

Mr A P Boardman



18.04.19

Dear Sir/ Madam

Warrington Borough Council Local Plan: Proposed Submission Version (PSV)

I wish to object to the current Proposed Submission Version for the following reasons:

- The use of Green Belt land should only be used in exceptional circumstances.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that Green Belt boundaries should not be altered unless by 'exceptional circumstances'. Furthermore, the Government's current White Paper entitled 'How to fix our broken housing market' strongly supports the avoidance of using Green Belt land and states, "we propose to amend national policy to make clear that authorities should amend Green Belt boundaries only when they can demonstrate that they have examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting their identified development requirements." Part of this recommendation outlines how brownfield sites should be considered before the Green Belt. Given that there is significant brownfield around Warrington which could be used, including the possible use of Fiddlers Ferry power station when it ceases to operate in the very near future, surely this land should be considered and exhausted first. Moreover, the Government's recently published "Planning for the right homes in the right places" consultation document ensures that the methodology and numbers in the PSV are now inconsistent and specious. Not as many houses will need to be built and any that are could easily be built on current brownfield sites; the council can protect and preserve existing Green Belt land.

- The development of so many houses will lead to severe traffic problems in the area.

Warrington is already a town which suffers from aggravating traffic congestion, but the exponential growth of houses and associated cars will ensure gridlock. No detailed traffic survey appears to have been included in the PSV and the roads which have been pencilled into the plan are in no way sufficient to satisfy the transport needs for this huge development. South Warrington and Warrington as a whole will simply be unable to cope with the influx of vehicles which the PSV will result in – this is a coherent and quite straight forward logical conclusion which the Council seems unwilling to acknowledge. Furthermore, the new "Strategic Road" which has been incorporated into the plan runs the risk of becoming a highway for heavy goods

vehicles as they use it to access the industrial estate at Barley Castle from Junction 10 of the M56. Moreover, if the proposed Eddie Stobart's facility is passed then there seems little doubt that this will be the purpose of this new road. With or without the Eddie Stobart facility, the purpose of this new road seems disingenuous and seems further proof of the Council's wanton disregard for the Green Belt and its failure to comply with the wishes and needs of the local population. The issue of the Strategic Road aside, the Council has still failed to provide adequate provision for the influx of so many extra vehicles which the PSV will create.

- The environment of Warrington will suffer.

In May 2016, the World Health Organisation reported that Warrington was the second worst town / city in the North West for breaching safe levels of air pollution. The additional of so many new houses and associated cars will only serve to worsen the environmental quality of Warrington and put even greater pressure on Warrington's healthcare institutes.

- Warrington's already pressurised healthcare will be put under increasing and unsustainable burden.

Warrington and Halton hospitals are already operating at or near to capacity. Moreover, almost all of the GP / medical centres in Warrington are operating at or near to capacity. Whilst the PSV makes mention of providing new health facilities in the Garden City Suburb and the South West Extension, there is notably no mention of increasing capacity at Warrington Hospital. The residents occupying the additional 24,000 dwellings will also need access to healthcare facilities and the hospitals of the area will find it impossible to cater for such an influx of people.

- The PSV seems to be driven by the desire of WBC to achieve "City Status", or at the very least by desires which are not shared by the inhabitants of Warrington.

The aspirations of WBC to become a city and/or expand Warrington so significantly are not necessarily shared by residents. Whilst it is acknowledged that growth is necessary it could be managed far more effectively with no need to touch the Green Belt, as I have argued earlier. Indeed, I would argue very strongly that the PSV has not been produced with the views of the local community in mind. The PSV differs very little from the original PDO which created an outpouring of opposition, opposition which demonstrated visceral aversion brought about by the very real and rational concerns of local residents to such plans. A scheme providing for such a fundamental change in Warrington's character should be produced in close consultation with the local community, reflecting what they want and need and not forcibly imposed upon them with scant regard for their very prescient concerns. Moreover, the aspirations of the Council, whatever they may be, cannot be considered "exceptional" enough to warrant the destruction of vast swathes of Green belt land. The sheer scale of the building works proposed would ensure that the character of South Warrington would

be irredeemably changed and damaged. The ability to enjoy the countryside is a vital amenity; the loss of such significant amounts of green space in pursuit of “city status” (or simple expansion which could be achieved using other land), would be detrimental to the whole town and generations to come. I stress again, there appears to be no exceptional circumstances which require the destruction of this Green Belt and doing so would make a mockery of the very purpose of Green Belt land and undermine numerous Government recommendations.

Thank you for taking the time to read my objections; I trust they will be given serious consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Andrew Paul Boardman