

OBSERVATIONS ON PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT OPTION CONSULTATION

South Warrington Proposals – Utilising information from Supporting Documents - Settlement Profiles – South Warrington (from Page 26 onwards)

WBC statements in Black - My responses in red

- Schools – limited capacity or no expansion potential – **where will new ones be built?**
- GP Surgeries – all at capacity – **again, where will new ones be built?**
- Pharmacies – some but unlikely to be sufficient to support new developments – **as above**
- Dentists – **as above**
- Community facilities as listed in the document for the whole of South Warrington – **this is unlikely to be sufficient for any new development. Transport options to any existing or new facilities will more than likely be by car.**
- **No mention of care homes; retirement homes or leisure facilities aimed at 65+ - national demographic profiles indicate an increase over the next 20 years**

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- Buses - some hourly, half hourly or sporadic – **all go into central Warrington making it difficult and too long for people to go South/North or East/West or any combination thus people have to travel by car. This leads to further congestion on motorways, major and minor roads. Indeed when there is gridlock people are now finding ways to go through residential areas with 20 mile an hour limits which is dangerous.**
- Rail – 2 stations both in central Warrington – **do not serve local travel**

LOCAL HIGHWAYS NETWORK

Congestion at peak hours on primary routes. No commitment to Local Highways improvements. Problems are exacerbated when the swing bridges have to open or there are delays on the Motorway network. The Strategic Highways Network via J20 of the M6 using the A50 and J10 of the M56. No immediate proposals to improve the Junctions or adjacent links – **it is not just at peak hours that there are major difficulties in this area. Mention is made of the proposed Warrington Western Link which has funding from the Department of Transport towards a feasibility study. However, this is unlikely to alleviate congestion problems when the Thelwall viaduct has lanes closed, or indeed it is totally closed. Existing problems will not go away in this area and any new housing will only exacerbate this. The conversion of the M6 south of Junction 20 into a Smart Motorway will still create a “bottleneck” going over the Viaduct and consequent problems around Junction 20**

ACTIVE TRAVEL

More people walk or cycle to work in this area than travel by bus or rail; however, the largest mode of transport used to travel to work is a car or van, with over 75% of people in this area using this mode of transport. The numbers of people making active travel choices is quite low compared with other parts of Warrington and much of this is due to the general lack of attractive, walking and cycling routes to key destinations – **use of bus and cycle lanes is to be encouraged but buses will still be delayed by traffic congestion. The aging population is unlikely to walk or cycle and the**

distances involved will still make it necessary to travel by car. There are no rail links so public transport is only by bus. Transport Strategies should consider alternatives such as trams.

CONSERVATION

The area contains or borders 6 conservation areas – Stockton Heath, Ackers Road, Victoria Rd/York Drive, Grappenhall Village, Thelwall Village and Walton Village. The area contains 29 statutory listed buildings – why even consider using Conservation areas? Past decisions have recognised any additional housing in large or small numbers, out of style with current buildings, will have a detrimental impact and that has not changed.

OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION

South Warrington has a significant deficit of all types of POS with the exception of parks and gardens which have a small surplus. The majority of the deficits are in the older/northern parts of the area near to the Manchester Ship Canal. In terms of equipped play there are 2 LAPs and 7 LEAPs and 1 NEAPs. Sports Pitches: The South Warrington Neighbourhood has a good range of sports pitches that include cricket, both rugby league and union, hockey and football pitches. However, there are some deficits of pitches in a number of sports (Rugby league, football and cricket junior, and cricket and hockey senior). In addition, there are two golf courses (one public and one private) – this is a vital part of any future plans, especially junior provision. It is possible to tie in with National Governing bodies and Sport England to get extra funding for new facilities or to improve existing facilities so this should be pursued.

GREEN BELT

There are 6 General Areas bordering the settlement – whilst recognising that some Green Belt land may have to be used this should be the last resort. No mention is made of Brownfield utilisation. Also there is a disproportionate amount of land and housing proposed in South Warrington compared with other areas. The Western area, which borders the M62, surely has potential. The M62 West is rarely congested, even at peak times, compared to the problematic M6/M56.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The southern area contains Local Wildlife Sites, an area of ancient woodland and Grade 2 and 3 Agricultural Land. The design and location of any future development would need to be sensitively considered in respect of the Local Wildlife Sites and ancient woodland to protect these assets – precisely! Consideration must also be given to air pollution from additional traffic which will impact on all outdoor spaces as well as Urban areas.

GROWTH

Incremental growth would not positively contribute to the Council's New City Aspiration – even if people in the South Warrington area support this ambition, incremental growth has been identified as not being viable so why consider it? There should definitely be no development of major housing projects in Conservation areas and Green Belt use should be a last resort.

NEW GARDEN CITY

A Garden City Suburb could impact on the strategic importance of the Green Belt, depending on its location, although in South Warrington only one of the 6 General Areas is performing strongly – IF this idea progresses identification of derelict land should be the first priority.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL – Disused Stretton Airport Site

Explore the possibility of using the land on which the old Stretton Airport is sited. This is a huge area of derelict land but it is situated near to the “Planned Major Employment Site” at J20 of the M6/M56. If this site was used it would cut the need for more traffic to go into the centre of Warrington on a daily basis, new schools and other facilities could be incorporated and there may be more use of walkways, cycling routes etc.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS FOR WARRINGTON FOR THE HOUSING EXTENSION PLANS

Consideration of the impact on local hospitals which are already struggling to meet demand. Provision of facilities for the elderly (including specialised housing and care options). Social housing and opportunities to get on the “housing ladder”. Emergency services; Car parks, particularly in the centre of Warrington; Utilities. No references appear to have been made to such vital services or the role of renewable energy which will come to the forefront during the lifespan of the proposals. For example, will plans include the necessity to have solar panels on the roof of each house as part of all new housing projects before planning permission is granted?

The disruption, which will inevitably be caused throughout the whole area, will have to be well managed and integrated. How will this be done?

