

## Warrington Borough Council Local Plan Consultation

I attended the consultation event recently, and had discussions with helpful members of the consultation team. As result I have a number of comments regarding the proposals which I feel should be considered in developing the final recommendations for adoption.

Given that central government is demanding a growth plan and undefined modelling processes are setting the targets to be met, the proposals do appear to be reasonably well thought out and should lead to a more cohesive developments within the Borough over the next 20 years. However, while the benefits must, as stated, provide adequate infrastructure investments to support the industry and housing objectives, this must be established before major building starts and not afterwards. As happens in many such programmes, changes in funding arrangements and timescales lead to an out of line approach, with “first phases” becoming being built to depend on existing infrastructure, with the promises of infrastructure catchup never being fulfilled. This **MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN** in Warrington.

There is little in the plan to indicate what will generate growth and whether the increased population predictions are “internal”, ie from natural growth within the current population, or as a result of import of labour to meet the demands of expanding or new industries. Consideration needs to be given to the changing demographics of the area, and he form of housing required to meet the needs and aspirations of new warringtonians. The vast numbers of one and two bedroom apartments built in the area over the last few years will not meet the needs of growing families , and much of the existing housing stock is out of the price range for aspiring owners on average or minimum wages. Are the housing proposals based on council owned housing, affordable housing, buy to let operations or executive housing which seems to be the development of choice for green field sites? As the populations age, the proposals must include provision of accommodation for the elderly and infirm, as well as a proper understanding of the fact that populations operate in 20 or so year cycles, so primary schools in a given newly developing area may be largely redundant after while new secondary school catchment areas will change significantly with time.

By the time of the completion of the plan, it would seem highly probable that approaches to transportation will have changed radically. Is the plan proactive or reactive in this respect. Do people really want to work close enough to their homes, so walking or cycling everywhere is the preferred option, or is everyone going to be crisscrossing the area by (electric) car or public transport? The Warrington western bypass and a resurrected eastern crossing of the ship canal are fundamental to the success of the proposals, so their timescale and chances of implementation need to be incorporated into the thinking. As I would foresee a major increase in traffic coming from the M56 heading northwards or vice versa either to avoid the toll bridge in Runcorn or to to access work related sites now being proposed, then should not consideration be given to a south western bypass from the M56 at Junction 9 to the new western bypass on the A56 to avoid this traffic passing through Stockton Heath or finding rat runs to bypass this already congested area.?