



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

Dear Sir,

I understand the need for a 20 year plan for Warrington houses and employment. I recognise that there are many different approaches to estimating the future needs for housing and employment and all estimates are subject to uncertainty and variability. The plan seems to manage the level of uncertainty reasonably well. Will residents of Warrington be updated regularly on the status of the plan versus the variability in the estimates?

I strongly support the proposal to maintain the current Plan's priority of unlocking major development opportunities in the Town Centre and Inner Warrington whilst addressing existing congestion in the town and focussing the Plan Review on identifying land for homes and employment whilst ensuring delivery of infrastructure.

I am pleased to see the council are keeping under review the potential reuse of the Fiddlers Ferry Power station.

I am also pleased to see regeneration of Inner Warrington is a priority. In particular, strengthening and expanding the role of Warrington Town Centre as a regional employment, retail, leisure, cultural and transport hub, whilst transforming the quality of the public realm and making the Town Centre a place where people want to live and visit. Over recent years Warrington Town centre has become a less attractive location to visit and shop. There seems to have been an exodus of major stores from the town centre. Many of the shops are empty, or have become charity shops and pound shops. The lower end of Bridge Street near the Mersey is particularly unattractive. Many towns make a feature of their river frontage, with walkways, specialist shops, cafes and restaurants. I notice on the plan all the river frontage is designated for residential development or mixed use. Will the mixed use include an attractive area that will encourage people to visit the centre of Warrington?

It is unclear to me what is intended to improve the cultural assets of Warrington. Currently there is little in the centre of Warrington that is attractive to visit for a day or evening out. I regularly travel to Theatre Clwyd, Liverpool, Manchester and Salford to visit the theatre, classical concerts, opera, art exhibitions and Museums. What is planned to improve the culture assets of Warrington to be more attractive for existing and new residents?

I have a number of concerns regarding the plans. In section 2.34 you state that you acknowledge that you have not fully considered the provision of retail and leisure. This is an important omission as out of town retail sites like Gemini and Alban Retail Park have adversely affected the town centre

(eg, the recent closure of Marks and Spencer). The town centre already has too many closed shops. I recognise that it is important to provide retail facilities if you intend to build a garden city but these need to be carefully planned and be similar in style to Stockton Heath, providing a mix of facilities and not just mega out of town stores.

Currently there are insufficient leisure facilities for the existing population in South Warrington. Failure to address the inadequate leisure facilities before the additional houses are built in 0-5 years will have detrimental effect on existing residents.

Additionally there are already insufficient GP/medical facilities in South Warrington such that registered patients cannot get appointments with their doctor. How will existing GP practices cope with the increasing population over the next 5 years?

Whilst I understand the need to have homes and employment, if the housing planned for South Warrington is similar to that recently built in Grappenhall Heys and Appleton, will the employment areas also provide high end, highly paid employment, eg scientific, highly skilled, and technical etc.? Or are you expecting Warrington to be a North West Commuter town where highly paid people live and commute for work and entertainment?

I welcome the proposal to turn Grappenhall Hall School and nearby Woodland Trust land into a country park. Can you provide more details on this proposal? Will this be similar to Walton Hall Gardens? When will this be implemented? Do you expect it to attract people from across Warrington to visit?

In section 2.4 you state that you have engaged with highways England and infrastructure providers to identify any mitigation measures for the preferred option. What mitigation measures are being proposed? On page 23 of your report you state that ' More detailed work will still be required to understand infrastructure and character impacts as this option still presents a significant urban extension. How are you proposing to address the following existing problems before any new homes are built?

- The road links from south Warrington to the town centre are inadequate and already bottleneck at the Bridgewater canal crossings, the Manchester ship canal crossings and at Bridge foot.
- How will a new crossing on the ship canal be developed? I do not see how a modification to the old high level railway bridge at Latchford is feasible? Does this also impact the Trans Pennine trail a route used by many for leisure activities?
- The inadequate GP services in South Warrington
- The inadequate leisure facilities in South Warrington

In Figure 7 it is stated a sensitive frontage to Bridgewater canal as a consequential development offset. However building houses on Stockton Lane to the tree line of the Grappenhall Heys woodland trust will not provide a sensitive frontage to the Bridgewater canal. I would ask that you think again about this part of the development.

In section 5.4 you state you will create a new country park by the restoration of Arpley landfill, how will impact Moore Nature Reserve? What is proposed for this Country Park is it similar to Walton Hall gardens? What is the timescale for this development?

In section 5.3 you state that walking, cycling and public transport linkages will connect these neighbourhoods to their local and district centres, Stockton Heath, the new employment zone and the City Centre. Will the walking and cycling routes extend to Warrington Town Centre and the railway stations at Warrington? Will there be more walking routes than currently available on footpaths across the existing agricultural land in the Garden city suburb. Already walking routes through the Dingle, Appleton, around Grappenhall Heys, the walled garden, the millennium wood, Bridgewater canal, woodland trust land and Trans Pennine trail are heavily used; unless there are considerable more areas to walk these will be inadequate for the increase in population.

I would like to propose some suggestions for your consideration:

- Create a new link to the M56 from the Garden city to avoid the existing bottlenecks on the A50 and A49.
- The local cricket clubs would benefit from receiving extra adjoining parcels of land to develop extra pitches to support the junior and female sections. This could alleviate some of the leisure facility problems in South Warrington.
- The proposed retail development in the garden city needs to be a mixed retail area similar to Stockton Heath.
- Improve the road access, leisure and medical facilities in the first 5 years of the plan.
- Provide cycle ways and walk ways from the Garden city to the Town centre

Yours Faithfully

██████████

██████████