

24 August 2017

Warrington Council



Dear Sirs

I object to the Warrington Local Plans , to the release of greenbelt and specifically object to the preferred option of creating a garden city in the South of Warrington.

I object to the proposal of a strategic road running over Weaste Lane and down the trans pennine trail.

I object to the proposal of safeguarding land for residential development as this land will add to the urban sprawl. Once safeguarded, it will be difficult to protect and may be used ahead of time.

I object to the land surrounding Weaste Lane being developed on. This land provides a “strong contribution” to the greenbelt. I noted your accompanying video advised that you were only building on areas with “least impact on important areas of greenbelt”. Clearly this is not the case!

A Garden City will destroy the area, decimate the greenbelt, and be detrimental to the local wildlife. It will be visually damaging to the landscape and conflict with the character of the area. I do not believe that the Local Plan has justified the special circumstances needed for loss of greenbelt at this magnitude. I would also question whether WBC can finance the sort of infrastructure that it is suggesting is required.

I appreciate there is a need for a plan, however this must be sensitive to the needs of the local community. This area is essentially a collection of communities within established individual identities. This plan will fundamentally change areas residents live in and remove vast areas of unspoilt countryside. It is important to remember that this will change the area permanently for all future generations.

I question the validity of the previous consultation in 2016, which helped to define the scope and contents of this Local Plan. The communication for the 2017 consultation has been abysmal, and I would like to know how the 2016 consultation was communicated. Only 78 responses were received, having read through these, the vast majority of in depth responses were from developers who clearly are interested in building properties and profit margins – and don’t seem to have any reservations about building on greenbelt. Affordable housing and retirement housing is needed in Warrington. Making green belt land available only serves to attract development aimed at homebuyers outside the target groups mentioned in your plan

Why has the plan been set at 20 years, with provisions for housing (safeguarded area) beyond this date. My understanding is there is no legal reason stipulating why it must cover such a long period and the NPPF suggest a 15 year time horizon.

Again, I wonder how well the call for sites was advertised, as the number of sites put forward seem to be very heavily biased towards the south of Warrington, again, where developers can make the most money. Developers SHOULD NOT be dictating the Warrington Local Plan!

Although I accept that some housing may need to be built on greenbelt in the future, I question the number of houses required and do not believe enough work has been carried out to determine what brownfield land may become available over the next 20 years. If WBC aim is to make best use of available land, then it is vital that brownfield sites are developed first. If vast swathes of land around South Warrington is removed from the greenbelt, it will simply serve as an encouragement for developers to build on these sites and the brownfield sites will never be developed. Given a choice, I believe a developer will always seek to develop a greenfield site over a brownfield.

It is important to note that whereas the supply of greenbelt land is finite, as time passes and industry and commerce change, more brownfield land does become available. Fiddlers Ferry is one such area which may become available. A **windfall allowance** for brownfield sites should be included in the plans.

I very strongly object to the Garden City concept. I currently live in a “greenbelt village”. I chose to live in this rural location. I DO NOT want to live in a Garden City.

For option 1 with approximately 8,000 houses, your plan states that this option will have a “significant impact on the character of this part of Warrington”. However, in your preferred option, you are suggesting 7,300 homes in this area (NOT 6,000 option 2 as suggested in your Local Plan) plus 2,840 potential gross density on safeguarded land ie 10,140 homes. There is no doubt that this WILL affect the character and will create an urban sprawl.

It will allow the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas and neighbouring villages will merge. The countryside should be safeguarded from encroachment.

I note the SHLAA 2017 no longer includes sites less than 0.25 hectares and 266 sites were removed from the SHLAA in the 2017 document – have these figures been taken into account within projected housing figures for small sites.

I would also like to query the population growth of this area during the plan timespan. I do not believe sufficient allowance has been made for the likely fall in immigration following the referendum on the UK’s membership of the European Union and the likely reduction of free movement of people.

Why does the Local Plan consistently refer to the New City Concept and even refers to driving in to Warrington – the City Centre. I do not want to live in a City, nor do I want further large scale housing estates and large scale employment development. I think that development in Warrington should be considered and balanced to ensure that it develops in a sustainable way as a TOWN!

Yours sincerely

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