



RE: Warrington Borough Council Preferred Development Option (PDO)

Dear Warrington Borough Council,

I am writing to oppose and object to the proposals and plans and request withdrawal of the plans for 'Warrington Borough Council Preferred Development Scheme' due to the following key themes:

- the release of greenbelt and specifically object to the preferred option of creating a garden city in the South of Warrington.
- the proposal of a strategic road running over Weaste Lane and down the trans pennine trail (TPT)
- the proposal of safeguarding land for residential development - this will add to the urban sprawl. Once safeguarded, it will be difficult to protect and may be used ahead of time.
- I object to the land surrounding Weaste Lane being developed on. This land provides a "strong contribution" to the greenbelt. Your accompanying video advised that you were only building on areas with "least impact on important areas of greenbelt". Clearly this is not the case!
- I consider that the process of how the council has arrived at their PDO is flawed and contains out of date demographics – with relation to Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN) based on 2012 surveys, rather than the more recent May 2017 report. The council have based their projections on an out of date 839 homes per annum rather than 738 that the May survey cites.
- WBC should produce a ten-year plan, by which point we will be much clearer of the economic and migratory impacts of Brexit, the impact from any completed national infrastructure initiatives and what the consequences of technological change have been on work and home life (and balance). It would also allow for the decommissioning of Fiddlers Ferry and so the availability of an enormous brownfield site requiring regeneration.

- The consultation process was poor due to inadequate untimely communication, lack of transparency and paucity of information with the original development plan – which many residents are only just aware of.
- South Warrington is unfairly, inequitably and disproportionately affected.
- The council have yet to complete any air quality surveys, ecological surveys, transport surveys and environmental impact surveys.

Other Key Themes in my Objection:

History and Heritage

The proposals in the preferred development favour dismantling the small and historic villages of Appleton Thorn, Thelwall, Grappenhall and Lymm in South Warrington. The plans will ruin the village feel and character by influx of unnecessary building in their environs. These villages will lose identity if the proposed plan continues by creating an unnecessary linkage and urban sprawl, rather than them being separated by natural and beautiful green belt and small paths and roads. Many of us chose to live in the countryside in a small village near to a town. I do not want to live near to or in a City.

Waste

As cited in his letter to you by [REDACTED] the local development plan requires additional information on a new WWtW, a district heating network and a review of the analysis surrounding waste (RDF/EFW) capacity, and identification of where a new WWtW and energy centre (EFW?) would be located within the Garden City development. This suggests that the LDP is premature and should be withdrawn.

Housing

I would also like to query the population growth of this area during the plan timespan. I do not believe sufficient allowance has been made for the likely fall in immigration following the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union and the likely reduction of free movement of people. Why has the plan been set at 20 years, with provisions for housing (safeguarded area) beyond this date. My understanding is there is no legal reason stipulating why it must cover such a long period and the NPPF suggest a 15-year time horizon.

Greenbelt

This land is not “spare” but supports existing farms and rural businesses.

Green belt should not be altered unless exceptional circumstances according to the ‘National Planning Policy Framework Section 9 Clause 79-82. I do not consider the proposed development plan considers or adheres to this framework as it doesn’t demonstrate compliance with the exceptional circumstances or has it examined the other options as stated in the framework e.g. effective use of all brownfield sites, land which is underused (or public sector land), optimising proposed density of development, whether other authorities can meet some identified development e.g. St Helens, Halton.

The City concept would be at the detriment of green belt usage

The classification system used by the review conducted by Ove Arup and partners is erroneous and subjective. If used this is likely to destroy some very beautiful and loved countryside around Warrington. This countryside is a natural landscape and habitat for much wildlife and protected species and by nature lovers, families and for exercise and linkage with our historic villages.

Green belt is essential for our wellbeing and to reduce and offset the pollution that Warrington residents are exposed to. If the green belt and the Trans Pennine trail (TPT) and/or part of the Bridgewater canal are destroyed as highlighted in the plan (especially if a transport link is implemented across the TPT, we will lose the ability for locals to enjoy unpolluted green exercise.

Ecology, Flora and Fauna

Currently there are a wide variety of trees, shrubs, animals, birds and land in the surrounding areas proposed by the preferred development. A full ecological and environmental survey is not mentioned in the development plans. This is essential before any further plans are proposed or put forward for consultation. The local protected and endangered species known are: water voles, common voles, newts. We also have nesting buzzards, herons, kingfisher, barn owls, badgers, toads, frogs and many bats along WA4.

Population, Pollution and Transport.

the projected population growth that is driving the need for housing development is flawed when compared with the Office for National Statistics. It is disproportionate. Perhaps the borough council should revisit the statistics - therefore less housing is required allowing the council and planners to consider an alternative plan e.g. Option5. I note that there is an uplift of 20% for employment housing and 5% for housing. Is this necessary? Why has this been put into the plan, other than to pursue the creation of a city which residents of WA4 are strongly opposed to e.g. 4000 signatures on the 38degrees toolkit, more than 220 people attending the ‘Save our Greenbelt ‘march along the TPT on Sunday 17th September.

If the preferred option is realised, it is likely that housing on outskirts of Warrington Town will not contribute to the urban growth or development or financial viability as it will be a commuter and dormitory town serving Chester, Liverpool and Manchester. However, the already congested motorways and A roads surrounding our town will be further invaded, congestion and cause increasing pollution to an already polluted over crowded infrastructure.

As cited by the World Health Organisation, Warrington is the 5th most polluted town in the North west for breaching air pollution safety levels. I cannot see any mention in the PDO or other plans of how the council aim to reduce or deal with this, with increasing housing, cars, roads. There is no mention of creative forms of transport links. Surely this is a priority for the council to reduce pollution rather than create this. (see below re: health). Air pollution is recognised as a factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. It is the largest environmental risk to the public’s health.

In 2011 the Councils Local Transport Strategy was already concerned about the percentage of

vehicles and journey to work in Warrington, with a higher percentage of households having 2 or more vehicles (36%) than the rest of North West (27%) or UK (30%). Warrington is already a high commuter area both in (17%) and out (18%) compared to the rest of the North West (10 % and 14%). This shows Warrington has an inherited reliance on cars.

Health and Wellbeing, Primary and Secondary Care Health services.

Your plan mentions provision for primary health care – which I assume is general practice and community services. However, I see no mention of secondary care, urgent care provision. This is of grave concern. We already need to ‘grow’ more GPs in the next 5 years as per GP forward View and Warrington and other environs in the North West are currently undersubscribed for GPs and GP trainees. More concern is that the local providers of both community services, urgent care and secondary care all require ‘Needs Improvement’ as per their Care Quality Commission reports. E.g. Warrington Hospital (July 2015) and Bridgewater Community Foundation Trust (February 2017) How will these services be sustainable and meet the needs of a larger population if your plan is realised? Local hospitals and community services that are already struggling e.g. breaches in 4 week waits at AED, concern over inadequate Maternity Care, Medical out-patients, will be crippled unless there are plans in place with Local health and Wellbeing Boards to develop capacity and estates for these services.

I look forward to being a part of a review process of this consultation and supporting our local village with a Neighbourhood Development Plan. I also look forward to a response in due course from Warrington Borough Council.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

(Local resident, [REDACTED] who enjoys outdoor green gym, the beautiful countryside and local heritage and the developing Warrington ‘Town’.)

Please enjoy a photograph of a vole that I spotted after playing tennis along Stockton Lane at Grappenhall Sports Club.



Photographs of the march along the TPT on Sunday 17th September.

