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Warrington Borough Council Local Plan

Preferred Development Option (PDO), Regulation 18 Consultation, July 2017

Having studied the maps and documentation and attended the consultation session, I consider the proposal in the PDO is not acceptable nor would it be achievable.

My reasons are primarily

1. The premature designation of green belt sites for development.
2. The overestimation of the Towns projected population increase
3. The decision to set a 20 year plan and not the more usual 15 year span
4. The unsustainability of the Garden City Suburb

1. Overestimation of population increase

The population growth aspiration in the PDO, calculated by using the 2.3 multiplier on the housing growth, is almost double the growth forecast for Warrington provided by the Office of National Statistics. Using those figures, including a 5% contingency plus the current backlog, only 12,442 will be required not the 24,220 planned, all of which could be accommodated without use of Green Belt.

2. Greenbelt.

National Planning policy states that Greenbelt should only be altered in exceptional circumstances and such circumstances do not exist at present.

There is currently enough brown land identified to accommodate 15,429 houses and large sites at Fiddlers Ferry and Lovely Lane Hospital may well become available within a 15 year or 20 year time span.

3. A 15 year plan

A plan for 15 years would reduce the number of houses needed within its life span and avoid the need to designate any Green Belt for immediate development. At the end of 15 years other brownfield sites may have been identified, and there will be a more informed understanding of the towns potential for growth. Green Belt land may or may not be needed eventually, but is it premature to designate any until it becomes essential.

Once designated experience suggests that green land will be the first choice for developers. This will hold back development on inner town brown field sites where the smaller starter homes, which are so badly needed, might be built.

4. Unsustainability of the Garden Suburb in South Warrington.

The building of so many houses in one area without adequate infrastructure cannot be considered to be good planning or achievable. Traffic is already at capacity and the PDO has no firm plans about where new roads might be built or how they could be funded. The New Town envisaged a major N/S Expressway in order to service fewer houses than are now planned. The geography of the town with its canals and the river is fixed and the roads needed to develop South Warrington on the scale in the LPO would be hugely destructive both north and south of the Ship canal.

On these grounds I believe the PDO as outlined is neither achievable nor desirable. The quality of life for residents will be damaged by loss of greenfield sites for leisure and enjoyment and traffic gridlock across the whole town.

I therefor ask the Council to look again at its population growth forecast and estimate of the number of houses needed and consider a 15 year plan which would prevent premature loss of Green Belt.

Yours sincerely

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