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**WARRINGTON**  
Borough Council

# **Warrington Borough Council**

## **Local Plan**

### ***Preferred Development Option***

### **Regulation 18 Consultation**

### **Standard Response Form**

**July 2017**

## 2: Questions

### Question 1

**Do you have any comments to make about how we've worked out the need for new homes and employment land in Warrington over the next 20 years?**

### Response:

None, other than to reiterate comments made in previous representations that the overall requirement for both new housing and employment should include a generous buffer so as to ensure that annual and the plan period targets are met, which hasn't been the case in previous years and with earlier plans.

## **Question 2**

**Do you have any comments to make about how we've worked out the number of homes and amount of employment land that can be accommodated within Warrington's existing built up areas?**

### **Response:**

Although the Representor does not wish to comment directly about how the Council has formulated the emerging Local Plan's housing requirement, which is based on inter alia an OAN, it is of the view that too high a proportion of the overall requirement for both residential and employment is directed towards the town's existing built up areas. The effect of this in some instances will be urban cramming and congestion as the plan does not appear to recommend the need for new infrastructure to cope with increased population, traffic and related needs. A better solution would be to direct greater levels of new development to peripheral areas where it is usually easier and viable to deliver new infrastructure and the effects of development is more dissipated.

### **Question 3**

**Have we appropriately worked out the amount of land to be released from the Green Belt, including the amount of land to be 'safeguarded'?**

#### **Response:**

The Representor is concerned that insufficient land is proposed to be released from Green Belt to allow it to be either reallocated for development or as land safeguarded for development in future years. Although a number of areas of Green Belt are proposed to be deallocated, the Representor is concerned that the approach being followed is piecemeal and cautious when compared to the best approach, by which he means that larger, more strategic releases in well serviced and accessed key locations would deliver more in planning and sustainability terms. For example, although land in the Winwick area is planned to be released from Green Belt, in the Representor's view, a wider, more strategic release could be supported given what it would deliver and because it would not impact seriously on the purpose of Green Belt or its value and role in a local sense.

## **Question 4**

**Do you agree with the new Local Plan Objectives?**

### **Response:**

The new Local Plan objectives broadly reflect related advice and guidance falling out of NPPF, albeit adapted to suit local needs and key objectives. As such, the Representor is broadly happy with the new Local Plan Objectives.

## Question 5

**Do you have any comments to make about how we've assessed different 'Spatial Options' for Warrington's future development?**

### **Response:**

The Preferred Development Option document has highlighted 'Option 2 - Majority of Green Belt release adjacent to main urban area with incremental growth in outlying settlements' as the preferred spatial distribution of new development.

The Representor broadly agrees with this spatial distribution and agrees that it would enable Warrington to meet its development needs whilst directly contributing to the delivery of Warrington New City. While it is accepted that much of the Green Belt release will be centred around the main urban area of Warrington, the Representor stresses the importance of the additional incremental growth in the outlying settlements and its role in supporting local services and widening local housing choice without compromising their character. This approach to Green Belt release is of particular relevance to the Representor's sites North and South of Townfield Road as these sites are part of the outlying settlement of Winwick and the release of such sites from the Green Belt would contribute to the Council's aim to deliver a number of smaller sites in outlying settlements in the early part of the plan period.

## Question 6

**Do you have any comments to make about how we've assessed different options for the main development locations?**

### **Response:**

The Preferred Development Option document has highlighted 'Option 2 - A Garden City Suburb of approximately 6,000 homes & an urban extension to the south west of Warrington of up to 2,000 homes' as the preferred main development locations.

While the representor understands that meeting the borough's housing needs will require the designation and development of larger, strategic sites such as these, attention should be given to the pressures this will put upon infrastructure and transport.

The Preferred Development Option states that a large number of sites were put forward in the call for sites exercise in proximity to each of the outlying settlements, far exceeding the level of growth required under the preferred spatial option. While it is acknowledged that not all of the sites put forward in the exercise will have been suitable or sustainable for housing development, the high number of potential sites in outlying settlements warrants a reconsideration of the proportion of housing to be delivered in the main strategic development locations (Garden city suburb and urban extension), in relation to the outlying settlements. A reduction in the level of housing delivery in the main development locations could reduce the level of lengthy and costly infrastructure provision required and provide a more balanced spatial distribution of development. It would also allow for a higher level of development within the outlying settlements, which would support local services, widen local housing choice and contribute to the Council's aim to deliver of a number of smaller sites in outlying settlements in the early part of the plan period, while also ensuring that Green Belt is released in a sensible and sustainable manner.

