

Dear Sirs

RE: Warrington Borough Council Local Plan. Preferred Development Option Regulation 18 Consultation

I am writing in regard to the above plan and associated consultation and wish to place a formal objection against the plan for the following reasons.

1. Housing Need

Whilst I appreciate that more houses are needed and do not wish to simply object because I don't want them near me, building on green belt land is an absolute travesty and something very close to my heart. The number of houses being proposed and the location of said houses will massively detriment a beautiful area with a number of well used and valuable rural green spaces, a great community feel and which is well connected to the motorway network and local cities. There are other brownfield options around Warrington which could fulfil housing needs without impacting on scenery, wildlife and green space. I don't feel that this has been fully explored and genuinely believe that the main reason for choosing this green belt land is overwhelmingly due to the investment return and the ongoing council tax the development will generate. Meeting the housing requirement is a convenient by-product.

It is clear from the concept of the Garden City Suburb that this will absolutely not be affordable housing and this type of concept to me is just artificial and man made. Certainly not the type of area I want to live in nor the reason I moved to this area.

This type of development is not something the vast majority of residents want nor is the status of Warrington Town to be brought up to a city. This has been overwhelmingly evident the Facebook groups, through the Warrington Guardian website and, I expect, in other residents objections.

2. Transport Links

Of course none of the plans for building this many houses will be approved without significant improvements to Warrington's transport network. This network is already at breaking point with huge knock on effects from an incident on the M56 or M6 causing gridlock far and wide.

- Road through green belt land, part of TPT and disused rail bridge

This concerns me hugely. The construction of a road (potentially a dual carriageway?) across green belt land, through existing residential properties on Weaste Lane and connecting with the Trans Penine Trail (TPT) at Pickering Bridge is absolute madness. The TPT is a wonderful amenity which the vast majority of residents utilise. Personally I run regularly on parts of the TPT, my [REDACTED] children have learnt to ride their bikes safely here and we regularly enjoy family walks and bike rides on it. [REDACTED]

█ it provides a safe traffic-free outdoor environment for children to explore, interact with nature and splash in puddles.

The proposal to then link across to the derelict railway bridge over Latchford Locks also appears ill thought out. Surely the cost of strengthening this bridge and the associated embankments coupled with the potential Compulsory Purchase and demolition of residential properties along Springfield Avenue, Thelwall New Road and into Latchford would be massively cost prohibitive. This is without taking the environmental aspects into consideration, the TPT and the railway embankments are home to a wide variety of wildlife, flora and fauna.

WBC also seem unable to confirm where this will exit? Bridgefoot roundabout and the centre of Warrington is already massively overpopulated at weekends and in rush hour, to add more traffic to this would further exacerbate the problem.

- Strategic bus route down Stockton Lane and using the cantilever bridge

Since Stockton Lane has been closed to through traffic, it has become a well used semi-rural amenity used by many runners, dog-walkers and families. Access to a small number of residents and the sports club only means the route is fairly traffic free and again a beautiful place to walk and take in the scenery of the canal and farmland.

It would be a sad loss to the area to see houses built on this farmland and a bus route implemented.

I understand the bus route will also use the cantilever bridge off Ackers Road – surely this bridge cannot safely take this additional traffic?

3. Infrastructure particularly hospitals

The PDO includes school provision but no mention of hospital. Warrington Hospital is already at risk of losing it's 24hr A&E service as I understand, how on earth can it support all these additional residents?

4. Consultation

Finally I wish to point out that the 'consultation' was very poorly managed and timed to the extent that it appeared that the proposals were being hidden and WBC were not being transparent with residents. The first I heard of the proposed transport links on the Trans-Penine Trail (TPT) was in the middle of the school holidays through a friend whose house backs onto the TPT. She had received an unofficial flyer through her door from a resident. Luckily those residents then took to social media to make the community aware of the plan that has a huge impact on them with some potentially losing their homes.

An official letter from WBC should have been sent to all properties directly impacted by this and to all residents in the areas of Grappenhall, Thelwall and Latchford. This would have ensured all residents were informed and not just those who use Facebook regularly. We have a number of elderly residents in our community who would not have had a clue about the consultation were it not for neighbours going out of their way to publish leaflets (paid for by the community) and go door to door telling people.

I tried (and failed) to get to the consultation even at the Park Royal but had to leave the queue after 30 minutes due to having my children with me. Feedback from friends and the photographs and videos I saw from the event were quite negative. People complained that officials weren't available and did not have answers. A friend was told by a planner that the road over the disused rail bridge in Latchford was 'simply a line on a map, don't worry about it'?!

Would you 'not worry about it' if there was a proposal to build a dual carriageway at the end of your garden?

Truth is these plans have unsettled and concerned the vast majority of your residents. I personally, and I know I speak for many of my family and friends, do not wish Warrington to be made a city and do not want this development. Please listen to your residents and do the right thing!

Yours faithfully

