

Local plan 2017 comments.

The following comments are in response to the local plan drawn up by the local council.

In response I would like to make the following comments.

The proposed plan is quite detailed in its ideas for housing development in the area. What is not clear from these proposals is how the council is going to achieve these aims particularly those of 'existing congestion' and protecting the environment in terms of air quality point W6.

The plan mentions the Western link road and also the possibility of one or more high level bridges across the Manchester Ship Canal but, there is little detail in the plan as to how and where these will be located. My view is that without new arterial routes north-south across the ship canal this plan will hinder not help the development of Warrington as a 'city' as no one will want to visit a city permanently congested. Surely logic dictates that the building of new road infrastructure precedes any thought of house or commercial building.

I would like the council to take into account the following points before making a final decision. I believe that the existing brown field sites combined with any available green field sites north of the ship canal should be used first before any thought of house building south of the ship canal is considered for the following reasons:-

- All of the major infrastructure in Warrington station, bus station, hospital, central shopping area, business areas, retail parks and all the major supermarkets are north of the Manchester ship canal.
- This plan places the bulk of the new housing in Warrington SW and Garden city. South of the Manchester ship canal away from all the major infrastructures and employment zones.
- Currently the bulk of employment in Warrington is north of the ship canal this will be combined with the identified potential employment locations of Omega and Waterfront a total of 173 hectares in the west and north. In order to meet point W4 'reduce the need to travel' housing should be concentrated near employment zones, therefore north of the ship canal.
- All traffic accessing Warrington from the south must cross one of the 3 swing bridges and the one high level bridge (this just links two already congested routes.). The development of the garden city has planned distributor roads but these all lead onto the existing A56 A49 and A50 and the swing bridges.
- These routes are already extremely congested at busy times (point 6 FAQ's existing congestion). Your plan to build 8000 homes in the south will mean an extra 8,000-16,000 cars in the area all trying to access the swing bridges.
- This number of cars is based on government ownership statistics 76% of all homes in England have one car 32% have two. This increases in more affluent areas like Appleton. Our road has 11 houses and 24 cars for example.
- Public transport in the south is poor no station poor bus service outside of the centre of Stockton Heath.
- Peel ports new Liverpool container base must mean they intend to use the ship canal on a more frequent basis which in turn means more bridge closures. Council figures show it takes

45 minutes for traffic to return to normal after one bridge closure and as all bridges close within 5 minutes of each other thus grid locking the entire area.

- There is also the possibility that traffic will use Stockton Heath/Warrington routes to avoid paying tolls on the Runcorn bridges. Thus adding to congestion.
- The planned expansion of Port Warrington a container base for Peel Ports can only increase the HGV traffic in the area. Much more detail is required on the Western link road before support for this scheme is forthcoming.
- To build just 1000 homes in the north, east and west of Warrington seems an in-balance and given the points above we would urge the council to have a re-think.

In conclusion.

- We would like to see the Western link road and new high level route completed before any house building is considered in the south. Preferred development point 5.7
- The need for another high level crossing over the ship canal would be imperative given the additional private and commercial traffic from the new Garden city and SW extension on top of existing congestion. Infrastructure requirements point 5.32
- A re-balancing of new home distribution to be closer to employment zones and the major areas of infrastructure (transport, retail etc).Point W4
- It is very difficult to get away from the idea the these plans are financially driven and driven by developers who only want to build in the south of Warrington where house prices are highest and profit greatest and where through higher housing tax bands the council will raise more revenue.