



## **PDO Objection**

### **The Wrong Type of Homes in the Wrong Places**

I wish to object the PDO on the following grounds:

#### **1. The inadequacy of the Consultation process**

The consultation process inadequate and poorly communicated. It was very unfair to schedule the consultation over the summer holidays. WBC were shamed into having to add extra dates. It was barely publicised, and it took residents (campaigners and activists) to raise awareness. Given that every resident will be affected by these proposals in some form or another (be it loss of clean air, loss of local green space, lowered house prices, compulsory purchased property, traffic congestion and longer commutes), you should have written to every resident of South Warrington. The way you have handled communication of the PDO has set the tone; every person I know who lives in South Warrington mistrusts you because of this and the unfounded data contained within the PDO.

The residents of Warrington have not been involved in the framing of any of these proposals. Some of the options have been conveniently dismissed without any real justification. Option 5, for example, seems completely reasonable and achievable to me, but there seem to be no obvious reasons for not pursuing it.

#### **2. The over-estimation of the housing needs and key data omission**

The Green Belt satisfied the tests of durability when it was designated, and WBC have presented no exceptional circumstances to justify a change.

The PDO document is very technical and references certain key numbers as given “fact” without direct links to the source material or considering alternative calculations. The OAN is cited as 839 new homes per annum - but this was based on 2012 surveys. Before publishing the PDO, WBC could have used an updated May 2017 report based on 2014 data which shows a figure of just 738 homes per year, but these numbers have been ignored. Why is this?

WBC have stated time and again (and by Andy Farral personally at the Park Royal consultation) that the amount of green belt proposed for the Garden City Suburb will be low density. However, according to the housing assessment, what the town needs is 2-3 bed homes. This is not what you might describe as low density. Where is the justification for this huge land-grab? If the council were to exhaust all the brown-field options first, the yield per hectare could be far higher, with the added benefit of being in the kinds of places where infrastructure (especially public transport) already exists. What is the point of destroying pristine green belt only to build giant link roads bringing heavy traffic directly off the M56

straight into the small villages of Stretton, Appleton, Grappenhall, Stockton Heath and Latchford?

Another major omission is Fiddler's Ferry. If WBC had an ounce of foresight, it would also have allowed for the decommissioning of Fiddlers Ferry and consequently the availability of an enormous brownfield site requiring regeneration.

### **3. WBC's Desire for Expansion and City Status is Driving Growth**

WBC's assumptions about housing need appear to have been selected to justify a much higher than necessary requirement - significantly above the OAN, and do not appear logical, consistent or robust.

Option 2 is based on an excess employment and economic growth outlook that is based on very high-level assumptions and considerations completely outside the control or influence of WBC, such as HS2/HS3, Brexit and associated financial/economic uncertainty. All the economic initiatives highlighted under the EDNA (such as Cheshire devolution and HS2/HS3) will, if they ever come to fruition, be needed just to provide jobs for the natural increase in the population, they are not a justification for even more housing. Where is the clamour for an expansion in the town coming from? It's certainly not coming from the people who live here.

Furthermore, there is no Government requirement to produce a twenty-year plan. The plans are simply too far out to be credible. A ten-year plan would be much less precarious, by which point we will be much clearer of the economic and migratory impacts of Brexit, the impact from any completed national infrastructure initiatives *and* any unforeseen technological changes that affect our commuting/work/home life (and balance).

### **4. Wrongly Assessed Green Belt**

Firstly, I believe that there is a conflict of interest with Arup, a multi-national construction and building company, have been allowed to assess the land on which they may well have a future building interest. The General Area Assessment clearly shows that the Garden City Suburb has been assessed as **weak** (Table 9, chloropleth map). Having cross referenced this with every single parcel of land assessed by Arup, there are significant mathematical discrepancies. In total the Garden City Suburb comprises 32 parcels of land. Of these, 12 are assessed as **weak**, 13 are assessed as **medium** and 7 are assessed as **strong**. Furthermore, the 12 parcels of **weak** land are a *tiny* acreage in comparison to the rest. This looks like a case of artificial justification, in the belief that nobody would be bothered to drill down into the detail and double check this data for themselves.

### **5. Geographical Position of the Garden City Suburb**

It is incomprehensible that WBC are planning expansion of low density, high value homes in pristine green belt before all brownfield sites have been exploited. The value of this greenbelt is manifold; they are the lungs of Warrington and provide valuable farming land and a safe haven for hundreds of species of mammals, birds and amphibians, as well as recreation opportunities for the residents of Warrington. It defies common sense to build thousands of homes South of the Manchester Ship Canal when the majority of residents already commute every day to the North where the major public transport hubs are, as well as the M62 and the newly redeveloped town centre. Even if a link road is built, it still will leave the major problem of crossing the ship canal into a bottle-neck. Even using conservative estimates, this new suburb will bring an extra 20,000 cars with disastrous

results. Why have no other forms of public transport been offered? South Warrington, if it is to be a major conurbation, cannot function in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century without train or tram links. It MUST be connected to other towns and cities by alternative non-petrol based transport networks, because we simply cannot keep adding to the roads and cars scenario. If we do, Warrington and surrounding motorways will simply grind to a halt and choke us.

The construction of the new business development in Stretton/Barleycastle in this particular place is highly questionable. All of that development area is strong greenbelt, and as such, should not be touched.

The residents of the South Warrington deserve a higher standard of disclosure and transparency than has been shown to date. WBC seem determined to soldier on whatever, which demonstrates that their ambitions are more important than the community they serve. A fairer distribution of housing right across Warrington, higher density housing taking up less green belt and a more strategic public transport links (and I don't mean extra buses) are crucial.

Regards,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the sender's name and contact information.