



10 September 2017

Director of Planning
Planning Policy and Programmes
Warrington Borough Council
New Town House
Buttermarket Street
Warrington
WA4 2NH

Dear Sir

**Warrington Borough Council Local Plan Preferred Development
Option Regulation 18 Consultation July 2017**

Thank you for kindly providing a copy of the local plan preferred development option for comment. As I understand it, the major intervention proposed in the draft plan is the development of a new Garden City Suburb comprising 7,274 new homes and 116ha of employment land between Knutsford Road and London Road linking the existing urban area to the M56. This new development will almost exclusively be on land currently protected as green belt. You also propose to protect for future development land, currently allocated as green belt, east of Knutsford Road and the M6, with the potential to accommodate a further 1,831 homes.

I have severe concerns about this proposed plan.

It is acknowledged that Warrington's roads, schools and health facilities are currently at capacity and such a development would need significant investment in both transport and public services. In current times of cutbacks etc, and recent reports of the low UK growth falling behind other main European countries, I feel it is extremely optimistic to assume that monies for such necessary development would be readily available.

In 2012, there was a focus on developing brownfield land, preserving the quality of the area, and the air pollution – why has there been this sudden switch to releasing green belt land? This was supposed to be maintained until at least 2032.

What would be the protection against air pollution currently provided by the Green Belt? It would appear to be negligible if this proposed plan goes ahead, since so much Green Belt would be eradicated.

My most pressing concern is the fact that the proposed development is on the wrong side of the Ship Canal. The main arteries which cross this Canal currently are at bursting point. Providing a huge new garden city suburb with only one new strategic road appears to be very short sighted. Why is it not close to a railway station?

There will be a huge financial incentive for owners whose land has been removed from the green belt to assiduously work the planning system to ensure the early release of their land for development without the proper road infrastructure in place. Residents already know well how badly the whole town is affected by any motorway incidents, for example.

Finally, the preferred development option would fundamentally alter the nature of Thelwall, Grappenhall, Appleton and Appleton Thorn. There would be a real risk that they would lose their local character and be swallowed into a gigantic area of urban sprawl. The very desirability of living here, which ensures high house prices, would be eroded. This would cause the whole ‘deck of cards’ to collapse – massive housing development which cannot sell, etc etc.

In the light of the real problems with the preferred development option I would urge you to reconsider your proposals. My view is that if the release of green belt land **can** ultimately be justified it would be more sensible to allocate development on the town centre side of the Ship Canal and where ready access can be gained to the rail network, such as the land between Birchwood station and the Ship Canal.

Please keep me informed of developments.

I have copied this letter to [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]