




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

09/06/19

Subject: Comments on the Warrington Local Plan 2019

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am writing this letter to express my concerns over the Proposed Warrington Local Plan 2019.



I am appalled by the sheer extent of devastation of my local area as shown in the new Local Plan for Warrington. The sheer scale of the changes will transform Appleton from a leafy suburb of Warrington to an urban sprawl with wall to wall housing, dual carriageway links and devastation of green belt countryside for miles around. The scale and size of the proposals are disproportionate to the area and will have dramatic negative effect on the villages of Appleton, Appleton Thorn, Stretton, and Grappenhall and its surrounding landscape and character

I do not believe that the plans as submitted are sound due to:

- unjustified loss of green belt,
- lack of a strategy to address transport issues, and
- the increase in pollution and reduction in air quality from the development.

I will take each of these issues and discuss the lack of soundness below.

Greenbelt

I understand the five purposes of Green Belt are:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

From the figure below copied from Garden Suburb Development Framework (the best I could find, as the figures are confusing with areas and roadways not clearly labelled) the first 3 bullets are clearly NOT satisfied. The proposal joins Appleton with Grappenhall, Appleton Thorn and Stretton, and merging them into one conurbation. Some green is shown and called up as open countryside, but is minimal in comparison to the original green space, and in comparison to the proposed new developments.



Further, how can these principals be met with a 'Garden Suburb' which links all the communities together ?

The fourth bullet is harder to justify, although Appleton Thorn and Grappenhall both have historic centres, which will not be enhanced by increased traffic, pollution and population in the area.

The final bullet cannot be addressed in the zone considered, but it has been raised that Warrington should consider use of the Fiddlers Ferry power station land when the coal fired parts of the station come offline in the near future. Use of this and other such sites could help preserve Warrington's Green Belt for this and future generations to come.

The above development is not all on Green Belt, but I understand that 38% of the proposed new housing in the Plan is designated to be built on such land, and these sizeable pockets of Green Belt land which will be lost forever due to the developments. In fact South Warrington bears the brunt of all Green Belt land to be used and over 10% of Warrington's entire allocation will go.

The Green Belt in this area of South Warrington is also well used by the local population. On a stroll from Appleton to Stretton, Appleton Thorn or Grappenhall one frequently sees walkers, cyclists, joggers, people walking dogs, and with families, couples or individuals all enjoying

the open space and fresh air that this part of Warrington provides on our doorstep. It is not just people who use this green space: wildlife such as bats, badgers, birds and butterflies all thrive in this environment. All this will radically reduce, or even vanish with the development of a Garden City sprawling across the communities.

National planning policy on the Green Belt is very clear: the land should only be developed in the most exceptional of circumstances. I do not believe that the plan makes a case for this. It is not Sound in this regard.

Transport Issues

As a resident of Warrington [REDACTED] it is very clear that Warrington's roads are already congested and struggle to cope with the existing demand. Local roads and motorways are already at near gridlock at peak times going to and from work or on the school runs. An accident on the M56 or M6 is enough to bring traffic to a standstill in Warrington, as cars, lorries and buses try to cut through our town to avoid the accident.

How can the Warrington Plan justify building another 5000 homes which will need to feed into this already congested infrastructure ? Most families these days need 2 or more cars. Many workers have to commute a distance to work on the motorways, further clogging up local roads and putting strain on the motorway network at peak times. There is little to address this in the Local Plan, as we will still have traffic converging on pinch points: the A49 at Stretton, and the A50 at Grappenhall. Those commuting into Warrington to work from the south east will still have the 3 Victorian Swing Bridges to contend with, only now with a massive increase of traffic levels. The detail of the high level crossing across Fairfield Road is too sketchy to understand how it might impact, and the Western Links will not help those who work in Warrington itself.

The area will also be subjected to a sharp increase in traffic from the new employment area. it is conservatively predicted that the Stobart Hub proposals will generate in excess of 2000 additional traffic movements per day (mostly HGV's) and the Applicant will be operating 365 days a year 24 hours which will be relentless for local residents. The plan show a potential dual carriageway scything through Appleton to connect into the pinch point at Owen's Corner, to add to current peak congestion.

The Warrington Local Plan does not address traffic congestion, and will only increase the numbers of cars and HGVs on an already overloaded road infrastructure in South Warrington. The plan is not Sound in this regard.

Air Pollution

Following on from my concerns over increased traffic loading in the area, this increased congestion will only serve to increase air pollution in the area.

Local green spaces serve as a green lung for Warrington. The Local Plan will destroy a huge area of green open space for South Warrington, and in particular the communities of Appleton, Appleton Thorn, Stretton and Grappenhall will suffer. The quality of air will undoubtedly be affected and Warrington already is ranked 5th worst Town /City in England by the WHO for exceeding air pollutants.

In conclusion, I am writing to you to object to the Warrington Local plan as it is not sound in terms of: unjustified use of Green Belt, increased traffic congestion on an already overloaded road infrastructure and reduced air quality through increased traffic levels and reduction in

Warrington's Green Lung. Please recognise these concerns and rethink Warrington's future without devastating the communities and landscape of South Warrington.

Yours faithfully



Robert Hanna