Garden Suburb is not sustainable given the geographic constraints of the area. The two canals and River Mersey which separate it from the Town Centre and from public transport cannot be wished away. Major new highways and bridges would have to be built and historic infrastructure such as the swing bridges and one-track Bridgewater Canal bridges destroyed at huge expense - and I am sure great protest. The Plan does not explain how this could be achieved or funded.

##### **a) The highway infrastructure**

The inevitable traffic congestion as a result of this development – not just locally but through town and at the Motorway junctions has not been properly considered in the Plan. With no public transport links in the south of the town all development will be dependent on motor vehicles. The road network is already congested with many junctions and pinch points at capacity. There are no new highways links other than 'aspirational' or 'illustrative' written into the plan. Nor is any idea given how funding could be found for the major road building that would be required to prevent gridlock. Warehouse/logistics developments will add wagons to the already congested country roads which are already dangerous because of the traffic from the existing Trading Estate.

##### **b) Other infrastructure**

As well as the inability of the roads to cope with the increase in traffic from housing and employment areas, the infrastructure necessary for health care, education, community life and shopping is inadequate. Car journeys will be necessary for people to access facilities such as schools and doctors adding to congestion. The Plan spells out the need for more facilities but the Council cannot guarantee any of them will be provided in a timely fashion, if at all.

##### **c) Air quality**

Warrington is already one of the most polluted towns in the country. The effect of this huge development dependent on motor vehicles for transport, will inevitably worsen air quality for residents especially on main roads through town such as the A50 and A49 as well as the new house owners in the Garden Suburb. It will also make pollution from the Motorways worse by removing the open countryside which at present acts as a buffer, allowing noxious gases and particulates from the Motorways to disperse before reaching residential areas. The Council aspires to improve air quality but this plan will do the opposite.

##### **d) Affordable Housing**

It is generally agreed that more social and affordable housing is needed to allow young families to get on the housing ladder. I support the efforts the Council is making on this, and the Town Centre housing planned. However, building on Green Belt in South Warrington will not help. Housing here will be too expensive and transport too much of a problem to help young people starting out on low incomes. The expensive houses built in the Garden Suburb will be bought by incomers who work away from Warrington.

**B.**

**I CONSIDER THIS DRAFT LOCAL PLAN UNSOUND BECAUSE IT IS NOT DELIVERABLE**

It is my opinion that this Plan is not only unjustified and unsustainable but it is undeliverable. Warrington has not, since the New Town, achieved anything like this amount of new housing. Its reputation is not good.

Anyone with knowledge of the area and current transport problems can see that putting so much development in the part of town with the greatest communication problems is not good planning and will not be deliverable. This Draft Plan is developer led and only the profitable aspects such as the house building and introduction of warehousing businesses will happen. It will spoil the Warrington as an attractive place to live and destroy the environment and do nothing to improve the towns position as a major economic hub with high quality jobs and a highly skilled workforce.

**C.**

**MODIFICATIONS CONSIDERED NECESSARY**

1. Lower the housing figure in line with the official population increase predictions
2. Reduce the time from 20 to 15 years to prevent premature release of Green Belt
3. Respect the Green Belt boundaries set 5 years ago for 20 years.
4. Remove from the Plan the warehousing/logistics industrial development areas from Warrington South which will worsen traffic congestion and air pollution.
5. Remove from the Plan the Garden Suburb and South West Extension and spread any essential Green Belt loss across the Town equitably and into areas which already have adequate infrastructure.

END