

Proposed Warrington Local Plan Objection

Grappenhall, an iconic urban village marking the transition between Warrington's urban development and the surrounding Cheshire countryside. The proposals in the plan, if delivered, would destroy the unique nature of Grappenhall and the other neighbouring villages. The changes would be irrevocable. The base case for the proposals is not well-made, not credibly supported by the evidence base and not proven. Specifically:

1. The impact of the PSV's unprecedented and unjustifiable proposals for Growth falls most heavily on Grappenhall. The Garden Suburb and the Strategic Link within it will remove massive amounts of Green Belt land from Grappenhall.

2. Speculative assessments of housing supply requirements based on unsound or out-of-date analyses will put large areas of green belt land under threat though there is little or no evidence of demand for the levels and nature of housing indicated.

3. No evidential base has been presented for turning the south Warrington countryside with its limited 'industrial' base into a logistics industry hub. There is no clear economic justification presented in the PSV to overcome the presumption against development in this part of Green Belt. The proposal is not supported by assessment by WBC's own findings which previously rated the Green Belt in Grappenhall as strongly meeting Green Belt objectives and purposes.

4. The historic and iconic value of the village of Grappenhall is enshrined in its Conservation Area status underpinned by its Green Belt setting. The Arup assessment of the Green Belt is flawed.

The PSV completely ignores the existence of the Bridgewater Canal corridor as a definitive and obvious transition line between the urban areas to the south of Warrington and the surrounding countryside and villages. The proposals of the PSV, consuming the countryside, will result in the combination, through the building of modern housing estates, of the distinct and iconic villages of Grappenhall and Appleton Thorn.

Green Belt protection will be removed from Grappenhall Village including the land between the Bridgewater Canal and the northern edge of the village.

5. The PSV admits that the proposals put pressure on an inadequate road network that is already struggling to cope. For Grappenhall and Thelwall, the critical points of the road system are the ship canal swing bridges, especially the Latchford/Knutsford Road bridge and the Cantilever bridge. The plan asks us to believe that the existing roads can accommodate the extra traffic generated by the Local Plan proposals but it relies on the false assumption that the swing bridges do not close.

The PSV asserts that highway shortfalls can be addressed, but the proposed Garden Suburb will bring large volumes of incremental traffic on to the existing networks creating further congestion and worse linkage to the town centre.

Proposals for highways within the Garden Suburb are associated with the employment area and its logistics business operators accessing the motorways. Local vehicle requirements including employees getting to work is not properly considered. The one new road, the Strategic Link, will have a major impact at the A49 junction with M56.

6. The proposals can only result in poorer air quality throughout and Grappenhall and all the surrounding villages. The plan for the Garden Suburb fails to deliver adequate levels of environmental amenity for both new and existing residents. The Garden Suburb will be exposed to high noise levels from both M6 and M56.

7. The proposals claim that 'the character of Warrington's places will be maintained and enhanced....a town centre surrounded by attractive countryside and distinct settlements'.....'the unique elements of the historic, built and natural environment will be well looked-after, well managed, well used and enjoyed'. It is impossible to reconcile these noble claims with the adverse impact of unnecessary and unjustified development on Grappenhall and the south Warrington villages

10. Up until now the distinctive arrangement of Warrington's semi-rural villages within a wider rural context has been considered an invaluable asset. The loss of this distinctiveness by the creation of the generic, out of context housing development that we have already seen will completely undermine and ultimately destroy this asset value. The PSV Local Plan provides absolutely no credible analysis describing how that destruction will be avoided or how the proposals could form any kind of enhancement to the context that exists today. One merely needs to travel from the M6 towards the town centre on the A50, Broad Lane or Lumb Brook Lane to appreciate the scale of the loss and devastation for which this plan sows the seeds.

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