

27th September 2017

Dear WBC

Re: Local Plan Preferred Development Option

I strongly oppose the Preferred Development Option of the Local Draft Plan 2017 currently proposed by Warrington Borough Council. I do not agree with Warrington Borough Council's aspirations and arguments for massive urban growth and New City status.

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. Why does the 20-year plan not take into consideration the fact that Fiddlers Ferry will have to close due to carbon reduction targets at some point and that Warrington Hospital may be moving to a new site for instance?

Warrington Borough Hospital is at or near capacity but no adequate provision for healthcare has been suggested in the plan. Those of us who have been around a bit have seen the gradual running down of our local services such as Stockton Heath Library and Broomfields Leisure Centre. We remember the medical centre and the new link road that were previously promised in the old "new town" plans that never materialised, hence my scepticism this time around in regard to getting the infrastructure that will be required.

The release of Green Belt land for the purposes of urban development and sprawl in any area of the town is unacceptable and unnecessary. Green Belt should remain Green Belt. Green fields, woodlands, natural habitats should not be destroyed. Why does WBC believe there are "exceptional circumstances "which will allow the changing of the green belt boundaries? (See National Planning Framework). The Agricultural land is "not spare" land, it helps provide a "lung" for Warrington whose air pollution is already bad. Warrington was named by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as the second worst place in the North West for breaching safety levels for air pollution in May 2016.

The proposed supporting infrastructure of roads and highways will be destructive, invasive and difficult to build. It will not alleviate congestion and pollution in the town, traffic implications must be carefully considered and mitigated before any plan is approved. Public and community transport also needs to be addressed and safe walking and cycle routes need to be promoted. Barleycastle Trading Estate already has a lot of heavy goods vehicles and coaches accessing it and care needs to be taken that any new employment land does not increase the issues that these vehicles bring. Lower Stretton Parish Council spends much of its time talking about

the very real traffic issues through the village as it is and I haven't seen any information about how this can be resolved.

The "garden city suburb" will completely change the character of the villages of Appleton Thorn, Walton, Hatton, Stretton and Grappenhall. The "pencilled in" roads shown at the consultation events will not remotely address the transport needs for this huge development. Warrington grew up around water transportation, this historical development now however poses challenges for such large growth to our town. If and it's a big if you manage to get a workable solution I suggest there will be nobody left trying to battle through the town to get to work once the plan has been implemented. I gave up working in Warrington [redacted] years ago and moved to a job in Halton as I couldn't get back across town to collect my children from school in time due to traffic issues. We also do most of our shopping in Northwich to avoid Warrington town centre now.

Warrington's position close to the M6, M56 and M62 is often cited as a positive but the opposite side of the coin is that local traffic comes to a standstill whenever there are problems on the motorways. The extra traffic from the new houses will just exacerbate this. The new roads may actually become routes used by this traffic trying to avoid the gridlock, not what people want when they buy a new house.

Warrington railway stations are also difficult to get to in a timely manner due to traffic issues and swing bridge closures as it is if you live on the south side of Warrington. It is imperative any plan ensures that all traffic and transport issues are addressed especially with respect both to safety and congestion and that the plan promotes safe walking and cycle routes as well.

In conclusion I do not think the Preferred Development Option plan reflects the true needs and aspirations of the residents of Warrington. I do not have any 'aspirations for massive growth', the adverse impacts of which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any supposed benefits, the housing target should be significantly reduced to reflect true local need rather than through any forced, unsustainable growth of the town.

I would like an environmentally friendly plan which is genuinely based on community and citizen led needs rather than one which is land speculator or developer led. A plan which respects, protects and reflects our historical and cultural identity, our landscape, greenbelt, green fields and natural habitats and which contributes positively to our health and wellbeing.

I would like sympathetic growth which protects our environment, where any development meets the needs of the local community and the environment around is protected and where possible, enhanced

Yours faithfully