

Local Plan
Warrington Borough Council
New Town House
Warrington WA1 2NH

Dear Sirs

11th June 2019.

Warrington's Local Plan

Having studied your proposals for future developments in Warrington, I would like to make the following comments.

Firstly, projections used to forecast future population and housing requirements have changed radically from just a few years ago so that it seems unwise not to acknowledge this and make some allowances. Indeed, you have made allowances but by increasing the estimates by 10%! This might not be so bad given that the Plan is reviewed every 5 years, but the danger is that the easy bits i.e. the green belt, gets developed first and is gone forever when subsequent revisions reveal that the green belt did not need to be used.

Secondly, the Plan seems more like a fantasy wish list. While the aims are commendable, the ways to meet those aims are hazy and, indeed, in some ways inimical to the stated aims. For example, the reinvigoration of Warrington town centre will not be helped by building thousands of new homes in the Garden Suburb when there is no additional access across the canal and river and no real alternative transport to the car. Indeed, additional congestion which will be generated by all the proposed new development is likely to drive people away from the centre. Neither will Warrington be improved as, or continue to be, a desirable place to live if the outlying villages which are an attractive part of the area are engulfed by overdevelopment.

Thirdly, the aim to reduce car usage is fine but will not be achieved by building extra houses with no accompanying employment close by. New jobs in the warehousing and distribution industry, which seem to be the only ones proposed in the Plan, are unlikely, in general, to provide sufficient remuneration to make such houses affordable.

It is clear that the location which makes Warrington so desirable for the distribution industry also makes it desirable for commuting, by car, to a wide swathe of the North West. The Borough Council should not be encouraging this type of development which will not help the town's regeneration.

Two points of detail on this.

- a) why should green belt be given over to new warehousing development when the brownfield site of the old aerodrome near Barleycastle, and equally convenient, is not used and
- b) what is the point of safeguarding a small area of ground where the cantilever bridge crosses the canal without safeguarding areas for links into the existing or planned roads?

Finally, throughout the Plan, although there is acknowledgement of the need for additional infrastructure there is scant detail about how, and probably more importantly, when, this will be built. We need look no further than Chapelford, where the much trumpeted new station is only now being completed years after the development that demanded its use was given the go ahead.

The situation in south Warrington is much worse in that there is no railway to mitigate the additional congestion that will inevitably follow from 1600 new houses in Walton, 5000 new houses in Grappenhall and Appleton, Waterfront development, and the Western link being used by travellers from south east Warrington avoiding the town centre.

It is quite inconceivable that given all the proposed new development the Plan considers no new links into the motorway system and no new canal/river crossings other than the Western link which is more likely to increase congestion round Walton and Stockton Heath than alleviate it. Necessary infrastructure should precede housing development.

I look forward to the final version.

yours faithfully

