



11 June 2019

Local Plan, Planning Policy and Programmes,
Warrington Borough Council,
New Town House,
Buttermarket Street,
Warrington, WA1 2NH

Dear Sir

Local Plan – Proposed Submission Version

I wish to register my opposition to the proposed submission version of the Warrington Local Plan. I believe it is wrong, lacking in detail, undeliverable and very unfair to the residents of South Warrington who would see the character of their area totally transformed as large areas of current green belt are released and destroyed to create a “Garden Suburb”. I live in [REDACTED] and do not want to live in a “Garden Suburb”. I moved here for its rural location and do not want to see the entire area developed.

Appleton Thorn has an approved Neighbourhood Plan and a policy that is not averse to sensitive and small scale development. However, the Local Plan makes no reference to the Neighbourhood Plan and proposes development that will completely surround the village. Contrary to everything the Neighbourhood Plan is about, the village will lose its identity as an independent village. This is unfair. After all the hard work volunteers put into producing the Neighbourhood Plan surely it should be considered as part of the Local Plan.

Other than the release of large areas of greenbelt the Local Plan is vague on detail. There is no real detail on the road infrastructure required to service the proposed developments. There are no proposals for any new crossings of the ship canal or for improvements to motorway and other local traffic bottlenecks.

Warrington South already has major traffic problems. There can be long queues at Stockton Heath and Latchford to cross the ship canal at any time of the day. There are long queues, particularly at peak times, to access the motorways at Junction 20 on the M6 and Junction 10 on the M56, at Lumb Brook and the A49 at Stretton. The Local Plan for South Warrington is proposing an additional 7000 houses and a number of transport

based businesses both of which will generate a huge increase in traffic and pollution and make all the above locations worse. But, whilst mentioning all the above, the Local Plan says, conveniently, that they do not need to be addressed at present but only after the plan is approved. I believe this is wrong; all the above congestion issues and the associated reduction in air quality need addressing now as part of the plan. New infrastructure, particularly modifications to Junction 20 on the M6, is likely to be very expensive so its funding should clearly be considered. Developers may not be prepared to contribute.

Warrington South is physically isolated from the Town Centre by the ship canal. This barrier already presents major problems to the population who need to travel to the hospital, major supermarkets and railway stations. At present, access into Warrington is by means of three swing bridges and a single high level cantilever. All the bridges are in very poor repair and will become increasingly unreliable. A large increase in the number of residents south of the ship canal will make situation impossible. Yet again, your plan says the need for any new crossing of the canal will only be considered in the future. This is wrong. The problems with traffic at the swing bridges need to be addressed in detail now as part of the Local Plan, together with how any new infrastructure will it be funded. Again developers may not be prepared to contribute.

You may remember that 25 years ago the much smaller scale development proposed for the area was dependent on a new high level crossing of the ship canal and much of it was subsequently abandoned when funding could not be found for a new bridge. We now have a proposed development 5 times bigger but the plan suggests there is no need for a new high level crossing.

In my opinion, if you truly want South Warrington to be integrated into the main town, a new high level crossing would be a priority. Without it, the new residents of South Warrington or the Garden Suburb will simply access the motorway to work and shop elsewhere.

The plan is vague on detail other than the proposal to release greenbelt. Greenbelt is a precious thing and should only be considered for development in "exceptional circumstances". There appear to be no such circumstances. Although I accept there are additional problems associated with brown field sites I believe such sites should be prioritised for development and more effort made to identify, and factor in, all those that may come available during the next 25 years. If greenbelt land has to be released because of "exceptional circumstances then it should be done more equitably. It is unfair on the local population to have its release concentrated in the south.

The overall plan may be undeliverable so we risk losing precious greenbelt land without the infrastructure in place to service all the proposed housing and business developments. Cynically, I still believe it is driven by the large number of landowners willing to sell at great benefit to themselves whilst you will struggle to get developers to pay for the major infrastructure improvements required.

In conclusion I believe the plan to be wrong, unfair and lacking in detail. It does not address the need for new transport infrastructure in South Warrington and may be undeliverable as developers make their own economic decisions. Whilst I fully support the need for Warrington to have an approved local plan to prevent speculative development I cannot support your current proposals. Please consider my comments before you deliver your final proposals.

Yours faithfully



David A Hughes