

29th September 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: WBC – Local Plan Preferred Development Option Consultation

With reference to the above and to a WBC Drop In session at the Park Royal Hotel, Stretton which I attended on the 4th September 2017.

I am writing to you to express my concerns at the Council's proposed plans because as a local resident I feel that they are ill conceived, irresponsible, unrealistic and will be detrimental to the whole of Warrington – South and North, East and West. Whilst I appreciate the need for some new affordable housing the proposals for 24,000 new properties over a 20 year time period are totally impractical, improbable and unworkable and I would question the whole criteria and thinking behind your Preferred Development Option.

Loss of Green Belt - Using the Green Belt land because these are 'Exceptional Circumstances' cannot and should not be justified. What are the Exceptional Circumstances? I can't find an explanation in your documents anywhere to explain this very important point. Once Green Belt land has gone and has been built on it can never be altered back to green fields and woodland and building a Garden City Suburb instead is both absurd and patronising – we don't need a Garden City Suburb – we have fields – used for agricultural purposes either for growing crops and/or grazing animals, we have The Dingle and The Millennium Green – at the moment – we have bridleways, pathways, footpaths to walk our dogs along, to enjoy with family and friends, to cycle along – why would you destroy and remove all these areas? Why do you think people want to live in Grappenhall Village, Stockton Heath, Appleton, Appleton Thorn, Stretton and Thelwall? These are lovely places to live now – people work hard to live in these areas – they pay their council and other taxes – why destroy the character of these areas forever?

The need for Sustainable Development - Warrington Borough Council's current plan does not constitute 'sustainable' development. Warrington, particularly the town centre, has already suffered far too much destruction of its historic buildings, distinctive identity, local culture and character. Many of its local and town centre businesses have disappeared. The massive, un-sustainable growth proposed will result in the destruction of Warrington and its environs. I believe that the proposed housing target calculation of 24,000 additional homes to be built over a 20-year period is not substantiated and does not reflect of the needs of Warrington and its people either in type, number or distribution. Our local infrastructure – Warrington and Halton hospitals, local doctors and dentists surgeries, secondary and primary schools and the local road networks struggle to cope now. In addition to this, it is evident that within your timescale there will be brownfield sites more suited to development, such as the Fiddlers Ferry Power-station site (which is due to close within the period under review) - there are no brownfield options appearing in the plan.

Traffic Issues and Geography - A high level traffic survey has not been included in the Preferred Development Option; Warrington is uniquely positioned close to the M6, M56 and M62 motorways. The growth of Warrington has often been attributed to its proximity to the transport network. But Warrington is affected detrimentally whenever there are problems on the motorway network. The A49 through Stockton Heath and Lumb Brook Road are often blocked; if there is an accident on the M6 people come off the motorway and drive through Warrington – recently there was a traffic jam for almost 3 hours in Stockton Heath because Junction 21 had to be closed on the M6 – this is without the additional potential of 48000 extra cars on the local roads.

The Preferred Development Option includes an 'Eastern Link Road' from M56 Junction 10 to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal (this route would cut right through the proposed new residential areas). On the downside, this would provide a new HGV access road to the Barleycastle Trading Estate (which, at the moment, is only accessible from the M6 junction). It would also provide an alternative route for traffic caught up in problems on the M56 / M6 motorways. As such, this will result in the deterioration of the quality of life for current residents who will be subjected to increased noise, pollution and vibration from the increased traffic flow.

The Preferred Development Option also suggests the use of an old railway embankment and bridge to the west of Latchford Locks as a new strategic transport route. Again, this route would be detrimental to the people currently living in this area.

Pollution levels as well as noise levels will dramatically increase during and after this potential development of South Warrington – especially along the A49 and in Stockton Heath – this won't be good for the local environment or people living in the locality.

Warrington Borough Council's desire for City status - The desire to make Warrington a city is at best questionable and at worst delusional – Warrington needs to improve drastically and dramatically before people would choose to work here, in the numbers proposed, as opposed to Manchester and Liverpool - two fine cities which are well established. Warrington is improving but I would question your data and reasoning behind your desire to change Warrington's status from a town to a city – Palmyra Square with the Parr Hall and new restaurants and Golden Square are attractive places to visit but there are many brown fields sites in Warrington – lovely Georgian and Victorian buildings which are simply boarded up and rotting away which could be converted into flats and apartments for young professionals to live in – which would make the town centre a much more pleasant place to be at night and especially over the weekends.

'City status in the United Kingdom is granted by the monarch of the United Kingdom to a select group of communities ...' Wikipedia 29.09.17 and a comment on the internet re city status ' There never has been any privileges. It's always been a status thing, nothing more. There's nothing to stop places declaring themselves a city ...'

Warrington Borough Council and the Planning Department have a moral, social and economic duty to develop Warrington as a decent town to live in initially and forget the desire for City status – if Warrington isn't attractive people aren't going to come here to work irrespective of fancy flyovers and the Garden City Suburb – people will simply look and work elsewhere. These 'aspirations for massive growth', the adverse impacts of which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any supposed benefits, should be abandoned - Warrington Borough Council should concentrate on delivering a draft local plan which reflects the true needs and aspirations of the residents of Warrington.

It is interesting that the consultation period has been timed over school/family holidays leaving people insufficient time to thoroughly consider the plans and thus depriving people of the opportunity to participate effectively.

And finally – South Warrington is disproportionately affected by the Preferred Development Option – North and East Warrington are barely affected by these proposals – why is this – what are the reasons for this?

I can only hope that you look at, read and digest the numerous emails and letters which you've received about your Preferred Development Option – naturally people generally do not like change

but I imagine that the majority of people understand and appreciate the need for some new housing but it's the scale and lack of forethought which I'm questioning; if you progress with your Preferred Development Option you will destroy the town of Warrington and the surrounding landscape of South Warrington forever – it's not a great legacy is it?

I look forward to hearing from you within due course.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted contact information]