

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for inviting my comments. *The Road to Little Dribbling*. The No. 1 Sunday Times Bestseller by Bill Bryson OBE and President of the CPRE – Campaign to Protect Rural England. In said book he reminds us that green belts exist “with the single-minded intention of alleviating sprawl” and, from his personal experiences in his native America, states the consequences of the lack of same. He continues “The notion of green belts was enshrined in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act and is to my mind the most intelligent, far-sighted, thrillingly and self-evidently successful land management policy any nation has ever devised. **And now many people want to take it away.** The *Economist* magazine, for one, has for years argued that the green belts should be cast aside as a hindrance to growth. As an *Economist* writer editorializes from a dementia facility somewhere in the Home Counties: ‘The green belts that stop development around big cities should go, or at least be greatly weakened. They increase journey times without adding to human happiness.’ Well, they add a great deal to my happiness, you.....”

He’s passionate! He cares! For people with even only a fleeting appreciation of the countryside, comments as those above strike feelings of despair and utter disbelief, not unlike those comments of councillors who tell us that “we have **no option** but to release some Green Belt land for development” and that the threat of government intervention awaits, should the residents of Warrington fail to comply. Can I have a blindfold please!

Seductive speak such as “Waterfront, garden suburb, community and cultural centres” is a veneer so thin, it is truly transparent. A Trojan Horse. The council is proposing to unleash an ongoing rolling programme of additional pollution, disruption, effort and expenditure to benefit people who do not even live in Warrington. A veritable tsunami of chaos and destruction. Instead of 20% or 30% affordable homes, the council might consider 70 or 80%, they might consider building less, they might consider building only on brown field sites before even considering green belt. Your proposals, specifically quantities, would suggest that encroachment in to green belt only becomes necessary to accommodate unaffordable homes and warehouses. People in Warrington perhaps don’t need (as opposed to want) unaffordable homes, they could be the territory of the 100 minute commuter (remember them) when HS2 gets here; until which time, the building of such properties could be delayed. The pending demise of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station could coincide with that event, thereby releasing that land so essential to your wants (as opposed to needs). More half a million pound homes with *Help to Buy* (seriously) like those in Daresbury, should prove most efficacious for you. Compromise instead of dictatorship, working with the people instead of against them; joined up thinking. You see, there are options, shed loads, and I’m not being paid to look for them.

Six 56 Warrington tells me that because of online shopping, the proposed extended warehousing facility at the M6 and M56 intersection “could deliver thousands of jobs”. Would that be 2000 or 3000 or 4000 or ? What sort of jobs would be created ? (rhetorical). *Robot maintenance engineer required – zero hours contract – must be prepared to travel – houses unaffordable in this area.* Six 56 Warrington also tells me that their assessment of the impact of their activities on air quality “will not be significant given the levels of traffic already using these roads”. For that, read – pollution (a word they skilfully avoid using) is already unacceptable, some more won’t be detected. A robust application then! Should sail through! Thousands of extra vehicle miles each day, diesel particulates, brake dust, NOx, CO2..... Sadly, their “assessment” is quite possibly true!! Relative pollution assessment. When the next development plan comes forward, as it must in order to maintain Warrington’s so beloved economic trajectory, that reasoning will be even stronger (courtesy WBC) and the applicants won’t be able to stop laughing. You could propose a null and alternative hypothesis and test it, but that would not make economic sense. More imported landfill (remember all those articulated truckloads of economy) or an incinerator perhaps.

When people are told that they are having something imposed upon them, ostensibly for reasons that will enhance their lives, they become suspicious. Inviting our comments and ignoring them is to be expected; bemused resignation. We will have done the dance, you will have engaged with the public and felt better for it. Glad to help. Whatever you do will be legal. You will ensure that. Fact is, it’s a little more than “alleviating sprawl”, it’s about preserving that life giving inconvenience, the environment. Apparently, it is only difficult when you care. Green belt demands respect if we are to escape this downward spiral. To that end, there is, without any, repeat any, fear of contradiction, “**no option**” but to protect it. Unless of course, you subscribe to the thoughts of the aforementioned *Economist* writer!

Thanks again. *K Bailey*