



12th June 2019

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

Dear Sirs,

Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2017 – 2037

Please consider my strong objection to the proposals contained in the above Local Plan, which is unsound in a number of vital aspects. If implemented it will have a profound and permanent negative impact upon people living in South Warrington.

The 2017 – 2037 Plan is unsound in the following respects:-

Green belt brings incalculable benefits to people and wildlife. It enhances everyone's life and is greatly enjoyed and appreciated. Development on green belt land is supposed to be tightly controlled so as to provide a buffer between towns and should be protected 'unless there are exceptional circumstances'. Anticipated demand for housing based on questionable projections does not constitute 'exceptional circumstances'

The importance of preserving green belt has been reinforced as recently as February 2019. As an alternative to precious green belt land being lost for ever, brown field land should be utilised for development. Fiddlers Ferry Power Station, for example, must close in the next few years. It already has excellent transport links, even a rail connection, yet it doesn't seem to feature in a 'plan' purporting to look forward twenty years.

Green belt must be preserved wherever possible and the sacrifice of such enormous areas of precious green belt in South Warrington is not justified. Being easier to develop and more profitable for the commercial interests involved is not a valid justification for destroying green belt.

The forecasts upon which this Plan is based are in some cases unrealistic. The period being considered is two years longer than required by the government. The forecasts of population increase are suspect and at variance with other forecasts which produce much lower projections. For example, based on 2016 population projections, the increase in local population by 2041 will be less than 19,000 people. This equates to a need for 343 new houses per year and not 945 as proposed in this plan.

On top of these unrealistically high housing number forecasts there is a 10% flexibility addition. This seems unnecessary in a plan looking so far ahead and which will be reviewed every five years. It seems that everything possible is being done to maximise the figures in the forecast, whereas I believe that we should be planning to build the minimum number of houses necessary to meet our needs, and based on realistic forecasts. Minimising new housing development will help to preserve green belt and preserve the amenity of the unique areas under threat by this Plan.

The location of new houses should be close to where the jobs are so as to reduce travel and the consequent congestion, environmental damage and economic cost which comes with it. The houses proposed for Walton will be taken up by people working in Manchester and Liverpool and using the nearby M56 motorway to commute.

Traffic congestion, noise and pollution is already a problem requiring attention in Stockton Heath. The development envisaged in this Plan will massively exacerbate those problems. The Manchester Ship Canal is a particular obstacle and the three swing bridges plus the high level 'cantilever' bridge, all built in the 1890's, can barely cope at present and will definitely be unable to handle the increased number of vehicle movements generated under this plan. In fact for shopping, for example, it will be easier for the new residents of South Warrington to take the M56 to retail outlets such as at Ellesmere Port, rather than shop in Warrington town centre.

Shipping movements along the Manchester Ship Canal, which causes the swing bridges to close to traffic each time a ship passes, are set to increase far above present levels. The traffic survey should have recognised that each time a ship passes along the canal and the bridges are swung in its favour, the road is closed to traffic at each swing bridge in sequence and there is no vehicle movement for some time. Standing traffic is already a feature of life in Stockton Heath and the effect of this Plan will be to further increase air pollution, increase stress, stifle economic activity and ruin the amenity of this unique and much enjoyed village centre.

Walton village is an amenity enjoyed by many people from the whole of Warrington and far beyond, as a visit on any summer weekend makes plain. The extent of this development

completely changes both the character and distinctiveness of Walton for ever, which contradicts the 'Vision for Warrington's Future' outlined in the Local Plan.

A fundamental role of WBC is to help improve the lives of Warrington's townspeople. Whatever the motives behind the Local Plan it should not put commercial interests or personal ambitions above the best interests of the people living in our community.

Yours faithfully



Graham Holland