



WARRINGTON LOCAL PLAN – FEEDBACK

I wish to comment on the above Plan currently out for consultation and my observations fall into the following main areas:-

Flawed public consultation.

Plan Parameters.

Strategic / Public Transport Route – through Latchford/ Grappenhall and Thelwall.

Whilst I have concerns over a wide range of points I do not want to dilute the strength of my feeling on what, for me, are the core issues listed above.

Flawed Public Consultation.

I am deeply disappointed with the lack of transparency during the consultation process. Despite being years in their formulation the Local Plan did not incorporate a very good plan for consulting with as many of the potentially affected residents as possible.

The unveiling of the plans and timing of the consultation period – over the main summer / school holiday period is at best bad planning and at worst does look suspicious. This is compounded by the fact that the Parish Councils do not sit in August and would not be able to easily meet to discuss their response to the grave implications to the Town's Green Belt.

I accept that an extension period has been granted for the consultation period but am I disappointed that this has only been following a strong public reaction to the earlier proposed deadline.

I am particularly concerned that No Information Roadshow was arranged for the Grappenhall, Latchford and Thelwall areas, even though they are affected by the proposed Strategic Link Road and the major share of the increased housing and distribution sites.

For those of us who are not geographically minded the various planning maps would have been more informative if they had all incorporated several clearly labelled landmarks. These reference points could have been main trunk roads and if they were uniformly marked on each different plan they would have made comparison much easier. It is often said 'the devil is in the detail' and I do wonder if this is the reason the planning maps were made so general.

Plan Parameters

I have read the various support documents – including the paper prepared by the Cheshire and Warrington LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership and I am familiar with why it has been decided to plan for 20 years and to weight this in line with pitching for devolvement.

I do feel, however, that by projecting for so long the risk of significant inaccuracies becomes increased. This is even acknowledged in the support documents –

‘The longer term the forecast, the higher the likelihood of unpredictability, therefore as we examine forecasts over 20 years into the future, the results referred to in this report should be understood as guidelines only, whose utility derives from assessment alongside policies and schemes.’

Whilst it is good to see this rider it does not alter the fact that the Local Plan is still based on these projections. It does not alter that Green Belt Land is being removed and further tranches are being transferred to ‘Safeguarded Land’ to be held in reserve subject to a possible future Local Plan review (with the same lack of transparency?).

In the event that the various forecasts prove partially incorrect this may have huge consequences. Even small deviations may free up numerous Brownfield sites for development rather than using precious Greenbelt Land.

There is an excessive burden being placed on the south of Warrington, with it seeing significant increases in traffic volume and huge housing development. Despite the aspirations of the LEP it does appear that a substantial part of the commercial development is in Warehousing and Distribution – not known to be high salary employment. Even so, the planned housing – certainly in the Lymm area continues to be low density/ high value – i.e. not compatible with the employment being created nearby.

Finally, there appears to be the Peel Holdings Factor. I appreciate the development of Warrington is unavoidably tied to business interests but in the public domain Peel Holdings commitments seem very loose and vague. Local residents are already familiar with Peel Holdings tardiness in addressing the maintenance of the Knutsford Road swing bridge and Latchford Locks.

One of the Local Plan support documents is an Equality Impact Assessment Report, which aims to identify various groups based on Age, Gender, Ethnicity etc and how they may be impacted. [REDACTED]

Like many, I do not want to be one of the local residents paying the price for Peel Holdings and its shareholders to prosper.

Strategic / Public Transport Route – through Latchford/ Grappenhall and Thelwall.

In the Local Plan and the various associated maps, the implication is that this proposed

route is for public transport and in particular buses. Within the supporting document *Warrington Transport Summary* is reference to the declining patronage of the local bus service -

‘In 2011/12, bus patronage was 10.8 million passengers per year but in 2015/16 this had fallen to 6.6 million passengers per year.’

Given that the keystone of the Local Plan is to take control of development within the Borough of Warrington and to ‘futureproof’ it – it barely seems credible that this proposed road would be developed purely for a declining transport mode.

Even if it remains for public transport only, this will involve widening of the current embankment to accommodate the new roadway and the existing bridge structure being replaced.

However, it is hardly credible that this level of expense will be undertaken purely for buses when the route is clearly to bring traffic from the M56 / M6 and take it over the Manchester Ship Canal without the inconvenience of the existing Swing Bridge.

Future-proofing would certainly mean this road would need to be a dual carriageway resulting in significant air pollution and noise pollution, in addition to loss of light for many residents.

The threat of Compulsory Purchase or even worse (no compulsory purchase but a consequent blight on a whole swathe of properties) is not providing future-proofing for local residents.

Other considerations that may result in even more traffic diverting through this new proposed strategic road are:-

- The implementation of the new tolls on the new and old Runcorn-Widnes bridges.
- Projected increases in HGV movements for Ship Canal container distribution because little progress appears to be being made in respect of railway connectivity despite Peel Holdings vague musings.
- Being used as a ‘rat run’ for existing motorway congestion from accidents/ rush hour increases/ closure of viaducts due to high winds – all of which are extremely unlikely to disappear if the current swing bridge crossings are removed.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]