## Question 7

**Do you agree with our Preferred Development Option for meeting Warrington's future development needs?**

### **Response:**

The Preferred Development Option for meeting Warrington's future development needs identifies four main areas of growth – The City Centre, the Waterfront, the Garden City Suburb and the South West Urban Extension. These areas are complemented by the optimisation of development throughout the remaining neighbourhoods of the main urban area and incremental growth in Warrington's outlying settlements.

The development trajectory proposes that 1,190 homes will be delivered in the outlying settlements (Green Belt) to be delivered in the early stages of a 20-year period. The Representor believes that this is a conservative projection and emphasises the need for sufficient suitable sites in outlying settlements, such as the Representor's sites, to be released from the Green Belt, alongside larger strategic sites, to allow progress to be made in delivering housing in the early stages of the plan period, particularly as the likes of the Garden City Suburb and South West Urban Extension will not realistically be delivered until the later stages of the 20-year period.

## **Question 8**

**Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the City Centre?**

### **Response:**

Although this matter is not overly relevant to the key matters the Representor's main representations, he is of the view that seeking to ensure that the Town Centre is as vital, viable and sustainable as it can be, is an important and necessary objective for the emerging Local Plan. This is because securing a vital and viable Town Centre will contribute significantly towards overall plan objectives and through this the creation of a truly sustainable settlement. As such, any proposals for the Town Centre should have regard to this and, linked to this point, be realistic and deliverable. The points about need for realism and deliverability are based on concerns around overly ambitious plans which do not have regard to national and regional trends in retailing and the local market and are unlikely to be achieved.

## **Question 9**

**Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the Wider Urban Area?**

### **Response:**

Our response on this question reflect points already made in the context of earlier questions, i.e. that too much development is proposed to be directed towards existing urban areas, whereas there are planning benefits to be enjoyed by directing a greater proportion towards peripheral/greenfield locations, especially those well located/accessible and served by infrastructure.

## Question 10

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for developing the Warrington Waterfront?

### Response:

No.

## **Question 11**

**Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the Warrington Garden City Suburb?**

### **Response:**

None, other than to say as already inferred through responses to earlier questions, the area to the north of the town/M62 provides scope for a similar development.

## **Question 12**

**Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the South Western Urban Extension?**

### **Response:**

Response same as for question 11.

## Question 13

**Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for development in the Outlying Settlements?**

### **Response:**

The Preferred Development Option defines an approximate number of homes the Council considers can be accommodated by each of the outlying settlements under the 'incremental growth' scenario. Here, an indicative figure of 90 homes has been allocated to Winwick.

The Representor appreciates that this figure is only indicative and that the final numbers will depend on the detailed assessment of potential development sites and the impacts on the character of settlements, the permanence of the Green Belt and transport impacts. However, the Representor believes that the actual figures for growth in the Green Belt in Winwick are likely to be significantly greater than projected, especially given the ambitious targets for residential brownfield development centred around the main urban area. As such, there may be a requirement for more release of Green Belt land in Winwick than anticipated, for which the Representor's site would represent a suitable option to contribute to the delivery of new housing in Winwick.

## Question 14

**Do you agree with our approach to providing new employment land?**

### **Response:**

The Preferred Development Option sets out Warrington's need for employment land over the next 20 years, of which 130ha of supply will be in the existing urban area and 251ha will be in the Green Belt.

The Representor broadly agrees with Warrington Council's intention to plan for an ambitious level of economic growth in accordance with the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, as well as the proposed release of Green Belt land to provide 251ha of employment land. The preferred option outlined by the Council is for employment development on land to be released from Green Belt to be directed towards the Warrington Waterfront area and the land at the M56 Junction 9, sites, which will meet the majority of Warrington's employment land requirement. While the Representor broadly supports the use of such sites for employment, smaller sites will also need to be brought forward in addition to these larger strategic sites to provide for the remaining employment land. Though generally the residential/semi-rural character of outlying settlements is not conducive to employment uses, the Representor's sites, while not falling within specified areas for employment growth, are located along the A49 corridor where policy IW1 of the Core Strategy supports proposals for appropriate uses, principally research and development, light industrial, general industrial and storage /distribution uses (Use Classes B1(b), B1(c), B2 and B8). Such uses on these sites could contribute to the additional floorspace needed to meet Warrington's employment growth aspirations and would be broadly in-keeping with surrounding land uses, including the substantial healthcare facility to the east of site A and south of site B, the B&Q store to the west and the nearby Winwick Quay business park.

## Question 15

Do you agree with our suggested approach for dealing with Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites?

### Response:

No comments to make.

## **Question 16**

**Do you agree with our suggested approach for dealing with Minerals and Waste?**

### **Response:**

No comments to make.

## **Question 17**

**Having read the Preferred Development Option Document, is there anything else you feel we should include within the Local Plan?**

### **Response:**

No comments to make.