



27 /09/2017

Dear Sirs

I refer to the current consultation on the South Warrington Development plan.

It is perhaps the most important responsibility of a Council to seek to improve the quality of life for its existing residents. Without prejudicing that, there must be a reasonable ambition for growth and development. However growth for growth's sake (as seems to be the case here) is often counter productive. It should in my view be undertaken only as part of a much wider plan to meet national or at least regional objectives.

I do not know if there is any truth in the suggestions that the plan is part of a campaign for Warrington to become a city and I do not comment on that ambition. Suffice it to say that such status brings no particular benefit to residents and does not of itself solve any problems.

The main problem is the barrier created by the ship canal and the Mersey between the Town Centre and South Warrington. The delays involved means residents in the south have no incentive to go into town unless they work there or have a specific reason. I acknowledge improvements are being made in the town but sadly I do not think these alone will alter the position. The decision of M & S to concentrate on Gemini and Stockton Heath was a warning that the town might become a "doughnut" with a hollow centre.

The tentative solution in the plan is a further high level crossing but that also has its problems. It would be extremely expensive, cause huge disruption while it was being built and afterwards would inevitably blight existing properties close to its route. Worse it would greatly increase the possibility of Warrington becoming a rat run for vehicles seeking to avoid tolls or motorway delays.

Whether or not north/ south links are improved I have real doubts as to whether an expanded "Garden City Suburb" would use the town centre facilities to the extent hoped for. Stockton Heath and Lymm are at their limits. Any substantial developments would therefore require at an early stage the provision of supporting infrastructure including at a minimum schools shops and medical services Such facilities might well be used by existing residents of South Warrington as well as the new comers. However for major shopping and entertainment ease of access to the M56 would probably draw people to the wider choice available in and around Liverpool and

Manchester where many of the facilities have free parking

An argument may be made that a large influx of residents and business would increase the Council's revenues but that would need to be most carefully costed. I have a suspicion that very little surplus would be available for general funds after the costs of infrastructure and the expansion of services to accommodate the developments was properly taken into account

The destruction of such a large area of highly appreciated green belt and valuable agricultural land require to be justified by overwhelming arguments. I can see no benefit for existing residents in the proposals and on present evidence my wife and I would strongly oppose them

Yours faithfully

